What is suffering, and how does it differ from pain? What are some common, humane approaches to suffering? As doctors, while we seek to respond to others’ suffering, how can we best take care of ourselves? To address these questions, students will discuss short readings from literature, philosophy, religion, and sociology. They will also become familiar with narrative medicine and how, by practicing it, they can cultivate greater awareness of the different dimensions of suffering. Students will be expected to write two short papers: one on the ethical basis for their own response to suffering, and a second on their plan for self-care.

The course will be offered as an elective for first-year and second-year students. It will include six sessions, meeting each Tuesday (5:30-7 p.m.) from October 11 to November 15.

1. What is suffering, and why is it a problem?
   - Viktor Frankl, excerpt from *Man’s Search for Meaning* (~5 pages)

2. What are traditional religious responses to suffering?
   - *Medical Humanities: An Introduction*, “Suffering and Hope” (pages 358-70)
   - Albert Schweitzer, “Reverence for Life,” *Anthology* (259-68)

3. What are traditional secular responses to suffering?
   - James Wright, “Saint Judas” (1 page)
   - short writing assignment given (due next session)

4. How can we be aware of our patients’ suffering?
   - Howard Brody, *Stories of Sickness* (65-80)
   - Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (131-51)

5. How can we care for ourselves?
   - Allan Peterkin, excerpt from *Staying Human During Residency Training* (81-91)
   - short writing assignment given (due next session)

6. How can we care for each other?
   - Allan Peterkin, excerpt from *Staying Human During Residency Training* (92-113)

Grading Rubric
Pass/Fail Course
50% Attendance (must attend 5/6 sessions)
30% Participation in Group Discussion
20% Passing Grade on Both Writing Assignments