

## Syllabus for Emory University School of Medicine Virtual Medical Humanities Course

Welcome to Introduction to the Medical Humanities. This course will use a variety of media (art, film, literature, poetry) and humanities disciplines (history of medicine, ethics, anthropology, literature and medicine) to examine the role of the physician and the impact of disease on humanity and health. In addition, students will see how medical humanities can enhance their observation skills, build teamwork, and promote a deeper understanding of their role as physicians-to-be. Students will meet virtually to discuss films and readings and other works of art and will share their own creative work.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Explore the image of the doctor, the role of illness, and the social determinants of health from a variety of humanistic perspectives.
2. Apply reflective writing tools to respond the physician's role in health and disease over time
3. Improve their observational abilities through close looking at works of art.
4. Build verbal and interpersonal communication skills through observation, description, and analysis of works of film, narrative, and the visual arts.
- 5.

### Course Details

- We will meet Synchronously via Zoom on Wednesdays from 1-4p, and Fridays from 1-2p. Zoom links will be posted on each Week's page.
- Each week in advance of the Wednesday Seminar, you will be asked to:
  - Watch 2 movies and read the assigned reading and come prepared to discuss these.
  - Write a brief response to the week's movies and readings, due each Tuesday before the Wednesday seminar. These responses will take a variety of forms and will be shared in class.
  - Complete a PhotoVoice assignment. You will upload your photo and a narrative description, due each Tuesday before the Wednesday seminar.
- During Friday's Seminar, we will engage in a live Museum Based Education session. No preparation is required.
- All students will complete a final creative project to be due on the final Friday at 1p.

### Assessment/Grading

This course will be graded pass/fail. In order to pass, students should:

- Complete all written assignments
- Attend and participate in all synchronous Zoom sessions or, if absent, complete the appropriate make-up assignment
- Complete the final creative project.

**A Note about Brave Spaces:** A brave space "allows students to express themselves, challenge one another in a positive way, and learn from one another" (amplifier.org). During this course, we will address many challenging topics. You are expected to engage with these topics; if any of

them evoke strong feelings for you, please feel free to consult with your instructors to discuss how we can best support you throughout the course.

### **Course Details by Week**

#### **Week 1: Orientation/The Role of the Healer**

During this week's VTS exercise, we will view [The Gross Clinic by Thomas Eakins \(1875\)](#) and [La Curandera by Carmen Lomas Garza \(1989\)](#) and use these discussion questions:

1. How do these works relate to your medical training so far?
2. What do these two works have to say about what it means to be a healer?

#### **Week 2: The Portrayal of Illness**

During this week's VTS exercise, we will view [Hephaestus by Sally Mann \(2008\)](#) and [The Suicide of Dorothy Hale by Frida Khalo \(1938\)](#) and use these discussion questions:

1. What do these works say about how patients view their health?
2. How can we provide a space for patients to share their innermost thoughts with us?

#### **Week 3: Social Determinants of Health**

During this week's VTS exercise, we will view [Painting for My Dad by Noah Davis \(2011\)](#) and use the discussion question "what does this say about some aspect of our lives currently?"

Each student will then select a contemporary work from the Harvard Art Museums online gallery that connects to a value they hold dear and share the personal meaning of the work to them with the class.

#### **Week 4: Caring for Our Patients and Ourselves through Art**

For the final week, each student will prepare a creative work to share with fellow students and faculty. Students may use one or more of a variety of elements, such as visual art (sculpture, drawings, paintings, photography, etc.), narrative writing, collage/collection of objects, music, or dance/movement to reflect on the three major themes of the course and connect them back to their professional identity.

You must include an object label for your work, with the following elements:

- Artist (that's you!)
- Title
- Date
- 1-page description of the piece that explains the work and its connections to the course in detail