This course examines the writings of contemporary physician-authors. It focuses on the books that doctors write—the stories they tell—while also critically engaging their works both in discussion and by reading a selection of original chapters from leading scholars in medical humanities who analyze these writings.

The class consists of a number of seminar sessions (typically 8 to 10) that focus on assigned readings and other materials.

### Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. articulate the significance of the writings of contemporary physician-authors (i.e., describe the reasons why doctors write);
2. analyze key themes in these writings; and
3. critically engage these works in seminar discussions.

### Material Covered:

Sessions focus on works of fiction and nonfiction written by physician-authors, including Oliver Sacks, Danielle Ofri, Atul Gawande, Perri Klass, Abraham Verghese, and more. Each class meeting is discussion-based, not lecture-based—that is, the class meetings are conducted as a humanities-style graduate seminar.

### Skills Acquired:

After taking this course, students will acquire skills in:

1. critical engagement with works by physician-authors; and
2. identifying and analyzing the purposes of these writings and the key themes.

### Activities Of Elective

Students will attend 3 sessions per week, each approximately 3-4 hours to account for 10 hours of structured time. The sessions will be discussion-based. Students will have assigned readings, including works by physician-authors supplemented by chapters written by medical humanities scholars about each of the physician-authors. All students will lead one class session, presenting brief descriptions of the readings, identifying key themes, and leading discussion. Students will be evaluated in terms of attendance, class participation, and their presentations, in connection with the three learning objectives.

### Number Of New Patients/Student/Week:

N/A; students will not see patients

### Responsibilities Of Student For Assigned Patients:

N/A

See sample course outline below.

### Scheduled Duties of Student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of rounds on patients</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presents patients to preceptor or attending physician</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly schedule of required teaching sessions</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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See sample course outline below.

1. Introduction and Samuel Shem

   Nathan Carlin, “Introduction,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

   Samuel Shem, *The House of God*

2. Richard Selzer

   Richard Selzer, *The Doctor Stories*

   Tony Miksanek, “Richard Selzer” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*
3. Oliver Sacks

Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*
Tom Koch, “Oliver Sacks” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

4. Perri Klass

Perri Klass, *Baby Doctor*, revised edition
Seema Yasmin, “Perri Klass” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

5. Abraham Verghese

Abraham Verghese, *Cutting for Stone*
Kaarkuzhali Babu Krishnamurthy, “Abraham Verghese,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

6. Atul Gawande

Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal*
Thomas Harter, “Atul Gawande,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

7. Danielle Ofri

Danielle Ofri, *When We Do Harm*
Susan Stagno, “Danielle Ofri,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

8. Paul Kalanithi

Paul Kalanithi, *When Breath Becomes Air*
Lise Saffran, “Paul Kalanithi,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

9. Damon Tweedy

Damon Tweedy, *Black Man, White Coat*
Keisha Ray, “Damon Tweedy,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

10. Louise Aronson

Louise Aronson, *Elderhood*
Craig Klugman, “Louise Aronson,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

11. Arthur Kleinman

Arthur Kleinman, *The Soul of Care*
Carol Levine, “Arthur Kleinman,” in *Contemporary Physician-Authors*

12. Sandeep Jauhar

Sandeep Jauhar, *Intern*

Describe Optional Rounds And Activities, If Any:
N/A

Other Required Activities:

| Reading/review of current literature | Yes |
| Writing or presenting a paper       | Yes |
| Other                              | Participation in class discussions and Presenting at least one session, which will entail summarizing the book, identifying key themes, and posing discussion questions. |

How Is Student Evaluated:

Students will be evaluated in terms of their attendance (60%), participation in class sessions (20%), and class presentation(s) (20%). A previously-developed rubric will guide the evaluation of each category.

Who Evaluates Students:

Faculty/course director, Nathan Carlin, PhD