Medicine & The Body: Exploring Narrative Mysteries; PE.401.030.15
Iro Filippaki, PhD & Lakshmi Krishnan, MD, PhD
9:30 am – 4:00 pm
June 24-28, 2019 (MTWRF)

Course Description: The medical encounter is often characterized by language and actions taking place in a detective style. People relate their health issues to others through personal narratives and stories, through which medical and narrative meaning is constructed. These stories are the common language of medicine. The mysterious and sometimes mystical depiction of human health, suffering, and death in narrative forms the basis of physical, emotional, and psychical identity, and is directly related to forms of power. Who is the explorer and who becomes an object of investigation? What are the ways of narrativizing mysteries in medicine?

This course will explore narratives and storytelling in medicine in centering on the concept of mystery through many forms including patient narratives, fiction written by physicians, medical case reports, and oral traditions as well as themes of discovery, adventure, confession, joy, grief, and loss. Students will work on various types of media and visual representations such as art and film.

Assessment: Grades will be on a pass/fail basis. There will be a 20 minute group presentation worth 50% of the grade during the second week. Class participation and discussion will be worth 50% of the grade.

Expectations & Framework: The general outline of the course will encompass reading and lively discussions in the morning sessions, with a break for lunch followed by afternoon activities including further discussion, breakout small group activities and presentations, and reflective writing. Class participation in discussions and reflective thinking are the most important aspects.

Required Texts: Most of our readings are short stories, essays, or excerpts, and will be provided on the Blackboard course reserves. You will also have access to the Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries on the Homewood Campus. We encourage you to make use of these additional resources for the group presentations, and we are happy to provide recommendations.

Key Questions & Learning Objectives

- To give an overview of the field of ‘literature and medicine’ and narrative medicine.
- To develop learning and interest in narrative and social theories through the study of the core concept of ‘mystery’.
To explore and evaluate the clinical and social connections between mystery and medicine and to understand the role such narratives perform for patients, family members, physicians, writers, artists, historians, academics, legal scholars, and policy makers.

To enhance reflective capacity and powers of written and oral expression and argument and develop skills in critical analysis and close reading.

Academic Ethics Statement

The strength of the University depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the Assistant Dean of Summer & Intersession. If needed the Assistant Dean of Summer & Intersession programs will loop in the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and/or the Chairperson of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/undergrad-students/student-life-policies/#UAEB for complete information.

Statements on Accommodations

“If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu. Students that require an accommodation must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. The office website is http://web.jhu.edu/disabilities/index.html

If you believe you need other accommodations for assignments or examinations, please contact the course instructor ahead of time to discuss the matter privately.

Students who heed the advice of health professionals to stay home or in the residence hall due to illness and thus miss class will be accommodated. Students who must miss a class or an examination because of a religious holiday must inform the instructor as early in the semester as possible in order to make up any work that is missed.

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Johns Hopkins University is a community committed to sharing values of diversity and inclusion in order to achieve and sustain excellence. We believe excellence is best promoted by being a diverse group of students, faculty and staff who are committed to creating a climate of mutual respect that is supportive of one another’s success. Through its curricula and clinical experiences, the University purposefully supports this goal of diversity, and in particular, works towards an outcome of best serving the needs of students. Faculty and candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of diversity as it relates to planning, instruction, management, and assessment.
Cancelation of Class

Due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, lecture and/or discussion session may be canceled. If JHU has canceled classes on the Homewood campus during the course meeting time, then class will be canceled. Please refer to JHU resources for emergency notifications at http://esgwebproxy.johnshopkins.edu/notice/ and 410-516-7781 and 1-800-548-9004. If class is canceled by the instructor for any reason, we will notify you by email as soon as possible.

In Case of Emergency

- In case of medical emergency, dial 911
- In case of fire, pull alarm, then dial 911
- Homewood Campus Safety & Security, Emergency 410-516-7777,
- Information and Walking Escorts 410-516-4600, Email Safety.and.Security@jhu.edu

Required Sign Up:

Hopkins Emergency Alert (JHEA) system sends a text message to the cell phones of those who have subscribed to the service. If you are not yet a JHEA subscriber, you can sign up on the https://my.johnshopkins.edu/ portal. After signing in with your JHED ID, go to the “My JHED” tab then update your emergency alert information. Remember to click “Save” when you are done. Please be sure to sign up to all campus location that your course will be held.

Statement on Classroom Civility

Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others’ behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, or demeaning. The instructor has primary responsibility for and control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity.

Instructor’s responsibilities:
- Start and end class on time
- Treat all students with courtesy and respect.
- Be open to constructive input from students in the course.
- Ensure that opportunities to participate are enjoyed equally by all students in the course.

Your responsibilities:
- Come to class on time, and refrain from packing up belongings before class ends.
- Turn off all electronic devices that might create a disruption in class.
- Be quiet and give full respectful attention while either instructor or another student is speaking.
- When speaking, use courteous, respectful language and keep comments and questions relevant to the topic at hand.
Monday: The Mysterious Body

Introduction to Narrative Medicine, the importance of mystery and detection
Introduction to argumentation and critical analysis

Sources & Texts
- “House, M.D.” (TV series)
- “Face of Stone” by William Carlos Williams

Tuesday: The Patient Body

Introduction to Bioethics through mystery narratives
Significance of the patient body to understanding medicine, medical stories, and society

Sources & Texts
- “The Use of Force” by William Carlos Williams
- “A Dreary Story: From the Notebooks of an Old Man” by Anton Chekhov
- Selected poems from Patient by Bettina Judd

Wednesday: The Gendered Body

Introduction to gender and its relation to medicine and sociopolitical concepts
Mysterious illnesses

Sources & Texts
- “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- White Matter by Janet Sternberg

Thursday: The Racialized Body

Investigating medicine’s role in constructing race in America
Mystery as a theme used by writers to imaginatively explore race, gender, and medical investigation

Sources & Texts
- Medical Apartheid by Harriet Washington
- “Tale of the Ragged Mountain” by Edgar Allan Poe
- Beloved by Toni Morrison (film)

Friday: The Foreign Body
How mystery has historically relied on constructions of the foreign body
Exploring global narratives of illness and their consequences for policy
Guest Speaker: Alexandre White, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology, JHU

Sources & Texts

• “The Speckled Band” by Arthur Conan Doyle

Disclaimer

The syllabus and/or lecture schedule are subject to change.