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Spring 1996

## Medicine & Literature (Spring 1996) (Whitman College)

Robert D. Tobin

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**WHITMAN COLLEGE**  
**MEDICINE & LITERATURE**

**world literature 390**  
**professor tobin**  
**office hours: MW, 1:30-3:00**  
**tobin@whitman.edu**

**spring 1996**  
**olin 310**  
**x5247**

In World Literature 390, I want to examine from a literary perspective medicine and medical discourse. How do authors use metaphors of sickness and health, illness and cure, disease and well-being in their literature? How in turn do these literary and rhetorical metaphors affect everyday understandings of these basic concepts?

Grading will be based on the following:

short paper, 3-5 pages,	10%	—
class presentation	15%	—
research into and presentation on rhetoric of disease	15%	—
long paper, 8-12 pages,	25%	
final	10%	
participation	25%	

Attendance is crucial to a discussion class. More than three unexcused absences may result in the lowering of a grade. Absences can only be excused by the Dean of Students or the Health Center.

## SYLLABUS

Jan. 16 Introduction: Medicine and Literature?

Unit I: The Origins of Health

Jan. 18 Wilhelm Meister, Books 1-2

Jan. 23 Wilhelm Meister, Books 3-4

Jan. 25 Wilhelm Meister, Books 5-6

Jan. 30 Wilhelm Meister, Books 7-8.

Feb. 1 Foucault, Birth of the Clinic

Unit II: The Pharmakon

Feb. 6 Madame Bovary, Part I

Feb. 8 Madame Bovary, Part II, Ch. 1-8

Feb. 13 Madame Bovary, Part II, Ch. 9-15

Feb. 15 Madame Bovary, Part III

Feb. 20 Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," Ronell, Crack Wars

Unit III: Psychiatry and Constructed Illnesses

Feb. 22 Lenz -- schizophrenia, Foucault, Madness and Civilization

Feb. 27 Dora 1-55 -- hysteria.

Feb. 29 Dora 56-124

Unit IV: Tuberculosis

Mar. 5 Magic Mountain, 1-101,

Mar. 7 Magic Mountain, 102-202

Spring Break

Mar. 26 Magic Mountain, 203-367

Mar. 28 Magic Mountain, 367-541

~~Weekend of operas about women with tuberculosis! La Boheme and La Traviata! Try to attend one!~~

Apr. 2 Magic Mountain, 541-624

Apr. 4 Magic Mountain, 624-717; Sontag, Illness as Metaphor

Unit V: The Plague

Apr. 9 The Plague, Part I-II

Apr. 11 The Plague, Part III-IV

Apr. 16      The Plague, Part V

Unit VI: Discourses of Diseases

Apr. 18      student reports on the rhetoric of such new diseases as ebola fever, hantavirus, sexual offenses, various addictions, attention deficit disorder, Gulf War syndrome, the newly re-emergent tuberculosis, chronic fatigue syndrome.

Unit VI: AIDS

Apr. 23      Angels in America: Millennium Approaches

Apr. 25      Angels in America: Perestroika

Apr. 30      Sontag, AIDS and its Metaphors; either Simon Watney, Policing Desire, or Writing AIDS, ed. Tim Murphy.

Unit VII: Breast Cancer

May 2      The Cancer Journals

May 7      The Cancer Journals

May 15, 9-11      Final examination: short identifications.

## Medicine and Literature

### New Syllabus

- Mar. 26      Magic Mountain, 100-343
- Mar. 28      Magic Mountain, 100-343 (through “Walpurgis-Night”)
- Mar. 30      9:00 “medicine and literature” panel!
- April 2      Magic Mountain, 344-540 (Chapter VI)  
Marie Roper’s tuberculosis presentation
- April 4      Magic Mountain, 540-716 (Chapter VII)  
Analiene Sand’s hysteria presentation.  
7:00    opera evening at my place? \*
- April 9      Camus, The Plague, Part I-II
- April 11     Camus, The Plague, Part III-IV
- April 16     Camus, The Plague, Part V
- April 18     No class
- April 23     Angels in America: Millennium Approaches
- April 25     Angels in America: Perestroika
- April 30     (everyone:) Sontag, Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors  
(presentation by Hong Vo and Coco Anderson: on Writing AIDS)
- May 2      The Cancer Journals
- May 7      The Cancer Journals
- May 9      Final paper due. No Final examination.

\*My place: 19 E. Walnut, between 1st and 2nd. Easiest directions: go down Main, Alder, or Poplar until 1st St. Turn left. Go down 1st until it seems to end (at Thorne). It doesn’t really end, it just jogs up--so go left on Thorne and right on 1st again. The next right is Walnut. This is about a 20 minute walk and a five minute drive. My phone number: 522-2270.