Medical Humanities

The minor in medical humanities draws on courses from a variety of departments and programs including art history, classics, history, languages and literature, music, philosophy, and gender and sexuality studies. The minor is housed in the Washington University Center for the Humanities.

The minor approaches health, disease and medical care as culturally embedded human experiences that vary across time and place. In addition to exploring health, disease and medical care as core human experiences, the program of study is designed to provide a solid grounding in the textual-historical approach essential to all humanities scholarship. The minor combines disciplinary diversity with thematic unity to engage students with a set of tightly related “big” topics and issues. These include the contested meanings of health and disease; the ethical dimensions of medicine; illness narratives; debates over health and development; the role of medicine in war, empire and nation building; the relationship between religion and medicine; exchange and friction between biomedicine and other healing traditions; and the burden of disease as it relates to gender, race and class.

Medical Humanities aspires to instill values shared by all humanities disciplines: to appreciate multiple worlds and viewpoints, to communicate clearly and gracefully, and to read and think critically. Students will emerge from the minor able to apply the insights and critical methods of literature, philosophy, history and the arts to subjects often left solely to the natural and social sciences. Its goal is to demonstrate the enduring relevance of humanistic inquiry to understanding a basic realm of human experience.

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MFA, California College of the Arts
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PhD, University of Texas at Austin
(Classics)

Majors
Medical humanities is an interdepartmental minor; Washington University does not offer an independent major in medical humanities.

Minors

The Minor in Medical Humanities

Units required: 18

At least one gateway course (3 units) is required for the minor. These include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MedH 130</td>
<td>The Art of Medicine</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History 1640</td>
<td>Health and Disease in World History</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>MedH 233F</td>
<td>Biomedical Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
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An additional 15 units of Medical Humanities courses are required to complete the minor: at least 12 of these units must be core courses, designated by the "CFH MH" attribute, while the remaining three credits can come from either the core or affiliate lists (below). At least 9 units of core courses must be at the 300 level or above. Core courses include the gateway courses, as well as:

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MedH 126</td>
<td>Chinese for Medical Purposes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hist 2216</td>
<td>Books and Bodies (U16)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>MedH 3001</td>
<td>Philosophy of Medicine</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History 301R</td>
<td>Historical Methods — European History (when offered as The Black Death and the Plague in Europe)</td>
<td>3</td>
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MedH 3031 | Music and Healing               | 3     |
MedH 3033 | Religion and Healing            | 3     |
WGSS 3041 | Making Sex and Gender: Understanding the History of the Body | 3 |
MedH 3044 | Humors, Pox, and Plague: Medieval and Early Modern Medicine | 3 |
History 3067 | Current Topics in the History of Medicine | 3 |
MedH 307 | Writing and Medicine            | 3     |
MedH 310 | From Hysteria to Hysterectomy: Women's Health Care in America | 3 |
MedH 312W | The Body in Pain                | 3     |
MedH 316 | Contemporary Women's Health     | 3     |
IS 326 | The Doctor Is In: Anton Chekhov and Narrative Medicine (U43) | 3 |
MedH 353 | Medical Spanish                 | 3     |
MedH 360 | Trans Studies                   | 3     |
Phil 366 | Art and the Mind-Brain          | 3     |
History 3672 | Medicine, Healing and Experimentation in the Contours of Black History | 3 |
ELit 370 | The Writing and Representation of Pain (U65) | 3 |
MedH 3801 | Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine | 3     |
MedH 391W | Literature and Medicine         | 3     |
MedH 4033 | Culture, Illness, and Healing in Asia | 3 |
MedH 418 | Sexuality and Gender in East Asian Religions (when offered as "The Body in Daoism") | 3 |
MedH 423 | Philosophy of Biological Science | 3     |
Drama 456 | A Madman in the Theater: The History of Insanity on Stage from Sophocles to Shaffer | 3 |
MedH 4647 | Ancient Madness                 | 3     |
MedH 474 | Frankenstein: Origins and Afterlives | 3 |
MedH 4885 | Advanced Seminar: Medicine, Disease, and Empire | 3 |
MedH 4990 | Advanced Seminar: History of the Body | 3 |
History 49CJ | Advanced Seminar: Medicine on the Frontiers | 3 |

Please note: The 9 credits of advanced medical humanities core courses (at the 300 level or above) must also come from at least two of six different disciplinary categories: Classics & Art History; History; Languages/Literature/Culture; Performing Arts & Music; Philosophy & Religious Studies; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Core courses may also require additional prerequisites within their home departments or programs.
Up to 3 units of affiliate courses from complementary disciplines in the sciences and social sciences (designated by the “CFH MHA” attribute) may be applied to the minor. These include:

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<tr>
<td>Anthro 3201</td>
<td>Gender, Culture and Madness</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Anthro 3283</td>
<td>Introduction to Global Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthro 3310</td>
<td>Health, Healing and Ethics: Introduction to Medical Anthropology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthro 3620</td>
<td>Anthropological Perspectives on the Fetus</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthro 3626</td>
<td>Adventures in Nosology: The Nature and Meaning of Disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psych 399</td>
<td>Living, Dying and Death: A Biopsychosocial Approach to Understanding the End of Life</td>
<td>3</td>
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Additional Information

The most up-to-date list of medical humanities courses and medical humanities affiliate courses can be found by searching Washington University Course Listings for the “CFH MH” and “CFH MHA” attributes, or by consulting the course requirements (http://cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu/undergraduate/medical_humanities/requirements) online.

Courses

Medical Humanities began listing courses under the L85 MedH designation in spring 2017; we are adding new courses to that designation as they are offered, but some of our core courses are not yet represented in the list below. For a more complete list of Medical Humanities courses, please consult the Minors section of this page or search Course Listings (https://acadinfo.wustl.edu/CourseListings/Semester/Search.aspx) for the CFH MH (Medical Humanities) and CFH MHA (Medical Humanities: Affiliate) attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L85 MedH 126 Chinese for Medical Purposes</th>
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<td>This course is the continuation of Beginning Chinese taught in the fall at the Shanghai Fudan program. The spring course is targeted specifically to pre-medicine and/ or health care students who have studied at the Shanghai Fudan program in the fall. Students without the Fudan experience can also enroll after language evaluation. Prerequisites: L04 101D, L04.117F or the equivalent. Same as L04 Chinese 126 Credit 3 units. A&amp;S IQ: LCD, LS Arch: HUM Art; HUM BU: HUM EN: H</td>
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<th>L85 MedH 130 The Art of Medicine</th>
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<td>This interdisciplinary, cross-school course at the intersection of the humanities and medicine offers students a singular encounter with the changing art and craft of medicine from ancient times to the present day. The course highlights transformational moments in the chronological history of medicine. It engages a variety of texts, including primary works and scholarship in the history of medicine as well as artworks and literary and dramatic narratives that represent the body, disease and healing care. A principal aim is for students to learn to see medicine as a social practice deeply implicated in the beliefs and struggles of particular cultural and historical contexts. Collaborating faculty come from the School of Engineering, the Washington University School of Medicine, the Sam Fox School of Design &amp; Visual Arts and the School of Arts &amp; Sciences. This course is for freshmen only. Same as I50 InterD 130 Credit 3 units. A&amp;S: FYBB A&amp;S IQ: HUM Arch; HUM Art: HUM EN: H</td>
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<th>L85 MedH 1640 Health and Disease in World History</th>
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<td>Health and disease are universal human experiences, yet vary profoundly across time and place. Extending from ancient times to the present, this course surveys that variety from a global perspective. We explore medical traditions from around the world, then examine how these responded to major epidemic diseases such as the Black Death. We study the globalization of disease and the emergence of scientific medicine after 1450, then turn to the interrelated histories of health and disease in the modern era. Throughout, we attend carefully to how the biological aspects of health and disease have shaped world history, while at the same time exploring the powerful mediating role of social, cultural, economic, and political factors — from religious beliefs and dietary practices to inequality, poverty, empire and war — in determining the myriad ways in which health and disease have been experienced and understood. Introductory course to the major and minor. Same as L22 History 1640 Credit 3 units. A&amp;S IQ: HUM, LCD BU: HUM, IS EN: H</td>
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<th>L85 MedH 233F Biomedical Ethics</th>
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<td>A critical examination, in the light of contemporary moral disagreements and traditional ethical theories, of some of the moral issues arising out of medical practice and experimentation in our society. Issues that might be discussed include euthanasia, genetic engineering, organ transplants, medical malpractice, the allocation of medical resources, and the rights of the patient. Same as L30 Phil 233F Credit 3 units. A&amp;S IQ: HUM Arch; HUM Art: HUM BU: ETH EN: H</td>
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<th>L85 MedH 3001 Philosophy of Medicine</th>
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<td>Same as L30 Phil 3001 Credit 3 units. A&amp;S IQ: HUM EN: H</td>
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<th>L85 MedH 3031 Music and Healing</th>
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| In this course, we broadly consider issues of music and healing, drawing from the fields of medical ethnomusicology, medical anthropology, music therapy, and psychology. Our case studies are multi-sited, as we interrogate musical healings and healing music from diverse global and historical perspectives. We approach our study of musical practices with the understanding that the social, cultural and political contexts where “music” and “healing” are themselves created inform the sounds of the music and its various — and often conflicting — interpretations and meanings. We read a variety of academic literature and use media texts and listening examples to develop interdisciplinary and cross-cultural analyses of music and healing. Issues of national consciousness, postcolonialism, gender, sexuality, race,
ethnictiy, class, religion, dis/ability and the role of history/memory remain central to our explorations of music and healing.

Same as L27 Music 3031
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD BU: BA EN: H

L85 MedH 3033 Religion and Healing
This course explores the relationship between religion and healing through historical and comparative study of Christian, Jewish and other religious traditions. We will examine how specific religious worldviews influence conceptions of the body and associated healing practices, how states of health and disease are identified and invested with religious significance, and how religious thought contributed to and coexisted alongside the growth of modern Western medicine. While much of the course will draw on specific case studies, students will be encouraged to pursue their own interests in the area of religion and healing through final projects.

Same as L23 Re St 3033
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: ETH
EN: H

L85 MedH 3044 Humors, Pox, and Plague: Medieval and Early Modern Medicine
This course examines how people thought about, experienced and managed disease in the medieval and early modern periods. Students will consider developments in learned medicine alongside the activities of a diverse range of practitioners — e.g., surgeons, empirics, quacks, midwives, saints, and local healers — involved in the business of curing a wide range of ailments. Significant attention will be paid to the experiences of patients and the social and cultural significance of disease. Major topics include: the rise and fall of humoral medicine; religious explanations of illness; diseases such as leprosy, syphilis and plague; the rise of anatomy; herbs and pharmaceuticals; the experience of childbirth; and the emergence of identifiable "modern" institutions such as hospitals, the medical profession, and public health. The focus will be on Western Europe but we'll also consider developments in the Islamic world and the Americas.

Same as L22 History 3044
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L85 MedH 307 Writing and Medicine
Same as L13 Writing 307
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L85 MedH 310 From Hystera to Hysterectomy: Women’s Health Care in America
This course examines issues surrounding women’s health care in America. While the scope is broad, the major emphasis will be on the 19th and 20th centuries. Through an examination of popular writing, scientific/medical writing, letters, diaries and fiction, we will look at the changing perceptions and conceptions of women’s bodies and health in America.

Same as L77 WGSS 310
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L85 MedH 312W The Body in Pain
This course explores the theme of consolation in medieval poetry. We read narratives that represent the consolation of a variety of melancholy figures — philosophers in exile, lovers in mourning, citizens in plague-ridden cities, and women disturbed by misogynous writing. We examine the connection between representations of consolation and the act of reading, and think about literature itself (along with other art forms) as a contested site of entertainment, moral guidance, self-fashioning and redemption. Authors may include Boccaccio, Boethius, Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, Abelard and Heloise, and the Pearl-poet. As a writing-intensive class, we spend time writing and talking about writing in the classroom. We read our literary texts as “arguments” about literature in addition to other topics, and we read secondary articles as examples of scholarly writing that we may or may not want to adopt as models.

Same as L14 E Lit 312W
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, WI Arch: HUM Art: HUM BU: HUM EN: H

L85 MedH 316 Contemporary Women's Health
We identify and study a broad range of health issues that are either unique to women or of special importance to women. The roles that women play as both providers and consumers of health care in the United States will be examined. The interface of gender, race, and class and their impact on an individual's access to and experience in the health care system will be central concerns. Topics are wide-ranging and include discussions of breast cancer, mental health, cardiovascular disease in women, women and eating (from anorexia to obesity), reproductive issues (from menstruation to fertility to menopause), as well as the politics of women's health, gender differences in health status, the effect of employment on health, the history of women's health research.

Same as L77 WGSS 316
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L85 MedH 353 Medical Spanish
Designed for future medical professionals, this course will provide students with a complete vocabulary and cultural sensitivity necessary for treating Spanish-speaking patients. While the main focus is oral/aural, written exams, varied reading and some research are required. Volunteer work recommended for enrolled students. Advanced students will be given priority. Prerequisite: Span 307D.

Same as L38 Span 353
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD BU: HUM EN: H

L85 MedH 360 Trans Studies
Trans* Studies is an interdisciplinary course that was previously named Transgender Studies. The new course title represents the development of the field and the identity in U.S. culture. In this course students engage with the following questions: When and why did the category gender emerge? What is the relationship between sex, sexuality and gender? How have the fields of medicine and psychology dealt with gender? How have approaches to “gender dysphoria” changed over time? Why is LGBT grouped together as a social movement? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this grouping? What are the legal obstacles faced by people who resist normative gender categories? What legal obstacles are faced by people who transition from one sex to another? To what extent do U.S. citizens have autonomy over defining their gender or sex? How are trans people represented in fiction? What does it mean to apply transgender theory to interpret fictional accounts of trans? Any of the following are suitable (but not required) courses to
We also investigate the sociocultural dimensions of illness and including China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Tibet, by considering case studies from a number of social settings clinical practice and ethics. The course familiarizes students changes affect the training of practitioners, health care policy, political violence, extreme poverty and health inequalities. This course examines the place of health, illness and healing in Asian societies. We explore how people experience, narrate this course introduces students to the practice and theory of medicine in the ancient Mediterranean, beginning in Egypt and continuing through Greece and Rome. It ends in the Middle Ages. Greco-Roman medicine will be our focus. How was disease understood by practitioners and, as far as can be reconstructed, by laypeople? What form did surgical, pharmacological, and dietetic treatment take? What were the intellectual origins of Greek medicine? The social status of medical practitioners? How was medicine written and in what terms did its practitioners conceive it? This course examines a number of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues that arise in the attempts of biologists to explain living systems. One sort of problem concerns the relation between biology (and biological descriptions and explanations) and physics and chemistry. Biological phenomena have often seemed very different from ordinary physical phenomena in being teleological or goal oriented. Vitalists, accordingly, resisted the attempt to invoke physics and chemistry in the attempt to explain biological phenomena. But recently biology has come more and more to draw upon physics and chemistry; we will examine the conceptual frameworks that underlie these efforts. Another sort of problem concerns the adaptiveness of living organisms. Charles Darwin offered one naturalistic explanation of this feature, an explanation that was further developed in this century as the synthetic theory of evolution. A number of controversial issues have arisen within this context of adaptation, and the range of levels at which selection can occur. The ubiquity of evolution, moreover, has been challenged in recent years, as a number of non-selectionist explanations have recently been put forward. We will consider the arguments for the synthetic theory and these alternatives. This course examines the health, illness and healing in Asian societies. We explore how people experience, narrate their gaze to explore the often delicate relationship of people of African descent within the realm of medicine and healing. Tracing the social nature of these medical interactions from the period of enslavement through the 20th century, this course examines the changing patterns of disease and illness, social responses to physical and psychological ailments, and the experimental and exploitative use of black bodies in the field of medicine. As a history course, the focus is extended toward the underpinnings of race and gender in the medical treatment allocated across time and space — the United States, Caribbean and Latin America — to give further insight into the roots of contemporary practice of medicine. We will begin by considering the images of women (whether mythical or historical) in traditional religious scriptures and historical or literary texts. We will then focus on what we know of the actual experience and practice of various types of religious women — nuns and abbesses, shamans and mediums, hermits and recluse, and ordinary laywomen — both historically and in more recent times. Class materials will include literary and religious texts, historical and ethnological studies, biographies and memoirs, and occasional videos and films. Prerequisites: This class will be conducted as a seminar, with minimal lectures, substantial reading and writing, and lots of class discussion. For this reason, students who are not either upper-level undergraduates or graduate students, or who have little or no background in East Asian religion or culture, will need to obtain the instructor’s permission before enrolling. This course examines the place of health, illness and healing in Asian societies. We explore how people experience, narrate their experiences with illness in more recent times. Class materials will include literary and religious texts, historical and ethnological studies, biographies and memoirs, and occasional videos and films. 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While we will concentrate on literary (particularly tragic and epic), philosophical, and medical texts, we will also look at visual representations and evidence from ritual and cult. An important part of our project will involve tracing the afterlife of classical ideas: the history of melancholia will ground this aspect of the course. Finally, we will consider how antiquity informs psychoanalysis (Oedipus, Antigone, Narcissus), and how ancient madness might partake in a critique of contemporary understandings of mental illness.

Same as L08 Classics 4647
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD EN: H

**L85 MedH 474 Frankenstein: Origins and Afterlives**
Same as L14 E Lit 474
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM BU: HUM

**L85 MedH 4885 Advanced Seminar: Medicine, Disease, and Empire**
This course examines the history of medicine in connection to the politics of colonialism and empire-building, spanning the 16th century through the 20th century. Topics covered include: epidemic disease outbreaks (e.g., smallpox, cholera, malaria); the role of science and medicine in endorsing the "civilizing missions" of empires; tropical climates and tropical diseases as western constructs; tensions between western medicine and indigenous healing practices and beliefs; ideas of race and racism in science and medicine; modern advancements in sanitation and public health and their implementation overseas; and the historical roots of the modern global health movement.
Same as L22 History 4885
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H

**L85 MedH 4990 Advanced Seminar: History of the Body**
Do bodies have a history? Recent research suggests that they do. Historians have tapped a wide variety of sources — including vital statistics, paintings and photographs, hospital records, and sex manuals — to reconstruct changes in how humans have conceptualized and experienced their own bodies. We pay particular attention to the intersection of European cultural history and history of medicine since 1500.
Same as L22 History 4990
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM, LCD, SD Arch: HUM Art: HUM EN: H