

# **Art of Observation—MED-1039**

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Dermatology

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**Departments:** Dallas Museum of Art, UTSW Department of Dermatology

## **Rationale**

Observation, visual inspection, with interpretation and verbal communication of one's findings are essential skills in medical practice. These skills can be learned utilizing master works of art, teaching medical students "visual literacy", which is the ability to reason pathophysiology from careful, unbiased observation.<sup>1</sup> Looking carefully at art involves analyzing the entire work before making judgments or interpretations.

Participants in the Art of Observation will learn to focus their attention on works of art and to use this visual exercise to reach conclusions. In this process, there is often more than one answer; as each viewer brings his or her personal experiences and preferences.<sup>2</sup> Exploration of core artistic concepts such as line, color, shape, form, texture, pattern, balance, and symmetry to analyze a work of art will be taught and utilized. Dallas Museum of Art docents will lead activities and discussions that help the student hone and communicate visual findings. After mastering basic art observation, two sessions will provide an opportunity to apply these skills to clinical assessment of patients using archived records of digital clinical images. *Group discussions are lively and invite individual interpretations. This is not an art history class, and students need no previous training in the arts to participate.*

Similar to courses offered at many medical campuses across the US, this course at UT-Southwestern is meant to foster early in one's medical career the habits of close visual inspection and cognitive reflection of those observations. This habit engenders a form of "metacognition" in which students learn to synthesize observations with one's knowledge and experiences as well as consider the collaborative thinking process of the group, a skill vital to successful clinical practice.<sup>3</sup>

This course meets in accordance with the schedules at the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center and the UT-Southwestern Medical Campus.

## **Objectives**

1. Explore artistic concepts of line, color, shape, form, texture, pattern, balance and symmetry
2. Utilize artistic concepts to close observation, description and group discussion/interpretation of artworks
3. Apply visual skills to patient observation using diagnostic images.
4. To develop skills of group presentation and collaboration with team members.

## **Format**

- Small Group Discussion
- Six two-hour sessions, including a 30-min pre and post-test.
- Minimum class 20 students, capped at 25 students
- Classes at: Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center, The Warehouse, and UTSW Campus

## **Student Evaluation**

Grades will be pass / fail, attendance is taken at each session. 75% attendance required to receive acknowledgement for the course. (A student must attend at least 5/6 sessions.) A separate pre and post-test of observations of artwork and patient images must be completed for credit, but is not assigned a grade or score. Students are expected to participate in lively discussions facilitated by museum docents. The diversity of the collections in these museums exposes the students to a rich multi-cultural experience.

## Course Evaluation

Students attending at least 5/6 sessions will fulfill the requirements for course acknowledgement and a passing grade. Students completing an online course evaluation will also receive transcript acknowledgement. The course evaluation will include students' perceptions of how well course objectives are met, and is utilized by the instructors to improve future curriculum.

## Representative Sessions

- Review of core artistic concepts in the museum
  - Line, color, shape, form, texture, pattern, balance, and symmetry
  - Approach to analysis of artworks
- Introduction in the European galleries, Dallas Museum of Art
- Introduction to the Pre-Columbian and Asian Collections, Dallas Museum of Art
- Walking tour of artworks on UTSW Campus, followed by Visual Skill Rounds using digital patient imagery
- Introduction to contemporary works from late 20<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> centuries at The Warehouse
- Sculpture at the Nasher Sculpture Center
  - An outdoor "roof-less" museum that serves as a peaceful retreat for reflection of both art and nature and public home for his collection of 20th-century sculpture.

**Bus transportation to and from UT Southwestern is provided.**

## References

1. Naghshineh S, Hafler JP, Miller AR, Blanco MA, Lipsitz SR, Dubroff RP, Khoshbin S, Katz JT. *Formal art observation training improves medical students visual diagnostic skills.* J Gen Intern Med. 2008. Jul; 23(7) 991-97.
2. Klugman CM, Peel J, Beckmann-Mendez D. *Art rounds: teaching inter-professional students visual thinking strategies at one school.* Academic Medicine. 2011. 86 (10) 1266-71.
3. Schaff PB, Isken S, Tager RM. *From contemporary art to core clinical skills: observation, interpretation, and meaning-making in a complex environment.* Academic Medicine. 2011. 86(10) 1272-76.

## Art of Observation Enrichment Elective MED-1039 2014-15

### All classes are Thursdays, 4-6pm

Session 1	January 8 <sup>th</sup>	Dallas Museum of Art
Session 2	January 15 <sup>th</sup>	Dallas Museum of Art
Session 3	January 29 <sup>th</sup>	UTSW Campus
Session 4	February 26 <sup>th</sup>	The Warehouse
Session 5	March 26 <sup>th</sup>	Nasher Sculpture Center (across street from the museum)
Session 6	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	Dallas Museum of Art

**A minimum of 20 students are required at all times for his elective, and a maximum of 25.**

**MISSED CLASSES:** Call Betty R. Shaw, Enrichment Electives Coordinator, 214-648-9176

- TWO DAYS notice required for missed classes
- Arrange for substitute student to attend and maintain minimum student requirement

***Students registering after we receive the maximum will be placed on a waiting list. If someone is unable to attend, the next student on the roster will be given priority.***