



# INTRODUCTION TO HUMANITIES

## SEMESTER, YEAR

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Location, Time  
Dr. Haugtvedt  
Office, Office Hours  
Email

## MATERIALS

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- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (2010)
- *Stitches* by David Small (2010)
- *Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* by Arthur Frank (1995)
- *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness* by Susannah Cahalan (2013)
- Readings posted on our course management site

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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This introduction to Humanities course is premised on the principle that narrative competence increases medical competence. In other words, it assumes that medical practitioners who become aware of the importance of stories and storytelling and are knowledgeable about how stories work will become more effective caregivers. We will explore this principle asking the following questions and more throughout the course: How does narrative give us greater insight into illness, medical treatment, doctor-patient relationships, and other aspects of health and medicine? How do illness and other experiences within the realm of medicine influence ways of telling stories? How do doctors' perspectives and patients' perspectives differ, and what, if anything, should be done to close those differences? In order to increase our own narrative competence, we will look at narrative in different media--print (fiction and nonfiction), comics, and film--and consider core concepts of narrative (plot, character, space, time, perspective, dialogue, ethics, and aesthetics) both academically and creatively.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Demonstrate knowledge of diversity of values, beliefs, and ideas embodied in the human experience
- Identify and explain basic concepts of the selected disciplines within arts and humanities
- Identify and explain the contribution of other cultures from the perspective of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities
- Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding
- Explain and interpret formal and stylistic elements of the literary or fine arts

## Course Policies

You are expected to be in class regularly, engage with course material exclusively during class, and be ready to contribute to classroom discussion and activities.

Throughout the semester, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked. Every absence after 3 will result in the lowering of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Excused absences such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or university-associated travel, will not affect your grade but you will need to contact me as soon as possible to make up missed work.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. You are encouraged to discuss your papers with each other, discuss readings, and go to the Writing Center with your papers, but if you use someone else's words or ideas you must provide proper documentation. If you have questions or are at all unclear about what plagiarism is or whether your work constitutes plagiarism, please email or speak to me. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that can result in a zero for the assignment, failure of the course, and/or referral to the committee of academic affairs. This includes both deliberate and accidental plagiarism.

A (93), A- (90), B+ (87), B (83), B- (80), C+ (77), C (73), C- (70), D+ (67), D (60), F (59 and below)

## Major Assignments

**Participation: 5% of your final grade.** Throughout the semester, I expect you to be actively engaged in class. This means that you contribute regularly to class discussion by responding thoughtfully and respectfully to your peers and to me, your instructor. In Week 15, you will be asked to write a report on your own participation in this class, presenting evidence for the grade you think you should receive. Unless I have reason to doubt or dispute your evidence of participation (which I will document in the feedback I give), the grade you give yourself will be the grade you receive for participation. See detailed assignment prompt on our course management site.

**Commonplace Book: 60% of your final grade.** For this assignment, you will maintain a commonplace book throughout the semester. A commonplace book is a book into which you copy out passages from your reading that you want to keep for reference, passages that are striking for their insight, beauty, style, or humor. You will maintain this journal of passages from the assigned reading, and from reading/thinking you do in the rest of your life (you may note things you read online from social media, things you see on TV, in the newspaper, or things that your friends and family say). The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on the reading and to connect it to other ideas in the world and to your own personal experiences. This commonplace book will be an actual book—i.e., a journal, that you physically write in. I will check your progress on your commonplace book 10 times randomly throughout the semester, and will collect your commonplace book at the end of the semester for a grade. See detailed assignment prompt on our course management site.

**Midterm Exam: 20% of your final grade.** In this short essay and identification-based midterm exam, you will show that you have mastered and thought about the topics we have so far encountered and have discussed in class. See detailed description on our course management site.

**Personal Memoir Essay: 15% of your final grade.** In this 10-12 page essay, you will tell your own first-person story of ability/disability, health/illness, drawing upon our discussion of the challenges and opportunities of telling stories of illness. See detailed assignment prompt on our course management site.

Date	Activities/Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1 Medicine as Science	Introduction to class Draw a stick figure and locate your scars/former wounds on the figure	Write in Commonplace Book once this week

	Rita Charon, <i>Narrative Medicine</i> Ch. 1  Michel Foucault, <i>The Birth of the Clinic</i> Introduction	
<b>Week 2</b>	Paul Starr, <i>The Social Transformation of American Medicine</i> Introduction  Daniel Ofri, <i>What Doctors Feel</i> Introduction	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 3 Women and the Medical Establishment</b>	Mary Poovey, <i>Uneven Developments</i> Ch. 2: “The Medical Treatment of Women in the Nineteenth Century” PBS documentary: <i>The Pill</i>	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 4 Race and the Medical Establishment</b>	PBS documentary: <i>The Deadly Deception</i> on Tuskegee Syphilis Experiments  Rebecca Skloot, <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> Part 1	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 5</b>	Skloot, <i>Henrietta Lacks</i> Part 2	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 6</b>	Skloot, <i>Henrietta Lacks</i> Part 3	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 7 The Struggle to Tell Stories of Illness and Pain</b>	David Small, <i>Stitches</i> first third	Write in Commonplace Book once this week  Midterm Exam
<b>Week 8</b>	Small, <i>Stitches</i> second third	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 9</b>	Small, <i>Stitches</i> , finish	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 10</b>	Arthur Frank, <i>Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics</i> Ch. 1-3 pg. 1-74	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 11</b>	Frank, <i>Wounded Storyteller</i> Ch. 4-6, pg. 75-136	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 12</b>	Frank, <i>Wounded Storyteller</i> Ch. 6-8, pg. 137-169	Write in Commonplace Book once this week  Draft your personal memoir essay
<b>Week 13</b>	Eula Biss, “The Pain Scale”  PBS Documentary: <i>The Lobotomist</i>	Write in Commonplace Book once this week  Meet with me outside of class to talk about how to revise your personal memoir essay
<b>Week 14</b>	Blog posts from Jared Gardner, <i>Patient Time</i>  Susannah Cahalan, <i>Brain on Fire</i> part 1-2	Write in Commonplace Book once this week
<b>Week 15</b>	Cahalan, <i>Brain on Fire</i> part 2-finish  Wrap up the course	Write in Commonplace Book once this week  Personal Memoir Essay due