Pathographies of Mental Illness

Spring 2017

Basic Course Information

Course Title: Suffering: Pathographies of Mental Illness
Course Information: Nursing: Dr. Rozmus Independent Study; Dentistry: DBEC 5009-001; and Medicine: Extracurricular Elective (formerly known as “Bluebook Credit”)
Course Director: Nathan Carlin, PhD (Nathan.Carlin@uth.tmc.edu)
Affiliated Faculty: Cathy Rozmus, RN, PhD, School of Nursing; Deborah Franklin, DDS, School of Dentistry; Luca Lavagnino, MD, PhD, Department of Psychiatry
Prerequisites: None
Semester Hours: Nursing: 1 Credit; Dentistry = .5 Credit; Medicine = Extracurricular Elective (formerly known as “Bluebook Credit”)
Method of Instruction: Discussion
Target Audience: Graduate Students/Graduate Level

Course Description

This course asks: What is the moral meaning of mental illness? What is it like to be mentally ill? How can we, as healthcare professionals, best care for sufferers of mental illness, as well as their families and friends? To answer these questions, we turn to sufferers and their loved ones, as this course explores (auto)biographical accounts of mental illness—a literary genre sometimes referred to as “pathography.” The class will consist of five sessions. Each session will focus on a pathography of mental illness. As such, this course is reading-intensive.

It should be noted that each class meeting will be discussion-based, not lectured-based—that is, the class meetings will be conducted as a humanities-style graduate seminar.

Course Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. identify, in class discussions, moral and ethical issues in a particular pathography of mental illness;
2. apply theoretical insights, in class discussions, from humanities writings to a pathography of mental illness; and
3. describe, in class discussions, how the reading of pathographies of mental illness can improve one’s clinical skills.

Evaluation and Requirements

Participation 100% (minimum of 4 sessions)

Participation. Participation in four of the five sessions is required for credit. Make-up papers (a 1-page/500 words, single-spaced summary and analysis of the assigned reading) will also be permitted for missed sessions beyond the allotted absence. In other words, make-up papers are
only required if more than one session is missed (no papers are required if you attend four sessions).

Course Limit

This course will be interprofessional, involving students from the School of Dentistry, the School of Nursing, and the Medical School. Enrollment will be limited to:

- 5 Medical Students;
- 5 Nursing Students; and
- 5 Dental and/or Dental Hygiene Students.

Course Dates and Time
January 31, February 7, March 7, March 28, April 18
5:30 – 7:00 PM (except for the final session, because of film viewing)

Course Place
Jesse Jones Library Building
Suite 410 (The McGovern Center), Conference Room

Course Texts
Darkness Visible, William Styron
An Unquiet Mind, Kay Jamison
Just Checking, Emily Colas
Dry, Augusten Burroughs
Another Bullshit Night in Suck City, Nick Flynn

Buying Books

Students should buy the required texts ahead of time from Amazon.com (or a book retailer such as BarnesandNoble.com, Thriftbooks.com, or PowellsBooks.com), as these texts will not be available in the campus bookstore. The articles and book chapters will be available on Blackboard.
Outline of Class

1. January 31, 2017
   **Depression**
   
   *Reading*
   
   1) William Styron, *Darkness Visible*
   2) Rose Styron, “Strands”
   3) Emma Coles et al., “Decayed and Missing Teeth and Oral-Health-Related Factors: Predicting Depression in Homeless People”
   4) Anne Hawkins, “Pathography: Patient Narratives of Illness”

2. February 7, 2017
   **Bipolar Disorder**
   
   *Reading*
   
   1) Kay Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind*
   2) Steven Miles, “A Challenge to Licensing Boards: The Stigma of Mental Illness”

3. March 7, 2017
   **Substance Abuse**
   
   *Reading*
   
   1) Augusten Burroughs, *Dry*
   2) Eric Cassell, “Diagnosing Suffering: A Perspective”

4. March 28, 2017
   **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder**
   
   *Reading*
   
   1) Emily Colas, *Just Checking*

5. April 18, 2017

Homelessness

Reading

1) Nick Flynn, Another Bullshit Night in Suck City

2) Arthur Frank, “The Capacities of Stories”

Class Movie – Being Flynn

*Dinner will be served.

**Class will meet at 6pm at Dr. Carlin’s home:

3923 Driscoll Street, Houston, Texas, 77098. Please enter around the right side of the house.