Introduction

The biomedical humanities major at Hiram College is an innovative and interdisciplinary area of study geared toward preparing students for successful careers in a range of healthcare fields. Our graduates have gone on to be physicians, physician assistants, veterinarians, physical therapists, genetic counselors, and to work in areas like bioethics, public health and the law.

The biomedical humanities major couples an intensive science core with equally rigorous study in the humanities for the purpose of exploring the intersections of medicine, science, literature and culture. The major’s relational core prepares students for the interpersonal and group level interactions that are quintessential to health and healthcare delivery. Collectively, our coursework provides students with a broad perspective on twenty-first century healthcare.

With built-in flexibility in major requirements, biomedical humanities majors are able to tailor their course of study—in consultation with their departmental advisor—to meet their particular interests and career goals. All biomedical humanities majors are required to participate in three hundred hours of experiential learning spanning biomedical research, clinical/job shadowing and service learning.

- Biomedical Humanities Major (https://catalog.hiram.edu/undergraduate/schools/health-medical-humanities/biomedical-humanities/biomedical-humanities-major/)
- Biomedical Humanities Minor (https://catalog.hiram.edu/undergraduate/schools/health-medical-humanities/biomedical-humanities/biomedical-humanities-minor/)

Course Descriptions

BIMD 18000: WKSP: 1 Hour(s)
WORKSHOP~ Workshops may be taken Pass/No Credit only. Students may take no more than nine workshops for credit toward graduation. Workshops can be used as elective credit only.

BIMD 18100: GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES: 1 Hour(s)
GLOBAL HEALTH ISSUES~ This overview course is designed to expose students who are interested in health to a global perspective of select, relevant issues in international health. A wide range of perspectives, including historical, ethical, environmental, cultural, social, economic, political, and policy will be explored. Current trends and future implications will also be examined. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or instructor permission required.

BIMD 18510: SPC TPC:~ 1 Hour(s)
SPECIAL TOPICS:~ These one hour courses allow students to explore contemporary issues within healthcare from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

BIMD 23000: STORIES OF ILLNESS&HEALING:IM: 2 Hour(s)
STORIES OF ILLNESS AND HEALING: IM ~ This course explores narrative techniques and representational strategies (such as metaphors) in stories of illness and healing. Through readings in a range of genres (drama, memoirs and personal essays, short stories, and graphic novels) we will examine, on one hand, how illness and healing experiences are structured and circulated as stories, and, on the other hand, how stories of illness mediate the social experience of illness and healing. You will learn basic techniques of narrative analysis, including close reading skills, in order to interpret texts within specific social contexts, such as Solnit, «Apricots,» Diaz, «Wildwood, » Edson, W;t; Small, Stitches; Forney, Marbles; medical students in What I Really Learned in Medical School; Danquah, Willow Weep for Me and other stories and essays.
Core: Interpretive Methods

BIMD 28000: SEM:: 1-4 Hour(s)
SEMINAR~

BIMD 28100: INDEPENDENT STUDY: 1-4 Hour(s)
INDEPENDENT STUDY~

BIMD 29800: FIELD EXPERIENCE: 1-4 Hour(s)
FIELD EXPERIENCE~

Faculty

Erin G Lamb, (2009) Associate Professor of Biomedical Humanities; Director of the Center for Literature and Medicine; Herbert L. and Pauline Wentz Andrews Chair in Biomedical Humanities
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Emily Waples, (2016) Assistant Professor of Biomedical Humanities
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Contributing Faculty

Bradley Goodner, (2001) Director of the School of Health & Medical Humanities; Professor of Biology; Edward J. Smerek Chair of Mathematics, the Sciences, and Technology; Director of Center for Scientific Engagement
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Michelle Nario-Redmond, (2007) Professor of Psychology
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BIMD 33000: CULTURES OF MEDICINE: UD: 4 Hour(s)
Course Description: CULTURES OF MEDICINE: UD This course investigates concepts of health and illness through multicultural fiction, autobiography, and longform journalism. We will consider the topic from a comparative cultural standpoint, looking at medicine in North America broadly defined, including Native American cultures and the immigrant experiences of Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and southeast Asian people. Questions for inquiry include: What is the relevance of culture in conceptualizing and experiencing health and illness? What do cultures outside biomedicine know about illness and healing? What are the concerns of specific cultures and how are these concerns reflected in their literatures/stories? How do issues such as cultural conflict, enslavement, colonization, dispossession, and cultural erosion manifest as illnesses and what are the healing processes? What are some applications for contemporary healthcare? Books include Alvord, The Scalpel and the Silver Bear, Silko, Ceremony, Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Danticat, Breath, Eyes, Memory, Kincaid, Annie John, and Farmer/Kidder, Mountains Beyond Mountains.
Core: Understanding Diversity Home

BIMD 34000: HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:ES: 4 Hour(s)
HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:ES ~ “Of all the forms of inequality,” Dr. Martin Luther King once proclaimed, “injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.” While Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies health and health care as fundamental human rights, in the United States and elsewhere, health disparities continue to exist on basis of socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and ability. This course applies the principles of social justice to an examination of American health disparities. Addressing issues such as economic justice, racial justice, environmental justice, reproductive justice, disability justice, and LGBTQ justice, this course promotes an intersectional approach to social justice issues as it seeks to explore the complex relationships among discourse, power, and health. Considering the competing positions of various stakeholders, we will explore population-specific differences in categories such as mortality and morbidity, access to and quality of care, resource allocation, and data collection. Through reading among multiple genres—including memoir, poetry, fiction, journalism, critical theory, and social scientific scholarship—we will also analyze the social determinants of health from a discourse analysis perspective, asking how representation affects policy, practice, advocacy, and activism. Ultimately, we will assess strategies for organized collective action as we work toward an informed response to Thomas Cooley’s question in Signifying Bodies (2010): “How can we guarantee, or at least try to ensure, that representation serves the best interests of vulnerable subjects?”
Core: Meaning/Ethics/Soc Responsibil

BIMD 35000: AUTOBIO, ILLNESS, EMBODIMENT: IM: 4 Hour(s)
AUTOBIOGRAPHY, ILLNESS AND EMBODIMENT: IM ~ Where do stories of illness begin—and end? How do experiences of disease or disability shape one’s sense of self? How do patient narratives engage with, respond to, and/or critique medical discourses? In this course, we will examine autobiographical illness narratives in a variety of media—print, graphic, and digital—in order to analyze how patient-writers narrate their experiences of illness and construct themselves as subjects within their wider social and cultural contexts. Engaging with modes of autobiographical expression from nineteenth-century journals to twenty-first century blogs, we will think about how personal narratives use the subjective experience of embodiment as a way to communicate, educate, and connect. We will also read scholarly articles that address the stakes of this kind of self-representation, and use critical theory to consider how the experience of illness intersects with race, gender, and sexuality. Ultimately, this course suggests that the study of narrative both allows us to imagine more empathic care, and helps us to understand how patients participate in the creation of medical knowledge.
Core: Interpretive Methods

BIMD 35600: HOW WE DIE: ES: 4 Hour(s)
HOW WE DIE: ES ~ Despite death’s inevitability, we consciously and unconsciously disguise or resist its reality in dreams, fairy tales, allegories, and even jokes. In his book, How We Die: Reflections on Life’s Final Chapter, from which this course borrows its name and a good deal of its inspiration, Sherwin Nuland describes how we have turned increasingly to modern medicine as one more means of denying the reality of death. As a surgeon with more than forty years of experience in a major metropolitan hospital, Nuland admits to actively participating in this denial. Modern medicine, he argues, influences how we as individuals and as a culture not only view but also experience death. “Modern dying,” he contends, “takes place in the modern hospital, where it can be hidden, cleansed of its organic blight, and finally packaged for modern burial.” This course uses literature, film, and history related to death as points of reference for examining the role modern medicine has come to play in how we die. Some sections of this course may be considered service learning (SL). This course fulfills the Meaning, Ethics, and Social Responsibility requirement. This course satisfies the requirement for a medical humanities course with an emphasis on bioethics.
Core: Meaning/Ethics/Soc Responsibil
BIMD 37500: ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH:ES  4 Hour(s)
ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH:ES~ Women have a complicated and sometimes contentious relationship with the biomedical model of health care. Historically, women have been underrepresented in scientific and medical research, although over-represented as objects on which these disciplines are brought to bear. Much as advertising has long been accused of objectifying and fragmenting women's bodies (displaying just a torso, just legs, etc.), so too has medicine frequently been accused of treating specific body parts, specific diseases, without regard for the whole person. This fragmentation may be even more problematic for women as new screening technologies help to construct the fetus as an entity entirely separate from the woman carrying it. This course focuses on bioethical issues particular to women's health and healthcare experiences across the lifespan. We begin by exploring some of the distinctive contributions of feminist theory to traditional bioethics, focusing in particular on the feminist critique of abstract principals and the call to contextualize, as well as a larger commitment to social justice. We then examine particular women's health issues through the lens of feminist theory. Specific course topics may shift with each course offering, but will likely include some of the following: reproduction (pregnancy and childbirth, prenatal testing, abortion, assisted reproduction, contract gestation), sexuality (sexual autonomy, contraception), disease (breast cancer, HIV/AIDS, clinical research), lifecourse development (menstruation and menopause, aging, physician-assisted suicide), mental health (hysteria, bullying, body image), and configuring the female body (eating disorders, cosmetic surgery).
Course texts consist primarily of critical essays with some literature and film. This course fulfills the Meaning, Ethics, and Social Responsibility requirement.
Core: Meaning/Ethics/Soc Responsibil

BIMD 38000: SEM::  4 Hour(s)
SEMINAR~

BIMD 38100: SPC TPC::  1-4 Hour(s)
SPECIAL TOPICS~

BIMD 41000: SERVICE IN HEALTH CARE SETTING:  1 Hour(s)
SERVICE IN A HEALTH CARE SETTING ~ By the end of this course, you will have completed participation in the off-campus volunteer experience(s) of your choice. Your only limitation is that your service must in some way expose you to health settings or work environments that involve close interaction with a population or demographic that is out of your norm. You must demonstrate completion of at least 60 hours, at no more than two service sites, by the end of the semester. We will be drawing on your experiences at your off-campus site during class discussions, for your personal journal, and in brief reflection essays. The service learning is intended to instill in students an appreciation for the community's strengths, resources, perceived needs and expectations through service-oriented experiences. Our discussions in class will focus on the American healthcare system; students will connect their personal experiences within the system to what is known about access to care, its costs and its outcomes. Pass/No Credit Only.

BIMD 47000: VOCATIONAL REFLECTION:  1 Hour(s)
VOCATIONAL REFLECTION ~ This course is intended to help upper-level Biomedical Humanities majors reflect upon and integrate their coursework and experiential learning, with an eye towards their intended career path. Students enrolled in this course will reflect upon their Hiram Connect experience (typically directed research or an internship), discuss issues of power inequality in volunteer situations and in health care more broadly, write their Hiram Connect Capstone reflection (in the form of a personal statement or essay), and prepare for the completion of Senior Seminar the following semester. Pass/No Credit Only.