

HMED3017/HMED3017A

MEDICINE IN LITERATURE

Course Syllabus

2013-14 session | Dr Stephanie Eichberg | s.eichberg@ucl.ac.uk

This course explores literature at the intersection of history and philosophy of medicine and science. We will discuss in how far literary representations can reflect subjective experiences of illness and suffering, the view of patients and practitioners in different historical contexts, and the impact of science on understandings of the body. Readings for the course include not only novels but other creative literary representations of medicine, such as short stories, plays and poetry.



Basic course information

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|------------------|--|
| Course website: | [insert if applicable] |
| Moodle Website: | https://moodle.ud.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3967 |
| Assessment: | 2 essays (2x 2000 words), one 3 hour unseen exam in Term 3. Extra coursework for affiliates (please see the Moodle website) |
| Timetable: | www.ud.ac.uk/sts/hpsc |
| Prerequisites: | No pre-requisites; course designed for year-3 students |
| Required texts: | Moliere, <i>The Imaginary Invalid</i> (1673); Andrew Miller, <i>Ingenious Pain</i> (1997); Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818); H.G. Wells, <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i> (1896); Pat Barker, <i>Regeneration</i> (1991); Albert Camus, <i>The Plague</i> (1947); Will Self, <i>Liver: A Fictional Organ with a Surface Anatomy of Four Lobes</i> (2008). Secondary readings are provided on Moodle. |
| Course tutor(s): | Dr Stephanie Eichberg |
| Contact: | s.eichberg@ud.ac.uk 020 7679 2959 (int. 32959) |
| Web: | www.ud.ac.uk/silva/sts/staff/ |
| Office location: | 22 Gordon Square, Room B 14 |
| Office hours: | Tuesday, 16.00-17.00 Thursday, 13.00-14.00 - and by appointment. |

Schedule

| UCL Week | Topic | Date | Activity |
|----------|--|---------------|---|
| 6 | Introduction | 01/10 | Discussion: Are there absolute boundaries between 'fact' and? 'fiction'? |
| 7 | Hypochondria | 08/10 | Discussing Moliere's <i>Imaginary Invalid</i> and modern case stories of hypochondria. |
| 8 | Pain | 15/10 | Andrew Miller's <i>Ingenious Pain</i> as historical fiction. |
| 9 | Cancer narratives | 22/10 | Fanny Burney's letter of a mastectomy as iconic narrative of modern patient power. |
| 10 | Medical Monsters and Scientific Bodies I | 29/10 | Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> - a classic tale of a mad scientist. |
| 11 | Reading Week | 04/11 – 10/11 | |
| | | | 1. Essay: due on Monday 11/11 |
| 12 | Medical Monsters and Scientific Bodies II | 12/11 | Victorian fears of science and evolution in H.G. Wells's <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i> . |
| 13 | Shell Shock | 19/11 | Pat Barker's <i>Regeneration</i> reiterating WWI Soldiers' experience in the trenches. |
| 14 | Disease as Metaphor | 26/11 | The plague as political and ideological metaphor in Albert Camus' story. |
| 15 | Modernist Visceral Fiction and Biomedical Ethics | 03/12 | Will Self's <i>Liver</i> : an experimental narrative of a bodily organ. |
| 16 | Medicine and Literature: the view from within | 10/12 | Conclusion: what <i>can</i> Literature teach us about (the history of) medicine? |
| | | 17/10 | 2. Essay: due on Tuesday, 17/12 |

Assessments

Summary

| | Description | Deadline | Word limit |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|
| Essay 1 | Write an essay about a novel/play/poem of your choice. Discuss your choice with the course tutor beforehand. | Monday, 11. November, 23.59 | 2000 |
| Essay 2 | Write an essay about a novel/play/poem of your choice. Discuss your choice with the course tutor beforehand. | Tuesday, 17 December, 23.59 | 2000 |

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|--|--|---------------------------|------|
| Extra coursework for affiliates | Either a review of a novel/play/poem related to the course content OR a review of a movie adaptation of one of the novels discussed in the course OR a discussion of images (portraits, photography, iconography) related to themes discussed in the seminars. | Monday, 13 January, 23.59 | 1000 |
|--|--|---------------------------|------|

Assignments

Please come and see the course tutor as early as possible about your preferred essay topic (at least 3 weeks before respective essay deadlines!).

Criteria for assessment

The departmental marking guidelines for individual items of assessment can be found in the STS Student Handbook.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/study/bsc/documents/sts_student_handbook.pdf

Aims & objectives

The module aims to

- provide new perspectives on literature as a source for historical and contemporary understandings of medicine
- evaluate critically what literature can teach us about the history of medicine and how medicine in history shaped literary responses to death and disease
- reflect on changing views of illness and the body
- show how knowledge of the specific historical context can reveal different layers of a story

Reading list

Required reading is posted on Moodle; additional reading will be added during the course, and essay-related reading lists will be provided once students have chosen a specific essay topic and discussed it with the course tutor.

Course expectations

Please bear in mind that this course is rather reading-intensive - students taking it are required to read the complete set texts and additional secondary literature prior to each session (because multiple copies are not available for all novels in the Wellcome or UCL library, it might be worth purchasing the items on the reading list before the beginning of term).

Active participation in class discussions is essential; students may also be required to give presentations.

Important policy information

Details of college and departmental policies relating to modules and assessments can be found in the STS Student Handbook www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/handbook

All students taking modules in the STS department are expected to read these policies.
