

## **Patient Experiences: Illness, Disability, and Well-being**

Christine Wieseler, Ph.D.

December 5-8<sup>th</sup> M, T, W, Th 1:00-3:30 pm

### **Course Description**

Disability and illness have often been conceived of in terms of lack—in regard to bodily abilities as well as moral status—rather than as ways of being that can contribute to a greater understanding of what it means to be human and to live a good life. This sub-elective considers alternative ways of thinking about disability and illness, centering the experiences of patients with various bodily conditions. We will examine ways that the perspectives of physicians and patients often differ regarding how to understand the relationship between illness, disability, and quality of life.

Questions guiding the course discussion will include: What assumptions regarding illness and disability inform medical practice? How might health care providers unwittingly create obstacles to patient well-being? How can physicians better understand the experiences of patients?

### **Course Objectives**

1. Identify dominant assumptions about experiences of illness and disability as well as one's own assumptions.
2. Demonstrate understanding of phenomenology as a method for describing lived experiences of patients through in class discussion.
3. Explain central differences between the approaches of physicians and patients to illness.
4. Apply insights from course readings to your engagement with patients in a short writing assignment.

All course readings will be available through Canvas. Readings should be completed prior to the class they are listed under.

### **Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:30 Class 1: Disability, Illness, and Quality of Life**

“Disability, Ideology, and Quality of Life: A Bias in Biomedical Ethics” by Ron Amundson

“My 10-Year Death Sentence” by Havi Carel

“Nasty, Brutish, and Short? On the Predicament of Disability and Embodiment” by Tom Shakespeare

### **Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:30 Class 2: Knowledge of Physicians and Patients**

“Epistemic Injustice and Illness” by Ian James Kidd and Havi Carel

“Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation” by Iris Marion Young

### **Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:30 Class 3: Experiences and Meanings of Illness**

“Introduction” and “The Separate Worlds of Physician and Patient” by S. Kay Toombs

“‘I am well, apart from the fact that I have cancer’: Explaining Well-being within Illness” by Havi Carel

### **Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:30 Class 4: Living with Chronic Illness**

“Plunging In,” “Taking Care,” and “Opening Doors, Unlocking Hearts” by Nancy Mairs

### **Additional Course Information**

This sub-elective will meet four times. Attendance for all class meetings is mandatory. If a session is missed, students can write a 3-page (1,500 words) summary and review of the reading for the day. Students will facilitate class discussion with my assistance.

