

English 1101H.224 Meanings of Illness and Health

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Office Hours: M 3:30-5:00, F 10:00-11:30,
and by appointment

Term: Fall 2006
Class Location: BHC 127
Class Hours: MWF 2:30-3:20

Course Goals: ENC 1101H has two major groups of objectives. The first set has to do with the writing, researching, and thinking skills required of all university students. Along those lines, ENC 1101H will help you to:

- * Raise your awareness of your own writing processes and the necessity of revision;
- * Produce effective writing tailored for specific audiences;
- * Gain confidence and control as writer;
- * Participate actively and effectively in discussions and presentations of your ideas;
- * Be able to give a piece of writing a clear central idea or thesis;
- * Organize your writing clearly and logically;
- * Evaluate sources of information and use appropriate support for your ideas in your writing;
- * Enhance your critical thinking skills through the use of close analytical reading;
- * Format your writing appropriately; and
- * Understand and use the conventions of punctuation, syntax, and grammar in your writing.

This particular section of English 1101H will use the lens of health and illness to hone these skills. It is designed to raise your awareness about the social and cultural aspects of health and illness by increasing your interpretive skills and sensitivities regarding literature, film, and art. In a practical sense, it may also help you to understand your own future role as a health-care professional and/or as a “consumer” of medical care, either for yourself or a family member. As a group we will discuss and challenge our own ideas about health, illness, and bodily experience more generally, as well as our ideas about science, objectivity, and subjectivity, so that we may understand the contingency and development of these ideas. We will also consider the ways in which literature, film, and art can be both repositories and shapers of cultural notions more generally. Although the course will focus mainly on depictions of illness, we should never forget that illness is always situated in relation to what we perceive as “lost” to illness, that is, good health, and so ideas about healthiness and fitness will form an underpinning that we should occasionally examine.

Course Methods: We will read, discuss, and write about various genres in which health and illness are represented: paintings, photography, poems, fiction, essays, journalism, and film. We will also read texts of a critical nature, which comment on various aspects of the practice of medicine and cultural understandings of the body. Each student will

write in a variety of modes including personal and fictional narratives; definitional, reflective, research, and analytical essays; and professional e-mail.

Required Texts:

a style manual of your choice (*Chicago Manual*, *MLA Handbook*)

Jim Knipfel, *Slackjaw*

Frank Huyler, *The Blood of Strangers*

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* and *AIDS and Its Metaphors*

Lynn Payer, *Medicine & Culture*

Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

Lucy Grealy, *The Autobiography of a Face*

Grading:

Assignment #1 (Narrative and Its Analysis—3 parts)	10 possible points
Assignment #2 (Rhetorical Analysis)	15
Assignment #3 (Medical Ethics Group Presentation)	5
Assignment #4 (Complex Text Edition)	10
Assignment #5 (Historical/Cultural Essay)	20
Other Homework, Quizzes, Participation, Etc. (Please also note the attendance policy)	10
Final Exam	20
Total possible points	100

Final Grade Scale and Basic Math

A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79,

C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = 0-59

Please be responsible for keeping up with your grades. To see where you stand, you can add up the number of points you have so far received, then calculate it with a simple fractional formula, like so:

$$\frac{\text{number of points you have}}{\text{number of points possible}} = \frac{x}{100}$$

Then you multiply the number of points you have by 100 and then divide by the number of possible points so far. For example, if you have received 8/10 on Assignment #1, 4.6 out of 5 on your Definition Essay, and you missed a 2-point quiz, you have a total of 12.6/17. So, multiply $12.6 \times 100 = 1260 \div 17 = 74$, approximately, so you would be carrying a C at that point.

General Expectations:

Attendance, participation, and timely completion of reading and writing assignments is crucial for this course. Always *come* to class, give our subjects some *thought*, be willing to *share* your thoughts, and *come prepared* because discussion-based learning cannot happen if you are not primed. I will not be feeding you answers; you must have your brain turned on so that you can find answers yourself. In addition, note that your participation grade will take into account the quality, helpfulness, and seriousness of your comments both on short exercises and in class discussion.

* Not only will repeated **absence** negatively affect your participation grade, but at a certain point it will mean failure in the course. After three unexcused absences, you can expect your grade to start falling. **Please note that if you miss enough classes, you will automatically fail the course.** If you have legitimate, *university-sanctioned* absences, then please let me know immediately and provide the necessary documentation.

* **Late and missed work** is not acceptable for this course. The final grade of assignments will be lowered a point for each day (including week-ends) any part of the assignment is not turned in on time. Quizzes cannot be made up. If a student fails to show up for an examination, the student fails the test. If you anticipate a scheduling conflict with an examination, you must consult with me at least two weeks prior to the exam.

* Every student must register his/her current e-mail address with **E-Community**, UCF's electronic communications portal. I may communicate via E-community, and so it is vital that you are enrolled with this service. The web address is <http://ecomunity.ucf.edu>. E-Community is also a way that you can communicate with other students in the course should you miss a class and want to find out your homework assignment.

* Please do come to **office hours** and please use **email**, as well, but do so judiciously and in a timely fashion. Although I want to be available to you and to help you with any questions you may have, like anyone, I have a busy life. In fact, according to my UCF contract, 60% of my work time should be spent on research activities and university service such as committees and program development and only 40% on teaching. Consequently, I cannot be available to students 24/7, and I ask your understanding of that fact. Waiting until the night before an assignment is due before getting started and then sending me panicky questions is not a good idea, and email will likely not solve the problem. Do NOT email me for missed homework assignments, unless you have a sanctioned medical or family emergency. Learn to plan ahead. Learn to gauge professional boundaries. Learn what constitutes a true emergency.

* **Format of papers.** Your assignments should be typed in 12-point Times Roman or equivalent font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins (1.5 at bottom okay). Your name, course number, and the date should appear in the upper right-hand corner of page 1, with subsequent pages numbered. **Please staple or paper-clip securely; loose sheets are devilishly easy for me to lose. Always keep a backup copy of your work.**

* **Writing skills.** Please be careful with typographical, spelling, and grammar errors on major assignments. Although you may not mean it this way, sloppiness in such matters is disrespectful of yourself, your work, and your readers. You will never receive an “A” on a major assignment that contains such errors, and if the work contains an excess of such errors it will be turned back for further revision before I will give it a grade, then marked down for lateness.

* **The University Writing Center** is a free service to all UCF students who want some extra help with their writing, and I recommend that you take advantage of it. Call 823-2197 for an appointment; walk-ins are also welcome as the schedule allows. If you do attend the Writing Center, please attach the forms they give you to the final draft of the paper you turn in to me.

Academic Integrity

Please familiarize yourself with UCF’s policies on academic honesty in the section on “Academic Behavior Standards” in the *UCF Golden Rule*. Work turned in by you under your name should be written by you, and unless indicated otherwise it should be new work, not work recycled from high school or another course. In addition, any source you use, whether you quote it directly or paraphrase it, *must* be cited properly. Ignorance is no excuse and will not be considered once you have “accidentally” plagiarized, so please ask if you have any questions. The penalties for academic dishonesty can be severe and include expulsion from the university. Please know that I will encourage the harshest penalties in cases involving students in my courses.

Disability Accommodations

UCF encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any kind of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.

The Gordon Rule

“ENC1101 and 1102 are subject to the Gordon Rule, Rule 6A-10.030 of the Florida Administrative Code requiring students to write a minimum of four (4) 'college level assignments.' Students in a Gordon Rule class must earn a grade of C- or better to receive course credit.”— UCF Composition Program

Major Assignments: These will be described in more detail in class and in assignment sheets given out at appropriate times during the semester. These descriptions are designed to give you a brief overview.

Assignment #1: Narrative and Its Analysis: Some of this assignment will be done in class, but it will involve exploring the ways that different genres affect our representations of experience of illness and good health. We will *draw* and *tell* about these in class. The written portions will consist of A&B) a drawing and a written narrative of one of your own experiences of illness or good health or one of someone close to you; C) a written account of one of your classmates’ experiences told about in

class; and D) an analysis of the differences between the various genres and perspectives you will have inhabited.

Assignment #2: Rhetorical Analysis: Choose one particular story in Frank Huyler’s *The Blood of Strangers* and one of the conditions represented in it—gang violence (gunshot wounds), AIDS, bi-polar disorder, heart attack, car accidents, Huntington’s disease, domestic violence, suicide, pneumonia, drug or alcohol abuse, rheumatoid arthritis, STDs, or drug allergies. Then find another representation of that condition—it can be an ad (even on TV, as long as you bring it in on DVD), an article, a website, another story—really anything where that condition is discussed, pictured, or narrated. Then, using the rhetorical concepts discussed in class, do a comparative analysis of the Huyler story and the other item.

Assignment #3: Medical Ethics Group Presentation and Written Summary:

Working in groups, you will be asked to take a look at an ethical issue in medicine and to see what various approaches to the issue might mean for its resolution, as well as at how the limitations of traditional medical case structures might be ameliorated. Each group will be provided with a particular medical case to present and discuss with the class as a whole. You will need to incorporate alternative perspectives (other sources) that shed light on or confuse further the issue at hand.

Assignment #4: Edition of a Complex Text: One of the most difficult things about moving from high school to college work is that the demands of reading grow much greater: you will have more reading, but you will also have reading to do that is not from textbooks written at a certain level for ease of comprehension. You will be reading numerous difficult “texts”—and these may include charts and graphs and data sets—and you will need to know what to do when you encounter something you cannot understand. For this assignment, we will spend a week going over in great detail “Utopian Bodies” (Chapter Five of David B. Morris’s *Illness and Culture in the Postmodern Age*). Your graded portion of this endeavor will consist of an analytical “edition” of a section of this text. (It’s called an edition because editors often are responsible for including explanatory notes and references, especially for historical texts that are hard for us to understand now.) Don’t worry—when the time comes, we will discuss more about what an edition is and how to do one!

Assignment #5: Cultural/Historical Essay: Each of you will select a disease (e.g., HIV, CFS, heart disease, Huntington’s disease) or other bodily/health issue (pregnancy, weightlifting, antibiotic overuse, masculinity, aging, alternative health practices, e.g.) to research throughout the semester. You MAY (but don’t have to) use the same topic you selected for your Assignment #2 (Rhetorical Analysis). Your final semester project will involve your own analysis of the historical development of ideas about this condition or a cultural analysis of how this condition is viewed in our society or in some other society. This project will have several phases over the course of the semester: 1) a topic proposal, including a definition of your term and a description of your approach; 2) an annotated bibliography; 3) an opening page with informal outline; 4) a rough draft for in-class workshop; and 5) a final draft.

Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is only a guideline. It is not etched in stone, and a number of things may affect it and change it. If any major changes are necessary, then I will give you a new printed schedule; however, you are responsible for keeping up with any minor alterations in the schedule.

- M 8/21** Course introduction. Discussion of “pictures of health.” The relationship between health and beauty. Assignment 1A&B given.
- W 8/23** The impact of genre on communication. Assignment 1C&D given. Due: Assignment 1A&B.
- F 8/25** Positionality. Due: Assignment 1C&D.
- M 8/28** Discussion of images of blindness. Due: Knipfel, ix-62.
- W 8/30** Due: Knipfel, 63-128.
- F 9/1** Implicit arguments in narrative. Due: Knipfel, 129-231.
- M 9/4** LABOR DAY HOLIDAY—No class.
- W 9/6** Positionality: doctor as hero. Watch *Magnificent Obsession* clips. Start reading Huyler.
- F 9/8** Rhetorical concepts. Assignments 2 & 5 given. Continue reading Huyler.
- M 9/11** Positionality: doctor’s take on patients. Due: Huyler, quick read of all stories, focusing on the ones beginning on pp. 3, 21, 51, 79, 85, 105, 119.
- W 9/13** Positionality: doctor as flawed human. Discussion of Huyler, stories beginning on pp. 27, 73, 79, 109, 133, 145.
- F 9/15** Presentations of rhetorical analysis findings. Due: Assignment 2.
- M 9/18** The medical case as narrative form. Due: Montgomery Hunter (handout).
- W 9/20** The limitations of cases. Assignment 3 given. Due: Miles (handout). Bring in style manual you have chosen. Discuss citation and use of sources.
- F 9/22** Library research. Class will meet in the library; details TBA. (Please note that depending on the librarian’s schedule, this week may shift slightly.)

- M 9/25** Health care under pressure: how ethics become compromised. Begin to view *Bringing Out the Dead*.
- W 9/27** *Bringing Out the Dead* cont. Due: Assignment 5A.
- F 9/29** Due: Assignment 3. Class presentations. Assignment 4 given.
- M 10/2** How to read a complex, allusive text. Due: Morris, “Utopian Bodies” (handout). The basics: what you get on a first reading. Focused in-class reading of first paragraph.
- W 10/4** Due: Assignment 4. Discussion of Morris, editions and commentaries.
- F 10/6** Continued discussion of Morris, editions and commentaries. Due: Assignment 5B.
- M 10/9** Historical perspectives on illness and health. Start viewing of *Camille*.
- W 10/11** Finish viewing *Camille*. Due: Start reading Sontag.
- F 10/13** Discuss pictures of ill health. Due: Sontag, 3-36.
- M 10/16** Due: Sontag, 37-87.
- W 10/18** Ideas of health and illness changing. Due: Porter’s “Old Mortality” (handout).
- F 10/20** Workshop on Assignment 5. Due: Assignment 5C.
- M 10/23** Culture and medicine: Differing values. Payer, xi-34.
- W 10/25** Payer, 35-73.
- F 10/27** Payer, 74-155.
- M 10/30** Simulation exercise prep.
- W 11/1** Simulation exercise.
- F 10/3** Simulation exercise debriefing. Due: Write at least a page on what you felt and learned during the simulation exercise, including a description of your role and actions and how others responded to you. Read the Summary (only) of the Institute of Medicine’s report, “Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care.”
<http://newton.nap.edu/books/030908265X/html/1.html>.

- M 10/6** Culture and medicine: East meets West. Fadiman, 3-59.
- W 10/8** Fadiman, 60-153.
- F 10/10** VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY—No class.
- M 10/13** Fadiman, 154-224.
- W 10/15** Fadiman, 225-288.
- F 10/17** Workshop on Assignment 5. Due: Assignment 5D (complete rough draft).
- M 10/20** Return to narrative: story, culture, and historical moment. Grealy, 1-68.
- W 10/22** Grealy, 69-139.
- F 10/24** DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING—No class.
- M 10/27** Grealy, 140-223.
- W 10/29** Due: Assignment 5. Final exam review.
- F 12/1** Reflections, evaluations, and closing comments. Take-home portion of final exam given.

FINAL EXAM: According to the UCF Final Exam Schedule, we will be meeting on W 12/6 from 1:00-3:50 pm. There will be both take-home and in-class portions of your final exam.