

Discussion Posts

ONE

After reading through the Epidemic books, how does the keeping of medical records from Hippocrates' time compare to how it is done now? Do you think that including more personal details (occupations and hobbies, ungendered marriage status, etc.) would provide a more well-rounded description of the patients as individuals?

TWO

Now that you've read some personal accounts of people living with chronic illness and how it effects the self, think of a time when you were restricted from being who you are or doing things that you loved. How did that make you feel? How do you think that doctors can help their patients through this difficult situation? Why is it so important that we retain our sense of self, especially in comparison with getting better physically?

THREE

Now that you've read through some of the works discussing the dark history of medicine, what are your thoughts on such actions? On one hand, they are at least partially responsible for the life-saving medicine that we have today. However, those discoveries were made completely against the Oath. Do these studies/actions still stand, given the positives that came out of them? Should there have been more repercussions for those involved? What if similar studies were repeated today: how do you think that modern society would react?

FOUR

Given these examples of the adverse relationship between doctors and their patients, as well as a deeper study done on the Health Adverse Effects Meghan O'Rourke mentioned in her essay, take a moment to consider this impact on both doctors and their patients. You know from her essay that both doctors and patients are suffering from the subpar care given as treatment, but what exactly does this mean for medicine? What reforms need to be put into place, if any? Why do/don't you think that there needs to be change?

FIVE

End-of-life care is not well-known, but each of our readings this week seem to be in agreement that it is extremely valuable. However, doctors and families alike seem hesitant to offer it as an option. We have read different opinions as to why, such as the feeling of giving up, but why do you think this is? Do you agree with the sentiment that it feels like throwing in the towel? Despite this, do doctors still have an obligation to discuss it as an option? We have also seen that there are different types of doctors. Do you think these different care types lead to different treatment outcomes? Which is the most preferential to you, and why?

SIX

As evidenced by these various articles, and which was touched upon in last week's module, there are many different forms of empathy. And, though there is evidence that utilizing this empathy is helpful to both sides, it appears to be lacking. One reason given for this is the detachment that doctors feel they must use with their patients. What may be some other reasons? Which form of empathy do you think is/would be the most effective, and why? Which do you feel is the worst, and despite that, is it better than having no empathy at all?

Assignment One: Ethics in Medicine

Website: <https://depts.washington.edu/bhdept/ethics-medicine/bioethics-topics/>

Directions: Ethics in medicine is a broad topic and sensitive topic. Many variables are considered and tested when considering the rule of thumb for ethics, leading to pros and cons for nearly every decision. After completing our assigned readings (located in Files), you will visit the Department of Bioethics and Humanities, and choose two topics to read through. These should be topics that you personally find important, relate to your field of study, or find intriguing. Read through the information provided by the topic that you select, as well as the case studies. **Optional: go through their provided additional readings and websites for more information.** After reading through the topic and going through the case studies, choose one and write a summary to describe the ethical issue to your classmates, propose why it is an ethical problem, and a plausible solution. (~500 words). For the other, you will post a short discussion post simply summarizing the ethical issue that you chose.

Some things to consider: While considering your ethics issues, keep in mind the general population (age, sex, economic standing, etc.). Who are these issues affecting? Why are they more at risk for these ethical issues than others? How does this issue reflect the current state of medicine in relation to its treatment of patients?

Assignment Two: Virtual Museum Tours

Mutter Museum: <http://muttermuseum.org/>

Surgeon's Hall Museum: <https://museum.rcsed.ac.uk/history-of-surgery-museum>

Directions: Go through each museum's virtual tour and exhibits, and choose four or five (total) that you find especially disturbing or wrong, keeping in mind everything that we have read so far. Once you have chosen your exhibits, write a short synopsis of each, and why they could not be done now, based both on medical ethics and on moralistic standing. Each synopsis should be an in-depth analysis, not shallow reasons for why they are bad. In total, your analysis should be ~750-1000 words.

Some things to consider: What are the reasons that someone loses their human label? Our readings mainly revolved around race and/or class; are these problems still prevalent in medicine today? Why were these things considered okay? What would the response be if it occurred again today?

Midterm Short Essay

Format: MLA 8, Times New Roman Font, size 12, double spaced, 6-8 pages

Description: We are halfway through the semester, and you have been working towards a deeper understanding of the responsibilities that a doctor has to their patients, to not only make their safety a priority, but also to acknowledge that beneath their illnesses, they are people. In this essay, you will further develop these ideas, by using additional secondary sources to extrapolate on one of the things that we have discussed. Perhaps you would like to look further at “The Oath,” or research more instances of unethical research. Maybe you want to look at our current ethics generally, and examine where changes could be made to be more beneficial. Or, like we looked at how ethics are stretched to accommodate emergencies such as epidemics, you could research an event that would also warrant this same modality. Whatever you decide, make sure that you analyze your quotes beyond simply adding them in.

Please use at least 2 sources from our class, and at least 5 outside sources. Ensure that at least one of these is used as a primary source.

Final Essay

Format: MLA 8, Times New Roman Font, size 12, double spaced, 10-12 pages

Description: Throughout this semester, there has been an emphasis on the various narratives that make up the health humanities, for patients, doctors, and everyone in between. For this paper, you will put these texts in conversation with each other, bringing them together to analyze the place of the self in medicine. How does it affect healthcare? Should treatment be streamlined, or adjusted for every patient to meet their medical and supportive needs? What does the relationship between patients and doctors look like, and does it need to change? These are just a few of the things that you could write about, but feel free to come up with your own idea of the self. Perhaps you yourself are/have been/have a family member who was a patient, and would like to write your own narrative in conjunction with those that we have read.

Being that you will be putting texts in conversation with each other, you are required to use at least 2 sources from the first half of the semester, and 2 from the final half. You can use as many sources as you please aside from that, both from our class and from outside sources.

Due: Before our break, you will need to submit a full draft for peer review. Your final draft will be due during Finals Week when we come back.