

AS.145 (MEDICINE, SCIENCE AND THE HUMANITIES)

Courses

AS.145.101. **Death and Dying in Art, Literature, and Philosophy: Introduction to Medical Humanities. 3 Credits.**

In this course, four essential aspects of the theme of death and dying will be examined: Death and Medicine; Emotional Responses to Death; Burying and Commemorating the Dead; and Conceptions of Death. Specific topics relating to each of these aspects that will be covered include illness and causes of death; prevention of death; suicide; death and grief; burial practices; mourning the dead; public commemoration of the dead; life after death; and death and rebirth. Students will explore these topics from a historical-anthropological perspective with Paul Delnero, a specialist in the history and culture of the ancient Near East (Near Eastern Studies); from a literary perspective, by reading and writing poetry relating to these subjects with the acclaimed poet James Arthur (Writing Seminars); and from a musical perspective, through direct encounters with the music and creative process of the award-winning composer, Michael Hersch (Peabody).

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.104. **Science, Medicine, Media. 3 Credits.**

Much of our understanding of science and medicine is filtered through what we casually refer to as "the media": newspapers, magazines, television shows, films, and electronic social media. But the scientific world relies on its own media to produce and circulate knowledge: from scientific journals and conferences, to agar plates and petri dishes, cloud chambers and electrophoresis gels. Medical technologies from the stethoscope to the echocardiogram likewise mediate the perception of the body in health and disease, and increasingly our own understanding and perception of our bodies and our health is mediated via screens, scans, and images – without which we can hardly imagine ourselves anymore. Students will learn theoretical tools to critically assess the technologies that mediate our knowledge of our own bodies and the broader world, as well as practical tools in media production and visual storytelling (video, podcast, website etc.) to bring these analytics to bear on our broader understandings of science and medicine.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.145.106. **Health, Science, Environment. 3 Credits.**

Environment has an inexorable effect on human health, and certain human activities have had outsized impacts on the natural world and the ability of forms of life to thrive. This course brings medical humanities, history of science, and science & technology studies into conversation with environmental humanities to ask: how have our conceptions of the natural world emerged, and how have these shaped our understandings of bodies, ecologies, and health outcomes? How do we know and measure the environment and health, and to what effects? How have human and ecological health affected environmental politics? How have writers and artists understood and depicted their environments and environmental questions? Can works of fiction shape ecological transformations? What can we learn from case studies of health and environment in Baltimore and the Chesapeake Bay as well as in global contexts? Course topics will include ecology, epigenetics, toxicity, agriculture and food, radiation, air quality, and more-than-human entanglements.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.145.107. **Visual Cultures of Medicine, Science, and Technology. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the ways in which science, technology, and medicine rely on visual techniques to produce, communicate, and represent knowledge. It brings tools from Cultural Studies, Critical Visual Studies, and Art History into conversation with the medical humanities and Science and Technology Studies (STS), exploring topics such as technologies of visualization, medical imagery, anatomical illustrations, plastic surgery, forensic science, data visualization, and aerial photography among others. Through a convergence of theory and case studies, the course investigates how race and gender play critical roles in the visual cultures of science and traces the ways in which power and expertise are (re)produced through visual representations

AS.145.201. **Clues: Unreasoning the Medical Mystery. 3 Credits.**

Foundational authors of detective fiction, including Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Pauline Hopkins, often used medical doctors and themes in their mystery plots. It's no coincidence that medicine and crime fiction share a vocabulary of clues, evidence, and diagnosis. The mystery genre was integrally tied to the rise of scientific medicine as a respected profession. Indeed, classic detective stories are practically propaganda for the scientific method, showing readers how the powerful tools of observation and inference can solve any problem. Over the course of the 20th century, not only doctors, but also psychologists, social scientists and historians adopted the authoritative stance of the detective in constructing or reconstructing facts. However, as we study Sherlock Holmes and his modern proteges, such as TV doctor Gregory House, we will analyze how "medical mystery" narratives can limit our thinking about problems and solutions in medicine. We will consider post-modern detective stories that offer alternatives to the "Holmsian" model for understanding the complex clinical realities of today.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.145.202. **Health Care Activism in Baltimore and Beyond. 3 Credits.**

National struggles over the right to health care, and over the health needs of marginalized groups, have taken distinctive forms in Baltimore City during the past century. The renowned Johns Hopkins University came to symbolize, for many residents, the power of medicine both to heal and to harm – and the need for community action. This course delves into the archives of local institutions to understand the work of activists and advocates who connected health, medicine, and social justice. We focus on specific sites, from the segregated wards of Johns Hopkins to the People's Free Medical Clinic on Greenmount Avenue, where demands for equity changed the city's health care landscape. Through interdisciplinary readings and conversations with local organizers, we consider how historical memory can serve as a creative resource for the art and politics of the present.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.203. Constructing memories: between art and science. 3 Credits.

What is a personal memory? Is it a story or a scene, as if in a film? Is there such a thing as body memory? How tight is the connection between remembering and story-telling? Scientific articles and book chapters in cognitive psychology and the neurosciences can provide some answers to such questions. Two films, "Memento" and "Inside Out" can also help us grasp the impact of major scientific discoveries of how memory works. But our discussions will depend above all on literary and biographical accounts based on the experiences of "rememberers" such as St Augustine, Proust, Woolf, Freud, as well as on cases on amnesia documented by Oliver Sacks, Antonio Damasio, and David Shenk. The latter will help us understand why our ability to engage in mental time-travel is essential to our personal and social existence. Coming out of this course, you will not only have a better comprehension of how autobiographical memory works, you'll have learned also how some of the sharpest scientific and philosophical minds of our times have tried to make sense of this mysterious human capacity.

Area: Humanities

AS.145.204. Graphic! Visualizing Medicine from Textbooks to Comics. 3 Credits.

Visuals play an important role in the history and practice of medicine, from medical textbooks to medical imaging, and from hospital signage and public health posters to comics and graphic novels. This course will examine the visual aspects of the history and practice of medicine by focusing on the rising genre of medical comics and graphic novels, known as "graphic medicine." The course will embed this examination of "graphic medicine" in a wider examination of the various uses of visuals in medicine, the complicated history of class, race and gender in those uses, and how visuals have served different functions in the history and practice of medicine, from assisting medical diagnosis to enabling new forms of medical consumerism, and from facilitating doctor-patient communication to practicing art therapy, as well as presenting visual pathographies and documenting patients' and caregivers' experiences of disease. Through an assortment of primary sources that include medical comics and graphic novels, aided by a variety of secondary sources that embed these narratives in larger issues in the history of medicine, medical anthropology, and the medical humanities, the course will aim to introduce students to some of the most important themes in the field of "graphic medicine."

Area: Humanities

AS.145.205. The Costs of Care: Writing about Illness in America. 3 Credits.

Health care can be expensive for those who receive it and those who provide it. In the United States, patients go into debt while doctors suffer from burnout and nurses rush through understaffed wards. The U.S. has the highest healthcare spending of any wealthy nation, yet suffers comparatively worse outcomes. This seminar brings together social science research with patient experiences that show the human face of the American health care debate. We read the work of scholars, poets, and medical practitioners who reflect on core questions: What should be the government's role in healthcare provision? What alternative models have people in marginalized groups developed when the system fails them? Understanding both failures and successes gives us the tools to build new paths.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.145.215. Representations of Pain and Suffering in Contemporary Culture. 3 Credits.

What does it mean to experience pain or encounter the suffering of another person in our post-truth era? This course explores the changing representation of pain and suffering in contemporary film, fiction, creative non-fiction, science and technology. Through analyses and close-readings of a variety of primary and secondary sources, we will consider the different ways twentieth- and twenty-first-century historical, cultural, and media representations have mediated pain and suffering. Such investigations allow us to understand the workings of pain in the present.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

AS.145.217. Neurofictions: History and Literature of the Mind Sciences. 3 Credits.

Neuroscience has a long way to go from mapping neural connections to a precise account of memory, emotion, and consciousness. But the limits of science have never stopped us from imagining its possible futures. Engaging two centuries of debate in the mind sciences and in western culture at large, this course looks at historical attempts to explain and control human consciousness. By placing each period's scientific texts in dialog with contemporaneous science fiction -- from Edgar Allan Poe to Ursula K. Le Guin -- we discover how theories about the brain can shape society while at the same time responding to social contexts.

Area: Humanities

AS.145.219. Science Studies and Medical Humanities: Theory and Methods. 3 Credits.

The knowledge and practices of science and medicine are not as self-evident as they may appear. When we observe, what do we see? What counts as evidence? How does evidence become fact? How do facts circulate and what are their effects? Who is included in and excluded from our common-sense notions of science, medicine, and technology? This course will introduce students to central theoretical concerns in Science and Technology Studies and the Medical Humanities, focusing on enduring problematics that animate scholars. In conjunction with examinations of theoretical bases, students will learn to evaluate the methodological tools used in different fields in the humanities to study the production and circulation of scientific knowledge and the structures of medical care and public health. This problem-centered approach will help students understand and apply key concepts and approaches in critical studies of science, technology, and medicine.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Writing Intensive

AS.145.220. Health, Medicine, Gender, and Sexuality. 3 Credits.

This course invites students to take the perspective of gender and sexuality on health and medicine. In this course, we do not see gender and sexuality as a separate domain of health. Instead, we will learn how a gender perspective is in fact crucial for critically exposing the ways in which medicine is interpenetrated by social life and by law. For example, what technologies and discourses constitute "the normal"? How is sexuality braided into disease surveillance? How do we understand the lawfare on the terrain of reproductive rights? What aspects of disease are suppressed in dominant forms of knowledge production, due to the undervaluation of gendered forms of experience? We will take cases involving HIV/AIDS; reproductive justice and rights; poverty, marginality and queer kinship; and household patterns of care.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.145.222. Bodies in Flux: Medicine, Gender, and Sexuality in the Modern Middle East. 3 Credits.

This course examines how bodies, genders, and sexualities in the modern Middle East, from the nineteenth century to the present, have been shaped and represented via changing and competing discourses. Through a variety of historical, ethnographic, sociological, media, and literary readings, the course investigates dynamic representations of bodies in flux: colonized bodies, medicalized bodies, gendered bodies, sexualized bodies, (re)productive bodies, aging bodies, and bodies in revolt. The course pays special attention to science, technology, and medicine in their interaction with cultures, laws, and religious practices. Some of the topics covered include analyzing histories of and discourses on gender, sexuality, health and disease, reproduction, genital cutting, and gender-based violence.

AS.145.303. Research in the Medical Humanities: A Practical Introduction. 3 Credits.

This seminar is designed to prepare students for an extended interdisciplinary writing project, such as an honor's thesis or an undergraduate research proposal. The first part will be devoted to establishing or consolidating skills in research, in methods, and in approaches specific to the medical humanities. Class meeting will involve different formats and types of preparation: studying examples of writing in different domains related to MSH, visits of specialists (e.g. librarians and authors), preparing a proposal to be presented in a workshop, and a well-documented capstone project outlining a proposal. You'll be asked to submit at regular intervals written results of your work in progress and you must be prepared as well to present your results orally at different important points in our unfolding semester.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.305. Lives in Medicine: Exploring the Personal Writing of Patients and Practitioners. 3 Credits.

The personal accounts of patients and practitioners offer a rich exposure to human experience in medicine. What is it like to be a patient, to be sick or to face the threats or limits that illness presents? What is it like to be a doctor or nurse in this world of illness? In this course we will read such accounts as published in book form, discuss them in a seminar setting and write about them. We will select a small number from the thousands of such publications to introduce the student to this unique genre, emphasizing reading, writing and group discussion.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.306. Home, Health, Labor, and Land: Medical Institutions in the City. 3 Credits.

The twentieth-century decline of manufacturing in American cities coincided with the rise of powerful healthcare institutions as major employers and drivers of urban development. This course explores the politics of race, class, and health as they pivoted around this major economic transformation. We examine the growth of Johns Hopkins in East Baltimore and its displacement of residents, met by the organizing efforts of workers and community members. Core texts illuminate the structural forces underpinning urban development and inequality across many post-industrial cities, as expanding healthcare infrastructure paradoxically coincided with worse health outcomes. Class time includes seminar-style discussion, archival research, and visits to local sites.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.145.310. A Noble Profession? Doctors as Social and Political Actors. 3 Credits.

Medicine is a profession known for its ethical code of conduct—a code that is imbued with an ethos of neutrality and impartiality. However, real life shows us that doctors do not occupy a special moral class, but are rather members of social and political communities, citizens with grievances, political affiliations and loyalties, and are often subject to many social and political influences around them. This course will examine how doctors' political choices shape their medical practice, and how their medical practice—especially their temporally and spatially privileged access to bodily suffering and loss of life—shapes in turn their political choices. It investigates the roles of doctors, not simply as technical experts, but as social and political actors informed by technical expertise among other factors. Relying on histories, ethnographies, memoirs and even works of fiction, this course will explore narratives of doctors' social and political engagement in the US and around the globe.
Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.145.312. Narratives of Bias in Healthcare. 3 Credits.

What are the ways in which bias informs and infiltrates healthcare? What is the relationship of bias with power and injustice, across medical training, patient care, and the production of medical knowledge? This course will grapple with these questions through interpretation and discussion of works of visual art, fiction, non-fiction, and popular media that center the voices of patients and healthcare providers. We will tie a direct link to healthcare systems and patient outcomes by applying a similar critical and interpretive lens to primary sources from scientific and medical literature. Combining these conversations with discussions of healthcare practices, we will explore a broad survey of themes, including cognitive biases and decision-making in patient care, epistemic injustice, bias in artificial intelligence, and bias in medical language and the electronic health record. Students will be introduced to identifying and navigating narratives of bias in healthcare, with an emphasis on applying critical thinking to the systems that propagate and dismantle bias in healthcare.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.320. British Visual Culture and Medicine. 3 Credits.

In this class, we will reflect on the ethical, gendered, and societal implications of the creation and exchange of British medical imagery. What purpose did this visual culture serve for artists, practitioners, and patients? How are we meant to look at these images today, outside of their original contexts? We will examine a range of images and objects from Britain, expanding our definition of "art" and interrogating the colonialist roots and origins of artistic and medical material. Our objects of study will extend from oil paintings of renowned physicians to diagnostic photographs of unnamed patients and from prints of gynecological dissection to satirical cartoons of "quack" doctors. We will look not only at how practitioners have had their patients depicted, but also at how those with illnesses or with disabilities have taken back their bodily power to portray themselves. Questions of portraiture, likeness, and consent will be constant themes throughout this course, guiding students' development of ways of thinking critically and writing thoughtfully about medical images.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.321. Music as Medicine. 3 Credits.

Music and medicine have long been understood as deeply intertwined technologies capable of reshaping human bodies and environments. We will explore some of the visible (as well as forgotten) connections between these domains, and ponder some questions along the way: How was music (and dancing) used to cure spider bites and other maladies? What is the best music to accompany the medicinal use of hallucinogenic drugs? How is the use of lullabies revolutionizing pre- and postnatal care for mothers and infants? What can we learn from the common origins of medical vs musical instruments? "Music as Medicine" will feature diverse perspectives of guest musicians and practitioners and offer hands-on engagement with archival sources and material objects.

Area: Humanities
Writing Intensive

AS.145.350. MSH Research Capstone. 3 Credits.

The Research Capstone seminar prepares students to undertake original extended research in the medical humanities and science studies. The course will help students synthesize the interdisciplinary knowledge upon which the Medicine, Science, and the Humanities (MSH) major is built. Students will have the opportunity to form research topics, devise and execute research plans, write a research grant application, and share their work with the class. The course is aimed at MSH juniors seeking to create Honors projects, though the course is open to any student wishing to learn or enhance research skills.

AS.145.360. Incarceration and Health: Critical Perspectives. 3 Credits.

Can care exist in a space of punishment? Institutions of incarceration are inherently spaces of violence and social control and, in the U.S.'s current context of mass incarceration, racial oppression. Yet prisons, jails, and detention centers are required to provide individuals access to health care. How can we understand this convergence of care for the body and psyche with multiple forms of carceral violence? This course will examine modes of health and health care inside institutions of incarceration as they are situated within broader socio-political contexts that shape society's over-reliance on incarceration as a means of social and racialized control. Drawing on history, anthropology, sociology, legal theory, critical race studies, and public health, the course will explore the everyday realities inside institutions of incarceration as they relate to suffering and care and how those are connected to policies and processes of subjugation outside the institutions' walls. Case studies for examining these relationships include pregnancy, COVID-19, addiction, and mental illness behind bars. Students will engage with concepts such as disciplinary power, biopower, carceral and anti-carceral feminism, theories of care, medical abolition, and dual loyalty. While the course will primarily focus on the U.S. context, we will also draw comparisons to non-U.S. settings. Throughout the course we will seek to understand how institutions of incarceration are not, as popularly understood, isolated places "elsewhere," but implicitly porous with so-called free society—and therefore as exemplars for understanding the connections among health, inequality, and state institutions.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences
Writing Intensive

AS.145.502. Medicine, Science & the Humanities Internship. 1 Credit.

An internship in Medicine, Science & the Humanities approved by the director of the program.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration, Online Forms.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.145.510. Medicine, Science & the Humanities Independent Research. 1 - 3 Credits.

This course is for students in the Medicine, Science & the Humanities doing independent research. Course can be taken up to 3 credits with approval from the director.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration, Online Forms.

AS.145.511. Medicine, Science & the Humanities Independent Research. 1 - 3 Credits.

This class is for the MSH majors completing their research project. Instructor approval required.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration, Online Forms.

Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS.145.516. MSH Honors Thesis. 1 - 3 Credits.

This class is for the MSH majors completing their honors thesis. Instructor approval required. This course can be taken for up to 3 credits with instructor approval.

Prerequisite(s): You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration, Online Forms.