Virgina Woolf once wrote, “The merest schoolgirl when she falls in love has Shakespeare or Keats to speak her mind for her, but let a sufferer try to describe a pain in his head to a doctor and language at once runs dry.” Problems of representation are at the heart of the experiences of physical suffering and medical care; how has literature defined and redefined its relationship to these experiences? Topics include empathy and its alternatives, illness and metaphor, and the evolution of the surface-depth model of the self. The course centers on major works of literature that engage the imaginative potential of medicine and the narrative structures of disease, including Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, read alongside paintings (Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*), medical descriptions of disease, diagnostic tools, and film (Ingmar Bergman’s *Cries and Whispers*).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**SEQUENCE OF READINGS**

**Week 1**
April 2  Introduction: What is disease, and what is art?

April 4 From disease as judgment to disease as self-expression

*Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility* (1811)

April 6 Optional: Visit to observe a Neurology Grand Rounds Case Presentation, Stanford University School of Medicine

**Week 2**
April 9 Irony vs. illness: states of *thoroughness* and the modern self

*Sense and Sensibility* (continued)
April 11  Illness and the history of solitude  
\textit{Sense and Sensibility} (continued)

\textbf{Week 3}

April 16  The “case” and narrative form  
\textbf{Robert Louis Stevenson, \textit{Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde} (1886);  
Brief excerpt from \textbf{Cassell, Talking with Patients (1985)} (3 pages)}

April 18  Medicine, literature, and reform  
\textbf{Robert Louis Stevenson, \textit{Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde} (continued)}

April 20-22  
Optional: Frankenstein@200: International Health Humanities Consortium  
Conference, Stanford University

\textbf{Week 4}

April 23  The difficulty of creating a language for physical pain  
\textbf{Sophocles, \textit{Philoctetes} (409 BC)}  
\textbf{McGill Pain Questionnaire} (5 pages)

April 25  Empathy and its alternatives  
\textbf{Sophocles, \textit{Philoctetes} (409 BC) (continued)}  
\textbf{Virginia Woolf, “On Being Ill” (1926)}

Optional: Screening of Ingmar Bergman, \textit{Cries and Whispers} (1972) to be arranged

\textbf{Week 5}

April 30  Looking at the world with the eyes of a confessor, of God, or of a physician: surfaces and the depths of persons  
\textbf{Gustave Flaubert, \textit{Madame Bovary} (1856)}

May 2  Medical frankness  
\textbf{Gustave Flaubert, \textit{Madame Bovary} (continued)}

\textbf{Week 6}
May 7  Illness and representativeness: the outer limits and the heart of the human
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

May 9  Disease and self-transcendence
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (continued)

**Friday, May 11**  
5-page paper due by 5:00 pm

May 14  Damage, modernity, and what it is to be human

May 16  Beauty and disease

**Week 7**

May 21  Symptom and metaphor
*Antonin Artaud*, from *The Theater and Its Double* (1938)

May 23  The spaces of medicine: the hospital, the laboratory, the sickroom, the waiting room

**Week 8**

May 25  1-page description of final paper due by 5:00 pm

**Friday, May 25**

May 28  Memorial Day (no class)

May 30  Illness and art: feeling what it is to be in your body

**Week 10**
June 4    Visit to Lane Library Special Collections, Stanford University School of Medicine

June 6    The history of endings
          Marcel Proust, from *The Guermantes Way* (1920)

**Saturday, June 9    Final Paper due by 7 pm**

**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Seminar attendance and participation (30%)
2. 5-page paper due on Friday, May 11 by 5:00 pm (submitted in hard copy to my office mailbox or in .pdf by email) (30%)
3. Final Paper: 8-10 pages, due by 7:00 pm on Saturday, June 9 (40%)
   1-page description of the final paper (specifying subject and approach) due on Friday, May 25 by 5:00 pm (both submitted in hard copy to my office mailbox or in .pdf by email)

Late Policy: A paper submitted late without advance permission will be penalized by 1/3 of a grade per day (e.g., an A paper becomes an A-).

**Note:** This course meets the Ways requirement for Aesthetic and Interpretive Inquiry (AII). No previous coursework in the Department of English is required to enroll in this course, and freshmen as well as non-majors are very welcome.

**BOOKS ORDERED**

*Please buy these editions, if possible, to ensure common pagination:*


*All other course texts will be available on the course website.*
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**Students with Documented Disabilities**
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: [http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae](http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae)).

**Honor Code**
The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

**Course Material Support**
Stanford University and its faculty are committed to ensuring that all courses are financially accessible to all students. If you are an undergraduate who needs assistance with the cost of course textbooks, supplies, materials and/or fees, you are welcome to ask the Diversity & First-Gen Office for assistance by completing their questionnaire on course textbooks & supplies: [http://tinyurl.com/jpqbarn](http://tinyurl.com/jpqbarn) or by contacting Joseph Brown, the Associate Director of the Diversity and First-Gen Office (jlbrown@stanford.edu; Old Union Room 207). Dr. Brown is available to connect you with resources and support while ensuring your privacy.