

**HLTH AGE 4C03: Representations of Health
and Illness Across the Life Course**



HLTH AGE 4C03

Mondays 11:30-2:20 – MDCL 1115

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Office hours: Fridays 11:30 – 1:30

Course Description

This course considers the effects and meanings generated by representations that speak for the body, particularly the impaired body of illness, the aging body, the body marked by disease and disability. We examine a number of disciplines including history of medicine, anthropology, aging studies, and sociology in order to examine the various ways our concepts of health, illness, and aging are shaped, circulated, and interpreted in contemporary Western society. Through weekly discussions, lectures, films, and in-class presentations, we explore the multiple cultural meanings and theories assigned to health and illness, and investigate how these are translated through visual and literary representations.

This course requires that students actively engage and participate in class discussions, come prepared to present their topics, and do the required readings *prior* to attending class. A great learning dynamic hinges entirely on students challenging various theories and assumptions, supporting their colleagues' discussions with questions, insights and comments, and lastly, contributing to resource material with film clips, images, and other references during their presentations.



Required Reading

Representations of Health and Illness Across the Lifespan
Courseware package (CW)

Small, D (2009) *Stitches: A Memoir*

Films (to be screened in class)

- *A Patch of Blue* (USA 1965; Guy Green)
 - *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (USA 1968; Robert Miller)
 - *The Colour of Beauty* (Canada 2010; Elizabeth St. Philip)
- http://www.nfb.ca/playlists/work-for-all/viewing/colour_of_beauty

Assignments

- **Participation/Attendance** **30% (includes media assignments)**
- **Presentation** **20%**
- **Discussion Starter** **15%**
- **Final Essay** **35%**

Participation

Participation grades are based on attendance, group work, and class discussions. It is vital that all students come prepared to discuss the weekly readings. Active, engaged, thoughtful reactions to the presentations and discussion starters are essential. Students who are not presenting will be expected to actively engage with the issues raised by their colleagues.



Presentation (15 minutes)

Each student will present a topic for which they have signed up by the second week of class. These presentations should provide an overview of the topic, a *critical* response to the relevant reading materials, and integrate primary research data that the student has gathered. Students are expected to be attentive to representations of health and illness outside the classroom, collecting interesting texts, visual references, film clips, commercials, advertisements, images, newspaper reports, etc.. that can enrich our understanding of the various subjects discussed throughout the term. Consider how this material relates to any of the areas that we discuss as a class. It can examine for example, various diseases, concepts of the body, hygiene, mental illness, drug abuse, homelessness, dieting, medication, community, alcoholism, institutionalization, depression, suicide, and death. As a class, we would like to know what visual or literary strategies this material employs for its effects. Lastly, it will be essential for students to include one or two questions for the class. Students will be graded on the quality of their presentation, the materials used, and their level of interaction and engagement with the class. Please refer to the grading rubric for specific expectations.

Discussion Starter (10 minutes)

Students are assigned one of the readings of the week before the end of the second class. They are expected to give an overview of the reading, provide the theoretical approach of the author(s), and use a short analysis (around 5 minutes) to initiate conversation, questions, and dialogue. Consider how the article relates to the topic of that particular

week, and include one or two questions for the class to discuss. I will post all DS assignments on Avenue to Learn. A written summary of the article (one page) is due *prior* to the start of the class, and must be uploaded onto Avenue to Learn for students to access. **Please note that when there are 2 or more students assigned the readings, students must coordinate - with each other - what they are going to discuss and outline, making sure that they do not upload and discuss the same material.*

Final Essay (5-6 pages)

This very brief research essay will explore issues raised in the course in relation to one or more representational texts (literature, film, comics, etc.). The essay can be an extension of either the student's presentation or discussion starter, or on a topic of their choice, **but** it must include, cite, or reference some of the materials included on the syllabus. Students will ensure that the instructor is aware of their choice at any time during the term. The final date for submission will be announced.

Late Assignment Policy

Essays must be submitted at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day, for 7 days. Assignments more than one week overdue will not be accepted. Essays submitted on time will receive a letter grade and written comments; late assignments will receive minimal feedback.

Please Note: All materials, letters, documents for absences/missed work (due to family emergency, medical condition, etc.) must be directed to the Faculty of Social Sciences office.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 – (Sept. 14) Introduction

Course outline and discussion

Assignment and Readings - overview

©Lecture – *The Politics of Good Health*

Week 2 – (Sept. 21) Health and Illness: Rhetoric vs. Narrative in Mass Media

Case Studies – Q&A “The Obesity Epidemic”

*Discussion Starter and Presentation assignments –All students must be signed up

Week 3 – (Sept. 28) Beauty and Vitality: Representing the Healthy Body

📖 Solomon et al (CW) “Beauty Salons” x3

📖 Aizura (CW) x2



🎬 *The Colour of Beauty* (Canada 2010; Elizabeth St. Philip)
http://www.nfb.ca/playlists/work-for-all/viewing/colour_of_beauty

Recommended

🎬 *Picture Me* (USA 2009; Ole Schell, Sara Ziff)

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Week 4 – (Oct. 05) Responsibility and Care – Institutions/Accountability

📖 Online source see: Doughty (2006) <http://www.senecac.on.ca/quarterly/2006-vol09-num01-winter/reviews/doughty5.html> - “No Moral Conscience” Review - **1**

📖 Stitches (2009) **x2**

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Week 5 – (Oct. 19) Threat-Isolation-Stigma: The ‘Dis’eased’ Body

📖 Kwan (CW) Weight loss – **x2**

📖 Online source: *The Story of Patient X* - [http://walnet.org/sos/ Society of Syphilitics- **1**](http://walnet.org/sos/Society%20of%20Syphilitics-1)

🎬 Clips – *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (USA 1968; Robert Miller)

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Week 6 – (Oct. 26) HIV/AIDS – STDs

🎧 Lecture – *Infectious Disease and the Cultural Landscape*

📖 Couser (1997) “HIV/AIDS and Its Stories” (CW) - **x3**

🎬 Clip – “Plenty of Syph”

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Highly Recommended

🎬 *Yesterday* (SA 2004; Darrell Roodt)

🎬 *And The Band Played On* (USA 1993; Roger Spottiswoode)

🎬 *3 Needles* (Canada-Singapore 2005; Thom Fitzgerald)

Week 7 – (Nov. 02) Infectious Disease - Rhetoric and Representations

📖 Social and Mass Media – **x3**

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Week 8 (Nov. 09) “Neo-identities”: The Disabled Body

📖 Ostrander (CW) **x3**

📖 Dettwyler (CW) **1**

🎬 Clip - ProInfirmis

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Week 9 - (Nov. 16) The ‘Dis-abled’ Body – Sexuality, Race, Class, Gender

🎬 *A Patch of Blue* (USA 1965; Guy Green)

Q+A Sheet

Week 10 – (Nov. 23) Aging and Decrepitude: The ‘Old’ Body

📖 Rowe (CW) x2

📖 Gullette (2004) “Trapped in the New Time Machine” (CW) x2

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

View any of the following before this class

🎬 *Amour* (Germany 2012; Michael Haneke)

🎬 *Iris* (UK 2001; Richard Eyre)

🎬 *Away From Her* (UK 2006; Sarah Polly)

🎬 *The Savages* (USA 2007; Tamara Jenkins)

**Week 11 – (Nov. 30) Mental Illness: Motifs of Madness**

📖 Corrigan & Watson (CW) x1

📖 Bentall (CW) x2

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

View before this class any of the following:

🎬 *A Dangerous Method* (UK 2011; David Cronenberg)

🎬 *The Others* (UK 2001 – Amenábar)

🎬 *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (USA 1975; Milos Forman)

🎬 *A Beautiful Mind* (USA 2001; Ron Howard)

🎬 *Black Swan* (USA 2010; Darren Aronofsky)

🎬 *Girl Interrupted* (USA 1999; James Mangold)

🎬 *Call Me Crazy* (USA 2013; A-Five Film)

Week 12 – (Dec. 07) Research Paper Overview and Catch Up - Papers Due: TBA

Discussion Starters:

Presentations:

Presentation Evaluation Rubric

Clarity	1	2	3	4	5
Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5
Engagement	1	2	3	4	5
References	1	2	3	4	5
Visuals	1	2	3	4	5

THE UNIVERSITY REQUIRES INSTRUCTORS TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ON COURSE OUTLINES.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

AVENUE TO LEARN

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

TURNITIN.COM

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must notify the instructor **prior** to submitting their paper.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS Students with special learning needs are asked to contact the instructor no later than the second week of classes. You must have written confirmation from Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Students can contact SAS to arrange for special accommodation for writing exams. They also provide or assist students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, Classroom Accommodations. Web site:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society at 905.525.9140 ext. 27227 or hasdept@mcmaster.ca.