Overview

This course considers broad theoretical and philosophic issues in U.S. healthcare. We unpack the organizing models of contemporary medical research, practice, and education. We look at the problems with today’s dominant biomedical model and the possibilities of alternative conceptual frames. And we consider how much contemporary “healthcare crisis” symptoms—patient dissatisfaction, social difference problems, unsustainable cost, restricted access, and widespread side effects—arise from the underlying model of healthcare.

Our inquiry will be interdisciplinary and we will draw from medicine, philosophy, history, psychology, literary theory, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, disability studies, cultural studies, poetry, drama, and documentary.

Objectives

1.) Understand the underlying biomedical model of healthcare and its limits.
2.) Develop a working knowledge of “narrative medicine” and “health humanities” approaches to healthcare.
3.) Be able to articulate and organize the many variables beyond “biology” that impact human
morbidity and mortality.

**Texts**

Edson: *W;t*
Gawande: *Being Mortal*

**Class Schedule**

1.) 9/9: **Introduction**

   Video: Gawande: Being Mortal (Kanopy, Frontline)
   Donne: Death Be Not Proud

2.) 9/16: **Biomedical Model**

   Edson: *W;t*
   Flexner: Medical Education in the U.S.
   Griffiths: 5 Minute Medical Consultation: Ovarian Cancer
   Reiser: Becoming a Doctor
   Campo: “Technology and Medicine”

   In Class: *W;t* (35 mins)

3.) 9/23: **Reform Efforts: Biopsychosocial Model and Patient-Centered Care**

   Engel: The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine
   Engel: The Clinical Application of the Biopsychosocial Model
   Cassel: The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine
   Levenstein: Patient Centered Medicine
   McWhinney: Are we on the brink of a major transformation of clinical method?

   In Class: *W;t* (35 mins)

4.) 9/30: **Phenomenology and Bioethics**

   Husserl: Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity
   Toombs: The Meaning of Illness
   Pellegrino: Being Ill and Being Healed
   Zaner: Toward a Philosophy of Medicine
   Rich: Introduction to Bioethics
In Class: \textit{W;t} (35 mins)

5.) 10/7: \textbf{Health Humanities and Narrative Medicine}

- Campo: Medical Humanities
- Carsons: Engaged Humanities
- Charon: Narrative and Medicine
- Lewis: Narrative Medicine and Health Care Reform
- Egnew: Meaning of Healing: Transcending Suffering

In Class: Charon

6.) 10/14: \textbf{Psychotherapy: Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, and Buddhism}

- Viorst: \textit{Necessary Losses} (selections)
- May and Yalom: Existential Psychotherapy
- Loy: Nonduality of Life and Death: A Buddhist View of Repression

- Video: Confronting Death and Other Existential Issues in Psychotherapy with Irvin Yalom (Kanopy)

- Suggested: Greenberg: \textit{Psychological Impact of Acute and Chronic Illness} (selections)

7.) 10/21: \textbf{“The Social”: Medical Sociology and the Social Causes of Disease}

- Germov: Imagining Health Problems as Social Issues
- McKinlay and McKinlay: Medical Measures and the Decline of Mortality
- Metzl and Hansen: Structural Competency
- Angel: Is Academic Medicine For Sale?
- Clarke: Biomedicalization

- For Class: Campo: “Ten Patients and Another”
- Focusing Upstream: McKinlay.Zola

- Video: Health for Sale: Money Driven Medicine

- Suggested: Guillemin and Barnard: George Engel the Construction of Medical Practice
- Singer and Baer: What is Medical Anthropology?
***Turn in first paper*** First Paper Topic (8 pages): Please develop a commentary on *Wit* using the references from the first half of our class. The big idea is to get beyond a “character analysis” to consider the ways that Jason and Kelekian are symbolic (if extreme) representations of the current biomedical model. From there discuss the biomedical model, its limitations, and possibilities we have considered for reform and expansion.

8.) 10/28: **Neoliberalism and Biomedicalization: Costs and Consequences**

- Mahar: The Road to Corporate Medicine
- Dumit: Pharmaceutical Witnessing
- Sismondo: Medical Publishing and the Drug Industry
- Callahan: Healthcare Costs and Medical Technology
- Starfield: Is U.S. Health Really the Best in the World?

In Class: Pharma. Top 15, Healthcare Costs, Medical Error

Video: Health for Sale—Money Driven Medicine

Churchill: Commercialism and Medicine

9.) 11/4: **Gender Studies and Health**

*Our Bodies, Our Selves* excerpts from first edition
Lupton: Feminism and Medicine
Kathryn Pauly Morgan: Contested Bodies
Passau-Buck: “Caring vs. Curing”
Kittay: Dependency, Difference, and Care
In Class: *Business of Being Born*

10.) 11/11: **Cultural Representation and Global Health**

- Lupton: Representations of Medicine and the Body
- Lewis: High Theory/Low Culture
- Lewis: Global Health Movement: Rx for the World?
- Kleinman and Hanna: Catastrophe, Caregiving, and Today’s Biomedicine
- Linton: What is Disability Studies?

In Class: *Invitation to Dance: Disability in 21st Century America*

11.) 11/18: **Disability Studies**

- Davis: Disability: The Missing Term in Race, Class, Gender Triad
- McGruer: Compulsory Able-Bodied
- Taylor and Butler: Interdependence
- Couzer: Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation
- Wade: “I Am Not One of the” and “Cripple Lullaby”

In Class: Examined Life—Sunara Taylor and Judith Butler

*Invitation to Dance* cont.

**THANKSGIVING**

12.) 12/2: **Religion and Spirituality**

- Lewis: Mindfulness, Mysticism, and Narrative Medicine
- Giles and Miller: *The Arts of Contemplative Care* (selections)
- Lewis: Narrative Medicine and Contemplative Care at the End of Life
- Lu: A Study of... *Ikiru*

In Class: Exerpts *Ikiru*

Video from Zen Center for Contemplative Care

Suggested: Newberg and Lee: Relationship between Religion and Health

Carrette and King: Selling Spirituality

13.) 12/9: **Primary Care, Integrative Medicine, and Lifestyle Medicine**
Final paper due on 12/19 in my box by 4 PM

Final Paper topic: Please further develop your Wit commentary using the second half of the course readings.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on three parts: attendance/participation (1/3) and 2 papers (1/3 each). Late papers are graded down. There will be an opportunity to rewrite the first paper if you desire. The attendance/participation grade is composed of weekly class readings, participation, and
attendance. There can be one excused absence for the class. After that, I drop a letter grade from your attendance/participation grade for each missed class.

Class will generally begin with a short presentation on the material for that week. Class discussion will be initiated by your selections from the material. To prepare for class discussion, please type a quote for each week’s reading (include author and page numbers so we can find your quotes). We will use your quotes to develop our understanding of the readings.

Papers are 8 pages type written, double spaced. Please use the material from the class to develop a topic I hand out (or a similar topic of your own making). Back up your thesis with arguments and examples from the class readings. Please include internal citations with page numbers and a reference list at the end. A good paper demonstrates that you have integrated the material from the readings and class discussions and can use it to analyze your topic. Use the bulk of your energy reading closely and thinking seriously about the materials you have (rather than doing outside research). Also, be sure and give your paper a title.

The grading scale for the papers will be as follows: A+ (98), A (95), A- (91), B+ (89), B (85), B- (81), C+ (79), C (75), C- (71), D (65), and F (number below 65).

Academic Integrity

“As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating.”

(http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)

Death, be not proud

John Donne (1572-1631)

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.