

Fall/Winter 2018-2019

AP/EN 1102 6.0A (Y)

LITERATURE AND HEALTH

Course Director:

Elena Basile
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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:00 pm, Bethune 309

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Wednesday 4:00pm - 7:00pm, Stong 214

Description:

This course examines the relation between literature and medicine, particularly exploring how health and disease are conceptualized in Western culture and how contemporary writers address the ailments of societies and communities via poetry, storytelling, literary non-fiction and graphic novels. Among the issues we will tackle are the following: (a) What do myths, stories and different practices of storytelling tell us about a culture's attitude towards the body, community and its relation to the environment? (b) Are there diseases that shape eras, or that can be read as symptomatic of social ills? (c) What are the ethics of care and caregiving in both institutional hospital settings and among non-professional caregivers? (d) How does our culture deal with death and mourning? (e) What is the significance of ritual in healing, and how does writing become a practice of healing? Throughout the course we will pay attention to how different narratives of illness bear witness to the historical and political dimensions of medical practices, specifically as they relate to the physical, social and cultural environments within which they operate.

Category:

N/A

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

1 In-class Reading Exercise (Oct 12) 5%
1 Reading Response (Nov 13) 15%
Midterm Exam 20%
Essay Outline (SOI, AB and Outline due between Feb 1-16) 10%
Essay (1800 words, due March 7) 25%
Final Exam 20%
Participation in Lecture and Online 5%

Reading List:

These books can be bought at the University Bookstore or accessed via Course Reserves at the Scott Library.

Wade Davis *The Wayfinders*; Anne Fadiman *The Spirit Catches You* ; Oliver Sacks *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* ; Marge Piercy *Woman on the Edge of Time* ; Rebecca Brown *The Gifts of the Body* ; Jamaica Kincaid *My Brother* ; Shani Mootoo *Cereus Blooms at Night* ; Alison Bechdel, *Are you My Mother?* ; Maylis de Kerangal *Mending the Living* ; Kazuo Ishiguro *Never Let Me Go*.

Additional readings will be available on **Moodle** and in a **Course Kit**.

Open To:

All year levels