

Medicine & the Holocaust

Dates of Course	Longitudinal
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Course Director	Course Coordinator
Course Director: Sheena M. Eagan, MPH PhD Email: eagansh17@ecu.edu Phone: Click or tap here to enter text. Office: Brody 2S 12-B Office Hours: By Appointment	Course Coordinator: Click or tap here to enter text. Email: Click or tap here to enter text. Phone: Click or tap here to enter text. Office: Click or tap here to enter text. Office Hours: Click or tap here to enter text.

Course Description

Physicians were instrumental to the atrocities committed throughout the Holocaust. By the end of World War II, over 38,000 physicians were members of the Nazi Party— meaning physicians joined the Nazi party in greater numbers than any other professional group. Physicians were also overrepresented in SS. Compared to < 0.5% of the general population, 7% of all physicians were members of SS with significant responsibilities at the concentration camps. Beyond the individual numbers, the ideas of National Socialism and later Nazi ideology were both informed by and enthusiastically embraced by the medical profession.

This longitudinal medical humanities course explores the role of medicine in the Holocaust. Drawing on the fields of history and ethics, as well as literature and film, this course examines (1) how the medical profession became aligned with the Nazis, (2) what medicine looked like before and during the Holocaust, and (3) the impact of Holocaust medicine today. This course will explore the “science” of eugenics that legitimized discriminatory Nazi policies/practices, as well as the role of individual physicians and the broader medical profession throughout the Holocaust (examining forced sterilization, euthanasia, and the infamous abuses perpetrated as human subjects research in the concentration camps).

Course Objectives

- Describe the role of medicine (both individual physicians and the broader profession) during the Holocaust.
- Explain ethical issues related to Holocaust Medicine.
- Understand the impact of Holocaust Medicine on contemporary research and medicine.
- Develop a history-conscious understanding of the profession of medicine.

Course Activities and Expectations

The course material is grounded in four (4) main themes (listed below). These themes will be addressed through a selection of books, recorded lectures, films, and reflective assignments. Students will select two (2) books from the list of sources to read and complete a reflective writing assignment for each. A

final research project will be submitted to the course director, and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss their chosen topic. Additional (optional) discussion meetings can be set up with the course director at any time.

- The Science (Eugenics & “Applied Biology”)
- The Profession (The Corruption of Professional Medical Ethics)
- The Doctors (Sterilization, Euthanasia, & Extermination)
- The Research (Experimentation on Concentration Camp Prisoners)
- Final Research Project

Required Texts

Students will select 2 books from the following list:

- Annas, George and Michael Grodin, *The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code: Human Rights in Human Experimentation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- Gisella, Perl. *I was a doctor in Auschwitz*. International Universities Press, New York, 1948.
- Kuhl, Stefan. *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism*. (Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Lifton, Robert Jay. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. (New York: Basic, 1986).
- Nyzsli, M. *Auschwitz: A Doctor’s Eyewitness Account*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2011.
- Proctor, Robert N. *When Medicine Went Mad: Bioethics and the Holocaust*. (Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 1992).
- Proctor, Robert. 1988. *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Suggested Resources

Watch recorded lecture by Dr. Sheena M. Eagan, as part of the Laupus Library History of Medicine Interest Group

- <https://youtu.be/uodyraVtKRg?si=7vQuPV1kHqmVpWdi>

Course Assignments and Assessment

Students will be assessed by way of reflective writing and a final research project.

Reflective writing is required upon completion of each book. The final research project can be either a research paper or creative project (the final project topic must be approved by the course director).

Reflective Writing (40%): For each (of the 2 selected) books, students will complete a reflective writing assignment. There are no prompts for these assignments to allow flexibility; students should take this time to reflect on their own values related to the books. If a prompt is desired, please contact the professor via email. Each reflection should be approx. 3-5 pages (typed/double-spaced) and submit in the online classroom.

Final Project (60%): For your final project, students must complete a substantive cumulative project that explores a topic related to medicine and the Holocaust. **This project provides you with the opportunity to explore a topic of interest to you. However, the topic of the cumulative project must be approved by Dr. Eagan (eagansh17@ecu.edu).**

Possible areas of inquiry include:

- The role of medicine before/during the Holocaust
- A specific physician, institution, organization
- Survivors of Medical Abuse/Research Atrocities
- Eugenics (can include work related to Eugenics in the US/NC/elsewhere)
- Personal reflections

Students have two options for this project:

- **OPTION 1:** Complete a research paper (10-15 pages, typed/double spaced)
- **OPTION 2:** Complete a creative project that addresses any of the topics (all creative project require a written component explaining the project and connection to the course (2-5pages))

Grading Rubric

Course Grading Scale—The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

89.5 – 100 = A
79.5 – 89.4 = B
69.5 – 79.4 = C
0 – 69.4 = F

Remediation Plan

Students will meet with course director for one-on-one discussion.

Additional Policies

Academic Integrity and Professionalism

East Carolina University, the course director, and other course leaders are committed to fostering a vibrant community of scholars. Academic integrity is a fundamental component of achieving this goal. All ECU students are expected to complete their academic work honestly. The course director and other course leaders will not tolerate acts of cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty. Please refer to the BSOM's Code of Student Conduct for definitions of academic dishonesty. If the course director becomes aware of potential academic dishonesty, the course director will follow policies and procedures in Article IV of the Code of Student Conduct. Students found to have violated the Code of Student Conduct will face sanctions, up to and including Expulsion (Dismissal) from the School of Medicine.

The **BSOM Code of Student Professional Conduct** can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/Code-of-Student-Professional-Conduct-2.pdf>

The **BSOM Code of Student Conduct** can be located at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/code-of-student-conduct_Revised-2011-4-2.pdf

The **BSOM Student Standards of Professional Dress** policy can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/Standards-of-Professional-Dress-2018-FINAL3-21-18-2.pdf>

The **BSOM Student Attendance Procedure** can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/Student-Attendance-Procedure-2018-FINAL-3.pdf>

Academic Achievement Policy

In an effort to support student learning and success of all medical students, the Brody School of Medicine (BSOM) Division of Academic Affairs has established procedures for intervention and remediation for students having academic difficulty. The Academic Achievement Program aims to help students who have academic difficulty as defined by: low grade average, exams or quiz scores below required thresholds, or failures of USMLE Step 1. The program has a plan in place to provide support and resources to those students. The **BSOM Academic Achievement Program** procedure can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/Academic-Achievement-Program-2018-FINAL-2.pdf>

Grade Related Policies

Information related to the grading system, student advancement, academic dismissal processes, academic appeals processes, requirements for graduation, and transcript and academic files are included within the **Student Grading and Promotion** website, which can be located at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/MD_StudentGrading.cfm

Information on how to appeal a course grade is included in the **Grade Appeals Process**, which can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/GradeAppealsProcess-2.pdf>

ADA Accommodations Policy

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 (252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY)). The **ADA Accommodations Policy** can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/ADA-Accommodations-Procedure-2018-FINAL-2.pdf>

Testing Procedures

Assessment within the MD program at the Brody School of Medicine will occur in the context of programmatic curricular alignment such that the assessments are aligned with institutional and course/clerkship level learning objectives and learning activities. This includes formative and summative assessments, and will utilize written examinations, (MCQ, SAQ, Essay), performance assessments (OSCE and simulation), assignments (reports, projects, self-reflection), and oral examinations among the assessment tools. Examinations administered at Brody School of Medicine follow specific procedures to provide a secure examination environment, consistent with what is required by the National Board of Medical Examiners. The **BSOM Testing Procedure** can be located at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/medicaleducation/upload/Sop9-8-2BsomTestingProcedure.pdf>

Blood and Body Fluid Exposure

Report Immediately! If source/patient is HIV positive, preventive treatment should be given as soon as possible, or within 24 hours. Call 744-2070, or 744-3545 during normal work hours (7:45 am-4:45 pm). The **Blood Borne Pathogen Algorithm for ECU Health Science Students with Curricular Exposure** can be located at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/bsomstudentaffairs/upload/Appendix-MS-C_What-To-Do-In-Case-of-An-Exposure-2-2.pdf

Veteran/Military Students: Veteran and active-duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g. upcoming deployments, drill requirements, VA appointments, disabilities, etc.) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor so arrangement can be made.



Course Schedule

This course will be run **longitudinally**, meaning that students can sign up in any block and complete the work throughout their fourth year. Students will be expected to spend approximately 30 hours a week on course work, which will include reading, reflective writing, and a final project/paper.

- Students are able watch lectures, do readings, and complete assignments at their own pace. **If possible, we will meet as a cohort in spring for in-person discussion and presentation of final projects.**
- The course has been designed mostly asynchronously for maximal flexibility, but I am happy to meet with you. **In-person discussion can be scheduled at any time. Please email eagansh17@ecu.edu to schedule a discussion session.**

Revised

September 29, 2023