

Introduction to Biomedicine and Culture

Professor Anne Pollock, apollock@gatech.edu

LCC2300 Spring 2014, MWF 1-2, Skiles 308

Office hours: Wednesdays 2-4, or by appointment, Skiles 360

This course provides an introduction to central cultural, including ethical, topics in biomedicine such as health care, medical practice, medical research, and the systems of cultural meaning within which ideas of health and disease circulate.

Course Objectives

- Explore how medical knowledge is created; how “illness” and “health” have been defined by doctors, patients, and publics; and the relationships between medical sciences, practices, and the social boundaries of healthcare
- Acquire a broad knowledge of significant concepts, developments, and events in the history of medicine and medical ethics
- Develop abilities to think critically and to communicate more effectively about the interactions among medicine, science, and social context

Readings

Books are available at the book store and on reserve at the library.

Required:

Anderson, Warwick, *The Collectors of Lost Souls: Turning Kuru Scientists into Whitemen*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Edson, Margaret, *Wit* [or *W;t*] Faber and Faber, 1993, 1999.

Porter, Roy, *Blood and Guts: a Short History of Medicine* Norton, 2002.

Recommended:

Aronowitz, Robert. *Making Sense of Illness*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

All other readings are available on T-Square.

Assessment:

Attendance and participation: 20 points

Active engagement during class is central to this course. Students are expected to come to class prepared, with readings and/or writing in hand, ready for discussion.

Blogs: 20 points

Before class each day for which readings are assigned – generally two per week – write an entry on your response to the readings on the blog section of T-Square. Your short comments (150-300 words) should be posted by noon, demonstrate that you have done the reading, and note comments and questions that you would like to raise in class. Each day, two students will be featured bloggers, kicking off class discussion by presenting their blogs.

Unit 1 “Making Sense of Illness” Individual Project: 20 points

This project has two components: doing an interview about an illness experience and writing up the notes (5 points) and writing a paper using course texts to analyze the interview (15 points).

Unit 2 “Medical Knowledge” Individual Project: 20 points

This project has two components: gathering and summarizing accounts of a particular piece of medical knowledge from a biomedical journal and mass media (5 points), and writing a paper analyzing the accounts of that knowledge in light of course texts (15 points).

Unit 3 “Medical Discovery in Cultural Context” Group Project: 20 points

This group project has two components: an individually-written annotated bibliography (5 points), and a group poster presentation (15 points). Each group member must also submit a self-assessment of their group work.

ADAPTS accommodation is available for students with disabilities: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>

Honor Code: In all assignments, be sure to reference and include full citations for any words or concepts that are not your own. Students are encouraged to seek help from each other on all assignments, as well as from the Comm Lab and the professor. Late assignments will be penalized two points per day.

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
UNIT 1: MAKING SENSE OF ILLNESS			
1	Jan 6 Introduction to the Course	Jan 8 Lorde, Audre. "Breast Cancer: Power Versus Prosthesis," from <i>The Cancer Journals</i> (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1980): 55-77.	Jan 10 Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Welcome to Cancer Land: A Mammogram Leads to a Cult of Pink Kitsch," <i>Harpers</i> November 2001, pp. 43-53.
2	Jan 13 Wit, pp. 1-41.	Jan 15 Wit, pp. 41-85.	Jan 17 Interview Notes Due at Noon In-Class discussion
3	Jan 20 MLK Day – No Class	Jan 22 Aronowitz, Robert. Preface and Introduction, <i>Making Sense of Illness</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): pp. ix-xxi, 1-18.	Jan 24 Frank, Arthur. "Illness as a Call for Stories," in <i>The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995): 53-74.
4	Jan 27 Pollock, Anne. "The Internal Cardiac Defibrillator." Ed. Sherry Turkle. <i>The Inner History of Devices: Technology and Self</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008: 98-111.	Jan 29 Charon, Rita. "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust," <i>JAMA</i> 286.15(2001): 1897-1902.	Jan 31 Paper 1 Due at Midnight
UNIT 2: MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE			
5	Feb 3 Skim Articles in BiDil folder Research Day: Bring Laptops	Feb 5 Fleck, Ludwik, "Some Specific Features of the Medical Way of Thinking," in <i>Cognition and Fact: Materials on Ludwik Fleck</i> , edited by Robert S. Cohen and Thomas Schnelle, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1986 [1927], pp. 39-46.	Feb 7 Gawande, Atul. "The Learning Curve: Like Everyone Else, Surgeons Need Practice. That's where you come in," <i>The New Yorker</i> , January 28, 2002.
6	Feb 10 Jain, S. Lochlann, "The Mortality Effect: Counting the Dead in the Cancer Trial," <i>Public Culture</i> 22.1 (2010): 89-117.	Feb 12 Snow Day	Feb 14 Paper 2 annotated bibliography due at midnight Guest Lecture: Marty Fink on Fat Studies

7	Feb 17 Littlefield, Melissa M., "Constructing the Organ of Deceit: The Rhetoric of fMRI and Brain Fingerprinting in Post-9/11 America," <i>Science, Technology & Human Values</i> 34 (2009): 365-392.	Feb 19 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Preface and Chapters 1-2 "Disease" and "Doctors" pp. 1-52.	Feb 21 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 3-4, "The Body" and "The Laboratory," pp. 53-98.
8	Feb 24 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 5-6 "Therapies" and "Surgery," pp. 99-134.	Feb 26 <i>Blood and Guts</i> Chapters 7-8 "The Hospital" and "Medicine in Modern Society" pp. 153-169.	Feb 28 Workshop paper rough drafts
UNIT 3: MEDICAL DISCOVERIES IN CULTURAL CONTEXT			
9	Mar 3 Paper 2 Due at Midnight	Mar 5 Intro Unit 3 <i>Form groups for final projects</i>	Mar 7 In-class research for final projects
10	Mar 10 In-class research for final projects	Mar 12 No class (Prof research trip)	Mar 14 No class (Prof research trip)
11	SPRING BREAK		
12	Mar 24 In-class group work	Mar 26 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i> Intro & Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-58.	March 28 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i> Chapters 3-4, pp. 59-116.
13	Mar 31 In-class group work Annotated Bibliographies Due at Midnight	April 2 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i> Chapters 5-7, pp. 117-184.	April 4 <i>Collectors of Lost Souls</i> Chapter 8 and Conclusion, pp. 185-234.
14	April 7 Group Work	April 9 Group Work <i>Have plan for final project poster in class</i>	April 11 Group Work
15	April 14 Present Group Projects	April 16 Present Group Projects	April 18 Present Group Projects
16	April 21 Present Group Projects	April 23 Present Group Projects	April 25 Wrap-Up Class Final poster and individual self-assessment of group work due at midnight