Applied Medical Ethics

Reconciling the needs of patients, families and communities with the practical considerations of medical decision making is a nuanced and increasingly complex process. This course provides an overview of current approaches to resolving ethical issues facing clinicians in private office and hospital practices and academic medical settings. The entire span of medical ethics including death and dying issues and research ethics will be covered in case based and current issue formats. Student team debates and a variety of interactive formats will be utilized in the course.

Art of Observation

This course offers medical students a chance to add a humanities element to their course of study, focused particularly on widening their understanding of the historical relationship of collaborative discovery between medicine and art. Students will be introduced to research showing that observational skills for clinical application are proven to be enhanced by learning to look at art, and will be asked to participate in a series of exercises to improve their own acuity of vision and diagnosis.

Dance and Medicine

This curriculum will incorporate ideals from Transformational Learning Theories. John Dirkz describes learning as a “…democratic vision of society and self-actualization of individuals.” He further explains that learning requires an awareness of feelings and emotions within the learning setting. Learning must be meaningful and reflect the relationship of self and society. In the case of this course, students should reflect on their relationship with patients. It is the aim of the Dance and Medicine Course to help students understand the feelings and emotions of self and to further understand the feelings and emotions of others. The committee wants students to find common ground with others and develop relationships that will lead to exceptional patient care. N.B.: Students should wear yoga attire because each session will include movement and dance to help the students understand their own body.

Emotional Intelligence

This course will introduce the humanities in medicine through the dynamic medium of musical composition. Students will be presented with an overview of concepts in music but no musical training is required. The course will involve independent students’ activities during the day (mostly work on compositional projects from the prior class session) plus discussions and composers workshop with the course director during the course sessions. The course director is available to consult on student work through email, and by prior appointment, through Skype (rdammers). Music, through the intentional organization of its elements, can express and evoke emotion and feeling through time (just as we experience feelings through time). Through making expressive musical decisions, a composer can explore and refine their understanding experience of being human. In this instance, composition can provide a platform for physicians to explore
the affective side of their patients and their own experiences of illness, medical procedures, and recovery.

**Observational Drawing for Future Physicians**

Like a master detective, the astute physician is a precise observer. There is no better way to hone one’s observational skills than to learn to accurately record what one sees. Observational drawing teaches students how to pay attention to detail and translate their perceptions into a picture of their own. This course will utilize a “life drawing” environment for a focus on core drawing skills, methods, and materials. Compositional elements, visual perception, proportion, value, line, shape and form relationships will be emphasized in this course. Students will be introduced to various mark making and blocking techniques and a small compliment of drawing materials.

**Opera and Medicine**

Opera is musical drama and provides a heightened sense of emotion through the nonverbal (both in acting, in staging, and of course in the music itself) and verbal (the libretto and the music). Music and socio-cultural analysis are possible because of a dynamic relationship which Lawrence Kramer calls a “network of social, intellectual, and material conditions that strongly, though often implicitly, affect meaning.” While it is embedded in the cultural context of their time, Western operas have explored much of what is essential to the human condition, desires, needs, anxieties, fears, disease, and death. Understanding the depths of the human condition and all of its complexity cannot be reached through a unilateral approach. However, adopting a multimodal approach, such as that offered by opera with its visual and aural sides, brings us closer to this understanding. This is not a simple assertion of music's ineffable power to move the emotions or, on the other hand, a technically advanced theory available only to musicologists. Rather, the course seeks to combine medical and cultural history with literary and dramatic analysis. Just as the barriers separating the different arms of the sciences have begun to dissolve, so to should the divide between science and humanities, the one used to compliment the other. We will explore the portrayal and use of disease and death in five operas as well as the various portrayals of the physician in opera. This course requires student attendance at one live opera.

**Theater and the Role of Role-playing**

Educational activities will focus on topics such as emotion expressed in the dramatic scripts, the embodied physical and vocal reactions of others and the benefits of drama as therapy and as a means to build empathy for others. The goal is to prepare future doctors for the profession by actively engaging them in replicating the standard patient care model, where doctors practice interacting with simulated patients and/or colleagues in constructed, “real life” hospital and office scenarios. Students in the class will construct and perform relevant scenarios with class peers in order to strengthen communication and collaborative skills and to physically practice developing effective strategies to defuse potentially fraught encounters with simulated patients.
Reflective, group discussions will take place and all acting exercises will be based on sound, ensemble based academic practice. We anticipate 10 to 20 students in the class and there will be 2 instructors in the session. The Course Director will be present at each class with a member of the theatre faculty. Additionally, 3 or 4 students from the Department of Theater and Dance will attend the class to demonstrate various acting techniques and exercises. Other presenters may be present depending on the session.

**Exploring Medicine through Composition**

This course will introduce the humanities in medicine through the dynamic medium of musical composition. Students will be presented with an overview of concepts in music but no musical training is required. The course will involve independent students’ activities during the day (mostly work on compositional projects from the prior class session) plus discussions and composers workshop with the course director during the course sessions. The course director is available to consult on student work through email, and by prior appointment, through Skype (rdammers). Music, through the intentional organization of its elements, can express and evoke emotion and feeling through time (just as we experience feelings through time). Through making expressive musical decisions, a composer can explore and refine their understanding experience of being human. In this instance, composition can provide a platform for physicians to explore the affective side of their patients and their own experiences of illness, medical procedures, and recovery. No prior musical experience is required for this course. Music software such as Soundation, provides an environment in which anyone, regardless of musical background or ability, can make expressive musical decisions at some level. While Soundation is geared toward vernacular styles of music, students will be free to create in the musical styles of their choice, as their ability and software allows.

**Medical Cineforum**

Movies have a powerful influence on popular culture. Doctors are among the professionals most frequently portrayed in movies. Hence, cinematic depictions of physicians have the potential to affect public expectations of physicians, and the doctor-patient relationship. The portrayals of doctors in movies at times may be inspiring, at other times disturbing, but are always thought provoking. Empathic physicians will want to know how their patients perceive them and what expectations they bring to the encounter. Through this course, students will explore key themes underlying the portrayal of doctors in the movies, and by doing so, show students aspects of the physician’s persona with which they may otherwise be unfamiliar, and which affect the public perception of our profession. This course will focus on nine movies. Using a written guide, students will independently view the movies, and participate in subsequent discussions led by the course directors.

**Medical Improvisation**
“Medical Improvisation” is a theatre improvisation course in which students will actively engage in a sequence of exercises designed to build their listening, responding, and observation skills. Students will improve their cognition by working creatively in groups as they explore storytelling, character development, role-playing, status, reading emotions, and multi-tasking in the six sessions. Through assigned readings and discussion, students will analyze the relevance of theatre improvisation and its usefulness in the medical workplace. The goal is to prepare future doctors for the profession by actively engaging them in improvisational exercises that allow them to build skills that are essential to their work while providing them with an experience that is fun, imaginative, and creative as an alternative learning experience in their clinical and basic science education.

The Social Mission of Medical Schools

Do medical schools have a mission beyond the successful education of physicians? Should medical schools be accountable to the broader society? Beginning with a review of the landmark 1910 report by Abraham Flexner, Medical Education in the United States and Canada: A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the resulting changes in medical schools, this selective will explore the traditional “metrics” by which these institutions have been externally evaluated and rated. The Historically Black Medical Schools (HBMS) will be utilized as examples of institutions with clearly defined goals and social missions. Recent perspectives on the social missions of medical schools will be incorporated into discussions regarding the future importance of these institutions as change agents to improve society beyond health equity. Students will have the opportunity to review and discuss CMSRU’s mission, vision and values and the relevance of these to the direction currently envisioned for our school. Students will develop a CMSRU social mission scale to delineate the measures of success in achieving a social mission for our school and for other schools.

Writing to Persuade and Convince

Successful physicians must be able to write clearly and convincingly. This is true whether the student plans a career in patient care, education, research, administration, advocacy, population health, or some combination. To write persuasively and convincingly requires more than just good vocabulary and grammar. Persuasive writing requires skill in constructing a logical argument from a set of facts, and presenting that argument in a compelling and elegant essay. Logical arguments often use the classical rhetorical devices of logos, pathos, and ethos. This course will review classical rhetoric, as well as some of the latest science about how an audience responds to persuasive writing. This course also will help students practice crucial writing skills by having them critically analyzing good and bad essays, and by writing short pieces of their own.