COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Hartley Jafine; hartley.jafine@learnlink.mcmaster.ca
COURSE TIME & LOCATION: Thursdays - 11:30-2:20 MDCL 3024

OFFICE/OFFICE HOURS: You can usually find me in MDCL 2231 on Thursdays after class, Mondays before 11:30 and Wednesdays between 1:30-2:30. You are free to visit anytime during the term to discuss your progress or anything course (or non-course) related.

If you would like to arrange a specific time to meet on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday please let me know and we can schedule a time.

Novels, one would have thought, would have been devoted to influenza; epic poems to typhoid, odes to pneumonia; lyrics to a toothache.

Virginia Woolf, On Being Ill

Scientists are actually preoccupied with accomplishment. So they are focused on whether they can do something. They never stop to ask if they should do something. They conveniently define such considerations as pointless.

Michael Crichton, Jurassic Park

COURSE DESCRIPTION
As the course title suggests, this course will examine and explore representations of health and science and its impact on society through a variety of selected novels, plays, and poems. The course aims to develop literary analysis as well as analytic and creative writing skills. In class we will explore literature through a variety of methods, including discussion, debate, and creative, arts-based methods.

Many of the texts reflect contemporary social issues and the class will have an opportunity to investigate how themes in the texts connect with topics relevant to our society/culture.

COURSE TEXT LIST
Blindness – Jose Saramago
Dying to the Thin – Linda Carson
Wit – Margaret Edson
Ball and Other Funny Stories about Cancer – Brian Lobel
*Blindness, Dying to Be Thin, Wit, Ball and Other Funny Stories About Cancer, When Breath Becomes Air, and the Custom Courseware should be available at the campus bookstore.

**EVALUATION (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

In-class/online participation and discussion (15%)

Due to the nature of the course, participation is essential to the pedagogical process. Students are expected to attend class and have readings (and any assignments) completed. There will be opportunities for critical discussion of the readings both in class and online. Mini writing assignments may be assigned throughout the semester and include personal critical responses/reflections to the texts and other creative work.

Essay #1 (25%) – Due **Friday February 16, 2018**

(1500-2000 words)

Evaluation will be based upon the following criteria:

- Original, clear and well defined research statement/thesis
- Precise and original argumentation throughout the paper to support your thesis
- Effective use of evidence from course readings (as well as external sources, if applicable)
- Fluidity and clarity of writing style

Essay #2 (35%) – Due **Friday March 30, 2018**

(2000-2500 words)

Evaluation is based on the same criteria as essay #1

Seminar Presentations (25%) – **Assigned Dates**

Seminar presentations should pose important questions, stimulate discussion, and engage with the readings for the assigned week. Additionally, you will be responsible for bringing in at least one additional resource that will further our exploration of the literature and/or themes.

Your responsibility is to introduce us to the readings, elicit discussion, facilitate exercises, and/or help the class navigate through the readings/engage with themes inspired by the texts.
READING OUTLINE:

January 4 – Introduction

Epidemics; Responses to Epidemics; AIDS
January 11 – Blindness, An Enemy of the People, Down from Heaven, Station Eleven
January 18 – Blindness, The Plague, Angels in America, And the Band Played On

Anorexia; Bulimia; Body Image; “Beauty”
January 25 - Dying to be Thin, Wasted, Lighter Than My Shadow, Reasons to Be Pretty, The Shape of Things, Boys Get Anorexia Too, Hunger

Depression
February 1 – 4:48 Psychosis, The Bell Jar, Suicide’s Room

Cancer
February 8 – When Breath Becomes Air, Ball and Other Funny Stories About Cancer, Notes to My Prostate

Reading Week

Cancer, Scleroderma, and Orphan Diseases
February 22 – When Breath Becomes Air, Wit, Pacifist Guide to the War on Cancer, Mom’s Cancer, Voices of Scleroderma, Brain on Fire

Narrative Medicine; Health Care Professional Narratives
March 1 - Narrative Medicine, In Our Hands: On Becoming Doctors, From the Other Side of the Fence, The Empathy Exams, The Night Shift, Vitals
March 8 – Teeth, Prostho Plus, Maisy, Charley & The Wobby Tooth, Broken Bridges
March 15 – What Doctors Feel, Black Man in a White Coat, Life on the Ground Floor, In the Land of Invisible Women

Ethics of Science
March 22 – Frankenstein, Jurassic Park, Never Let Me Go
March 29 – Frankenstein, Fortitude

April 5 – Final Class/Wrap Up
**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

*McMaster Policy on Academic Integrity:*

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour 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 behaviour 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: [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://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.

**COURSE MODIFICATIONS**

The instructor, program and the 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 modifications become necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given. Students will be provided with an explanation and an opportunity to comment. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and the course website/LearnLink weekly during term. Any significant changes will be made in consultation with the BHSc Assistant Dean.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT**

*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 email sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities. In consultation with the BHSc Assistant Dean.