

# Narrative Medicine Syllabus (200/300 Level PHIL Course)

Fall/Spring: 202?

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Professor Kelly Cunningham

### Email

[Kelly.cunningham.1@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Kelly.cunningham.1@vanderbilt.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

Furman 108

Monday: 12:30-1:30

Thursday (Zoom): 3:30-4:30

## General Information

### Description

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the principles and practices of narrative medicine, emphasizing the significance of Rita Charon's pioneering work. Through Charon's influential theories, students examine the power of storytelling in medicine, understanding how personal narratives shape patient care, clinical practice, and ethical decision-making.

By engaging with Charon's groundbreaking research, students gain a deeper understanding of the ethical complexities inherent in healthcare, honing their abilities to critically analyze and respond to diverse patient experiences. Through discussions, case studies, and practical applications, this course fosters a holistic perspective on healthcare ethics, encouraging students to navigate the ethical challenges inherent in medicine while acknowledging the profound impact of narrative approaches in shaping compassionate, patient-centered care.

### Expectations and Goals

You are expected to complete all readings before class. Our goals for this course include deepening our understanding of narrative medicine in a variety of contexts, practicing critical thinking, and improving academic writing abilities.

## Course Materials

### Required Materials

We will read a mix of textbooks, articles, monographs, and novels in this course. When not available through the university library, single-chapters or article length readings will be posted as PDFs to Brightspace. Since we will read the entirety or most of the books listed below, it is recommended that you purchase a copy.

- Rita Charon. *Narrative Medicine: honoring the stories of illness*
- Rita Charon (ed). *The Principles and Practices of Narrative Medicine*
- Atul Gawande. *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*

## Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
1	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Charon- “At the Membranes of Care: stories in narrative medicine”  Misak- “Narrative Evidence and Evidence-Based Medicine”	Opportunities for Journal Entries
2	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Lanphier- “Narrative and Medicine: Premises, Practices, Pragmatism”  Lanphier and Anani- “Narrative Ethics and Intersectionality”	Opportunities for Journal Entries
3	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Charon- <i>Narrative Medicine</i> Chapters	Opportunities for Journal Entries Book Club Day 1
4	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Charon - <i>Narrative Medicine</i> Chapters	Opportunities for Journal Entries
5	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Charon- <i>Narrative Medicine</i> Chapters	Opportunities for Journal Entries
6	Foundations: Patient Narratives as Evidence	Charon- <i>Narrative Medicine</i> Chapters	Opportunities for Journal Entries Book Club Day 2

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
7	Narrative Medicine In Context: Mental Health	Tekin- "Self-concept through the diagnostic looking glass: "Narratives and mental disorder"  Heney- "Practitioner Narrative Competence in Mental Health Care"	Opportunities for Journal Entries
8	Narrative Medicine In-Context: Mental Health	Potter- "Narrative Selves Relations of Trust, and Bipolar Disorder"  Lemonge et al.- "Balint groups and narrative medicine compared to control condition in promoting students' empathy"	Opportunities for Journal Entries  Book Club Day 3
9	Narrative Medicine In Context: Trauma		Opportunities for Journal Entries
10	Narrative Medicine In Context: End-of-Life Care	Nuland, <i>How We Die</i> , "Doors to the death of the aged" and "Hope and the Cancer Patient"  Cunningham- "'As thin as a sheet of light' Jane Addams on Narrative and End-of-Life Care"	Opportunities for Journal Entries

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
11	Narrative Medicine & Healthcare Practitioner	Charon- “Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession and Trust”  Schwartz et al. - “Addressing Postpandemic Clinician Mental Health: A Narrative Review and Conceptual Framework”	Opportunities for Journal Entries
12	Narrative Medicine & Healthcare Practitioners	Bajaj- “A narrative medicine intervention in pediatric residents led to sustained improvement in resident well- being”  Perris et al. - “Narrative Medicine: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Address Burnout Among the Nursing Workforce”	Opportunities for Journal Entries  Book Club Day 4  Paper Topic Proposal Due

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
13	Narrative Medicine & Healthcare Practitioners	<p>Launer and Wohlman- “Narrative medicine, narrative practice, and the creation of meaning”</p> <p>DasGupta- “The Political of Pedagogy: Crippling, Queering, and Unhoming Health Humanities”</p>	Opportunities for Journal Entries
14	Narrative Medicine in Practice	<p>Colón- “From Fire Escapes to Qualitative Data: Pedagogical Urging, Embodied Research, and Narrative Medicine’s Ear of the Heart”</p> <p>Charon- “A Framework for Teaching Close Reading”</p>	<p>Opportunities for Journal Entries</p> <p>Annotated Bibliography Due</p>
15	Narrative Medicine in Practice	<p>Charon- “Clinical Contributions of Narrative Medicine”</p> <p>So et al. “‘Many people know nothing about us’: narrative medicine applications at a student-run free clinic”</p>	Opportunities for Journal Entries

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
16	Narrative Medicine in Practice	Mohanti- “Lessons from narrative medicine: Cancer care will improve with narrative oncology”	Opportunities for Journal Entries Book Club Day 5 Final Papers Due

## Additional Information and Resources

### Accessibility and Accommodations

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. To receive such accommodations students are to apply for services through the Student Access Center. The Center can be reached at [disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu) and is located in the Baker Building, Suite 108.

### Technology and AI Use Policy

The use of technology in the classroom (such as laptops or tablets) is often crucial for students with accessibility needs, but it can also be a distraction for some students. Similarly, AI is a powerful tool. To ensure everyone’s needs are met to the best of our collective abilities, we will co-author our technology and AI policy on the first day of class. After which, it will then be posted to Brightspace. Cell phones should be kept away during class.

### FERPA Compliance Reminder

To protect student privacy, FERPA guidelines state that professors are not to discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grades, please come to office hours, email me to make an appointment or use your private “journal” discussion board on Brightspace.

### Academic Integrity

All student are required to make themselves familiar with and abide by the University Honor Code. I reserve the right to report cases of suspected misconduct, which includes use of AI prohibited by the class policy, will be submitted to the Honor Council for further review. If you are unsure if the way you are using a resource or AI tool is permitted, please consult the University policy and contact me with any further questions *before* turning in your assignment.