

**ENGL 280g: Introduction to Narrative Medicine
Fall 2019**

Dr. Erika Wright

Meeting Times: TuTh 4:30 – 5:50

Class Location: THH 203

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Office Hr: Tues. 11:00-1 & by Appt.

Office: THH 436

“[W]e lead our lives as stories, and our identity is constructed both by the stories we tell ourselves and others about ourselves.”

--Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan

“Study the humanities and the arts as part of your professional training only if you have to. You probably have to.”

--Kurt Vonnegut, MD

Course Description

How a story gets told is as important as what gets told, and the ability to “read” the stories of another is a foundational skill in the field of Narrative Medicine. **Close reading**, which is a technique developed by literary scholars, teaches readers to pay attention not just to a story’s content and themes but also to its form and structure. This type of reading is valuable across all disciplines, fields, and contexts (personal and professional), but is central to this introductory course, which focuses on the relationship between literary studies and medical practice and the value of narrative competence for anyone touched by illness. Whether you are planning a career in healthcare or not, the skills you develop in this course will serve you well, as we will examine a range of texts: clinical case studies, novels, films, short stories, poetry, and memoirs that provide us with a deeper understanding of the relationship between narrative and identity, self and other, literature and the wider world. Each week we will coordinate a literary concept with a related medical/health theme or issue:

- our focus on plot will challenge the ways that diagnostic certainty, treatment, and cure can shape our narrative expectations;
- our understanding of literary narrators and character development will inform our view of the power dynamics of the doctor-patient relationship;
- our emphasis on time and metaphor will teach us about the role that memory and imagination can play in defining and sustaining a meaningful life.

These areas of inquiry will demonstrate what interdisciplinary training looks like—what each discipline gains from this relationship. Medicine learns from literary studies how metaphors contribute to complexity, how repetitions compete with silences, and how point of view and tone shape our reading expectations. Literary scholars learn from medicine what’s at stake in telling and listening to stories, our responsibility to a given text, and the real-world social and political ramifications of the work we do in the humanities.

Learning Objectives – In this course you will:

- Develop narrative competence through the practice of close reading;
- Cultivate a critical appreciation for various forms (film, science writing, novels, poetry) of human expression;

- Learn to read, interpret, listen actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write and speak persuasively;
- Evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and formulate informed opinions on complex issues of critical importance in today's global world;
- Collaborate effectively with others through seminar discussions and class presentations;
- Engage with lasting ideas and values that have animated humanity over time for a more purposeful, more ethical, and intellectually richer life.

Required Films/TV

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (original title: *Le scaphandre et le papillon*), Dir. Julian Schnabel (2007)

Medical TV Dramas, including *New Amsterdam*, *The Resident*, and *The Good Doctor*

Required Books

Barker, Pat, *Regeneration* (1991)

Bauby, Jean-Dominique, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (1997)

Edson, Margaret, *W;t* [=Wit], play text (1995)

Haddon, Mark, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)

Ishiguro, Kazuo, *Never Let Me Go* (2003)

Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999)

Sacks, Oliver, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985)

Required Articles/Handouts

A selection of articles, videos, and handouts are listed in the Reading Schedule below. Handouts, which are indicated with an asterisk (*), will be distributed in class & posted as PDFs on Blackboard. I may have occasion to add or substitute a particular reading. I will announce any changes in class and post them on Weekly Updates or Announcements on Blackboard.

Grading	150 pts.	Participation
	200 pts.	Weekly Response Papers (1-2 pp.)
	100 pts.	Midterm Reflection (2-3 pp.)
	200 pts.	Close Reading Essay (4-6 pp.)
	100 pts.	Final Project Prospectus (2 pp.) & Presentation
	250pts.	Final Research Project (7-12 pp.)

Course Requirements

1. **Participation 15% (150 pts.)** Active participation in discussions is essential, and you cannot participate if you are absent. Arrive on time with all the relevant course materials (i.e. readings and assignments for that meeting), ask questions, express opinions, and respond to the comments of your classmates with respect and curiosity. This portion of your grade also includes any in-class exercises, presentations, quizzes, etc.
2. **Weekly Reader Responses 20% (200 pts.)** Your ten short responses (1-2 pp.) are worth 20 points each. These writing assignments are designed to help you organize your thoughts and engage more deeply with the work. You will respond to a question or prompt that I will post on Blackboard. These prompts will invite you to make connections between the week's text/concept and a current event, literary theory, another class, or your personal experiences. Prompts will begin Week 2 and end Week 15 (identified as **RR#** on the schedule below). There are twelve RR opportunities. I will drop your two lowest scores, which means you may skip 2 RR's unless they are designated "Required."

3. **Midterm Reflection 10% (100 pts.)** During Week 8, you will submit a 2-3 page, double-spaced reflective response. I will post detailed instructions on Blackboard.
4. **Close Reading Essay 20% (200 pts.)** Each student will sign up to initiate discussion of one of the texts. On the day that you are the Discussion Co-Leader, you will submit a 2-page (minimum) draft of your analysis. Three class sessions after you facilitate the discussion, you will turn in a complete 4-6 page close-reading essay. Do not use any outside sources. You must meet with me **before** your presentation. See Blackboard for more detailed instructions and due dates.
5. **Final Project Prospectus & Presentation 10% (100 pts.)**. During the final week of class, we will host a conference-style presentation of works-in-progress.
6. **Final Project 25% (250 pts.)** This project will consist of two parts, one critical close reading (5-7 pgs.) and the other creative (2-5 pgs). These two parts will expand upon one or more of the concepts raised in class. See Blackboard for more detailed instructions.

Course Schedule

Adjustments may be made during the semester. Except for Day 1, all readings and assignments must be completed **before** we begin class on the day they are listed in the syllabus.

Unit 1: Taking Oaths, Telling Stories

Week 1: Oaths and Introductions

T Aug. 27—Introductions – What’s in a Name?

Discussion: Health Humanities, Narrative Medicine, and You (ppt.)

In-Class Exercise: Close Reading Oaths

Use your close reading guide to analyze the following texts:

Modern Oath*

Hippocrates, Ὁρκος*

Rafael **Campo**, “Hippocratic Oath 2.0”*

Th Aug. 29—Oath’s cont’d

Rita Charon, “Honoring the Stories of Illness” TedxAatlanta

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24kHX2HtU3o>)

Jane **Gallop**, “The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters”*

In-class Exercise: “Super Doctors” Close Reading Exercise

Week 2: Humility and the (Doctor) Hero

DUE RR #1

T Sept. 3—Individual Meetings

Th Sept. 5— Sayantani **DasGupta**, “Narrative Humility” TEDxSLC talk

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZ3ucjmcZwY>)

The Resident, *New Amsterdam*, *The Good Doctor* – Watch the pilot episode from each show prior to coming to class. Available on Hulu and Amazon Prime. See Weekly Updates and RR Prompts for guidance.

Unit 2: Developing Narrative Competence

Week 3: Memory, Temporality, and the Doctor-Patient Relationship DUE RR #2

T Sept. 10—Oliver **Sacks**, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* from Parts One & Two
(See Weekly Updates on Blackboard for required tales)

Th Sept. 12— Sacks finish selections from Parts Three & Four

Theodore **Martin**, from “Temporality and Literary Theory: ‘Narrative Time’”*

In-class Exercise: “I Remember”

Week 4: Cultivating Compassion: Point of View & Narration	DUE RR #3
T Sept. 17—Share your “I Remember” poems. Haddon, Mark, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>	
Th Sept. 19— <i>Curious Incidents</i> “Narratee” and “Point of View,” Entries in <i>Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory</i> * Thesis Workshop	
Week 5: Diagnosis: Bodies in Space, Figures of Speech	DUE RR #4
T Sept. 24—Raymond Carver, “What the Doctor Said”* Margaret Edson , W;t	
Th Sept. 26—Jean-Dominique Baubo , <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> (Memoir) Sabine Buchholz and Manfred Jahn , “Space in Narrative”*	
Week 6: Perspective Shift	DUE RR #5
T Oct. 1— <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i> (Film) Th Oct. 3— <i>Fixed: The Science Fiction of Human Enhancement</i> (Film)	
Unit 3: Identity & Intersubjectivity	
Week 7: Defining Self, Defining Health	DUE RR #6
T Oct. 8—Alice Walker, “Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self”* Th Oct. 10—Pat Barker , <i>Regeneration</i> (Part 1) In-Class Exercise: What is Health?	
Week 8	
T Oct. 15—Wilfred Owen , “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” “Dolce Et Decorum Est,” “Disabled,” Siegfried Sassoon , “They,” “The Rear-Guard,” “The General,” “Glory of Women” * DUE : Midterm Reflection	
Th Oct. 17—FALL RECESS - NO CLASS	
Week 9:	
T Oct. 22— <i>Regeneration</i> (Parts 2 & 3) DUE RR #7 Elaine Showalter, <i>Female Malady</i> (excerpt)	
Th Oct. 24— <i>Regeneration</i> (Part 4)	
Week 10 Coping & Community	DUE RR #8
T Oct. 29—Lesley Nneka Arimah, “What it Means When A Man Falls From the Sky”* Th Oct. 31—“Bearing Witness and Finding Meaning” (JAMA)*	
Week 11	DUE RR #9 (required)
T Nov. 5—Jhumpa Lahiri, stories from <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> Th Nov. 7— <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> , “Mrs. Sen’s” Guest Speakers: SSG/Alliance	
Week 13: Homesickness	DUE RR #10
T Nov. 12—Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (Part 1) Th Nov. 14—NLMG (Part 2)	
Week 14	DUE RR #11

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T Nov. 19—NLMG (Part 3) finish

Th Nov. 21—*The Black Mirror*, episodes “Be Right Back” and “San Junipero”

Week 15

DUE RR #12

T Nov. 26—*Black Mirror* discussion cont’d

Sign-up for Final Presentations

Th Nov 28—THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 16

T Dec. 3—Presentations: Work-in-Progress Final Project

Th Dec. 5—Presentations cont’d

Final Project due at day and time listed in USC Schedule of Examinations

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety

<http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>.

This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html

provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Student Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.