

Faculty In Charge Of Course:	Cheryl Erwin, JD, PhD
Participating Faculty:	Thomas Cole, PhD Rebecca Lunstroth, JD, , Samuel Karff, DHL, Alejandro Chaoul, PhD
Location:	JJL 410
Offered:	October 2008 and February 2009
Max. # Students/Period:	Minimum 5, maximum 10

Course Objective

This survey course will provide students with both a broad introduction and an in-depth understanding of the medical humanities. Students will explore the non biomedical aspects of medicine through the lens of philosophy, religion, history, literature and the arts.

Material Covered:

The content of topics covered in this course will be presented in topical format. Each bi-weekly session cover a different relevant topic in medicine using the medical humanities to explore and analyze it. Towards the end of the course time will be devoted to student presentation of their papers and/or projects.

- **Introduction to Ethics and the Philosophy of Medicine:** This core topic will explore the underlying nature of medical ethics and professionalism utilizing the history of the doctor/patient relationship. Core concepts such as ethical decision making, the philosophy of science, paternalism, autonomy, and cultural competency in the 21st century will be examined through. Students will ultimately be encouraged to understand their own decision-making models in an effort to understand how this will influence their medical practice and the relationships they forge with their patients.
- **The Doctoring Experience and the Arts** – In this section students will explore accounts of the doctoring experience as seen in literature and the arts, including film. Students will examine how the media and arts have portrayed this experience and how this role has changed throughout the generations. Furthermore, we will explore how literature and the arts influence the practice of medicine and discuss how outside influences can shape public perspectives.
- **Spirituality and Medicine** – Should I pray with my patients? Does praying impact outcomes? The vast majority of people living in the United States adhere to some type of religious practice or faith. Moreover, a growing number of people want their health care providers to acknowledge their belief systems. This session will examine empirical data that links spirituality to positive health outcomes. Students will also be taught how to take a spiritual history and begin to articulate whether they want to integrate spirituality in their medical practice.
- **History of Medicine** – This session will explore pivotal events in the history of medicine beginning with the invention of anesthesia and antibiotics, looking at the success of public health initiatives, and evaluating more recent events such as the war on cancer and the business of aging.
- **Death and Dying** - “To most people, death remains a hidden secret, as eroticized as it is feared.” (Nuland, 1994) Using Nuland’s book, *How We Die*, students will explore in detail the process of death, then will examine cultural, religious and economic models of death and dying throughout the ages.
- **Illness and Disease Through the Life Cycle** – This session will explore historically, anthropologically, and culturally, the similarities and differences between illness and disease and how each is viewed along the life cycle. Topics to be covered include reproductive technologies, the business of aging and alternative medical systems whose views differ from western medicine.
- **Health Law, Policy and Economics** – How does health legislation get promulgated and how does this impact the way in which medicine is practiced? How do certain laws hinder the practice of medicine and do others help the practice of medicine? In this section students will be given an overview of state and federal health legislation and how new policies get written and enacted. Moreover, students will gain an understanding of how legislation impacts the way medicine is practiced.
- **Clinical Ethics** – How does ethics get practiced at the bedside? What happens when a student disagrees with either the attending or resident? How do I deal with medical error? In this section these questions as well as others will be examined. Students will also have the opportunity to do a clinical evaluation and will observe an ethics committee meeting and/or consultation.

Skills Acquired:

- At the conclusion of the course students will have an understanding and appreciation for the non biomedical aspect of medicine. Through various reading and writing assignments students will also hone their research and writing skills.

Activities Of Elective

There will be significant readings and writing assignments for each class. These will be listed on the syllabus distributed before the first day of class. The reading assignments will include books and articles on the various topics. Students will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned materials. Each class will be broken in to three parts: the first part will be a didactic session or viewing of a movie; the second part will be a seminar and the third part will be an in-class writing exercise.

Scheduled Duties of Student:

Structured Time: 10 hours per week: Each week students will spend 10 hours a week in a seminar or related activities with the course director or other McGovern Center faculty.

Research Time: 20 hours per week: Students will write an original research paper or design a project with guidance from the course director on a topic in the medical humanities. Students will be expected to present their paper or project on the last day of the course.

How Is Student Evaluated:

Students will be evaluated on participation and their final paper or project. Class participation will be evaluated based on attendance and discussion contributions in class.

Who Evaluates Students:

Director and collaborating faculty