

Grand Rounds: Exploring the Literary Symptoms of Illness through Narrative

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions, Syllabus, Welcome to Blogging.

Week 2: Diagnosing Illness Narratives.

Literary theory. General Illness.

*Excerpts from Arthur Kleinman's *Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition*, Arthur Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller*, Kathy Conway's *Illness and the Limits of Expression*

Week 3: The *Metamorphosis* of Illness

Short story. Unnamed illness.

*Read Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*

Week 4: Living Beneath *The Bell Jar* of Depression

Semi-autobiographical novel, Poetry. Depression.

*Read 2nd half of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*, poems by Sylvia Plath.

Week 5: A Literal Lock-in- The Body's Entrapment of the Mind.

Autobiography/Memoir, Film. Locked-in syndrome.

*Read Jean-Dominique Bauby's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. (Watch clips in class)

Week 6: Embracing Illness- (Dis)Ability in Children's Literature

Children's Literature. Autism.

*Read DSM IV entry for autism, Landon Bryce's *I Am My Own Autistic Self*, Chew and Raymaker's *10 Autism Controversies*.

Week 7: Meeting Cancer, *The Emperor of All Maladies*

Memoir. Breast Cancer.

*Read Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals*.

Week 8: Facing the Ultimate Illness: Death and Children's Literature

Children's Literature. Terminal Illness and Death.

*Read Leo Buscaglia's *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown's *When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death*, Warren Hanson's *The Next Place*.

Week 9: Show and Tell

A final project showcase of illness narratives analyzed and created by students.

Assignments:

Course requirements will include engaging in weekly readings, reflecting with short blog entries, and contributing thoughtfully to class discussions. For the final project, students will have the opportunity to analyze a preexisting illness narrative or create their own representation of illness.



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