**LMC 3318: Biomedicine and Culture**  Carol Senf (carol.senf@lmc.gatech.edu)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course discusses the history of medicine and medical technologies; literary and popular representations of health, disease, and the medical establishment; ethical issues related to medicine and public health; and cultural conditions affecting the development of medicine and medical technologies. Subjects include interpersonal conflicts between doctors and patients, the Tuskegee syphilis study and the establishment of bioethics, the race among researchers to discover the HIV virus causing AIDS, sustainability and public health, patients’ rights, and genetic technology.

*Attributes: Humanities, Ethics*

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

* To increase awareness of the cultural factors affecting the development of biomedical knowledge and practice
* To increase awareness of and think critically about the role of biomedicine, including its technological means, in culture
* To explore nuance and ambiguity in ethical debates about research and practice in biomedicine
* To communicate in sophisticated ways about these issues of broad concern, orally and in writing

**BOOKS THAT COULD BE PURCHASED;** also available as pdf documents in class Canvas site**:**

William Carlos Williams, *The Doctor Stories* New Directions, 1984. ($11)—[selected stories/poems in pdf]

Margaret Edson, *W;t* [or *Wit*]. Faber and Faber, 1993, 1999. ($10) [also in pdf]

David Feldshuh, *Miss Evers' Boys.* Dramatists Play Service, 1989, 1995. ($7.50) [also in pdf]

**RESERVE READINGS** also available as pdf documents in class Canvas site:

Stanley Joel Reiser, "Examination of the patient in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" and "The stethoscope and the detection of pathology by sound," chapters 1 and 2 of *Medicine and the Reign of Technology* Cambridge University Press, 1978*:* 1-44.

Stanley Joel Reiser, "Governing the Empire of Machines," [*Technological Medicine: The Changing World of Doctors and Patients*](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0521835690/ref=ord_cart_shr?ie=UTF8&m=ATVPDKIKX0DER)Cambridge University Press, 2009: 186-203.

Bettyann Holtzmann Kevles, "Looking through Women: The Development of Ultrasound and Mammography." Chapter 10 of *Naked to the Bone: Medical Imaging in the Twentieth Century*. Addison-Wesley, 1997: 228-260.

Susan Gubar, *Memoir of a Debulked Woman: Enduring Ovarian Cancer*, 2012. Selections.

James Jones, “A Moral Astigmatism” & “A Notoriously Bad Blood,” Ch. 1 and 2 of *Bad Blood*, Free Press, 1993: 1-29.

Susan Reverby, “Bioethics, History, and the Study as Gospel” and “The Court of Imagination,” chapters 10 and 11 of *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2009: 187-215.

Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Broadway, 2010, 2011.($8.24) [excerpts]

Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On*. 1987. pp. 11-33, 80-92, 234-242, 263-277, 450-456, 486-503

*A Timeline of HIV/AIDS* <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/aids-timeline/>

*AIDS Retrospective Slideshow: A Pictorial Timeline of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*   
 <http://www.webmd.com/hiv-aids/ss/slideshow-aids-retrospective>

Luc Montagnier, *Virus: The Co-Discoverer of HIV Tracks Its Rampage and Charts the Future*, 1999 [Chapter 2]  
Christopher Dyea and Shambhu Acharya, “How can the sustainable development goals improve global health?   
 Call for papers.” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. October 2017: 666-667.

Assignment 4 articles,which are available in pdf on Canvas, are noted on the last page of the syllabus.

**TIPS:** **Print the syllabus and download pdf files of course texts before leaving the US.** We will reference texts during class discussions, so having access to print or electronic versions (on laptop, tablet, or phone) during class is helpful. Purchasing plays by Edson and Feldshuh and bringing these to GTL is recommended.

**ADAPTS:** The Atlanta Office of Disability Services assists students self-identifying as having a disability to obtain reasonable accommodations. Documentation of disability is required to determine appropriate accommodations or modifications that may be helpful on campus. See <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>

**INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:** The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** If you quote, paraphrase, or summarize information that you originally obtained from a written (print or Internet) or a verbal source in your written assignment, this source reference should be cited in your text. You should use MLA style in your papers for this course: references should be parenthetically made within your essay, and references to texts not on the course reading list should be linked to a works cited section. Questions about appropriate forms of citation can be asked of the course instructor or the reference staff at the library. You should become familiar with the provisions of the Georgia Tech academic honor code and the policies governing violations of the honor code, both published in the Georgia Tech course catalog. For more information, see [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu)

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATION [More information is available on the assignment handout]:** Due dates for the writing assignments are listed in the syllabus.Your writing assignments will provide opportunities to extend classroom discussions and to meditate more thoughtfully on course topics. Class discussions depend on your analyses of the readings and your contributions to the conversations. Your essays should build on your reading and the class discussions. Please come to each class prepared to participate in discussions after having read and thought about the text/s assigned for that day, bringing your ideas and questions to introduce into the discussion.

**REPORTS:** During each class a student will lead us through and share a short (5-8 minute) analysis of the text and topic, summarizing the reading’s focus, evaluating its meaning and construction, and providing a question or two for class discussion. In preparing your presentation, consider what you learned from the reading, how it can apply to other readings, and which stylistic features of the text and aspects of its argument deserve consideration. You should consult the instructor if you have questions about your presentation. Remember that your contribution as a presenter should facilitate class conversations as you formulate appropriate questions that fit the course topics, provide a thoughtful way of approaching textual issues, and report on information gleaned from reading primary and critical material. Sign up for reports as soon as possible;“R:” indicates a report topic.

**GRADING:** All written assignments should be posted to the Dropbox section of the class tsquare site. Any postings should be in the body of the message (not sent as attachments). Late assignments will not be accepted unless you arrange with the instructor in advance of the due date.

Final grades will be calculated according to the following proportion and graded by the instructor named here:

Assignment 1 (short essay on relationship of doctor/nurse and patient): 15% of final grade *[Senf]*

Assignment 2 (short essay on ethics, culture, medical technology) 15% of final grade *[Senf]*

Assignment 3 (short essay on public health, ethics) 15% of final grade *[Colatrella]*

Assignment 4 (team presentations on medical ethics article): 20% of final grade *[Colatrella]*

In-class oral report/leadership of one class discussion: 10% of final grade *[Both]*

General class participation/weeks 1-3: 5% of final grade *[Senf]*   
 General class participation/weeks 4-11: 10% of final grade *[Colatrella]*

In-class writings: 10% of final grade *[Colatrella]*

**GRADING SCALE:** 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, less than 60=F

**ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED IN THIS COURSE:** Because class discussion and in-class assignments make up a significant percentage of the final grade, excessive absences (more than 2) could result in an unsatisfactory mark. Submit the appropriate documents to the instructor for medical, athletic, or other justified absences. Extended absences away from campus for family, medical, or legal reasons should be reported to Dr. Paul Voss at Georgia Tech Lorraine. The Georgia Tech Office of Student Life in Atlanta also has information: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/class-attendance>

**SCHEDULE:**

Week 1 Relationship of doctor and patient, diagnosis, therapy, ethics of research. Readings by Williams

and Reiser.  
Week 2 Development of evidence-based medicine. Readings by Reiser and Kevles  
Week 3 Conflicts between medical therapy and research. Readings by Gubar and Edson.

Weeks 4-5 Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Readings by Jones, Feldshuh, Reverby.

Weeks 6-8 Medical research studies, patients’ rights, journalistic ethics, public health. Readings by

Skloot, Shilts. Screening of *And the Band Played On* (Dir. R. Spottiswoode)

Weeks 8-11 Ethics, sustainability, and public health: The UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Team presentations on articles about public health.