“Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.”

Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the field of medical ethics using the popular genre television shows set in hospitals as a jumping off point for discussion. The course examines these shows to explore the constructions of doctors and medicine as well as ethical guidelines in the practice of medicine. Using the tools of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, the course investigates the real life practices of doctors and the U.S. health care system. What ethical and professional guidelines do, don't or should doctors follow? For example, the outrageous practices of Dr. Gregory House in the now ended popular show House M. D., show the strengths and limitations of strict bureaucratic guidelines that can sometimes get in the way of diagnosis and treatment. Using television’s doctors this course debates some of the key issues in medical ethics to explore the need for sound ethical principles in the practice of medicine as well as contemporary debates in the field. Some of the issues explored include: the politics of health care including the affordable care act, medicalization of childbirth, doctor/patient confidentiality, racial categories in medicine, the binary sex/gender system, disability, genetic testing (of embryos and adults), abortion, organ transplant, vaccination and more.

II. TEXTS

There is no text book for the course.
All the course readings (or links to readings) are available on Moodle.
MOODLE: We will use Moodle throughout the course. Surprise extra credit assignments, news and information will be posted on Moodle. Once you register for the course, you will automatically be added to the course on Moodle. Use your OIT username and password to sign into the course. Please contact OIT if you have any problems.

Readings are available online on Moodle (organized by week)
Web Articles: URLs are on the syllabus. All Web Articles can also be accessed through Moodle

Medical Ethics in the News! We will email and post on Moodle news stories that pertain to the themes of the class. In addition, you are also required to post articles on the discussion board.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class involves television clips, course readings as well as systematic debate and dialogue around medical ethics. It is essential that you complete the readings and reflect upon them before coming to class, and be prepared to contribute to the discussion. Every class will focus on the readings assigned for that class as stated in the syllabus. Your attendance and participation are required for the entire session of each class meeting. The format of the class will be primarily a group discussion focused on the themes of the readings. The issues we will be discussing this semester have both academic and personal implications. Throughout the course, we encourage spirited and respectful debate. In order to grapple with this material it is vital that you read the assignments carefully and on time, come to class with questions, opinions, and analyses (agreements and disagreements) -- in other words be prepared to participate in an intellectual debate. Study questions will be distributed regularly to guide your preparation. One educational goal is to help you develop arguments. Throughout the semester we will work to develop arguments and ethical positions in class discussions and written work – you should be able to take a position and use evidence to make a strong case in support of your argument.

GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION: During the semester, we will discuss many issues that deal with the complexities of medical ethics. Sometimes, these debates may get heated. In general, we ask that you approach the discussions with openness, curiosity, and respect. Listen--don't speak for others--don't assume a speaker represents an entire group--practice mutual respect. We hope we can create a climate of engaged and intellectual debate without personal attacks.

ATTENDANCE: Your attendance & participation is required for the entire session of each class. More than 3 unexcused absences will reduce your grade by at least one letter grade.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS: In your writing for this class, you will be asked to respond to the issues and topics we are studying. We want BOTH your opinion and your analysis based on the readings and the class discussions:

- **One Analytic Paper (15%)**: Pick any of the “Medical Ethics in the News” articles posted on Moodle and analyze the article using class readings and discussion. Pick a topic we have already covered. The paper should be 5 pages long (double spaced, standard margins). You must refer to course readings in this paper. Details in class and posted on Moodle. Due March 10.
Final Project (25%): A final project, 8-10 pages (details in class and Moodle) is due on April 23. The project will require you to do analytic work focusing on the material you have read for this course, rather than doing library research on topics not addressed in class. The paper is due in class on April 23. The paper will count for 20% of your grade and the evaluation 10% of your grade. A topic and brief abstract are due on April 7.

Peer Evaluation (10%): You will exchange your final project paper with someone else in the class and write a 2 page critical reflection on the paper. The original paper and your evaluation of the paper are due in class on April 28.

Discussant and Discussant Essay (10%): Once during the semester, each of you will serve as a discussant for the material that week. Discussant should read class readings PLUS supplemental readings for that week. Each of you must submit a 3 page essay – a summary of all the readings assigned for that day (due in class). The week before, you will come up with a set of questions to help organize the class discussion and you will help lead the class discussion (with others) that week. You should each post your questions on MOODLE by 5 p.m on the Thursday before the discussion. Do meet as a group with the instructors to plan class discussion. Consult the instructors if you have any questions.

In-Class Writing (10%): We will periodically have brief in class writing assignments based on the readings assigned for the class and the class discussion. Your 2 lowest scores will be dropped.

Class Participation (20%): Class participation (quality not quantity!) counts for 20% of your grade. Participation includes discussions in small and large groups and all class activities.

Medical Ethics in the News (10%): Three times during the semester, you are required to post a story from the news connecting the world outside the classroom to the course materials during that week on Moodle. The post can be in the form of the following: a short personal experience, a video, a photograph, an article from a magazine or newspaper, a news event, an advertisement, or even a description of an artifact that you want to bring into the discussion. Include a brief explanation/comment. Do at least one posting and two responses prior to spring break. Each of these posts counts for 2% of your final grade. You should respond to someone else’s posting at least 4 times during the semester; each of your postings counts for 1% of your final grade. Details on Moodle.

Extra Credit: Throughout the semester, we will post events in the five colleges relating to the concepts and ideas of the course. You can attend an event, write a 2 page summary for a 2% extra credit. The summary must be turned in within one week of the event. You can earn up to 6% in extra credits for the semester.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY STATEMENT: The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS) or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH), please notify us within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. Accommodations will not be made after the fact. For more information, please contact Disability Services at: http://www.umass.edu/disability/
STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC HONESTY: The course will strictly follow the university policy on Academic Honesty: See the University Academic Honesty Policy: http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

Summary of Final Grade Computation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Class Writing</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytic Paper (due March 10)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussant Essay and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project (Abstract, April 7, paper April 23)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluation (due April 28)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle Discussion Board Postings</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
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IV. COURSE SCHEDULE

Week I: Setting the Stage – Feminism, Medicine, and Television

January 27: Introductions & a discussion of medicine and television over time


Week II: Social Construction of Medicine

February 3: Social Location - Why Race/Gender/Class/Sexuality Matters

- Video: In Sickness and in Wealth

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:

- "A Renewed Call to 'Do No Harm’", Johns Hopkins Newsletter October 2011
Week III: Normative, Normal and Normality

February 10: What is Normal?

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:

Week IV: Re-Constructions of the Body

February 18: The Limits of a Binary Sex/Gender/Sexuality System
- Video: 1/2000
- Video: Diagnosing Difference

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:
- The Ethics of Breast Implants: http://ethicist.www50.a2hosting.com/?p=327
- Gynecomastia: http://www.gynecomastia.org/
Week V: Race Based Medicine

February 24: The category of “race” in medicine

- **Film Clips:** Miss Evers’ Boys

**Supplemental Readings for Discussants:**


Week VI: Doctor/Patient Relationship: Confidentiality/Informed Consent/Disclosure

March 3: The Doctor/Patient Relationship

**Guest Speaker:** Tina Furcolo, O.D, Physician, Family Practice, Valley Medical Group, Amherst


**Supplemental Readings for Discussants:**

Week VII: Abortion/Reproductive; Genetics/Eugenics

March 10: The Morality and Politics of Abortion

ANALYTIC PAPER DUE

- "Case Presentation: Savior Sibling" In Ronald Munson’s Intervention and Reflection: Basic Issues in Medical Ethics, 8th edition, 2008: 389-390

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:
- David King, “Why We Should Not Permit Embryos to be Selected as Tissue Donors,” In Bioethics: An Anthology, Helga Huhse and Peter Singer eds., Blackwell Philosophy Anthologies, 2nd ed, 2006, 158-161.

🔐 TUESDAY, MARCH 17 – MARCH 21 – SPRING BREAK ☠️

Week VIII: Medical Interventions on the Body

Tuesday, March 24: (Monday Schedule) Medicalization of Childbirth

- Video: The Business of Being Born

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:
Week IX: Genetic Testing

*March 31: Preimplantation and Adult Genetic Testing*

*Supplemental Readings for Discussants:*

Week X: Epidemic/Contagion/Public Health/Vaccines

*April 7: The Politics of Infections*

**ABSTRACT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE**

**Guest Speaker:** Kathleen M. McGraw, MD, FHM, Chief Medical Officer, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital


**Supplemental Readings for Discussants:**
Week XI: Organs and Transplantation

April 14: Organ Transplants


Supplemental Readings for Discussants:

Week XII: Politics of HealthCare

April 23 (Monday Schedule):
FINAL PROJECT PAPER DUE
Guest: Dr. Jonathan S. Klate, Licensed Acupuncturist; practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine

- Issues around the Affordable Care Act (TBA – we’ll update readings for this)

Supplemental Readings for Discussants:

Week XIII: Wrap Up and Conclusion

April 28: Conclusion and Summary
FINAL PAPER & PEER EVALUATIONS DUE