Medical Humanities is an interdisciplinary field that examines medicine and health through humanistic disciplines such as history, ethics, religion, literature, cultural anthropology, media studies, and the visual and dramatic arts. Students in the minor will learn about medical and health systems and practices using methodologies such as close reading, cultural comparison, historical contextualization, creative expression, and critical thinking. The field is committed to interpretive and qualitative work that explores the human dimensions of experiences of health and illness, for doctors and for patients. The Medical Humanities minor is an interdisciplinary course of study, housed in the School of Humanities.

Minor

- Minor in Medical Humanities (https://ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/humanities/medical-humanities/medical-humanities-minor/)

Medical Humanities does not currently offer an academic program at the graduate level.

Director and Advisor

Kirsten Ostherr

Associate Director

Melissa Bailar

Professors

Martin Blumenthal-Barby
Marcia Brennan
Tony N. Brown
Eugenia Georges
Bridget K. Gorman
Gisela Heffes
Vivian Ho
Rachel Tolbert Kimbro
Anne C. Klein
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Rebecca Richards-Kortum
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Moramay López-Alonso
Fabiola López-Durán

Assistant Professors

Victoria Massie
Samuel Reis-Dennis

Senior Lecturer

Melissa Bailar

Lecturers

Travis Alexander
Helena Fietz
Beverly Mitchell

Steering Committee

Travis Alexander
Melissa Bailar
Marcia Brennan
Eugenia Georges
Victoria Massie
Kirsten Ostherr
Samuel Reis-Dennis

For Rice University degree-granting programs:
To view the list of official course offerings, please see Rice’s Course Catalog (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat?p_action=cata)
To view the most recent semester’s course schedule, please see Rice’s Course Schedule (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/!SWKSCAT.cat)

Medical Humanities (MDHM)

MDHM 201 - INTRODUCTION TO MEDICAL HUMANITIES
Short Title: INTRO TO MEDICAL HUMANITIES
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Distribution Group: Distribution Group I
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level
Description: Examines the history of medicine, concepts of disease vs illness, narrative medicine, health disparities, religion, spirituality, and the role of science and technology on the practices of healthcare. Students will develop skills in close reading, interpretation, historical contextualization, critical thinking. This course (formerly HURC 201) is required for the minor in Medical Humanities. Mutually Exclusive with HURC 201. Credit cannot be earned for both HURC 201 and MDHM 201. Mutually Exclusive: Cannot register for MDHM 201 if student has credit for HURC 201.
**MDHM 238 - SPECIAL TOPICS**
**Short Title:** SPECIAL TOPICS  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Laboratory, Internship/Practicum, Lecture, Seminar, Independent Study, Lecture/Laboratory  
**Credit Hours:** 1-4  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester's topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

**MDHM 250 - INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY STUDIES**
**Short Title:** INTRO TO DISABILITY STUDIES  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** This course examines perceptions and implications of the meaning of disability for society. The course will cover the history of disability rights and offer alternative viewpoints of disability. Implications of this analysis will involve exploration of social justice themes in pursuing disability rights for individuals with disabilities.

**MDHM 260 - TOPICS IN CREATIVE WRITING FOR MEDICAL HUMANITIES:**  
**WRITING AND READING (NEAR) DEATH EXPERIENCES**
**Short Title:** CREATIVE WRITING FOR MED HUM  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** "I learned a lot of things in medical school. Mortality wasn't one of them." So begins Atul Gawande's bestselling memoir about the challenges of end-of-life medicine in a culture obsessed with avoiding death at all costs. How do we talk, write, and think about the Gordian knot near death experiences create —increasingly common as lifesaving technologies rapidly advance? In this course, students will read literary writing on the subject of death and its attendant challenges, and well as learn to write creatively and concisely about it — in their own lives and in the experiences of others. Students will learn directly from writers, physicians, and historians during in-class visits and gain valuable skills as communicators, to enhance their future endeavors as students and health care professionals. Repeatable for Credit.

**MDHM 275 - TOPICS IN HEALTH INEQUITIES**
**Short Title:** TOPICS IN HEALTH INEQUITIES  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** This topics course will introduce students to the most prevalent types of health inequities and prepare them to understand their history and possible interventions within the fields of medicine and public health. Topics vary but may include gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, language, fat bias/weight stigma, immigration, documentation, and nationality. Repeatable for Credit.

**MDHM 300 - IMMUNITY IN MEDIA, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE**
**Short Title:** IMMUNITY- MEDIA/SCI/CULTURE  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** This course will consider the conceptual history of immunity and autoimmunity. We will track immunity as it migrates from the domains of law and politics into biomedicine. What are the consequences of this provenance? How have seemingly objective medical conceptions of the body preserved or retained this militaristic belief in independence, power, and control? And what are its consequences for those whose bodies are exposed to that domination? How does the history of immunity inspire contemporary depictions of BIOPOC, trans, queer, and undocumented lives as pathogenic to the flourishing of “healthy” bodies and in turn to their state-sponsored exposure to death? We will propose to answer these questions by integrating an interdisciplinary archive of fiction, film, philosophy, and law. Recommended Prerequisite(s): MDHM 201 Repeatable for Credit.

**MDHM 306 - HEALTH AND HUMANITIES MASTER CLASS**
**Short Title:** HEALTH AND HUMANITIES MASTER CLASS  
**Department:** Medical Humanities  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Graduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** Faculty from Rice University, University of Texas School of Public health, and University of Houston, as well as practitioners in the Texas Medical Center, will lead class discussions on different aspects of the health industry today. The class will meet Tuesday evenings at the McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science and at Rice Thursdays. Students will read essays, case studies, and fiction or watch films to prepare for each discussion. Formerly offered as HURC 306. Mutually exclusive with HURC 306. Credit cannot be earned for both HURC 306 and MDHM 306. Instructor Permission Required.
MDHM 325 - ETHICAL DEBATES IN MEDICINE: DIGNITY AND WELFARE
Short Title: ETHICAL DEBATES IN MEDICINE
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course will survey a range of contemporary controversies in medicine, focusing especially on conflicts between promoting welfare and respecting human dignity. Repeatable for Credit.

MDHM 397 - TOPICS IN MENTAL HEALTH
Short Title: MENTAL HEALTH IN AMER CULTURE
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Since the arrival of Covid, we have seen a proliferation of novel therapeutic practices like mental telehealth, as people around the globe cope with unprecedented isolation and require the ability to communicate, confess, and introspect with a professional, a stranger. This course will investigate several things: First: what is the history of psychotherapy both in the US and globally? How, in other words, did we get here? And second: how have literature, film, and now social media represented this changing history back to us? Have our understandings of conditions like depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, and psychosis come to be thought—and even lived—as, themselves, essentially cinematic and literary experiences? Has social media now assumed some of this responsibility of narration and explanation? And if so, to what end? This course will examine the works of authors such as Poe, Plath, Lynch, and Moshfegh. Repeatable for Credit.

MDHM 359 - RESPONSIBLE AI FOR HEALTH
Short Title: RESPONSIBLE AI FOR HEALTH
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Distribution Group: Distribution Group 1
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This interdisciplinary course explores how artificial intelligence, machine learning, and related tools are poised to transform healthcare – for better and for worse. Examines the latest uses of these tools in clinical healthcare settings, in public health, and in day-to-day wellness apps. Considers the social, cultural and ethical issues related to the development and application of AI for health. Explores the ways that technology can have unintended consequences that reproduce existing health disparities, especially racial and intersectional health disparities. This course will count as an elective in MDHM minor, the STSM minor, and the ENGL major. It may count as an elective for the DSCI minor (contact the program advisor).

MDHM 397 - TOPICS IN MENTAL HEALTH
Short Title: MENTAL HEALTH IN AMER CULTURE
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course will examine the works of authors such as Poe, Plath, Lynch, and Moshfegh. Repeatable for Credit.

MDHM 402 - HEALTH, HUMANISM AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS MEDICAL HUMANITIES PRACTICUM 1 (1 WR SEQUENCE)
Short Title: HUASS MED HUM PRACTICUM 1
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): MDHM 201
Description: Students are matched with medical humanities research projects in TMC. Students conduct 6-8 hours of research per week under guidance of on-site supervisor and follow curriculum under guidance of Rice faculty, developing skills for careers after graduation. Yearlong sequence continues as MDHM 403 in spring. Must have completed MDHM 201 and at least 9 credit hours in a humanities discipline for course eligibility. Instructor Permission Required. Recommended Prerequisite(s): Humanities or Social Science Major Mutually Exclusive: Cannot register for MDHM 402 if student has credit for HUMA 402.

MDHM 403 - HEALTH, HUMANISM AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS MEDICAL HUMANITIES PRACTICUM 2 (1 WR SEQUENCE)
Short Title: HUASS MED HUM PRACTICUM 2
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): MDHM 402 or HUMA 402
Description: Students are matched with medical humanities research projects in TMC. Students conduct 6-8 hours of research per week under guidance of on-site supervisor and follow curriculum under guidance of Rice faculty, developing skills for careers after graduation. Continuation of MDHM 402 as yearlong sequence. Instructor Permission Required. Mutually Exclusive: Cannot register for MDHM 403 if student has credit for HUMA 403.

MDHM 430 - HEALTH, HUMANISM AND SOCIETY SCHOLARS MEDICAL HUMANITIES PRACTICUM (ONE SEMESTER)
Short Title: HUASS 1-SEM MED HUM PRACTICUM
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): MDHM 201
Description: This research-based course is conducted in partnership with health institutions in Houston. Qualified and advanced students apply for or develop projects in specific research areas and work 6-8 hours per week on site with health professionals, archivists, and center directors. Students follow curriculum under guidance of Rice faculty and meet regularly to discuss research and develop skills for careers after graduation. Must have completed MDHM 201 and at least 9 credit hours in a humanities discipline for course eligibility. Instructor Permission Required. Mutually Exclusive: Cannot register for MDHM 430 if student has credit for HURC 430. Repeatable for Credit.
MDHM 477 - SPECIAL TOPICS
Short Title: SPECIAL TOPICS
Department: Medical Humanities
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture/Laboratory, Internship/Practicum, Laboratory, Lecture, Seminar
Credit Hours: 1-4
Restrictions: Enrollment is limited to Undergraduate, Undergraduate Professional or Visiting Undergraduate level students.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Topics and credit hours may vary each semester. Contact department for current semester's topic(s). Repeatable for Credit.

Description and Code Legend
Note: Internally, the university uses the following descriptions, codes, and abbreviations for this academic program. The following is a quick reference:

Course Catalog/Schedule
• Course offerings/subject codes: MDHM

Department (or Program) Description and Code
• Medical Humanities: MDHM

Undergraduate Minor Description and Code
• Minor in Medical Humanities: MDHM

CIP Code and Description
• MDHM Minor CIP Code/Title: 51.3204 - Medical/Health Humanities

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2020 Codes and Descriptions from the National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/