

Medicine in Film and Lit  
Fall 2008 (W 4-7 P.M.)  
Room: 1507 Setnor

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Texts: Texts available at Upstate bookstore in Campus Activities Building:  
Wit by Margaret Edson; The Midnight Meal by Jerome Lowenstein; Fourteen Stories by Jay Baruch; Miss Evers' Boys by David Feldshuh; Handouts.  
Available through amazon.com The Healing Art by Rafael Campo

- Aug 27 Introduction and Requirements  
THE IDEAL  
Arrowsmith (film)
- Sept 3 The Midnight Meal, pages 1-80  
Handout, Sir William Osler  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Sept 10 Good Will Hunting (film)  
Handout, "The Bruising"  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Sept 17 The Healing Art, pages 1-40  
Handout,  
Marcus Welby, MD excerpts  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Sept 24 Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare excerpts  
Journal entries due  
Paper Due between now and Oct. 1
- Oct 1 Rosh Hashana
- Oct 8 THE NIGHTMARE  
The Hospital (film)  
Journal entries due
- Oct 15 Wit (read the play); we will see some of the film  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Oct 22 The Healing Muse launch  
Medical Alumni Auditorium 4-5:30 pm

Handout following the launch 5:30-7pm  
Journal entries due

- Oct 29     Miss Evers' Boys (read the play)  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz  
Paper Due between now and Nov. 5
- Nov 5     THE REAL  
Fourteen Stories pp. 15-18; 38-46; 47-53  
The Healing Art pp. 111-126  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Nov 12    House; Grey's Anatomy excerpts  
The Midnight Meal pp.80-120  
Journal entries due
- Nov 19    Fourteen Stories pp. 54-59; 60-75; 91-106  
Journal entries due  
\*\*\*Quiz
- Nov 26    Thanksgiving
- Dec 3     The Healing Art pp. 126-163  
Journal entries due  
Paper Due  
Evaluation

Medicine in Film and Literature intends to provoke thoughtful discussion and analysis about health care and clinicians as depicted both in popular culture and in reality through stories, poems, essays, films, drama, and television. We will use first person accounts from contemporary clinicians to provide intriguing comparisons between the fictional worlds we see on TV and in literature and the real worlds we encounter in the hospital. We will examine the ethical dilemmas faced by today's health care professionals and contrast them with those from the past. Cases involving paternalism, autonomy, confidentiality, and justice may create very different reactions and outcomes, depending upon when and where the story occurs. Questions to analyze will include the following: are physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals called to a higher code of conduct and behavior? What kind of relationship is possible today between patients and clinicians? Does technology serve medicine well, or does it create more ethical difficulties for patients, health care professionals, and society? Does popular culture's portrayals of medicine help or hinder today's medical practitioners? What role does narrative play in medical treatment? When competing ethical interests collide (my research goal vs. your body; health care's cost to society vs. your family's need for experimental treatment), who decides which goal is legitimate?

**OBJECTIVES:** The student will compare and contrast popular culture's depiction of the profession of medicine as seen in television and film with those of medical professionals and patients in literature. The student will analyze how health, illness, and identity are defined and treated by the medical establishment and then compare that with how the individual who suffers from a particular illness sees his/her identity. The student will demonstrate an understanding of a multi-tiered system of health care that may or may not dispense care, treatment, and options fairly and equitably. The student will be able to identify the various incarnations the physician has assumed in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The student will write an analysis of the issues discussed in class.

**STRUCTURE and REQUIREMENTS:** Attendance and participation are obviously important in a course like this. Bring your most open and intellectually curious self to class. If you miss class, you are responsible for checking the assignment for the next class. Students will keep an on-line journal with three entries made each week. The journal should reflect the student's responses to the reading and to any discussions the student is having with others about the course's topics. On certain weeks there will be a 10-minute quiz on that week's required reading. Quizzes cannot be made up, but we will drop the lowest two at the end of the semester.

Paper topics will be discussed two weeks before each paper is due. Papers must be typed; writing should reflect your academic status. Papers are 6-8 pages in length. Yes, spelling and grammar do matter! Consult an English handbook and dictionary. Plagiarism will result in failure for the course and referral to SUNY Upstate Medical University's Judicial Board.

**GRADING:**

Quizzes and Participation (20%)

Journal (20%)

Paper #1 (20%)

Paper #2 (20%)

Paper #3 (20%)

We look forward to a semester of passionate, intelligent discussion.