What is "normal"?

UGS 2250 – BlockU: Medical Humanities – Fall 2018

Class meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:25-2:45, BU C 212

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BlockU Support
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Course Description
What's normal? Are you normal? Medicine traditionally draws a clear line between the healthy and the diseased, the functional and the dysfunctional, the able and the disabled, the normal and the abnormal. These traditional dichotomies, however, are being challenged by science and culture. Members of the Deaf community vehemently defend their Deaf culture and argue that they do not suffer from hearing loss but instead benefit from "Deaf gain." Intersex humans are actively challenging physicians to avoid performing surgeries on newborns born with ambiguous genitalia. And still others are seeking to be better than normal with performance enhancing drugs designed to improve cognition or athletic performance.

In the Medical Humanities BlockU course we will discuss specific cases like these and embed them in larger questions about normalcy: Is there even such a distinction to be made between normal and abnormal? What does science and the humanities have to say about the matter? How can (or should) medicine intervene on the "abnormal"? And who decides on such interventions?

Course Objectives
1. Students will learn about historical attempts to determine and enforce "normalcy" and the experience of those who were/are deemed "abnormal."
2. Students will become familiar with a variety of medical cases which challenge the traditional dichotomy between "normal" and "abnormal."
3. Students will critically engage literature from medicine.
4. Students will develop their ability to work effectively and responsively in teams.
Required text for purchase:

Work Required
Instructions for each assignment will be given in class and posted on Canvas when appropriate.

Quizzes – four (5 Sept, 1 Oct, 24 Oct, 14 Nov), 5 pts each – 20 pts total
Questions for Kate – due 12 September – 5 pts
Debate assignment – due 24 Sept – 15 pts
Dialogue Essay - Instructions on 3 Sept - due 26 September – 60 pts
Movie reflection essay – due 22 Oct – 15 pts
Research Essay – Instructions on 5 Nov - First draft due 19 November – 20 pts
  Final draft due 3 December – 70 pts
Essay workshop, comments on peers’ papers – 21 November – 10 pts
Natural History Museum of Utah exercise – completed *in class* on 28 Nov – 5 pts
Presentation on research essay – scheduled on 3, 5, or 12 December – 20 points
Final Quiz – on 12 December – 10 points

Check Canvas and your email regularly, so that you are apprised of any changes or updates.

Grading Scale [250 pts]
- A: 94-100% [234-250 pts]
- A-: 90-93% [224-233 pts]
- B+: 87-89% [216-223 pts]
- B: 84-86% [208-215 pts]
- B- : 80-83% [198-207 pts]
- C+: 77-79% [192-197 pts]
- C: 74-76% [183-191 pts]
- C-: 70-73% [175-182 pts]

Electronics Policy
*The use of phones will only be allowed in class when participating in classroom polls/quizzes.* Tablets and laptops are allowed for taking notes or in the case of specific in-class tasks.

Finding Required Readings
*All readings are available electronically, except for Ellen Forney’s Marbles, which you must purchase. The rest of the required readings are posted as pdfs on Canvas or linked in the syllabus.* Other useful books are available via Marriot Library’s course reserve system, either electronically or in person at the library. Find the course reserve list by visiting the main library website (http://www.lib.utah.edu/), clicking the “Course Reserves” tab on the search bar, and then entering “2250-001” in the search bar.

Relationship between the fall and spring semester of BlockU: Medical Humanities
Fall semester will feel more like a typical undergraduate course, in which you will gain a basic foundation of knowledge on the topics noted in the course description. In Spring semester, however, you will delve more deeply into a narrower topic (or coherent set of topics) that we select, as a group. You will develop a more sophisticated understanding of that topic, enabling you to create an aesthetically engaging and educational exhibit on the topic in Marriott Library. Grading in spring will be based upon the research you accomplish in the early weeks of the semester and the outcomes of our exhibit, which will be accomplished as a group.
Fall 2018 Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1 – What are we doing in this class?
M 20 Aug: What is “medical humanities” and why should you care?
Reading assignment for today: Read the syllabus carefully, including “Why should I care about medical humanities?”, at the end of this syllabus.
In class: The basic mechanics of the BlockU program and - just what IS medical humanities?

W 22 Aug: Disease concepts, experiences of illness, and the history of medicine
Reading assignment for today: Porter, Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine, Ch 1, “Diseases,” pp 1-20.
In class: What is the difference between disease and illness? What is the “medical model”?

WEEK 2 – Disease and the human experience of illness
M 27 Aug: Diabetes as disease, diabetes as human experience PLUS Christine Contestable
In class: Identifying the social and biological components of the illness experience AND guest speaker, Christine Contestable.

W 29 Aug: HIV as disease, HIV as human experience
In class: Identifying the social and biological components of the illness experience, continued.
WEEK 3 – Disease and the human experience of illness, continued
M 3 Sept: NO CLASS – Labor Day

W 5 September: Race and Disease: Being Black in the American medical system
Reading assignment for today:
AND:
a) Villarosa, “Why are black mothers & babies in the U.S. dying at more than double the rates of white mothers and babies?”, 15 April 2018, The New York Times Magazine.
OR
b) Villarosa, “Why do America’s black gay and bisexual men have a higher H.I.V. rate than any country in the world?” 11 June 2017, The New York Times Magazine.
In class: Quiz 1, introduce Dialogue Essay assignment (due 26 September).

WEEK 4 – Beginning your Dialogue Essay
M 10 Sept: Introduction to the library with Alfred Mowdood -Meet in library, Room TBD
Reading assignment for today: Selected from Dialogue Essay folder.
In class: Learn about effective library research techniques.

W 12 Sept: What is “normal”? How do we recognize it?
AND Kate Jirik readings: 2) Elliot, Better than Well, pp 14-18;
In class: The history of “normal” and devising a list of questions for guest speaker Kate Jirik.
DUE: Questions for Kate Jirik
Kate is a PhD student, nearing completion in spring 2019, publishing and presenting on her research on turn-of-the-20th-century American institutions for people with cognitive impairments. She has just returned from her eighth trip to Europe, during which she went down in a coal mine on a tour, saw Stonehenge and the Magna Carta, and visited Windsor Castle. She will be speaking about her research and about her own experiences as a person with severe cerebral palsy. We are preparing questions in advance, as it takes Kate a good deal of time to type.
WEEK 5 – What is a normal human?
M 17 Sept – The Elephant Man –
Guest speaker, Nadja Durbach,
U of U Department of History
Reading assignment for today:
Durbach, Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture,

W 19 Sept – What is a normal man?
What is a normal woman?
Reading assignment for today:
1) Dreger, Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex, Prologue, pp 1-14 AND
2) Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States,
In class: What do we know about sex and gender? Reading and assignment for next Monday’s debate distributed (see below).

WEEK 6 – Living outside the norm
M 24 Sept: Debate, Sex testing in sports
Reading assignment for today:
Distributed last Wednesday
BRING TO CLASS
2) Coleman, “Sex, Sport, and Why Track and Field’s New Rules on Intersex Athletes Are Essential,” 30 April 2018,
Analysis, NYT.
In class: Prepare arguments and debate.
DUE: Debate assignment

W 26 Sept: Guest speaker, Kate Jirik
DUE: Dialogue Essay
WEEK 7 – Living outside the norm, continued

M 1 Oct: Deafness and human diversity
Reading assignment for today: Bauman and Murray, “Deaf gain: An Introduction,” pp xv-xxiv ONLY.
In class: deaf vs. Deaf. Hearing loss vs. deaf gain. Reading and assignment for Wednesday’s debate distributed (see below). Quiz 2

W 3 Oct: How do we decide what’s “normal” in human psychology?
Reading assignment for today:
1) Greenberg, The Book of Woe?, p 1-16;

FALL BREAK – OCTOBER 8-12
WEEK 8 – What is a normal human brain?
M 15 Oct: Anxiety and depression amongst your peers
In Class: Kate Wingard, art therapy workshop

W 17 Oct – NO CLASS
Watch one of the following films and write a 2-3-page (double-spaced) reflection essay relating the film to the themes of this class and analyzing how the main characters are portrayed—are they “normal” or abnormal? Is there a stigma attached to their behaviors?
Due Monday 22 Oct:
-“Deaf Jam” (on reserve at the library)
-“Life, Animated” (on reserve at library, Amazon Prime)
-“Silver Linings Playbook”
-“The Perks of Being a Wallflower” (on reserve at the library)
-“The Theory of Everything” (stream on Swank, through library website).
Want to suggest another relevant film? Email Rachel!

WEEK 9 – Living outside the norm: Disability and the brain

M 22 Oct – Marbles & bipolar, part 1
Reading assignment for today:
1) Forney, Marbles: Mania, Depression, and Michelangelo, & Me, Chapters 1-4
NOTE: pp 30-38 contain sexualized nudity
AND
2) Jamison, “Their life a storm on which they ride,” Touched with Fire, pp 101-108.
DUE: Movie reflection essay

W 24 Oct – Marbles & bipolar, part 2
Reading assignment for today:
1) Forney, Marbles, last half
AND
Quiz 3
WEEK 10 – Eugenics to “newgenics” – Who gets to be “normal” and healthy?
M 29 Oct – Eugenics in the “land of the free”
Reading assignment for today: Read the entire article and watch the videos from PBS’s Independent Lens, then select AT LEAST ONE LINK from the article to follow, to learn more: http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states/
In class: Introduce the American eugenics movement.

W 31 Oct – Watch Gattaca in class, NO reading assignment for today, costumes optional.

WEEK 11 – Research paper and Eugenics to “newgenics,” continued
M 5 Nov – Alfred Mowdood – taking research to the next level - Meet at library, room TBD
Reading assignment for today: Look back at the readings you have completed for this class. Identify what you found most exciting, intriguing, or challenging. Select one or two topics that most piqued your interest. Visit the “Further Reading” folders on Canvas and select 1 OR 2 items to read before class today. Aim for at least 10-15 pages of reading.
In class: Introduce the Research Essay assignment (First draft due 19 Nov, final draft due 12 Dec) and make a research plan.

W 7 Nov – Eugenics as science & medicine
Reading assignment for today:
Tuchman, “Diabetes and ‘Defective’ Genes,” pp1-10 ONLY.
AND 2) Enter the image archive of the American eugenics movement at http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/. Explore one of the following “Virtual Exhibits”: Scientific Origins, Research Methods, Traits Studied, Research Flaws.
In class: How did eugenics reflect state-of-the-art science and medicine?
WEEK 12 – Research paper and Eugenics to “newgenics,” continued
M 12 Nov: No regular class meeting: Individual essay consultations scheduled.

W 14 Nov: Engineering better humans
Reading assignment for today - TWO pieces on ideas.ted.com:
1) Interview with Julian Savulescu, “As a species, we have a moral obligation to enhance ourselves,” 2014: https://ideas.ted.com/the-ethics-of-genetically-enhanced-monkey-slaves/
In class: How far should humans go in engineering future generations?
Quiz 4

WEEK 13: Looking forward
M 19 Nov: Introduction to our second semester project
In class: Learn about the past BlockU: Medical Humanities exhibits and what our task will be.
DUE: First draft of Research Essay, CANVAS PLUS PAPER copies to classmates [if you need me to print/copy these, you must email me your draft by 8am].

W 21 Nov: Paper Workshop
In class: Discuss and comment on your peers’ drafts.
DUE: Your comments on the paper copies of your peers’ drafts.

WEEK 14: Looking forward, continued
M 26 Nov: Graphics software tutorial with Adobe education specialist

W 28 Nov: What makes a successful exhibit?
Meet at the Natural History Museum of Utah at 1:45
Reading assignment for today: Chicone, Dinosaurs & Dioramas, 57-64.
Tim Lee and Lisa Thompson of the NHMU Exhibits team will lead us in an examination of what works and what doesn’t in communicating complex ideas to different audiences.
DUE in class: NHMU exercise that you will complete during visit.
WEEK 15: Presenting what you learned
M 3 Dec: Individual presentations, to be scheduled.
DUE: Final draft of Research Essay.

W 5 Dec: Individual presentations, to be scheduled.

FINALS WEEK – Final meeting of 2018: Wed 12 DEC – 1:00-3:00pm
In class: Complete class presentations, discuss spring semester, Final Quiz.

Important notices about your rights and the rules that govern behavior at the U of U:

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

ADDRESSING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS AND LGBTQ RESOURCE CENTER: Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name as well as “Preferred first name” (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, group projects, etc. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes (and update CIS) so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun will be respected. If you need assistance getting your preferred name on your UIDcard, please visit the LGBTQ Resource Center Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building, M-F 8am-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center, and links to additional resources: http://lgbt.utah.edu/
WELLNESS STATEMENT: Central to this course is a broad concept of health and wellness. I believe that your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructors before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the course-assigned SSA or the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL/SECOND LANGUAGE: If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (http://writingcenter.utah.edu/); the Writing Program (http://writing-program.utah.edu/); the English Language Institute (http://continue.utah.edu/eli/). Please let us know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

PLAGIARISM – FROM THE STUDENT CODE: “Plagiarism” means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as a basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit for public presentation. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression. It can be the basis for failure of a course or dismissal from the University. This concern applies to all written reports and oral or written presentations in this course. See Student Code: http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html#section_5.

If you have questions about what counts as plagiarism, please ask Rachel. And if you have read this far in the syllabus, email Rachel and she will give you an extra credit point!