

COMPARATIVE STUDIES 305: MEDICINE AND THE HUMANITIES

Fall 2005 | Call #05359-2 | MW 9:30 – 11:18 a.m.

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Office hours: M/W 12:00 – 1:00
and by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we will explore medical knowledges, practices, and issues from a variety of perspectives. Because we are approaching medicine, health, and illness in the context of the Humanities, we will read texts from literary and journalistic genres (including memoir, autobiography, autopathography, oral history, and literary criticism), while also considering critical-theoretical and anthropological accounts. Through our readings, we will explore the particular experiences of medical practitioners, patients, and activists in relation to their cultural, institutional, local, national, and global contexts.

What I expect of class members:

- * Engaged participation (speaking *and* listening) in class discussion
- * Employment of critical thinking skills and a willingness to interrogate familiar ideas, terms, and practices. We will develop these skills in reading, writing and discussion.
- * Thoughtful reading and consideration of course texts and authors' arguments
- * Collegial attitude
- * Presence in class (with cellphones, personal videogame & mp3 players turned off, newspapers set aside).

What I do not expect of class members:

- * Certainty before speaking
- * Mastery of texts
- * Competitive attitude
- * Passive consumption of others' contributions
- * Agreement with ideas or positions represented in course texts and discussions

Course Requirements

Participation (includes attendance and participation in class discussion): 25%

For the purpose of this class, **participation is defined as the practice of making productive, relevant contributions to class discussion *while also listening to and respecting the contributions of others.*** Talking a lot without engaging with the readings will not raise your participation grade; demonstrating your engagement with course texts and issues, with your fellow classmates, and practicing attentive listening to others will result in a strong participation grade.

In order to participate meaningfully in class discussion, you will need to **complete the reading(s) for each class *before coming to class.*** Expect the readings to challenge you. Many of the essays and books we will read are written for academic audiences, and will use terminology with which you may be unfamiliar. I expect you to notify me or raise questions in class if there are aspects of the reading that you do not understand. I will evaluate your engagement with the course texts through your participation in discussion and your in-class writing responses.

Because participation is integral to the success of our class, attendance is mandatory. For the purpose of this class, **“attendance” means coming to class on time and remaining in class for the duration of the class meeting.** You are allowed two unexcused absences (no questions asked). After that, each unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 5 points from your final participation grade.

In-class exercises: 15%

We will do exercises in class for credit on a weekly basis. These exercises (in-class writings, pop quizzes, small group activities) will help me assess how you are engaging the readings and exploring the course themes.

Group facilitation of discussion: 15%

Once during the quarter, you will work with a small group to facilitate discussion about the readings assigned for the day. Your group will be responsible for presenting a brief oral synthesis of the assigned text(s). You will also be responsible for developing discussion questions to pose to the class, or for developing a collaborative learning activity for the class. Your group will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: your preparedness; evidence of your collaboration; the significance of your discussion to the course; the evaluation of your presentation by your peers; and a (brief) self-evaluation.

Book review: 15%

Students will review an illness narrative (memoir, autobiography, novel, or other representation of illness) of their choice. You will be provided with specific guidelines for writing the review essay.

Final paper & Proposal: Paper (10-12 pages): 25 % & Proposal: 5% = 30%

Topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor. The paper may take a variety of forms, including (but not limited to): research essay, creative nonfiction, personal essay, interview or journalistic account, or critical essay.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations based on the impact of an impairment or disability, please contact me privately as soon as possible. I will be happy to work with the office of Disability Services to coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you want to contact the office of Disability Services, you can visit 150 Pomerene Hall or call 292-3307.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own, and/or the undocumented, unacknowledged use of quoted or paraphrased work by another person. In accordance with university policy, all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Course Texts

This course has **three required texts** and a **course packet**. The texts and the course packet are available at SBX. You may also want to look for the books online (used or new), or request them via OSU, OhioLINK, or the Columbus Metropolitan Library system.

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.

Farmer, Paul. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004.

Lindenbaum and Lock, eds. *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Daily Schedule

Note: Any modifications to the schedule will be announced in class and on WebCT
Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are included in the Course Packet

9.21 W Introduction to the course

Medical Knowledge Production

9.26 M Good and Good, "Learning Medicine': The Constructing of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School," in *Knowledge, Power and Practice*

Rhodes, "The Shape of Action: Practice in Public Psychiatry," in *Knowledge, Power and Practice*

9.28 W Kaufert and O'Neil, "Analysis of a Dialogue on Risks in Childbirth: Clinicians, Epidemiologists, and Inuit Women," in *Knowledge, Power and Practice*

10.3 M *Laqueur, "Orgasm, Generation, and the Politics of Reproductive Biology"

Medicine in Translation

10.5 W Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chapters 1 – 4

10.10 M Fadiman, Chapters 5– 9; 11 – 13

10.12 W Fadiman, Chapters 14 – 19

Theorizing Experiences of Illness

10.17 M **Group 1 Facilitates**
*Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*, Chapters 1 – 2

10.19 W Estroff, "Identity, Disability, and Schizophrenia: The Problem of Chronicity," in *Knowledge, Power and Practice*

10.24 M **Group 2 Facilitates**
*Lorde, "Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis" from *The Cancer Journals*
*Ryan, "Am I Not a Woman?' The Rhetoric of Breast Cancer Stories in African American Women's Popular Periodicals"

10.26 W **Group 3 Facilitates**
*Spade, "Resisting Medicine, Re/modeling Gender"

10.31 M **Group 4 Facilitates**
*Lavendar, *Lessons in Taxidermy* (selections)
*Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives* (selections)

11.2 W *McEntyre, "Out of Season: Illness in Adolescent Fiction"
Optional: *Kumbier, "Trauma Club: The Chronic Popularity of Illness Lit"

11.7 M **Book reviews due** (no assigned reading for today)
Class cancelled to accommodate student-teacher meetings to discuss final project plans (Meeting slots will be available on Monday & Tuesday)

Health and Social Justice

- 11.9 W **Group 5 Facilitates**
Comaroff, “The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body,” in *Knowledge, Power and Practice*
- 11.14 M **Group 6 Facilitates**
Farmer, *Pathologies of Power*, Introduction and Chapter 1
- 11.16 W Farmer, Chapters 2 and 4
- 11.21 M **Project proposal due**
Farmer, Chapters 5 - 6
- 11.23 W **Group 7 Facilitates**
*Chandler, “Death and Dying in America: The Prison Industrial Complex’s Impact on Women’s Health”
- 11.28 M **Group 8 Facilitates**
Farmer, Chapters 8 – 9
- 11.30 W Final class meeting
- 12.5 M **Final projects due**