

# 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, including 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; the 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 the 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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