Course Description:
Sherwin Nuland often referred to medicine as “the Uncertain Art.” In this course, we will address the role of uncertainty in medicine, and the role that narrative plays in capturing that uncertainty. We will focus our efforts on major authors and texts that define the modern medical humanities, with primary readings by Mikhail Bulgakov, Henry Marsh, Atul Gawande, and Lisa Sanders. Other topics will include the philosophy of science (with a focus on Karl Popper), rationalism and romanticism (William James), and epistemology and scientism (Wittgenstein). Events permitting, trips will take us to the Yale Medical Historical Library, and the Yale Center for British Art.

Required Texts:
1. Henry Marsh – *Do No Harm*
   a. ISBN: 9781250090133  ; $5.39
2. Leo Tolstoy – *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (trans., Louise and Aylmer Maude)
   a. ISBN: 9781798500620  ; $6.99
3. Lisa Sanders – *Every Patient Tells A Story*
   a. ISBN: 9780767922470  ; $12.19
4. Jerome Groopman – *How Doctors Think*
5. Mikhail Bulgakov – *A Young Doctor’s Notebook* (trans., Michael Glenny)
   a. ISBN: 9780099529569  ; $13.85

Other assigned readings (to be made available online):
2. Philippe Ariès – selection, *Death Denied*
7. Nassim Nicholas Taleb, selection, *The Black Swan*
10. Aristotle, selections, *Nicomachean Ethics*
12. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, selection, *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*
15. Carl Von Clausewitz, selection, *On War*
17. Chuang Tzu, selections, *Zhuangzi*
18. Lydia Dugdale, selections, *The Lost Art of Dying*
20. Kate Murphy, “Do You Believe in God, or Is That A Software Glitch?” N.Y. Times, 8/27/16
21. Dostoevsky, selections, Notes From Underground
22. Kierkegaard, selection, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments
23. Pascal, selections, Pensées
25. Witold Gombrowicz, selections, Diary
26. Robert Pirsig, selections, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
27. Blake, selection, Milton – “On Reason and Imagination...”
30. Atul Gawande,
   • “The Learning Curve,” The New Yorker, 1/28/02
   • “When Doctors Make Mistakes,” The New Yorker, 2/1/99
   • “Letting Go,” The New Yorker, 8/2/10
32. Warburton, selections, Philosophy: Basic Readings – Popper, Kuhn, Sokal, Monk
33. Wittgenstein, selections, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and Philosophical Investigations
37. Stephen Hawking, selection, A Brief History of Time
38. Albert Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore, “Note on the Nature of Reality.”
40. George Eliot - selections - Scenes of Clerical Life; Adam Bede; Felix Holt, the Radical; Middlemarch
41. Tolstoy, selections, War and Peace

Recommended Reading (optional)
2. Sherwin Nuland – How We Die
3. Philip Roth – The Anatomy Lesson
5. Harvey Pekar and Joyce Brabner – Our Cancer Year
6. Roz Chast – Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?
7. Sir Thomas Browne – Religio Medici

Course Requirements:
Regular attendance at lectures, as well as informed and active participation in class, is expected.

The grade breakdown will be as follows:
- Presentation: 15%
- Midterm Paper: 25%
- Final Paper: 40%
- Attendance and Participation: 20%
**Presentation**: You will give one brief oral presentation on cognitive bias in clinical medicine. This presentation should demonstrate some background research, encourage thinking about the subject, offer a clinical example of the bias at work, and close with a few questions — general or specific — which will engage the class in conversation.

**Midterm and Final Papers**: Your midterm essay should run between 4-5 pages, and final essay between 8-10 pages, double spaced. Papers may be research-oriented or more personal, considering a work we’ve read in light of a medical experience of your own, or a family member’s.

**Computer and Mobile Device Policy**: I respectfully ask that notes be taken by pen / pencil and paper in class, rather than by computer, and that texting and phone calls be taken outside of the classroom.

**Absence policy**: Regular attendance is expected. Multiple absences may affect the attendance portion of one’s grade. Make-up reading reflection may be assigned for missed sessions. Multiple absences may affect the attendance portion of one’s grade, even provided make-up reflection.

**Academic Integrity**: Any work that you submit must be your own, and any work that is borrowed must be properly cited.

**Weekly Schedule**
*(some changes may occur)*

**Class 1:**
- Introduction; Syllabus; Course Guidelines
- Henry Marsh – *Do No Harm* (Chapters 1-12)

**Class 2:**
- Henry Marsh – *Do No Harm* (Chapters 13-25)
- Karl Ove Knausgaard
  - “The Terrible Beauty of Brain Surgery,” N.Y. Times Magazine, 1/3/16
  - selections, *My Struggle, Book I*

**Class 3:**
- Leo Tolstoy – The Death of Ivan Ilyich
Class 4:
- Wordsworth, “Tables Turned.”
- Jorge Luis Borges, “On Exactitude In Science.”
- Nassim Nicholas Taleb, selection, The Black Swan
- Rivka Galchen, “Every Disease on Earth,” The New Yorker, 5/13/13

Class 5: Heuristics and Cognitive Errors, Diagnostic and Therapeutic –
- Presentations: Cognitive Biases
- Jerome Groopman, selections, How Doctors Think (2007)
  - Introduction
  - Chapter 6, “The Uncertainty of the Expert.”

Class 6:
- Mikhail Bulgakov – A Young Doctor’s Notebook

Midterm Paper Due

Class 7: Medical Ethics, Phronesis, Metis –
- Aristotle, selections, Nicomachean Ethics
- Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, selection, Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics
- William James, selections, “The Moral Philosopher and The Moral Life.”
- Carl Von Clausewitz, selection, On War
- Keith Black, selection, Brain Surgeon
- Chuang Tzu, selections, Zhuangzi
- Pascal, selections, Pensées
Class 8:
- Kate Murphy, “Do You Believe in God, or Is That A Software Glitch?” N.Y. Times, 8/27/16
- Dostoevsky, selections, Notes From Underground
- Kierkegaard, selections, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments
- Witold Gombrowicz, selections, Diary
- Craig M. Bennett. Neural correlates of interspecies perspective taking in the post-mortem Atlantic Salmon. J. Serendipitous Unexpected Results 1, 1–5; 2010.
- Robert Pirsig, selection, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
  “Classicism vs. Romanticism.”
- Blake, selection, Milton – “On Reason and Imagination...”

Class 9:
  Introduction; Chapter 1; Chapters 4-6
- Atul Gawande,
  - “The Learning Curve,” The New Yorker, 1/28/02
  - “When Doctors Make Mistakes,” The New Yorker, 2/1/99
  - “Letting Go,” The New Yorker, 8/2/10
- Denise Grady, "Restoring the Lost Art of the Physical Exam," The New York Times, 10/11/2010
- Warburton, Philosophy: The Basics – “Science”
- Warburton, selections, Philosophy: Basic Readings – Popper, Kuhn, Sokal, Monk
- Wittgenstein, selections, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and Philosophical Investigations

Optional:
- Atul Gawande,
  - “Final Cut,” The New Yorker, 3/19/01
  - “The Case of The Red Leg,” Complications

Class 10: The Philosophy of Science; Scientism –
- Robert Pirsig, selection, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
  “Mu States and Truth Traps.”
- Stephen Hawking, selection, A Brief History of Time
- W.I.B. Beveridge, selections, The Art of Scientific Investigation
- Albert Einstein and Rabindranath Tagore, “Note on the Nature of Reality.”
- William James – Rationalism vs. Empiricism, Some Problems of Philosophy
- George Eliot - selections - Scenes of Clerical Life; Adam Bede; Felix Holt, the Radical; Middlemarch
- Tolstoy, selections, War and Peace

Final Paper Due