LITERATURE CAPSTONE: LITERATURE AND MEDICINE

HSS 403--e-learning

Fall 2007

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday (4:00 PM-5:30PM) 313 Cullimore. If you wish to meet with me during my office hours or at another time, please schedule an appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 popularity as opposed to 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 policy; eugenics and euthanasia; physician-assisted suicide; the role of the “gadfly” as initiator of changes in medical/health care policy.

FINAL GRADES WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING FORMULA.

**Essays**: 37 points –Except for the Interview Essay #6, all essays are worth five points each. The Interview Essay, in combination with the related oral presentation, is worth seven points.

**Bulletin Board Postings**: 25 points

**Concluding Project**: 20 points

**Portfolio**: 18 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 BOTH WEBCT AND HIGHLANDER PIPELINE IN ORDER TO BE PROPERLY REGISTERED FOR THIS COURSE. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MESSAGES SENT THROUGH BOTH WEBCT AND PIPELINE. PLEASE CHECK THEM REGULARLY.

2. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT, FROM THE START OF THE SEMESTER, I HAVE YOUR CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, MAILING ADDRESS, AND OTHER RELEVANT PERSONAL INFORMATION. PLEASE INFORM ME IMMEDIATELY IF THERE ARE ANY CHANGES. THIS IS ESSENTIAL.

3. PLEASE SECURE ALL OF THE REQUIRED TEXTS BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. THE BOOKSTORE WILL NOT HAVE THEM AVAILABLE SHORTLY AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER.

4. STUDENTS MUST RETURN THE COMPLETED COURSE AGREEMENT FORM PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SPRING 2007 SEMESTER.

5. IF STUDENTS HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, THEY SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME BY EMAIL, TELEPHONE, OR BY APPOINTMENT IN MY OFFICE (313 CULLIMORE).

ASSIGNED TEXTS: ALL ARE REQUIRED


6) Arthur Miller’s adaptation of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*. Penguin.

(7) Dale Wasserman’s play *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (based on Ken Kesey’s novel). Samuel French, Inc.

(8) Margaret Edson, *Wit: A Play*. Faber and Faber.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1) **WEBCT BULLETIN BOARD POSTINGS: 25 POINTS**

Students are required to post, on the WebCT Bulletin Board substantive comments about each week’s readings, research, and interview. Also, each week, students are required to make brief responses to at least two other student comments. Copies of your comments and responses must be included in your final Portfolio.

2) **ESSAYS: 30 POINTS**

Students are required to submit through the WebCT Assignment Tool, on the dates noted below, an analytic essay of approximately 1,000 words in response to the indicated questions based on the week’s reading. Each paper must have the student’s name, topic for the week, 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 papers 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. *Students should be rewriting papers throughout the semester following my corrections and comments. These rewrites, along with first drafts containing my comments and corrections, should be retained by students for inclusion in the end of semester portfolio.*

In all essays, briefly integrate documented references to at least two relevant and reliable sources other than the assigned text(s). Illustrations of current relevant issues include the following: current medical education and treatment practices, role of money and politics in the delivery of medical services and medical research, current attitudes toward euthanasia, other genocides (following the Nazi genocide), current disability issues, and current “whistle blowers” on medical/pharmaceutical practices. Although peer-reviewed sources are preferred, you may also include references to books, periodicals, newspapers, documentary films, as well as reputable Internet sources.
Do not use "Wikipedia" or encyclopedias. Be especially careful of online sources. Be sure that such sources are retrievable.

Examples of legitimate online sources are Google Scholar, New York Times, and WebMd.

A peer-reviewed source has been subjected 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 any questions, contact Davida Scharf in the Library <davida.scharf@njit.edu>.)

2) INTERVIEW ESSAY AND ORAL PRESENTATION: 7 POINTS

Students are required to interview a health care professional, for example, a physician; medical researcher; bioethicist; 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. For further details regarding the focus of the interview, see assignment for November 21. Students must submit name and title of interviewee for my approval by October 19. Students will be provided with suggested questions for use at the interview. In their end of semester portfolios, students will also be required to submit a double-spaced outline of at least one full page in bullet form of the ten-minute presentation, as well as an audio tape or CD of the presentation, related to the interview and its relevance to the course and to current issues.

(4) CONCLUDING PROJECT: 20 points

This Project, which should be submitted to the WebCt Assignment Tool by April 30, will be a distillation of the semester’s work. Details will follow.

(5) PORTFOLIO: 18 points

All assignments graded and returned to students must be rewritten reflecting my comments and suggestions. These re-writes (as well as the original drafts) should be placed in a Portfolio to be received by me by December 17. This Portfolio will reflect the overall quality of the student’s work and will allow for an in-depth assessment of the student’s progress. All the essays in this Portfolio will be reviewed and, whenever appropriate, grades will be re-considered in light of the re-writes. In
addition, students must include the CONCLUDING PROJECT in the Portfolio, as well as an outline and audiotape or CD of the oral presentation based on the interview with a health care professional. SUBMISSION OF PORTFOLIO IS REQUIRED FOR STUDENTS TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE FOR THIS COURSE

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

PLEASE NOTE THAT ESSAYS ARE DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON THE DATES LISTED BELOW. ALTHOUGH LATE ESSAYS MAY BE ACCEPTED IF THE EXPLANATION FOR THE LATENESS WARRANTS SPECIAL CONSIDERATION, I CANNOT GUARANTEE PROMPT RETURN OF SUCH LATE ESSAYS WITH MY COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS.

Students should inform instructor promptly if essays are not received by students (graded with comments and corrections) within two weeks of submission.

I--THE ROLE OF THE PHYSICIAN/RESEARCHER

Saturday, September 8: Read W.C. Williams, The Doctor Stories: Introduction vii-xvi; poems, pp. 127-132; stories, pp. 1-60. Post your analytic comments on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

Friday, September 14. Read W.C. Williams pp. 61-126; 133-142. Post your analytic comments on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized Essay #1 of approximately 1,000 words, submitted to the WebCt Assignment Tool, that is responsive to the following questions: What view of William Carlos Williams’s struggle as a doctor and poet do the above sections of The Doctor Stories present? How is the doctor/patient relationship reflected in these poems and stories? Explain, making specific references to no fewer than eight stories and four poems

Friday, September 21: Read O. Sacks, The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, pp. vii-x; pp. 3-125. Post your analytic comments on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

Friday, September 28. Read O. Sacks, pp. 127-233. Post your analytic comments on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized Essay #2 of approximately 1,000 words, submitted to the WebCt Assignment Tool, which is responsive to the following questions: How does Oliver Sacks reveal the mind/body connection in those patients whom he treats? To what extent does Sacks transcend the concept of “cure” by collaborating with his patients? (Differentiate between the categories of “Losses” and “Excesses,” as well as the categories of “Transports” and “The World of the
Simple.”) In your essay, make reference to no fewer than three works from each of
the four sections.

Friday, October 5 Read S. Lewis, *Arrowsmith*, chapters 1-23. Post your analytic
comments on this novel on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

Friday, October 12 Read *Arrowsmith*, chapters 24-40. Post your analytic comments
on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized Essay #3 of approximately 1,000 words,
submitted to the WebCt Assignment Tool, that is responsive to the following
questions: How does Sinclair Lewis in *Arrowsmith* present the tension between
idealism and expediency? Ultimately, what view of science and the scientist does
Sinclair Lewis present in *Arrowsmith*?

II—CONTRASTS IN HEALTH CARE/MEDICAL POLICY IN A
TOTALITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC STATE

For Essays due October 26 and November 9, list chapters by titles and pages in
Works Cited list

Post your analytic comments on the WebCt Bulletin Board no later than the
indicated date. Also, please note the deadline for submitting name and title of
interviewee. See April 6 assignment for further details on the interview.

Friday, October 26 Read R. J. Lifton, pp.214-302; 418-504. Post your analytic
comments on these readings on the WebCt Bulletin Board no later than the
indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized Essay #4 of approximately 1,000 words,
submitted to WebCt Assignment Tool, that is responsive to the following questions:
How does Lifton describe the slippery slope from sterilization to euthanasia to
Auschwitz? Differentiating between Nazi doctors and prisoner doctors, indicate
how Lifton reveals the role of doctors in the practice of genocide. In your essay,
make specific references to the text.

Friday, November 2 Read D. Fleischer & F. Zames, *The Disability Rights
Movement*, Personal Notes (xii-xiv), Preface (xv-xvii), Chapters 1-3. Post your
analytic comments on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

Friday, November 9 Read D. Fleischer & F. Zames, Chapters 7, 8, 12. Post your
analytic comments on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized Essay #5 of approximately 1,000 words,
submitted to the WebCt Assignment Tool that is responsive to the following
questions: Explain the meaning of each of the titles of the first three chapters. How is this movement revealed in the struggle of disability activists with regard the following issues: access to employment and health care, physician-assisted suicide, as well as identity and culture?

Thursday, November 15: Post your comments on your interview with a Health Care Professional and/or your related research, on the WebCt Bulletin Board no later than the indicated date.

Wednesday, November 21: Submit Essay #6 (approximately 1,000 words) to the WebCt Assignment Tool describing your interview. It should focus on the following three major topics of the course:

(1) Role of the health care professional (physician, researcher)

(2) Significance of health care/medical policy and its relationship to social/political policy.

(1) Role of the gadfly in challenging the status quo, ultimately leading to change in medical practice and/or health care policy.

(Students will be provided with sample questions that they may wish to use in the interview.)

Note: In their end of semester portfolios, students will also be required to submit a double-spaced outline of at least one full page in bullet form of the ten-minute presentation, as well as an audio tape or CD of the presentation, related to the interview and its relevance to the course and to current issues.

III. THE ROLE OF THE GADFLY AS A COUNTERVAILING FORCE

Tuesday, November 27: Read the following two plays: Arthur Miller’s adaptation of Henrik Ibsen’s An Enemy of the People and Dale Wasserman’s adaptation of Ken Kesey’s novel One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. Post your analytic comments on these plays on the WebCt Bulletin Board by than the indicated date.

Monday, December 3: Read Margaret Edson’s Wit. Post your analytic comments on this play on the WebCt Bulletin Board by the indicated date.

In addition, write a well-organized essay #7 of approximately 1,000 words that is responsive to the following question: How do each of the protagonists (Dr. Stockmann, Randall McMurphy, and Vivian Bearing) reveal the failure of commonly held assumptions, thereby serving the greater good by countering the majority or the status quo? Explain, making specific reference to each of these texts.
**Friday, December 14:** The Concluding Project must be received by me on the Web Ct Assignment Tool by this date.

**Tuesday, December 18:** The Portfolio (including the Concluding Project) **must** be received by me in **hard copy**, by this date. This means that that it should be overnighted by December 17.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Portfolio should be organized as follows:

1. Table of Contents

2. Course Syllabus

3. All Bulletin Board postings on the readings, as well as responses to other student postings, in chronological order

4. All “handouts” provided by the instructor by WebCt

5. All assigned original essays with my comments and corrections, as well as student rewrites, all in chronological order

6. An outline of at least one full page in bullet form, plus an audio tape or CD, of ten-minute presentation on the Interview and its relevance to the course, as well as to current issues.

7. Concluding Project: Details to follow.

**DO NOT MAIL THE PORTFOLIO TO NJIT!**

Mail Portfolio to me at 4085 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11235. Please send via a delivery service such as Express Mail or Federal Express so that you have a Tracking Number. Make sure that you have a back-up disc in your possession. **PLEASE INDICATE CLEARLY THAT NO SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED FOR DELIVERY TO ME.**