

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"WOUNDED STORYTELLERS: NARRATIVES OF ILLNESS IN LITERATURE"

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What is it really like to experience serious illness, even to face the possibility of death? Biomedical research investigates the causes and cures of disease, while social science quantifies and categorizes patients' subjective reactions. But where in all of this are the unfiltered, uncensored voices of the sufferers - the patients themselves? This course will use fictional literature - poetry, short stories, and excerpts from novels - as well as first-person accounts (writings of actual patients) to explore the psychological, emotional, and relational aspects of patient experiences of such conditions as cancer, heart disease, disability, alcoholism, AIDS, and mental illness. We will also examine the power of narrative to bring coherence and meaning to our lives at moments of great physical and emotional crisis. This course may appeal especially to students planning careers in medicine, but is open to anyone. Grade based on attendance, class participation, completion of 5 short (1/2 page) weekly writing assignments and one creative project.

CLASS TIME: Wednesdays, 2-4

LOCATION: Computer Science 209

OFFICE HOURS: W 4-5 Med SCI IB, rm 140E

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OF UNITS: 2

GRADING POLICY: Final grade will be based on attendance (20%), class participation (20%), completion of 5 brief (1/2 page) writing assignments (30%), and a creative project (30%).