

Spring 2021

HSS 403-458: Literature and Medicine

Doris Fleischer

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HSS 403 - Senior Seminar LITERATURE AND MEDICINE HSS 403458 E-Learning
(Spring 2021)

Instructor: Doris Zames Fleischer, Ph.D.

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Personal phone number: 718-615-0350 – Do not hesitate to phone me or email me if you have any questions or concerns. My intention is to respond to all students, so if you do not receive a response, try again.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: [HUM 102](#) with a grade of C or higher, and 6 credits at the 300-level History and Humanities GER with a grade of C or higher; 3 credits at the 300-level may be taken concurrently as a co-requisite. The capstone seminars allow students the opportunity to work closely with an instructor in a specific area of the instructor's expertise. Students are required to bring together interests and skills developed in previous courses. Students make in-depth oral and written presentations. A list of capstone seminars is published each semester in the course registration bulletin.

This course examines the relationship between literature and medicine by focusing on important literary works, including fiction, plays, poetry, and non-fiction. These works reveal how medical issues underlie many of the vital questions of our age. Among the subjects considered are the conflict in the medical profession between achieving wealth and fame and maintaining one's courage and integrity; urgent public health questions; the struggles of the medical researcher; the influence of the marketplace on medicine; medicine as art as well as science; the daily realities of a family doctor's life; the impact of politics on medical/health care decisions; disability issues; eugenics and euthanasia; physician-assisted suicide; and the role of the "gadfly" as initiator of changes in medical/healthcare policy.

ASSIGNED TEXTS: ALL ARE REQUIRED

1. William Carlos Williams, *The Doctor Stories*[Selections]. New Directions (1984). ISBN:0-8112-0926-1. [Selections]
2. Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*[Selections]. Harper & Row (Perennial edition) (1987). ISBN: 0-06-097079-0. [Selections]
3. Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith*. Signet Classic (1998). ISBN: 0-451-52691-0.
4. Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*[Selections]. Basic Books (2000). ISBN: 0-465-04905-2.

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5. Doris Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames, *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation*(UPDATED EDITION) [Selections]. TempleUniversity Press (2011). ISBN: 978-1-4399-0744-3.
6. Dale Wasserman's play *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*(based on Ken Kesey's novel). Samuel French, Inc. (1970). ISBN: 10-05736134335.
7. Margaret Edson, *Wit: A Play*. Faber & Faber (1999). ISBN: 10-0571198775.
8. Arthur Miller's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. Penguin (1997). ISBN: 0-14-048140-0.

FINAL GRADES WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FORMULA:

Essay #1 on W.C Williams and Oliver Sacks: 14 points

Essay #2 on Sinclair Lewis and Presentation by Dr. David Himmelstein at NJIT's
Technology and Society Forum: 14 points

Essay #3 on Robert Jay Lifton and Fleischer/Zames: 16 points

Essay #4 – Research Essay: 24 points

Essay #5 on Dale Wasserman, Margaret Edson, and Henrik Ibsen: 16 points

Required Blogs (Submitted to Canvas Announcement site): 16 points

ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE REQUIRED IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE
COURSE.

GENERAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE AN ACTIVE ACCOUNT FOR CANVAS IN ORDER TO BE PROPERLY REGISTERED FOR THIS COURSE. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL EMAIL MESSAGES SENT THROUGH CANVAS OR REGULAR EMAIL, AS WELL AS INFORMATION APPEARING ON THE CANVAS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ASSIGNMENT SITES.

2. STUDENTS SHOULD SECURE ALL OF THE REQUIRED TEXTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE BOOKSTORE WILL NOT HAVE THEM AVAILABLE SHORTLY AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER.
3. IF STUDENTS HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, THEY SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME BY EMAIL, PHONE (SEE ABOVE FOR MY PERSONAL PHONE NUMBER).
4. ANY PLAGIARISM (PRESENTING ANOTHER'S WRITING AS YOUR OWN) WILL BE REFERRED TO THE DEAN FOR FURTHER ACTION. BE VERY CAREFUL TO DO YOUR OWN WORK. THE UNIVERSITY HAS A CLEAR POLICY ON PLAGIARISM. "A STUDENT WHO FAILS A COURSE DUE TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS WILL BE ASSIGNED A GRADE OF 'XF' IN THAT COURSE AND BE PLACED ON PROBATION FOR A PERIOD TO BE DETERMINED BY THE SANCTIONING AUTHORITY."

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: 1) BLOGS (Discussion Post): 16 POINTS On the dates indicated in the Syllabus, students are required to post on the Announcements Site, IN ONE POST, substantive comments about the week's readings and research. Also, in the same Forum posting, students may comment on other student posts. Students will be provided with questions (on the Canvas Discussion Site) to stimulate their thinking with respect to required Discussion posts to be submitted on the Canvas Discussion site) and Essays (to be submitted to the Canvas Assignment Site). Students are expected to be aware of the questions sent to the Canvas Discussion Site, the posts of other students, as well as my responses to such posts. Students are *not* required to respond in writing to all questions on the Canvas Discussion site. Students should choose the question or questions that will result in their moving the class discussion along effectively. This task is equivalent to a student raising his or her hand in class. Students will not receive grades for their responses, but those who participate regularly and effectively will do significantly better than those who do not.

2) ESSAYS: 84 POINTS Students are required to submit to the Assignment Site, on the dates noted below, analytic essays in response to the indicated topics based on the assigned reading for that essay. Each essay must have the student's name, topic for the essay (which is next to the due date for the essay), number of the essay (#1, #2, etc.), and date of submission, clearly indicated. If students use ideas or words drawn from a source, that source must be cited. In other words, all essays must be fully documented according to Modern Language Association (MLA) parenthetical style. A Works Cited list, following MLA style, must also be included. Both paraphrases and direct quotes are to be cited following MLA documentation specifications. The link to

MLA specifications is the following: <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/675/01/>
(Links to an external site.)

[\(Links to an external site.\)](#)

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STUDENTS SHOULD NOTE THE FOLLOWING: IN ALL ESSAYS, students should briefly integrate a documented reference to at least one relevant, reliable, and retrievable source other than the assigned sources. That source should relate to an historical or current relevant issue. Illustrations of current relevant issues include the following: current medical education and treatment practices, role of money, government, and politics in the delivery of medical services and medical research, current attitudes toward euthanasia, other genocides (following the Nazi genocide), current disability policies, and recent “whistle blowers” on medical/pharmaceutical practices. For the Research Essay, students must briefly integrate at least five related, reliable, and retrievable sources. For assistance with research, students are advised to consult the NJIT Research Librarian: davida.scharf@njit.edu.

Although peer-reviewed sources are preferred, students may include also references to books, periodicals, newspapers, documentary films, videos, websites, as well as other reputable Internet sources that contain the names of the authors. Although it may be used for your own edification, do not use "Wikipedia" as a source. Be especially careful of online sources. Be sure that such sources are reliable and retrievable. Examples of legitimate online sources are Google Scholar, *New York Times*, and WebMd. Peer-reviewed sources are preferable. A peer-reviewed source has been subject to a “blind” review by other experts in the field to determine if the manuscript is worthy of publication. Since the material is anonymously reviewed prior to acceptance for publication, peer-reviewed publications are believed to be the most reliable sources of information. Examples of scholarly, peer-reviewed journals include *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *The Lancet*, *Human Communication Research*, *The Academy of Management Review*, and *The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Relevant NJIT Library Data Bases include the following: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Omnifile, Lexis-Nexis, and Medline. Cite your source(s) in the body of your essay, as well as in your "Works Cited" list. For help finding sources, contact the NJIT Research Librarian: davida.scharf@njit.edu.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS: PLEASE NOTE THAT ESSAYS ARE DUE BY 11:50 PM ON THE DATES LISTED BELOW.

THE ROLE OF THE PHYSICIAN/RESEARCHER

1/25: Read in W.C. Williams, *The Doctor Stories*, the following: "Introduction," vii-xv; "Mind and Body," (p. 13); "The Girl With a Pimple Face," (p. 42); "The Use of Force," (p. 56); "A Night in June," (p.61); "Jean Beicke," (p. 69); "The Paid Nurse," (p. 92); "Ancient Gentility," (p. 99); "The Practice," (p. 119); "Poems,"(pp. 127-132.); "Afterword" (p.133). Post your analytic comments on this reading on the Announcements Site by the indicated date. (SUBMIT YOUR DISCUSSION POST UNDER MY QUESTIONS. DO NOT OPEN A NEW TOPIC.)

2/1: Read in Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat," (p. 8); "The Lost Mariner," (p. 23); "The Disembodied Lady," (p. 43); "Hands," (p. 59); "On the Level," (p. 71); "Witty Ticky Ray," (p. 92); "Cupid's Disease," (p. 102); "Reminiscence," (p. 132); "A Passage to India," (p. 153); "The Dog Beneath the Skin," (p. 156); "Murder," (p. 161); all stories in "The World of the Simple," (pp. 178-233). Post your analytic comments on the Discussion site by the indicated date.

2/8: Write a well-organized Essay #1 of approximately 800 words (submitted to the Canvas Assignment Site), that is responsive to the following question: How is the doctor/patient relationship reflected in the stories and poems of William Carlos Williams (or the "Afterword" by William Eric Williams or the "Introduction" by Robert Coles), as well as the clinical tales by Oliver Sacks? Be sure to make some reference to at least five works in each of these volumes (ten works in total). For W.C. Williams, be sure to include at least one poem, and for Sacks, choose at least one work from each of the four sections of his book.

2/15: Read S. Lewis, Arrowsmith, Chapters 1-23. Post your analytic comments on these chapters on the Discussion Site by the indicated date.

2/22: Read Arrowsmith, chapters 24-40. Post your analytic comments on these chapters on the Discussion Site by the indicated date.

3/1: Write a well-organized Essay #2 of approximately 800 words (submitted to the Assignment Site), which is responsive to the following questions: How does Arrowsmith reveal the increasing commercialism of medical practice and research? How does the

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Lecture by Dr. David Himmelstein (Harvard Medical School), presented at the November 7, 2007 NJIT Technology/Society Forum, illuminate the way in which such commercialism continues to affect medical care and research. Students should mention briefly how the 2010 Affordable Care Act deals with the issues to which Dr. Himmelstein refers.}

II—CONTRASTS IN HEALTH CARE/MEDICAL POLICY IN A TOTALITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC STATE: For Essay due on November 16, list chapters by titles and pages in Works Cited list.

3/7: Read R. J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors*, pp. xi-xiii; 3-102; 134-213. Post your analytic comments on the Discussion Site no later than the indicated date.

3/13: Read R. J. Lifton , pp.214-302; 418-504. Post your analytic comments on the Discussion Site no later than the indicated date.

3/24: Read D. Fleischer & F. Zames, *The Disability Rights Movement* (UPDATED EDITION) Personal Notes (xiii-xiv), Prefaces (xv-xxi), Chapters 1, 6, and 9. Post your analytic comments on the Discussion Site by the indicated date.

3/27: Submit topic for Research Project. Choose a topic in which you explore an issue related to medical education, practice, research, policy, etc. that emanates from the required readings for this course. Students should also indicate whom they have chosen to interview (and his or her credentials) as one of the five required sources for this Research Project. (See 4/19 for further details regarding the Research Project.) Students will be provided with suggested questions for their Interviews with Health Care Professionals, which they may use as they deem appropriate.

3/29: Read D. Fleischer & F. Zames, Chapters 10, 12, and 13. Post your analytic comments on the Announcements Site by the indicated date.

4/5: In an Essay of approximately 1,000 words, answer the following question: How do *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation* (by Doris Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames) and *The Nazi Doctors* (by Robert Jay Lifton) make the following statement starkly clear: While grievances regarding medical issues can be addressed in a democratic society, no such avenue is available in a genocidal, totalitarian regime such as the Nazi Third Reich. Refer to specifics in both works to support your arguments.

III RESEARCH PROJECT

4/19: Submit a well-documented Research Essay (following MLA specifications for citations and a Works Cited list) of approximately 1,500 words on the topic that you have chosen (on 11/6) for your Research Project. Be sure to include at least five related, reliable, and retrievable sources, including your reference to an interview that you have conducted with a health care professional.

Students are required to interview a health care professional, such as the following: a physician; medical researcher; bio-ethicist; university-level educator who teaches courses related to health care, medical policy, or the history of medicine; or an individual who deals with health care policy.

IV: FINAL ESSAY -- THE ROLE OF THE GADFLY AS A COUNTERVAILING FORCE

4/26: By this date read the following three plays: Arthur Miller's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* -- (Consider how this play relates to the current "fracking" controversy, as well as other issues related to concerns about water safety in the U.S.); Dale Wasserman's play adaptation of Ken Kesey's novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*; and Margaret Edson's *Wit*. Post your analytic comments on all three plays on the Discussion Site by the indicated date. Be sure to respond to at least one question on each of these plays.

5/8: In an Essay of approximately 1,000 words, answer the following question: How does a major character (not necessarily the main character) in each of the plays, Dale Wasserman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (based on Ken Kesey's novel by that name), Margaret Edson's *Wit*, and Arthur Miller's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, reveal the failure of prevailing assumptions, thereby upholding genuine ethical values by countering the power structure, the majority, or the status quo? (For example, with respect to *Wit*, you could refer to Nurse Susie as a significant major character.) Explain your responses, making specific references to each of these plays.

This Final Essay (submitted during Final Week) should demonstrate student mastery of analyses of texts, ability to relate texts to one another, as well as Information Technology.