General Education 1300 – section 17
First-Year Seminar – Fall 2009
MWF 11:30 in CGC 240
**Topic: In Sickness and In Health**
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Goals and Requirements for the First-Year Seminar
March 19, 1999 – adopted by the faculty. *(This course is unique in that the whole faculty prescribes its requirements.)*

1) **Goals**
   a) To develop ability to weigh evidence, critically evaluate ideas and arguments, and make reasonable judgments.
   b) To develop ability to generate ideas, create arguments, and think independently.
   c) To develop research and writing skills.
   d) To develop discussion skills.

2) **Assessment guidelines**
   a) At least 20 pages of evaluated written work.
   b) At least one evaluated presentation as well as active participation in informal discussion.
   c) Required attendance; policy discussed in syllabus.
   d) Writing and oral component each must count for at least 30% of grade.

Honor Code:
The course will be governed by the approved policies associated with the Honor Code.

Course Overview:
The physician patient relationship is special. This interaction is based on the trust that the patient places in the physician and the physician reciprocates by bringing expertise that addresses a specific health issue. We each live in a society that makes demands on our health. Societal pressures as well as the promise of increasing medical knowledge results in each individual calling upon the health establishment far more often than say fifty years ago. As a commodity, medicine now consumes 16% of the gross national product. No matter how frequent the access to the health care delivery system is or how it is paid for, the process ultimately boils down to the physician patient relationship. This medical social contract is highly intriguing and it is the focus of this seminar: In sickness and in health.
Primary Reading List (number in parenthesis, Amazon price)

1) *Tube Feeding: from Confessions of a Knife (published 1979)*
Richard Selzer
Distributed to the class as a .doc.

2) *Free: a short story (published in 1918)*
Theodore Dreiser
Distributed to the class as a .pdf.

3) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
Anne Fadiman
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998
ISBN: 0374525641 $15.00 ($10.20)

4) *Medicine and Culture: Revised Edition*
Lynn Payer
ISBN: 0805048030 $16.00 ($10.88)

5) *Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advance of Teaching*
Abraham Flexner
Distributed to the class as a .pdf.

6) *Time to Heal*
Kenneth M. Ludmerer
ISBN: 0195181360 $39.95 ($30.36 – there used to be a less expensive edition)

7) *How Doctors Think*
Jerome Groopman
Mariner, 2007
ISBN: 978-0-547-05364-6 $15.95 ($10.37)

8) *Patient, Heal Thyself: How the new medicine puts the patient in charge*
Robert M. Veatch
Oxford University Press 2009
ISBN: 978-0-19-531372-7 $29.95 (still too new to be discounted)
9) **On the Social Contract**  
Jean-Jacques Rousseau  
Dover Thrift  2003  
ISBN:  0-486-42692-0  $7.95

10) **The Medicalization of Society: On the transformation of human conditions into treatable disorders.**  
Peter Conrad  
Johns Hopkins University Press 2007  
ISBN:  978-0-8018-85853 $20.00 ($17.10)

**Course Objectives:**

I. We will begin our journey by exploring the relationship between husband and wife: one terminally ill and the other the primary caregiver. This initial exposure serves to view poor health not from the perspective of the patient but rather the caregiver. Readings 1 and 2 (will be posted on the T-Learn site) also must considered from the vantage of author as well. I will stress writing style through these examples.

II. Our third reading has a great deal of meat on its bones. Anne Fadiman records the interactions of a Hmong immigrant family with the American medical establishment. In this early 80’s slice of life we discover a physician (represented by the medical staff of the Merced County Hospital) hesitantly interacting with a juvenile patient (represented by an animist Lee family of seventeen). Quite frankly the social contract between physician and patient fails in this story. Yet upon reflection, does the social contract actually unravel? We will have our work cut out for us as we think about Fadiman’s work dealing with a clash of cultures.

III. Our fourth reading travels down a different road. Physicians reflect the societies from which they come. Do physicians from Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States practice medicine differently? Lynn Payer, a medical science writer, argues yes. How does the sense of a national culture and its health payment system affect health care delivery? Payer hints at this controversy, albeit as it was twenty years ago. It would be instructive if we could put Lynn Payer, Michael Moore, and Alexis de Tocqueville together for a discussion about health care delivery.
IV. Our fifth reading appears quite long, but you can work through it in one night. Hypothesize the following: a major private endowment contacts and asks you to write what amounts to a term paper on the state of the medical education in the United States. You spend a year on the job and the study is published. As a result of the work, half the medical schools in the United States are closed and the structure of American medical education is forever changed. What a term paper, as it were! We will take a look at medical education beginning with Abraham Flexner’s report. Our sixth reading updates Flexner’s report which appeared in 1910. Kenneth Ludmerer looks at where medical education is today and how it is financed. It is not an easy read; however it is very insightful and potentially rewarding.

V. Readings 7 and 8 are contemporary musings of both sides of the physician patient relationship. Jerome Groopman is an oncologist at Harvard Medical School who has captured how doctors think about what they do. Robert Veatch is a well-known medical ethicist who explores the patient side of the equation. These readings address the heart of the physician patient relationship.

VI. Reading 9 is brief. Rousseau’s thoughts permeate the Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Thomas Jefferson read Rousseau’s work as well as Thomas Hobbes (Leviathan) and John Locke (Second Treatise of Government). We will have a very difficult job of trying to tie the political view of a social contract with a medical view of social contract. If we do it well, we might want to impress others with our thinking.

VII. The last reading we may or may not get to. It is experimental. Peter Conrad is a medical sociologist at Brandeis. He writes of external pressures on the physician patient relationship. It may well be one of the more thought provoking readings on our list. At the least, it is controversial.

Course Topic Schedule: approximate

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<tr>
<th>date</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/29 – 09/11</td>
<td>Selzer and Drieser</td>
<td>Paper One: being ill</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/14 – 09/30</td>
<td>Fadiman</td>
<td>Paper Two: clash of cultures</td>
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<td>10/02 – 10/16</td>
<td>Payer</td>
<td>Presentation: country medicine</td>
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<td>10/19 – 10/26</td>
<td>Flexner and</td>
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<td>10/28 – 11/13</td>
<td>Groopman and Viatch</td>
<td>Debate: the failings of the physician and that of the patient</td>
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<td>11/16 – 11/20</td>
<td>Rousseau</td>
<td>A Panel in Time: how would Rousseau and Tocqueville interact with Payer and Moore?</td>
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<td>11/23 – 11/30</td>
<td>Conrad</td>
<td>Paper Three: should medicine be a commodity?</td>
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<td>12/02 – 12/07</td>
<td>Symposium</td>
<td>Formal reading of a paper.</td>
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**Comment**
Specific information about the course, assignments, etc., is purposefully vague so that tasks can be completed well rather than dates being matched. Generally assignments will be announced at least one week in advance.

I would hope that I am able to meet you out-of-class at least once a week. We have a great deal to talk about and to think about. If you have Skype, perhaps we can use that medium to communicate on a regular basis.

It is my goal to produce a collection of class materials by the end of the semester. I have an example of what we did last year. Please understand I expect revisions of work, unless of course, you write that well.

As the semester progresses you will meet Mrs. MacAlpine, who is the science reference librarian. She can help you get the most out of library resources. Also I will ask Mr. Robert Chapman to speak to the class about digital issues like TLearn and Skype. I will have Dr. Neal, Director of the Counseling Center come by and talk about depression as it is associated with one of our readings. I will also ask Dr. McCaughrin to make an appearance. He is a professor of Health Care Administration at Trinity. I have several other people that may visit the class via Skype as the semester progresses.

**Grading**
1) 50% of the grade will come from writing
2) 30% of the grade will come from oral presentation and participation in discussions
3) 20% of the grade will come from special projects

**Office Hours and Contact:**
CLS 153, X7243, rblyston@trinity.edu
Tuesday and Wednesday 1:00 to 4:00 pm; and by appointment.

Lauren Holmgren is our peer tutor. Her email is lholmgre@trinity.edu She will announce her schedule as the class gets started. Please understand that I have a great deal of confidence in Lauren and strongly suggest you get to know her well. She can help you figure out what I am trying to get each of you to do. She took the first version of this course three years ago and served as my peer tutor for the second version of this course last semester. She is medical school bound.