

Standardized Course/Section Syllabus:



**Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine**



**Building
Empathy: A
Cross Specialty
Elective**

Course Director: *Elizabeth Ryznar MD MSc, 312-285-0416, eryznar1@jh.edu*

Small Group Facilitators: *n/a*

Class Schedule: *Course offering #1: June 28-July 2
Course offering #2: July 12-July 16
Course offering #3: October 25-October 29
a minimum of three students required for any offering to proceed

*Synchronous Zoom meetings:
Monday: 8:30-9am and 3-5pm
Tuesday: 3-5pm
Wednesday: 3-5pm
Thursday: 3-5pm
Friday: 3-5pm*

Prerequisites: None, though experience on clinical clerkships is preferred since there will be lots of discussion and reflection on physician(student)-patient interactions

Course Description: Empathy has been shown to improve patient outcomes and physician satisfaction, and it is considered an essential trait of being an excellent physician. However, it is rarely explicitly taught as a concept and teachable skill. This one-week elective will focus on developing students' empathy in medicine. The course will utilize readings, reflection, and role-plays to practice four specific skills needed for empathy: recognizing emotions, perspective-taking, mindfulness, and communication. The course builds on concepts covered in TIME and TTW, and it will cover a diverse range of clinical experiences. Examples of scenarios or diagnoses that may be covered include: medication non-adherence in primary care setting, refusal of care, delusional parasitosis, functional neurological disorder, and addiction. Students will be asked to discuss their own clinical experiences as well, and there will be a final paper based on a book of the student's own choosing. In this way, the elective allows for personalization of content to reflect each individual student's interests, while at the same time teaching fundamental principles and skills that are relevant to all medical students.

Course Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Define empathy and its modulating factors
- 2) Appreciate the beneficial effects of empathy on health outcomes
- 3) Practice perspective-taking and mindfulness, which enhance one's own ability to empathize with patients
- 4) Recognize factors that limit one's own ability to empathize with patients, including transference and countertransference
- 5) Reflect on past encounters with patients that may have challenged your empathic stance

Required Text and Other Materials

- Articles and videos links will be provided to students
- Subscription to Calm app (free with jh email address: <https://support.calm.com/hc/en-us/articles/360010183313-Calm-for-Johns-Hopkins-University>)
- Students will be required to read one book (chosen from the list below), which they may have to purchase if it is not freely available as e-book through library or internet. Please contact course director if you are having trouble. You may also suggest your own book, subject to course director's approval. Some of these are movies that are available online. You can choose the movie version subject to course director's approval.

Structural Determinants of Health or Systems Issues or Vulnerable Populations

- Ask Me Why I Hurt: The Kids Nobody Wants and the Doctor Who Heals Them (Randy Christensen)
- Doing Harm: The Truth About How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed, and Sick (Maya Dusenbery)
- Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic (Sam Quinones)
- Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City (Matthew Desmond)
- Heavy: An American Memoir (Kiese Laymon) *obesity, race, ACEs*
- The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates (Wes Moore)
- Your Heart is the Size of Your Fist: A Doctor Reflects on Ten Years at a Refugee Clinic (Martina Scholtens)

Addiction Memoirs

- Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Addiction (David Sheff)
- Hooked: Five Addicts Challenge Our Misguided Rehab System (Lonny Shavelson) *not a memoir
- In Pain: A bioethicist's personal struggle with opioids (Travis Rieder)
- Long Walk Out of the Woods: A Physician's Story of Addiction, Depression, Hope, & Recovery (Adam Hill)
- Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines (Nic Sheff)

Medical Memoirs:

- Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved (Kate Bowler) *cancer*
- In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope (Rana Awdish) *critical illness (ICU)*
- When Breath Becomes Air (Paul Kalanithi) *cancer*

- The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer, and Care (Anne Boyer) *cancer*
- The Unwinding of the Miracle (Julie Yip-Williams) *cancer*

Neurological Memoirs

- Brain On Fire (Susannah Cahalan) *autoimmune encephalitis*
- The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (Jean-Dominique Bauby) *locked in syndrome*
- My Stroke of Insight (Jill Taylor) *stroke*

Psychiatry and/or Psychology Memoirs:

- Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness (Susannah Cahalan) *psychosis/autoimmune encephalitis*
- Building a Life Worth Living: A Memoir (Marsha Linehan) *borderline personality disorder*
- The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness (Elyn Saks) *schizophrenia*
- The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression (Andrew Solomon)
- Manic: A Memoir (Terri Cheney)
- Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me (Ellen Forney) *graphic novel
- Maybe You Should Talk to Somebody (Lori Gottlieb) *human struggles, psychotherapy*
- My Lovely Wife in the Psych Ward: A Memoir (Marck Lukach) *delusions, marriage*
- Rx: A Graphic Memoir (Rachel Lindsay) *bipolar disorder* *graphic novel
- An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness (Kay Redfield Jamison) *bipolar disorder*
- Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia (Marya Hornbacher)

Assignments

Asynchronous readings, videos, and reflective writing exercise (~2 hours per day)

a 1000 word reflective book report based on book from list below (or another with course director's approval) (6-12 hours total)

Meditation (10-15 minutes per day)

Evaluation and Grading

- Formative: Students will receive individual feedback from the course director mid-course regarding participation in class activities and group presentations
- Summative:
 - Class participation: (50%) -
 - Reflective exercises: (25%)
 - Reflective book report (25%)

Pass/Fail Grading Scale (Grading scale is determined by the School of Medicine.)

P = Student has an average equal to or exceeding 70% and/or has met all required assignments for the class.

F = Student has failed significant required elements of the course, or has an average score below the passing level for the course. Student should meet with the course director to plan remediation.

Expectations

Participation in lectures, discussions, and other activities is an essential part of the instructional process. Students are expected to participate regularly; those who are compelled to miss class meetings should inform their instructors of the reasons for absences. Classroom participation and attendance are included in student grading and evaluation. The instructor will clearly communicate expectations and grading policy in the course syllabus.

Professional Behavior Expectations during all Courses

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as outlined in the [JHU SOM Honor Code](#) and in the AAMC subcompetencies on professionalism:

1. *Demonstrate behaviors that show compassion, integrity, and respect for others*
2. *Demonstrate behaviors that show responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest*
3. *Demonstrate behaviors that show respect for patient privacy and autonomy*
4. *Demonstrate behaviors that show accountability to self, patients, colleagues, the profession, and society. [Link to [Accountability Policy](#)]*

Course and Clerkship directors will communicate discipline specific expectations/tasks for which students will be held accountable. **As with other Course/Clerkship domains such as knowledge and skills, students who deviate from these expectations, may have their final grade lowered, or a serious deviation may result in failure of the course/clerkship.**

Serious breaches of professionalism should be expected to result in failure of the course/clerkship in which the breach is detected. These breaches will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the course/clerkship director in consultation with the Office of Medical Student Affairs and the Office of Curriculum. All such matters may also be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

Examples of such unprofessional behaviors include but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty; forgery or falsification of documents/records; lying or misrepresentation of facts, figures, or clinical data; failure to obtain appropriate supervision for clinical care; physical violence, bullying or harassment against others, or other significant lapses in personal ethical conduct that raise concern regarding the moral character of the student in question.

JHUSOM Policy on Attendance

This course is heavily dependent on participation, if you need to miss a required session, you need to let the course leader and course coordinator know ahead of time. The JHUSOM policy on attendance in the curriculum is posted at https://hpo.johnshopkins.edu/som/policies/886/39178/policy_39178.pdf.

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires an academic adjustment, auxiliary aid or other similar accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at 410-955-3416. You must also notify the course director and course coordinator in advance of the start of the course and well in advance of any exam or assessment so that appropriate preparations can be completed before an event requiring accommodation.

Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

Johns Hopkins University is a community committed to sharing values of diversity and inclusion in order to achieve and sustain excellence. We believe excellence is best promoted by being a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff who are committed to creating a climate of mutual respect that is supportive of one another's success.

Teacher Learner Conduct Policy

The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is committed to fostering an environment that promotes academic and professional success in learners and teachers at all levels. The achievement of such success is

dependent on an environment free of behaviors, which can undermine the important missions of our institution. An atmosphere of mutual respect, collegiality, fairness, and trust is essential. Students should review the JHUSOM Guidelines for Conduct in Teacher/Learner Relationships https://hpo.johnshopkins.edu/som/policies/886/39186/policy_39186.pdf.

Student Honor Code

Students are reminded of the honor code developed by the medical student body, introduced in September 1991, is as follows:

As a student at The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, I pledge:

- To do my own work and be honest in my interactions with peers, faculty, and staff. This applies to my work on examinations, assignments, and papers as well as work in the laboratory.
- To uphold the high standard of conduct in patient care which has always been maintained by the Johns Hopkins medical community.
- To base my interactions with other students on mutual respect and cooperation.
- To act on infractions of the honor code and to maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.
- To encourage my peers to uphold this honor code.

It is the expectation that Hopkins students live by this code.

Course Evaluation

Please remember to complete the course evaluation for this course. For preclerkship courses, evaluations will be required from a rotating sample of 25% of the class. Other students will always have the option of submitting an evaluation if they choose. This will reduce the overall burden of surveys for students. There will be no extra credit for completing the evaluation. If you are in the designated 25%, you will receive an incomplete if the course evaluation is not completed by the time grades are posted for the course.

Course evaluations are an important tool in the School of Medicine's ongoing efforts to improve instructional quality and strengthen its programs. The results of the course evaluations are kept anonymous — your instructor will only receive aggregated data and comments for the entire class.

For the clinical clerkships and clinical electives, 100% of the students are expected to complete the course evaluations.