Course Description: HUMANISM IN MEDICINE

**Course Director:** Dr. Molly Camp  
**Faculty Sponsor (if non-faculty course director):**  
**Department:** Psychiatry  
**Student Liaison:** Ashley Yoder ([ashley.yoder@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:ashley.yoder@utsouthwestern.edu))

**Requirements:**  
- Minimum participants for course to be conducted: 5  
- Maximum number of students per course (if applicable): unlimited

**Rationale**  
Medicine is both an art and a science. Medical school curriculums cover scientific principles in detail. However, as William Osler once said, “It is much more important to know what sort of a patient has a disease than what sort of a disease a patient has.” This elective would complement the medical school curriculum and focus on developing skills needed to become a well-rounded physician who is informed about both the social and medical issues that affect our patients.

The hope for this elective is to provide skills to strengthen the patient-physician relationship. Hearing a patient’s perspective regarding healthcare and possible barriers to care can help future physicians understand the importance of patient input in developing realistic treatment plans. The physical exam is also an important component of assessment and diagnosis. Time will be spent addressing the intricacies of this time-honored practice. Furthermore, with the assistance of expert physicians, we will discuss addiction and chronic pain, homelessness, and barriers to health care, specifically addressing how these can impact our patients and their overall health. Cases with ethical dilemmas from clinical rotations and/or volunteer clinics will also be discussed. Lastly, time will be spent discussing how to promote one’s own health in a demanding profession.

**Objectives**  
This course strives to foster a better understanding of the patients we will serve as future physicians. It also serves to strengthen medical students’ confidence in performing the physical exam and identifying normal and abnormal findings.

**Format:** lectures, discussions, and active learning and practice of the physical exam

**Student Evaluation:**  
*Grades will be pass / fail.* Attendance and active participation are required to receive credit for the course.

**Course Evaluation**  
Grading will be pass/fail. To receive transcript acknowledgment, students must:  
- attend at least 10 participant hours  
- complete the online course evaluation form
Schedule

I. Patient-Centered Care (1.5 hrs)

*Dr. Dan Sepdham; Panel of Patients*

A physician who is recognized for his patient-centered care and compassionate demeanor will talk about how he maintains empathy on a daily basis. The physician will also discuss how he addresses challenging situations. Conversely, a panel of patients will provide an alternative perspective of the healthcare system – addressing the stresses associated with managing chronic illnesses and the fear of a surgery or hospitalization. Patients will also be asked to reflect on what they look for in a “good physician.”


II. Barriers to Care I: Social Determinants (1 hr)

*Practicing Social Worker*

Behforouz states, “Whereas biologic pathology may present specific targets for intervention, social or structural pathology is difficult to treat.” Psychosocial issues often impact the health of our patients. When treating patients, the social history is often overlooked or simplified to whether the patient smokes, drinks, or uses recreational drugs. However, this simplified approach has many pitfalls as patients’ living situations may affect their ability to successfully manage their health conditions after discharge. As the importance of social determinants on health becomes more and more recognized, there is an ever-growing need for multidisciplinary medical teams to fully address a patient’s needs. At this session, a social worker will present on his/her career and specific skill set as well as how to find resources for our patients. Discussion will also center on what future physicians need to know to best collaborate with other members of the team to efficiently prepare an appropriate disposition plan.


III. Barriers to Care II: Cultural and Language Differences (1 hr)

*Dr. Kevin Brown or Dr. Ximena Lopez*

At this session, we will address the intricacies of practicing medicine in a diverse society. We will focus specifically on how patients’ unique cultural and religious backgrounds can affect their treatment preferences and perceptions of healthcare.


b. Excerpt from *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

IV. Addiction (1 hr)

*Dr. Kurt Kleinschmidt*

The goal of this session is to increase awareness and understanding regarding the challenging topic of addiction. Phrases like “he’s just a drug-seeker” often reverberate on rounds and can invoke negative countertransference in medical providers. Many myths exist about addiction, and this session hopes to dispel misconceptions and provide better understanding of this condition.
V. **Homelessness** (2 hrs)
*Representative from The Bridge*
This session will focus on attaining a better understanding of patients’ current social situations and how this impacts their ability to receive care and obtain medications. This session will involve a trip to a local homeless shelter.

VI. **Palliative Care** (1 hr)
*Dr. Elizabeth Paulk*
This session is designed to dispel myths regarding palliative care. An emphasis will be placed on providing care that enhances quality of life over quantity of life in appropriate clinical scenarios. Additionally, an expert physician will discuss how to compassionately approach discussions with patients and their families regarding goals of care/end-of-life care.

VII. **Art of the Physical Exam** (1.5 hrs)
*GHHS Committee Members*
Verghese states, “modern medicine is in danger of losing a powerful, old-fashioned tool: human touch.” This tool requires no fancy imaging equipment or costly software and is readily available and informative if performed correctly. This session will focus on current viewpoints regarding the physical exam. Verghese’s TED Talk will also be shown during the class session.


b. TED Talk: Abraham Verghese’s “A Doctor’s Touch”
   [https://www.ted.com/talks/abraham_verghese_a_doctor_s_touch?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/abraham_verghese_a_doctor_s_touch?language=en)

VIII. **Art of the Physical Exam – Part II** (1.5 hrs)
*Dr. Sujata Bhushan*
This session will focus on honing students’ physical exam skills through demonstration from a physician expert followed by hands-on application. From maintaining a patient’s modesty to pinpointing important physical exam landmarks and significant findings, it is our hope that students will leave feeling more confident in their physical exam skills.

a. Stanford Medicine 25: Promoting the Culture of Bedside Medicine
   [stanfordmedicine25.stanford.edu/about.html](https://stanfordmedicine25.stanford.edu/about.html)

IX. **Physician Wellness: Taking Care of Yourself and Managing Burnout** (1.5 hrs)
*Dr. Molly Camp*
The medical education process has been viewed as demanding and dehumanizing; furthermore, compassion fatigue and loss of empathy appear to be growing problems in the field. This final session will focus on how to maintain compassion and manage emotional stressors through various mediums including reflection, mindfulness, and literature/art. Participants will also take an empathy and compassion test, and the results will be discussed.

   [www.aafp.org/fpm/2015/0900/p42.html](https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2015/0900/p42.html)