SYLLABUS

Freshman Honors Seminar 2012:

The Doctor’s Dilemma: Being Both Correct And Right

Professor: Michael E. Makover, MD
Course # FRSEM-UA.379.1.001.FA12
Place: GCASL 274 Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life, 238 Thompson
Dates: 14 Sessions, Tuesdays, 6:20 PM – 8:50 PM.
   #1 –  Tuesday 9/04
   #2 –  Tuesday 9/11
   #3 –  Tuesday 9/18
   #4 –  Monday 9/24 NOTE CHANGE IN DATE  Room TBA
   #5 –  Tuesday 10/02
   #6 –  Tuesday 10/09
   No Class – Tuesday 10/16
   #7 –  Tuesday 10/23
   #8 –  Tuesday 10/30
   #9 –  Tuesday 11/06
   #10 – Tuesday 11/13
   #11 – Tuesday 11/20
   #12 – Tuesday 11/27
   #13 – Tuesday 12/4 Thesis due date!
   #14 – Tuesday 12/11 Last session

Professor’s availability: Dr. Makover’s office is off-campus, but he will be available if needed before class and will meet with students after each class. You can also reach him by e-mail.

Each week three to four students will meet individually with Dr. Makover after class to discuss their work and answer questions. These are an important part of the course and there should be at least four meetings during the semester. Each meeting will review prior assignments and class work and answer any questions.

Summary of the Course

This course is designed to develop skills in thinking and communicating and is also an introduction to the many complex issues in healthcare, medicine and science. Students cannot avoid these issues, as they are central to the life of every American. Besides that, everyone will likely be a patient needing the healthcare system at some point, or many points, during a lifetime. It will also be of interest to students heading toward a career in healthcare, law or business. The course will give you a sense of what it is like to be a doctor and what it takes to be one.
We will explore what it means to think as a scientist and a doctor.

- To think independently, as free of assumptions as possible;
- To employ logic, tempered by experience and human values (better known as wisdom);
- To formulate ideas and arguments efficiently and compellingly;
- To be comfortable in responding to challenging interactions of ideas;
- To be able to defend ideas or to adapt them in response to better arguments and information;
- To judge data, observations and reports objectively and critically;
- To research resources for concepts and data to support assertions.

We will also practice communicating ideas effectively:

- To write and speak clearly and simply;
- To organize and present ideas and concepts in a manner appropriate and valuable to the audience receiving them;
- To present your ideas and beliefs honestly but effectively for your purpose.
- To learn to speak in a public forum (in class).

The course will also serve as an introduction to the college educational experience that is designed to help you succeed well in the rest of your college career.

This course is not intended to convey the enormous amount of data and information necessary to understand such a broad field as healthcare, but to explore some of the important concepts involved and to be an introduction to how to develop the skills above that are necessary to science and medicine (and to every other endeavor).

The format is fourteen two-and-one-half hour seminars (each with a brief mid-session break).

During each session, the students will do most of the talking with guidance and devil’s-advocate challenges from the professor where needed. *Come prepared!*

Each session will begin with a brief introduction by the professor to lay the groundwork for the day’s issues. After the first class, students should come prepared from the assigned books and the readings posted on Blackboard and from additional research they feel they need to contribute to the discussions. Every student should participate in every discussion.

*Because of the nature of the course, attendance is an absolute requirement at every session unless the professor approves a valid excuse.*

Topics will be listed ahead of time and as many as possible will be covered during class, determined by the direction of the discussions as they unfold. Students will lead most of the discussions on the topics.
There is a list of many topics posted on Blackboard. It is not meant to include all but is a resource for choices for the major paper, for a shorter paper, for debates and for class discussion.

Note: This syllabus is an approximation of the topics we will cover. We will adjust it as we go in response to how much we cover in each class and the students’ interests and choices.

There will be no tests, but there will be questions and references to assigned reading. That means the readings must have been completed and understood in the allowed time. Please note: skimming and ‘winging it’ will not work.

The course is intended to be challenging and involving; its success will depend on the vigor and enthusiasm students invest. It is the opportunity to express your ideas, think original thoughts and test yourself with your peers, free of the pressures to memorize a long string of facts.

There are no truly ‘correct’ ideas in ethics and science. Scientists and ethicists know that they can only approach truth, and that much of what is judged to be true is relative to the culture and standards of the human environment. What is accepted in one community may be rejected by another. One interesting debate would be whether there are ‘universal truths’ that should apply to all humans regardless of cultural differences or whether all morality is relative to the society in which the individual resides. If the latter, does one society have the intellectual right to ‘judge’ another.

Students should not think they have to come up with the ‘correct’ answer. Instead, they should work to contribute ideas and answers that are theirs, are supportable and honest, avoid logical fallacies and demonstrate that thoughtfulness was invested in the comment.

Students will not be judged on their beliefs or points of view, but rather on their ability to think out their views, whatever they are, and to present them effectively.

The bookstore has copies of books required and recommended for the course. See the list at the end.

There will be many articles posted or handed out. Some are required and others are made available for those interested and to help go beyond the required readings. While your own research is a very important part of your work, Dr. Makover may be able to supply or suggest others as you work on various projects.

Students are encouraged to study together and to try out arguments with each other, though, of course, all written work must be the student’s alone.
Very important cautions:

Citations must be complete: The professor will look up and read many of your sources, so be sure to include all information required to find them. Internet accessed articles and sources must be properly identified and reachable directly. Look up the proper format for footnotes and citations. In this class you may use RefWorks, MLA or APA standard format as long as it is complete.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is considered a very serious offense in college (and elsewhere). Plagiarism means to use the words, or close to them, and ideas of others without careful attribution and crediting the source. In some schools, plagiarism is grounds for expulsion. NYU applies a more individualized policy but strongly forbids the practice. Students can easily fall into plagiarism without intending to if they are not careful. Even if unintended, it is not acceptable. We will discuss in class how to avoid these traps.

Sources: Wikipedia, About.com, Answers.com, etc. are not acceptable references as their authorship is unknown or uncertified and they have not been vetted by proper editorship. (They can be used as one form of initial overview to guide further research, but they are of limited value even for that.) Google, Google Scholar, SearchMedica (http://www.searchmedica.com/), PubMed and other such search engines are invaluable. However, there is no substitute for also doing in-library research, as serendipitous discovery in the midst of journals and stacks is often invaluable. Few books are online, so the library stacks are important to find those. There are several sections that include medical ethics, healthcare policy and other topics that apply to this course.

Research resources:

Over the next four years you will be doing research all of the time, beginning with this course. Learning how to use the library now will make your life much easier. The library maintains huge resources for you to use. It employs an army of librarians who exist to help you in your work. Students today are very expert in the digital world, but you are all complete novices in applying those skills to the wealth of resources at NYU. Visit the library and ask a librarian to begin to teach you how to use it. Attend some of the many sessions they run for that purpose. The librarian for Health Sciences is Susan Jacobs (998-2432, susan.jacobs@nyu.edu) and for Undergraduate Studies is Paula Feid (998-2509, paula.feid@nyu.edu). Do not hesitate to call them for help.

Assignments (also see handout on workload and grading)

The Freshman Honors Seminar program is designed to feature significant reading and writing every week.

There will be on-going writing assignments, most short, one major.
Weekly work:

- Each week, students will read posted articles and assigned books in preparation for class discussion. The articles should be a starting point and students should look beyond.
- At least two days before class begins students must e-mail to the professor the assignment due that week, usually an Essay. See the numbered essay list for what is due that week.
- Every week, each student must also post one or two brief questions (some will be used in class) that interest them, or that they think will be of interest to discuss in class. Asking questions is one of the most important ways to learn and to improve thinking skills. We cannot of course cover them all in class, but we will select some for class discussion.
- Assignments, which will vary, should be original and demonstrate that the reading was done and understood. Self-editing and clarity are important, but this is not a writing course and students will not be graded as such. You will be graded on how well you present your ideas, your research and your original thinking. (See below for two writing resources that are optional but very helpful in improving writing. Both are short and easy to read.)

Major research paper: By the third session, students will identify a subject for the major paper (thesis), which will be ten to fifteen pages long (around 4500-6500 words, single-spaced, 12 pt., Word doc, printed and also posted on Blackboard). It should be related to any of the topics in the course outline or topic list but other topics will be considered if a student wishes. In the final paper, students should summarize the topic, show original mastery of available resources and present a cohesive and interesting original argument of their own using the principles taught in the course. It should conclude with a brief summary. Length is not the criteria for quality. Thomas Jefferson once apologized for a long letter saying that he did not have time to write a short one. You have time. The papers should be pithy, concise, and show a sensible progression of ideas. It will be very helpful for you to self-edit and to make sure the paper flows in order and avoids repetition.

By the fifth session, students should have an initial outline ready (e-mailed) for the professor to review. It will undoubtedly evolve as you go but will help make sure you are on the right path.

Beginning with the eighth session, students will begin presenting their thesis ideas and findings to the class. The presentations will be ten minutes and should be spoken, but can be augmented with PowerPoint or other such presentation program or any imaginative way the student wishes, but it is not required to do so. The class will discuss the issue, tactfully critique the presentations and make suggestions.

The final paper, incorporating the input from the professor and the class and any further research you might do, is due by the start of the thirteenth session.
Procrastination is your enemy, so please plan a schedule for working on your thesis.

Research paper format: See NYU writing department guidelines.

Useful writing guides include: Strunk and White, The Elements of Style, 4th Ed. and a handout in class from Zinsser, William: On Writing Well, 6th Ed. Both are short, easy to read and will provide most of what anyone needs to write well. Note that the time invested in learning writing skills and improving your writing style will be an invaluable investment for the rest of your college career and all the years after.

Debates: The class will also be divided into teams for occasional in-class mini-debates. Debates will be informal and will follow debate rules loosely. Any students previously active on debate teams are welcome to offer ideas about how to structure these, or even to be in charge of organizing them.

Grading:

The following will contribute to the final grade:

| Class contribution quality and participation | 35% |
| Major research paper | 30% |
| Weekly essays and questions | 25% |
| Debate participation and preparation | 10% |

See the handout as to what is expected for superior grades.

Class Outlines

Class One:

A. Introduction
   Introduction and description of the seminar and its structure and requirements
   Introduction to the professor.
   Students will be asked to introduce themselves and to give a short personal background.
   Explanation of assignments, debates, the research paper and class discussion.
   Assignment to debate teams.
   A beginning overview of medicine and its place in society and the issues we will be covering.

B. How doctors and scientists think (or should)
   We will review the handout on concepts of thinking.
   Logical and efficient thinking
   Avoiding assumptions and preconceived ideas
   Presenting ideas clearly and compellingly
   How to listen
Should logic always rule?
What is the difference between logic and wisdom?
What are the limits of logic?
Is all worthwhile thinking conscious or is ‘intuition’ useful as well?
How does probability fit into decision-making?
What is the nature of medical reasoning and decision-making?
What is truth? Scientists know that ‘truth’ is a highly relative term.

Doctors almost never have enough information, so they must always extrapolate available knowledge to the specific, unique case of each patient. How does that affect medical care?

Heinrich’s, Thank You for Arguing is an excellent and enjoyable guide to basic logic and logical fallacies, how to structure ideas and arguments effectively and how to be persuasive. Very worthwhile (and fun) to read.

Other suggested readings on logic and argument (not required):
- Weston, Anthony, A Rulebook for Arguments (only 87 pages, provides a simple introduction to presenting ideas fairly and convincingly).
- Bennett, Deborah, Logic Made Easy (brief and enjoyable introduction to logic).
- McInerny, D. Q., Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking

C. Presenting medical and scientific arguments and information effectively

Brief introduction

Assigned work:

Essay: #1 for next week.

As you go through the course, please read and use Strunk and White and Zinsser on how to self-edit for clarity, brevity and cohesiveness and Heinrichs to begin to understand logic, organizing ideas, presenting convincing arguments and analyzing those of others.

Students should begin to think about topics and issues from their own experiences for future class discussions.

Begin reading Mismanaged Care, pages 13-53 for next class.

Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine, edited by Roy Porter. Porter was a superb medical historian. He edited this collection and wrote part of it. (His writing is enjoyable and compelling. He wrote a comprehensive history, The Greatest Benefit to Mankind, should anyone wish a much more detailed resource.) Read the Cambridge Introduction, Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 for next class. The readings in this book are to give you an idea about the history of medicine and how concepts have changed dramatically over time and in different cultures.
Know Your Chances, Schwartz, Wolshin, Schwartz and Welch, This was written for a study (see posted articles) on how patients understand risk. It is a good introduction to putting risk in perspective. Doctors, pharmaceutical companies, schools and the media overload people with a multitude of risks; it is important to put them in perspective and to learn how to address the real issues and most important risks for which it is worth taking action. We will discuss the virtues of what the authors are saying, as well as the limits. Please read this fully before next class.

What you learn from this book will be applicable to your everyday life and to much of your future college and post-graduate career. Combining this book with The Drunkard’s Walk will equip you understand the role that chance and probability play in everything you do and think,

Read the AMA and Hippocratic codes of ethics and articles on understanding medical risk and statistics posted on Blackboard for next session.

Submit questions on topics for the next class.

**Important assignment:** Begin to read all of How Doctors Think by Jerome Groopman; an assignment based on it is due before Class Three. The book is very clear and he relates everything to real life cases and situations. As you read the book, note all of the ‘cognitive’ errors of thinking and any other good or faulty ways of approaching medical problems. At least four days prior to Class Three, post on Blackboard what you have listed along with a very brief description of your own what each entry means. **You should have at least 10 things you learned from this book, such as cognitive errors to avoid.** Then please briefly discuss your views on this and illustrate how selected few examples of the errors might occur in non-medical situations as well. **This will require a fair amount of work so enough lead-time is provided.**

**Class Two:**

A. Medical ethics codes and the essence of medical practice  
B. Aging in America and Healthy living  
C. Why don’t people act sensibly and follow good advice? Four steps to success.

**Assigned work:**

Complete Groopman assignment as above before next class.

Topics will be decided for some mini-debates for Class Four.
Students should read Chapters 2, 8, 20 of *Mismanaged Care* by next week, as well as the posted readings for next class. Post questions on topics.

Readings for next week will be posted.

**Essay:** #2 for next class.

*Note:* Students should complete the reading of entire *Mismanaged Care* and *Cambridge* in time for Class Seven.

**Class Three:**

A. **How Doctors Think**
B. **Doctor-patient relationship**
   - Informed Consent
   - Paternalism vs Patient Autonomy
   - The placebo effect
   - Privacy

Groopman assignment and Essay #2 are due today.

**Assigned work for next week:**

**Essay:** # 3 for next week.

Articles will be posted on end-of-life and other more serious ethics questions for next week’s discussion.

If there is time, we will hold a mini-debate, the topic to be chosen by the students. Please select one student to organize and lead the debates, usually someone who has had debate experience.

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit assignment for the next class.

*Students will have submitted choices for research paper.*

**Class Four:**

A. **Life and death issues**
   - End of life issues; whose life is it, anyway?
   - Patients in permanent coma and persistent vegetative states;
   - Futile medical care;
   - Physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill patients who are suffering;

B. **Politics and health care**
FDA issues, political pressure by religious groups,
Effects of government regulation,
Candidate and office holder health issues).
Physician participation in torture and executions.

Assigned work for next week:

Mini-debate: students will choose topics.

Essay: #4 for next week

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit essay and questions on topics for
the next class.

Class Five:

A. Addiction.
B. How people make decisions (Doctors and patients face endless decisions and how
they are made is essential to medical care)
C. The teenage brain and risk-taking; a major medical problem

Students will have posted on Blackboard and hand-in in class a printed copy of their
initial outlines for their major paper.

Assigned work for next week:

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit assignment and questions on topics for
the next class.

Essay: #5 for next week

Class Six:

A. Medical ‘truth’: Understanding medical risk; research design and validity;
interpreting medical statistics

Assigned work for next week:

Student teams of two will choose a country (Canada, England, France, Japan,
Germany, China, India, Mexico) to report (briefly) to the class next session about
how they pay for healthcare and their healthcare ‘culture’. Reports will be given in Class Eight

Essay: #6 for next week
Reading of *Mismanaged Care* and *Cambridge* should be complete in time for next class.

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit questions on topics for the next class.

**Class Seven:**

**A. Health economics: who should pay for your healthcare?**

**B. Rationing Healthcare**

**Assigned work for next week:**

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit assignment and questions on topics for the next class.

Read handout selections from Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark, *Metaphors We Live By, 2nd ed.*, in preparation for Class Ten. By metaphor they mean the point of view every individual or every society has toward the world or towards a specific aspect. This plays a vital role in language and in how each of us deals with the components of our lives. Doctors operate by certain metaphors (for example, the ‘war’ against cancer, or whether the doctor sees himself as a paternal figure or as a co-partner with the patient). We are reading from this classic book in this course because understanding the role of metaphor and point of view is essential to understand medical care, medical research, communication and the doctor-patient relationship (and most of everything else we do).

**Essay: #7 for next week**

Think about the difference between mistake, error and negligence for class discussion.

**Class Eight:**

**A. Malpractice and error**

**B. Healthcare in other countries and the role of cultural differences**

Student teams will report their research assigned last week.

**C. Student presentations**

**Assigned work for next week:**
Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit questions on topics for the next class. There are no posted articles on topics B. and C. next week so that you can do your own research for articles and ideas.

Essay: #8 for next week

Class Nine:

A. Is there a place for spirituality?
B. What are the medical and health effects of hope and optimism vs. anxiety and pessimism?
C. Student presentations.

Assigned work for next week:

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit questions on topics for the next class.

Essay: #9 for next week

Class Ten:

A. The pharmaceutical industry and its effect on medical care and research
B. ‘Disease mongering’
C. Student presentations.

Assigned work for next week:

Essay: #10 for next week

Read posted articles (and beyond) and submit questions on topics for the next class.

Class Eleven:

A. Metaphor and point of view (see under Class Seven above)
B. Alternative medicine, complementary and integrative therapies
C. Student presentations.

Assigned work for next week:

Read posted articles (and beyond) for the next class.

Essay: #11 for next week

Class Twelve:
A. The genetics revolution, and medicine; how far we should go?
B. Medical technology, “enhancement” and bionic people.
C. Student presentations

Assigned work for next week: Complete major paper.

Class Thirteen:

A. Various topics from previous discussions for which there was not enough time, or new topics students particularly want to address.
B. Topics from the topic list if time.
C. Student presentations.

Assigned work for next week: Submit final research paper (post online and hand-in double-spaced paper copy).

Finish preparations for in-class debates.

Class Fourteen

A. Debates
B. Summation and open discussion.

The teams will hold their debates. There will be two debates, each between two of the four teams that have been preparing since the beginning. These will be friendly but more formal debates.

We will finish by summing up the approaches to thinking that we have developed over the course of the seminar. Students can ask any final questions or make any comments of interest to them.

Required Book List for Class

How Doctors Think
  o Jerome Groopman

The Soul of a Doctor
  o Harper, Gordon, et.al.
  o Algonquin ISBN 156512507X
Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Bioethical Issues
   Levine, Carol

Mismanaged Care
   Makover, Michael
   Prometheus Books ISBN 157392248X

Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine
   Porter, Roy

Thank You for Arguing
   Heinrichs, Jay

   Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions [Paperback]
   Ariely, Dan

Recommended resources (not required):

   Bennet, Deborah J., Logic Made Easy: How to Know When Language Deceives You
   W.W. Norton (Paperback), ISBN 0393326926

   Caplan, Arthur L., Smart Mice, Not-So-Smart People

   Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark, Metaphors We Live By
   University Of Chicago Press (paperback), ISBN 0226468011

   McInerny, D. Q., Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking
   Random House (paperback), ISBN 1400061717

   Allyn & Bacon; 4th edition (paperback), ISBN 0205313426
Wilson, David Sloan, *Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives*  
Delta (Paperback), ISBN: 0385340923

Zinnser, William, *On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition*  
Collins (paperback) ISBN: 0060891548

This is from the library telling instructors what is available for students. The librarians can be immensely helpful and are eager to do so. Please contact any of the below or ask Prof. Makover to help arrange it.

NYU Library Resources and Services for Faculty Teaching Freshman Honors & Collegiate Seminars – Fall 2010

These are the skills freshmen and sophomores need in order to be intelligent users of information; they need to know how to:

- Clearly articulate a research problem or question
- Translate the question into a search statement (consisting of subject headings or keywords and Boolean operators) suitable for a library catalog or online index/database
- Use the online catalog to locate books, journals and media by title, author or subject
- Become proficient using a general index/database to locate articles on a topic
- Begin to use specialized indexes/databases, e.g., PsycInfo, MLA, etc., to find scholarly articles
- Begin to critically evaluate information sources. Understand concepts such as authority, depth, scope, bias, relevance, currency, reputation, and intended audience
- Recognize the limitations of Google for academic research
- Understand the ethical use of information, e.g., plagiarism, copyright and fair use

**Services:**

- Students should attend one of the pre-scheduled library instruction classes. The fall class schedule is available at [http://library.nyu.edu/classes.html](http://library.nyu.edu/classes.html)
- Request a course-specific library instruction session tailored to the assignment and research needs of your class. For details, see [http://library.nyu.edu/forms/instruct.html](http://library.nyu.edu/forms/instruct.html)
- Term Paper Research Clinics – November 2–November 12, 2009
  If you’re assigning a research paper, encourage your students to take advantage of this service. Librarians will work one-on-one with students to help them develop a research strategy for their topic. An online request form will be available in late October at [http://library.nyu.edu/research/termpaper.html](http://library.nyu.edu/research/termpaper.html)
- If a student wants to get started on a research assignment before the term paper clinics begin, let them know they can always make an appointment with the Undergraduate Librarian for an individual consultation.
- 28 Subject Librarians serve as liaisons between the library and academic...
departments. Contact your Subject Librarian to schedule classes for your upper-level students; request a research consultation or library services update for yourself or demos of discipline-specific databases for department meetings. For contact information, see: http://library.nyu.edu/research/lib_arc.html
• See the Library’s website for more resources and faculty services.

http://library.nyu.edu

Have a question about library support services but not sure whom to call?
Contact Paula Feid, Undergraduate Librarian. paula.feid@nyu.edu, 1-212-998-2509