New York University  
Department of Media, Culture, and Communication  
Health Media and Communication  
MCC-UE 1040

239 Greene Street 7th Fl  
mmills@nyu.edu  
Classroom location: TBD  
Class meeting times: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The meanings of health and disease are shaped not only by scientific and medical discourses, but by media, communication, and the cultures of health. This course examines the impact of media and health cultures on what counts as normal and pathological, how medical environments are understood and experienced, popular tactics for communicating and contesting biomedical information, public understandings of biotechnology, and how media representation and popular culture help to shape understandings of disease and health. Through the topic of health, we will look at nationhood and population management, subject-formation and stigma, individual and environmental risk. At the level of language, we will question the metaphoric uses of disease and their consequences. Readings, films (and other sources) will be drawn from a variety of genres, including epidemiology, public health, anthropology, history, communication studies, and medical memoir.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:
- Define “biomedicalization” and “biopolitics”—in particular the impact of medical technologies on the definitions of disease and health.
- Describe the manner in which different disease categories imply different social causes and consequences.
- Examine the personal experience of disease in relation to medical care, risk, and scientific change.
- Compare different media strategies for popularization, advocacy, and direct action in relation to public health.
- Contrast the disability studies perspective with the medical and public health models of impairment.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Emily Martin, Bi-Polar Expeditions
Alice Wexler, Mapping Fate: A Memoir of Family, Risk, and Genetic Research
Georges Canguilhem, The Normal and the Pathological
Critical Art Ensemble, Marching Plague
Audre Lorde, The Cancer Journals
ASSIGNMENTS
20% Popularization/Translation of Science Assignment
   (news article, video news report, audio podcast)

20% Critical Essay – Open topic

20% Media Advocacy and Health Assignment
   (policy memo, op-ed piece, poster advertisement, mobile phone strategy)

30% Final Exam, In-Class

Evaluation Rubric
A= Excellent
This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from
discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments
offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are
prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B= Good
This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding.
Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom
participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C= Average
This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at
times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis.
Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory
This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or
discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material
and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off
topic.

F= Failed
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B  = 84-86
B-  = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C   = 74-76
C-  = 70-73
D+ = 65-69
D   = 60-64
F    = 0-59

COURSE POLICIES
Absences and Lateness
More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format
Please type and double-space your written work. Typing improves the clarity and readability of your work and double-spacing allows room for me to comment. Please also number and staple multiple pages. You are free to use your preferred citation style. Please use it consistently throughout your writing. If sending a document electronically, please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Coursenumber Assignment1.doc

Grade Appeals
Please allow two days to pass before you submit a grade appeal. This gives you time to reflect on my assessment. If you still want to appeal your grade, please submit a short but considered paragraph detailing your concerns. Based on this paragraph I will review the question and either augment your grade or refine my explanation for the lost points.

General Decorum
Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity
The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.
You violate the principle of academic integrity when you
- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other’s oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
• Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
• Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions
When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

Departmental Procedure

• The Professor will meet with the student to discuss, and present evidence for the particular violation, giving the student opportunity to refute or deny the charge(s).
• If the Professor confirms the violation(s), he/she, in consultation with the Program Director and Department Chair may take any of the following actions:
  o Allow the student to redo the assignment
  o Lower the grade for the work in question
  o Assign a grade of F for the work in question
  o Assign a grade of F for the course
  o Recommend dismissal

Once an action(s) is taken, the Professor will inform the Program Director and Department Chair, and inform the student in writing, instructing the student to schedule an appointment with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, as a final step. Copies of the letter will be sent to the Department Chair for his/her confidential student file and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The student has the right to appeal the action taken in accordance with the School's Student Complaint Procedure as outlined in The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development Student's Guide.

Referral to the Steinhardt Committee on Student Discipline
In cases when dismissal is recommended, and in cases of repeated violations and/or unusual circumstances, faculty may choose to refer the issue to the Committee on Student Discipline for resolution, which they may do through the Office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.

Student Resources
• Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 719 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.
• Writing Center: 269 Mercer Street, Room 233. Schedule an appointment online at www.rich15.com/nyu/ or just walk-in.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**READINGS WILL BE PRIORITIZED EACH WEEK, WITH SOME MADE OPTIONAL.**

**Week One: Introduction**

**Week Two: Discourses of Health, The Normal, and the Pathological**  
**Reading:**


**Week Three: Medical Anthropology, Western Medicine, Globalization**  
**Reading:**
Byron Good, “Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief”


**Week Four: The Medical Gaze and Visible Evidence**

**Reading:**

Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* (Selections)

Byron Good, “How Medicine Constructs its Objects”

Beverly Ann Davenport, “Witnessing and the Medical Gaze: How Medical Students Learn to See at a Free Clinic for the Homeless”

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, Ch. 9 ("Scientific Looking, Looking at Science")


**Popular Science essay due**

**Week Five: Medical Technologies: Biopolitics and Risk**

**Reading:**


Volti, “Medical and Biological Technologies” (Chapter 7, pp. 107-117)

Week Six: Genetics
Reading:

Geller, Gail; Bernhardt, Barbara A; Holtzman, Neil A., “The media and public reaction to genetic research”

Allen, “Science Misapplied: The Eugenics Age Revisited,”* Technology Review*

Weinberg, “The Dark Side of the Genome”

Luoma, “Pandora’s Pantry,” www.motherjones.com/mother_jones/JF00/pandora.html

Volti, “The Genetic Fix” (Chapter 7, p117-123)

Week Seven: Autopathography: From Stigma to Activism


Week Eight: Disability Studies
Reading:
Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Glossary Entry: “Disability Studies,” *Bedford Introduction to Critical Terms*


April Herndon. “Disparate but Disabled: Fat Embodiment and Disability Studies”

Ellen Samuels, “Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Body Theory and the Question of Disability”

Ann M. Fox and Joan Lipkin, “Res(Crip)ting Feminist Theater through Disability Theater: Selections from the DisAbilityProject”

**Week Nine: Psychiatry**

**Reading:**


**Critical Essay Due**

**Week Ten: Public Health on Screen: Propaganda, Documentary Witnessing, and Medical Soaps**

**Reading:**


*Hollywood Health and Society: Entertainment Education for Television, Movies and New Media*

Week Eleven: Media Advocacy, Social Marketing, and Health Media

Reading:


Albert Jonsen, “Frankenstein and the Birth of Medical Ethics” In *The Picture of Health: Medical Ethics and the Movies*

Christopher E. Beaudoin, “News, Social Capital and Health in the Context of Katrina”

Bob Kuska, “Covering genetics: How the Media Fares”

Crystale Purvis Cooper and Debra L. Roter, “If It Bleeds It Leads”’? Attributes of TV Health News Stories That Drive Viewer Attention”

Games for Change Health Channel:
http://www.gamesforchange.org/CHANNELS/health

Week Twelve: Pharmaceutical Advertising

Reading:
Joseph Dumit, “Pharmaceutical Witnessing: Drugs for Life in an Era of Direct-to-Consumers Advertising”

Sjaak van der Geest, “Anthropology and the Pharmaceutical Nexus”

Lawrence H. Diller, “Fallout from the Pharma Scandals: The Loss of Doctors' Credibility?”


Week Thirteen: Health Campaigns, Anti-smoking

Reading:
Roddey Reid, “Introduction,” *Globalizing Tobacco Control*
Harkness, Jon M, “The U.S. Public Health Service and Smoking in the 1950s: The Tale of Two More Statements”

Edith D. Balbach and Stanton A. Glantz, “Tobacco Control Advocates Must Demand High-Quality Media Campaigns: The California Experience”

Cornelia Pechmann and Ellen Thomas Reibling, “Anti-Smoking Advertising Campaigns Targeting Youth: Case Studies from USA and Canada”

**Week Fourteen: Activism and Health: AIDS Activism**

**Reading:**

Steven Epstein, “The Construction of Lay Expertise: AIDS Activism and the Forging of Credibility in the Reform of Clinical Trials”


**Media Advocacy Assignment Due**

**Final Exam:**

**SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY/SUGGESTED READINGS**

Athena Du Pre, *Communicating about Health: Current Issues and Perspectives*

Eileen Berlin Ray, *Health Communication in Practice: A Case Study Approach*

P. Geist-Martin et al. *Communicating Health: Personal, Cultural, and Political Complexities*

K.B. Wright and S.D. Moore, *Applied Health Communication*

Henri Colt, Silvia Quadrelli, Friedman Lester (Eds.) *The Picture of Health: Medical Ethics and the Movies*