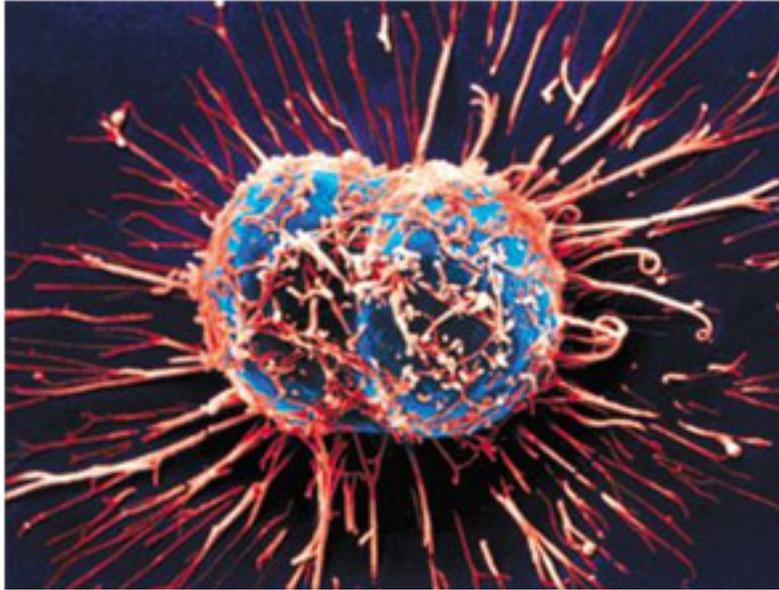


Malignant Ideas: The Ethics, Politics, and Business of Cancer in the 21st Century

Spring 2014
HON/HPS 394: Science and the Self



Dr. Jenny Dyck Brian

Class time and location: MW, 6:00-7:15pm, Cereus 202
Office: Sage Hall 150
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30pm and by appointment
E-mail: Jenny.brian@asu.edu
Phone: 480-727-3592

Synopsis

The global cancer industrial complex is one of the most lucrative treatment sectors and continues to grow. This course investigates cancer as a social, political, economic and historical construct. In this class, we will analyze cancer research funding mechanisms, patient advocacy, and the role of pharmaceutical companies in building the business of cancer, and ask questions, such as: **Who gets rich off cancer? What are the processes of commodification and exploitation in cancer treatments? How do illnesses become illnesses and how do illnesses become industries? Are some cancers “better” than others?** We will seek answers from science and technology studies, history of medicine, economics, sociology, and bioethics, as well as fiction, movies and personal narratives.

Required Texts

The course reader is available for pick-up at the Alternative Copy Shop. It is available in print and electronic form. You can choose the electronic version, but if you abuse your computer privileges, you will then have to buy the print copy.

Available at ASU Bookstore:

Sulik, Gayle. 2012. *Pink Ribbon Blues*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1:

- 13 Jan Introduction to the class
15 Jan Jain, L. 2013. *Malignant: How cancer becomes us* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), pp. 1-26. **BB**

Week 2: What is Health?

- 20 Jan Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No classes
22 Jan Canguillehm, G. "Health: Crude Concept and Philosophical Question." *Public Culture* 2008; 20(3): 467-477.

Media analysis: *Bring in an article or video link that teaches you how to be healthy. What assumptions is the author making? What is the tone? If there are images, what do the images convey? What or whose interests are promoted? What definition of health is promoted?*

Week 3: What is Illness?

- 27 Jan Sontag, S. 1990. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: Doubleday, pp. 3-87.
29 Jan Frank, A.W. "The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics." Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-25.
Woolf, V. 1926. "On Being Ill."

Week 4: The Politics of Life and Death

- 3 Feb Rose, N. "The Politics of Life Itself." *Theory Culture Society* 2001; 18(6): 1-30.
5 Feb Mbembé, J.-A., and L. Meintjes. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 2003 (Winter); 15(1): 11-40.

Week 5: Clinical Trials

- 10 Feb Callahan, D. 2003. *What Price Better Health? The hazards of the research imperative*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 11-35, 77-78.
Keating, P., and A. Cambrosio. "Cancer Clinical Trials: The Emergence and Development of a New Style of Practice." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 2007 (Spring); 81(1): 197-223.
12 Feb Joint class with Bioethics in Film, 6-9pm, LSE 106. Movie: *Wit*.

Week 6: Heroism in Health

- 17 Feb Stacey, J. 1997. *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-29.
Recommended:
Bauman, Z. "Survival as a Social Construct." *Theory, Culture & Society* 1992; 9: 1-36.

Media analysis assignment: Bring in an example of a “survivor” message. (E.g., FORCE, “previvors”, chrisbeatcancer.com)

19 Feb Clarke, A., Shim, J., Mamo, L., Fosket, J.R., and J. Fishman.
“Biomedicalization: Technoscientific transformations of health, illness, and U.S. biomedicine.” *American Sociological Review* 2003; 68(2): 161-194.
Klawiter, M. 2008. “Introduction” in *The Biopolitics of Breast Cancer*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp. xxvi-xxxi.

Week 7: Probability and Chance

24 Feb Porter, T.M. 1995. *Trust in Numbers: The pursuit of objectivity in science and public life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 33-48.
Woodward, K. “Statistical Panic.” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 1999; 11(2): 177-203.

26 Feb Sarangi, S., et al. “‘Relatively Speaking’: Relativisation of genetic risk in counseling for predictive genetic testing.” *Health, Risk & Society* 2003; 5(2): 155-170.
Jolie, A. “My Medical Choice.” *New York Times* 2013 (14 May), A25.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/14/opinion/my-medical-choice.html>

Week 8: The Rhetoric and Strategy of “War”

3 Mar Mukherjee, S. 2010. *Emperor of all Maladies: A biography of cancer*. New York: Scribner, pp. 107-190.

5 Mar Sporn, M.B. “The war on cancer.” *Lancet* 1996; 347(9012): 1377-1381.
Gatenby, R.A. “A change of strategy in the war on cancer.” *Nature* 2009 (May); 459: 508-509.

Leaf, C. “Why We’re Losing the War on Cancer and How to Win It.”

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1roZA8ddW0>

Article:

http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2004/03/22/365076/

Week 9: Spring Break - No classes

Week 10: Patient Advocacy and Philanthropy

17 Mar Sulik, G. 2012. *Pink Ribbon Blues*. New York: Oxford University Press.

19 Mar Sulik, G. 2012. *Pink Ribbon Blues*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Documentary: Breast Cancer, Inc.

Week 11: Cancer and Capitalism

24 Mar Batt, S. “Who Pays the Piper?: Industry Funding of Patient Advocacy Groups” In Rochon Ford, A., and D. Saibil. (Eds). 2009. *The Push to Prescribe*. Toronto, ON: Women’s Press/Canadian Scholars’ Press, pp. 67-89.

- 26 Mar Mello, M., Abiolo, S., and J. Cargrove. "Pharmaceutical Companies' Role in State Vaccination Policymaking: The Case of Human Papillomavirus Vaccination." *American Journal of Public Health* 2012; 102(5): 893-898.
Batt, S., and L. Gross. "Cancer, Inc." *Sierra Magazine* 2000. Accessed online at <http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/199909/cancer.asp>.
- Week 12: Politics and power
- 31 Mar Petryna, A. "Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations." *Osiris* 2004; 19: 250-265.
- 2 Apr Carson, R. 1962. *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 1-38.
- Week 13: Big Pharma
- 7 Apr Angell, M. 2004. *The Truth About the Drug Companies*. New York: Random House, pp. 52-73.
DeGeorge, R. "Two cheers for the pharmaceutical industry." In Arnold, D.G. (Ed). 2009. *Ethics and the Business of Biomedicine*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 169-197.
- 9 Apr Elliott, C. 2010. *White Coat, Black Hat: Adventures on the dark side of medicine*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, pp. ix-xvi, 109-137.
- Week 14: Cancer and capitalism
- 14 Apr Waldby, C. and R. Mitchell. *Tissue Economies: Blood, organs and cell lines in late capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 1-30, 136-159.
- 16 Apr Lock, M. "The Alienation of Body Tissue and the Biopolitics of Immortalized Cell Lines." *Body & Society* 2001; 7(2-3): 63-91.
Whynes, D.K. "Economics of Cancer Screening Programs." *Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics Outcomes Research* 2004; 4(1): 61-69.
- Strongly recommended:** Attend Dr. Kelly Joyce's Honors Lecture Series talk. 12:15pm. Location TBA.
- Week 15: Patents
- 21 Apr Parthasarathy, S. "The Patent is Political: The Consequences of Patenting the BRCA Genes in Britain." *Community Genetics* 2005; 8: 235-242.
Baldwin, A.L., and R. Cook-Deegan. "Constructing narratives of heroism and villainy: case study of Myriad's BRACAnalysis® compared to Genentech's Herceptin®." *Genome Medicine* 2013; 5(8): 1-14.
- 23 Apr Presentations
- Week 16:
- 28 Apr Presentations
- 30 Apr Last day of class: Presentations, wrap-up, evaluations.

Assessment

This course will be a dynamic, discussion-based class that demands a high level of engagement from the students. Students are required to complete all assigned readings and come to class

prepared for discussion. The final grade for the course will be based on participation (50%), three reading responses (15%), and a final project (35%).

Participation (50%)

Your participation grade will be assessed by the quality of:

- Your daily in-class contributions
- Your two turns leading the classroom discussion (by preparing discussion questions, interesting background information, news articles, etc)

This class demands respectful engagement with one another and with the texts. Participation will be assessed daily. You will earn marks for sustained engagement, including coming prepared, contributing original ideas and insights to the discussion, and responding thoughtfully to a classmate's contribution. You will get an F if you are absent or act like it; things that will hurt your participation in class include: being disruptive (talking to your neighbor, texting, forgetting to put your mobile on silent), being unprepared, checking e-mail or online shopping, sleeping in class, being late, not bringing the text(s) to class.

I recognize that it seems odd to *demand* participation, and yet, this honors seminar class will not function without your engagement. I want to hear what you think of the texts and the ideas. Some of them are very challenging; our class is a place for you to take (intellectual) risks, to ask questions, to share insights and respond to one another seriously and generously. I would also like to see you connect the texts to current events or ideas and (occasionally, when appropriate) your own personal experiences.

A note on readings: **Plan/expect to spend at least 4 hours outside of class reading, rereading, annotating, and preparing for each class meeting.** It is impossible to play catch up in this class, so plan ahead and finish the readings before you come to class.

As you read, you must keep a reading journal, where you take note of the thesis (where applicable), themes, interesting quotes, and/or responses to the focus questions. In addition to the focus questions on Blackboard, ask yourself the following questions while reading:

- What questions is the author asking?
- What assumptions is the author making?
- What controversial claims does the author make, and what are the possible objections?
- What interesting (non-obvious, original, thought-provoking) question does the author make and why is it interesting?
- What conclusions does the author draw, and what are the implications of those conclusions?

Asking yourself these questions forces you to take a stance of curiosity toward the reading, and will help you prepare thoughtful responses to our texts. You should be able to answer these questions for each text before you come to class.

Reading responses (15%)

At three points over the course of the semester, you will turn in a 250-500-word response to one or more reading. These very short essays are an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to critically analyze the texts, to synthesize ideas and concepts, and propose/explore insightful, original arguments. These responses will be evaluated on their accuracy of interpretation and understanding, quality of argument, expression, and originality.

Final project (35%)

For the final project, you can choose to work alone or in pairs, and you will present your findings in a ten-minute presentation during the last week of class. The 15-20-page project is due on the day of your presentation. A project proposal is due on February 7th and a draft is due on March 7th. More details will be provided in class.

Grading Key

The grading will be on a traditional scale of 100-98=A+, 97-93=A, 92-90=A-, 89-88=B+, 87-83=B, 82-80=B-, 79-78=C+, 77-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F.

A-level work will demonstrate mastery of the material and will go far beyond the minimum requirements of a particular assignment; in addition, there will be few or no mistakes.

B-level work will exceed the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate strong competency with the material; some mistakes, but no egregious errors.

C-level work will meet the requirements of an assignment but demonstrate only basic comprehension of the material; some mistakes and potentially a major error.

D-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate little or no content comprehension; many mistakes and more than one major error.

F-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and have little merit as a demonstration of knowledge or ability.

Policies

Attendance: Daily attendance is required. Each student is allowed two absences, with no explanation necessary. Additional absences will negatively affect your final grade (e.g., taking you from a B to a B-). The instructor reserves the right to fail those who miss twenty percent of the class meetings or more for any reason.

Penalty for late assignments: Late assignments are not accepted.

Regrading policy: If you think the grade I gave you on an assignment is wrong, you may submit it to be regraded. It must be resubmitted within one week, with a paragraph explanation as to why you think my assessment was incorrect and why the paper deserves a different grade. Please refer to our grading rubric when making your case and remember that grades are earned, not given.

Electronic devices: You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in class if you are referencing relevant readings. Do not use the laptop or tablet to check e-mail or Facebook or shop for shoes because that will significantly affect your overall participation grade. (It will affect your grade for the worse, just to be clear).

Unless you are otherwise instructed, all assignments are to be submitted to Blackboard and

directly to the Instructor.

Reading assignments are to be completed in advance. You must come to class prepared and ready to participate in discussion. Please bare in mind that oftentimes theoretical literature must be read twice or three times to facilitate comprehension.

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss course requirements and accommodations are asked to see the instructor within the first week of class.

The syllabus is a contract between the student and the teacher. If you come back on Wednesday, you agree to abide by the terms I have laid out in the syllabus. While I reserve the right to make small changes to the reading schedule, policies or due dates, I agree to not make any significant changes to the syllabus without consulting the class.

Academic Integrity

If you submit work that is not your own, you will be fully disciplined in accordance with university policies. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are strictly forbidden and will result in a failing grade for the assignment, the class, and disciplinary action with the Dean. It is your responsibility to be aware of, understand, and adhere to the rules and regulations of Barrett, The Honors College and Arizona State University.