

Fall 2018 - AMST UN 3930 - Th 4:10-6PM - Hamilton 607

LIFE AT THE END OF LIFE

Palliative Care and Service



Jacques Louis David, *The Death of Socrates*, 1787

Contact Information

Craig D. Blinderman, M.D., M.A. (Course Director)

Director of Adult Palliative Care Service and Associate Professor of Medicine at CUMC

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Robert Pollack, Ph.D. (Course Advisor)

Professor of Biological Sciences, Director of University Seminars, Director & Founder of RCSS

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Brigid Connelly

Teaching Assistant, Research Cluster on Science & Subjectivity (RCSS) Intern

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Course Overview

Description

This seminar is designed to provide opportunities for readings and reflections on the experience of volunteer service work. At least one prior semester of volunteer work in a clinical setting relevant to the syllabus is recommended, but not required. The fieldwork component of the course is met by the student's continued direct service work in that context, during the course itself.

Students participating in the seminar will volunteer 4 hours/week through the *Columbia At Your Service* program at Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center (TCC), gaining insight into the experiences of a long-term resident in a nursing home. At TCC, students will provide assistance and support, whether emotional or recreational, and serve as a consistent presence for someone experiencing chronic illness, disability, or the end of life.

At the core of this framework is the resident; however, it is important to consider the impact this volunteer service will have on the student, Columbia, and TCC. Therefore, the following specific goals and objectives are outlined to benefit each individual and group involved in this service relationship.

Goals & Objectives

Student

- Students will learn how to critically reflect, emotionally and intellectually, on their experiences and that of their long term companions' (LTCs) at TCC in the context of seminar readings and discussions.
- Students will explore the emotional, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of illness, medical practice, and caregiving.
- Students will develop their capacity to share their reflections and experiences at TCC and consider one another's perspectives.
- Students will gain insight into palliative care as a philosophy of care, and learn about its role in our health care system.

Columbia University

- Students will develop an understanding of their role within their communities, and Columbia University's position in New York City.
- Students will continue to explore values of social justice and social responsibility as they investigate controversial societal, medical, and ethical issues in end of life care.
- Students will use their experiences to better understand the complex interpersonal and societal questions raised in the core curricula of the undergraduate colleges.

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- Pre-medical students will gain academic credit based on the skills developed through direct service as an emotional caregiver, further enriching the University's pre-medical program.

Residents

- Students will use their seminar reflections to better inform their volunteer-caregiving experience.
- Students will form attentive, lasting, and consistent relationships with residents, serving as an additional advocate within the nursing and health care system.
- Students will develop a sensitivity toward the physical, psychological, and emotional suffering of individuals suffering from chronic illness and disability, and those facing the end of life, and gain insight into practices that aim to comfort and support.

Home Institution (Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center)

- Students will provide additional support and specific resident-centered care at TCC, ArchCare, the Continuing Care Community of the Archdiocese of New York.
- Students will participate in the *At Your Service* volunteer program, supplementing the existing social and recreational opportunities at TCC.

Requirements

Attendance & Participation

- Seminar (10% Attendance, 15% Participation)
 - Students are required to attend all seminar meetings. Seminars will meet weekly for the duration of the semester, for a total of 13 meetings. Students may miss two full class meetings during the entire semester, after which their seminar participation grade will be lowered by 5%.
- Reflection Sessions (10%)
 - Students are required to attend the 1 hour/biweekly *At Your Service* reflection sessions. Attendance will be monitored by the AYS liaison; one absence may be excused.
- Volunteer Participation (25%)
 - Students are required to volunteer 4 hours/week at TCC; a minimum of 2 hours must be spent with the student's assigned Long-Term Companion. Attendance will be monitored by the Project Coordinator (Tom McDonald: tmcdonald@archcare.org).

Writing Assignments

- Weekly Reflection (15%)
 - Students are required to complete brief written reflections on the weekly readings and their experiences at TCC as they relate to seminar discussions. Reflections should be submitted to Courseworks and brought to class. Assignments will be graded on completion.
- Final Reflective Paper (25%)
 - Students are required to complete a final paper (7-10 pages) in which they critically reflect on a particular idea or issue they explored in their volunteer service and seminar discussions. While reflective papers will serve as the main evaluation for this course, they are meant to encourage students to develop an understanding of the significance of their volunteer experience and the impact it has had on them as an individual, the resident, the institution, and the university. Students are encouraged to develop ideas for their reflective papers throughout the semester.

Additional Participating Faculty, Instructors, and Collaborators

- **Rita Charon**, M.D., Ph.D., Chair, Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics; Professor of Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, Founder and Executive Director of the Program in Narrative Medicine
- **Robert Chodo Campbell**, GC-C, Co-Founder, New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care
- **Eliza Factor**, M.F.A., Author, Founder of Extreme Kids & Crew
- **Marcus Folch**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Classics, Columbia University
- **Rabbi Shimon Hirschhorn**, M.S., M.A, BCCC; Director, Religious Affairs, The Jewish Home in Riverdale
- **Anthony Lechich**, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, Mary Manning Walsh Residency
- **David Madigan**, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Arts and Sciences, Columbia University; Professor of Statistics at Columbia University
- **Melissa Martin**, M.D., M.P.H., C.M.D., Medical Director, Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center
- **Cynthia Peabody**, M.Div., Palliative Care Chaplain at Chilton Medical Center
- **Marya Pollack**, M.D., M.P.H., Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Columbia University
- **Daniel Shalev**, M.D., Resident Physician, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University Medical Center/NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital
- **Tamara Tweel**, Ph.D., Adjunct, Assistant Professor, Center for American Studies, Columbia University

Course Schedule

* TCC Volunteer Orientation TBD *

Week 1 (9/6): Course Introduction

Professor Robert Pollack & Dr. Craig Blinderman

- *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande
- “Where in this World is the Human Soul?” by Robert Pollack

Week 2 (9/13): Clinician Panel Discussion: On caring for the seriously ill

Dr. Melissa Martin, Dr. Tony Lechich, and Dr. Marya Pollack

- “Letting Go” by Atul Gawande (The New Yorker)
- TED Talk (video): “What really matters at the end of life – BJ Miller”

Week 3 (9/20): Spirituality & Religion at the end of life

Chaplain Cynthia Peabody, Sensei Robert Chodo Campbell, and Rabbi Shimon Hirschhorn

- “The Question” by Chris Adrian
- “Days” by Philip Larkin
- Selections from: *Intoxicated by My Illness* by Anatole Broyard (“Toward a Literature of Illness”)

Week 4 (9/27): How we care when we can no longer cure

Professor Tamara Tweel, Center for American Studies

- *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant* by Roz Chast
- “The Sense of an Ending” by Rebecca Mead (The New Yorker)

Week 5 (10/4): The body in confinement

Marcus Folch, Department of Classics

- Sophocles, *Ajax*
- Plato, *Laws* X. 907d-910d (pp. 396-401)
- Selections from: *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* by Michel Foucault (Chapter 1: “Stultifera Navis”, Chapter 2: “The Great Confinement”)
- Selections from: *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* by Michel Foucault (Chapter 1: “The Body of the Condemned”, pp. 3-32)
- Optional Reading: “The Theater of War: Sophocles' Message for American Veterans” by Robin Wright (The New Yorker)

Week 6 (10/11): Non-Verbal Communication, Family Wisdom & the Limits of Rational Inquiry

Eliza Factor, M.F.A, author

- *Strange Beauty: A Portrait of My Son* by Eliza Factor

Week 7 (10/18): Listening and Forgiveness: Caring for ourselves and others

Brigid Connelly

- On Being (podcast): “Marie Howe – The Power of Words to Save Us”
- “Magdalene—The Seven Devils” by Marie Howe
- unnamed prayer by Elie Wiesel (read aloud in On Being (podcast): “Evil, Forgiveness, and Prayer”)

Week 8 (10/25): Narrative Medicine

Dr. Rita Charon, Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics

- “What is Narrative Medicine?” by Rita Charon
- “Odour of Chrysanthemums” by D. H. Lawrence

Week 9 (11/1): The body in pain and illness

Dr. Daniel Shalev, Psychiatry Resident, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University

- “When I go” by Paul Kalanithi
- Selections from: *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors* by Susan Sontag (Part One: Illness as Metaphor)
- Selections from: *The Body in Pain* by Elaine Scarry (Chapter 1)

NOTE: Seminar will end early on 11/1; students will have opportunity to attend the Reimagine End of Life event “Giving and Receiving: A Conversation on the Role of Contemplative Practice at the End of Life with Dr. Ira Byock, Dr. Blinderman, Sensei Chodo Campbell and Sensei Koshin Paley Ellison” at Faculty House (6-8pm).

Week 10 (11/8): Autonomy, Advance Care Planning & Medical Decision Making

Dr. Craig Blinderman

- Selections from: *Strangers at the Bedside: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making* by David Rothman (Introduction: Making the Invisible Visible, Chapter 11: New Rules for the Bedside)
- “Some Reflections on the Problem of Advance Directives, Personhood, Personal Identity” by Helga Kuhse
- “Ethical Issues in Palliative Care” by D Ko, P Perez-Cruz, & CD Blinderman
- TED Talk (video): “The art of choosing – Sheena Iyengar”

Week 11 (11/15): The Ethics of Palliative Care & Moral Dilemmas at the End of Life

Dr. Craig Blinderman

- “The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine” by Eric J. Cassel
- “Palliative Options of Last Resort” by Timothy Quill
- “A Better Way Out” by Marcia Angell
- “Ethics and the Legalization of Physician-Assisted Suicide: An American College of Physicians Position Paper”

Week 12 (11/29): Moral Character and the Role of Service

VP David Madigan

- Selections from: *The Road to Character* by David Brooks (“Introduction” and “The Shift”)

Week 13 (12/6): Semester Reflections (@ Faculty House)

Professor Robert Pollack & Dr. Blinderman

Week 14 12/22: Final Paper Due (No Class)

Uploaded to Courseworks by **11:59pm** on **12/22**.

Volunteer Information

Students volunteer at TCC through the *At Your Service* program in two 2-hour shifts per week (4 hours total). At least one shift must be spent visiting an individual long-term resident, while the other may be spent in whatever capacity the student chooses (Sub-Acute, recreation area, visiting other residents, etc.). Students may plan these shifts to best fit their schedule.

Volunteer tasks include, but are not limited to:

1. Serving as an advocate for the long-term companion, keeping in mind their individual needs
2. Participating in therapeutic recreation events
3. Transporting residents between bedrooms, units, recreation room, OT/PT, lounges
4. Addressing or relaying any requests or concerns of residents and/or their loved ones, especially during discharge
5. Planning activities with long-term companion
6. Answering call bells

Course Policies

Class Ethics

- Students are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards in this course. Cheating of any form will only diminish the student's ability to reflect on their experiences. Students are also expected to be truthful and accurate in reporting shift times at TCC. Columbia University policies on academic conduct will be enforced in all assignments and participation.

Expectations of Students and Instructors

- Students and instructors are expected to engage in continuous academic conversation surrounding subjective experiences and service based learning. Students can expect the instructors to provide academic enrichment to their experiences at TCC. The instructors will be available during office hours or by appointment to discuss any additional ideas or issues that arise.

Disability Accommodations

- Any student requiring disability accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). ODS will determine the student's need for disability services on a case-by-case basis. Any student with concerns and/or registered services should speak to the instructor in office hours or by appointment.

Required Texts

On Courseworks

Adrian, Chris, "The Question"

Angell, Marcia, "A Better Way Out"

Brooks, David, *The Road to Character*

Broyard, Anatole, *Intoxicated by My Illness*

Cassel, Eric J., "The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine"

Charon, Rita, "What is Narrative Medicine?"

"Ethics and the Legalization of Physician-Assisted Suicide: An American College of Physicians Position Paper"

Foucault, Michel, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*

Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Gawande, Atul, “Letting Go”

Howe, Marie, “Magdalene—The Seven Devils”

Kalanithi, Paul, “When I go”

Ko D, Perez-Cruz P, Blinderman CD. “Ethical Issues in Palliative Care.” Primary Care Clinical Office Practice, 2011

Kuhse, Helga, “Some Reflections on the Problem of Advance Directives, Personhood, Personal Identity”

Larkin, Philip, “Days”

Lawrence, D. H., “Odour of Chrysanthemums”

Mead, Rebecca, “The Sense of an Ending”

Plato, *Laws*

Pollack, Robert, “Where in this World is the Human Soul?”

Quill, Timothy, “Palliative Options of Last Resort”

Rothman, David, *Strangers at the Bedside: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making*

Scarry, Elaine, *The Body in Pain*

Sophocles, *Ajax*

Wiesel, Elie, unnamed prayer from *One Generation After*

Wright, Robin, “The Theater of War: Sophocles' Message for American Veterans”

Purchase/Library

Chast, Roz, *Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant*

Factor, Eliza, *Strange Beauty: A Portrait of My Son*

Gawande, Atul, *Being Mortal*

Sontag, Susan, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors*

Online

TED Talk (video): “What really matters at the end of life – BJ Miller” (TED Talk):
www.ted.com/talks/bj_miller_what_really_matters_at_the_end_of_life

TED Talk (video): “The art of choosing – Sheena Iyengar”:
http://www.ted.com/talks/sheena_ityengar_on_the_art_of_choosing?language=en

NPR On Being (podcast): “Elie Wiesel – Evil, Forgiveness, and Prayer”:
<http://www.onbeing.org/programs/evil-forgiveness-prayer-elie-wiesel-2/>

NPR On Being (podcast): “Marie Howe – The Power of Words to Save Us”:
<http://www.onbeing.org/programs/marie-howe-the-power-of-words-to-save-us-may2017/>