

FIQWS 10013: Narrative Medicine

Research Paper Option 2

When stories get embedded into culture, they become master narratives—designs for people to follow when structuring and telling their own stories, for better or worse. These scripts evolve as culture evolves. The evolution of our stories doesn't erase what they meant in the past. Instead, new meaning is layered onto an older understanding. The stories we tell draw from those that we've heard, and like it or not, we infuse them with memories passed down through generations of story-tellers.

But, our stories do change. More science, attention to different perspectives, greater empathy, and sharper challenges to unconscious beliefs, leads to a critical understanding of ourselves and others.

So...look at a changing story, describe how the story has changed, ask yourself why the story has changed, and think about what might still be there, but unspoken.

Consider the way we talk about HIV/AIDS. Most of us have a different understanding of the virus than the one depicted by this 1987 headline. We don't call it "gay cancer". We advocate for research, awareness, and prevention. There are walk-a-thons, research teams, fundraisers, and much better treatment options. We express empathy for the afflicted. HIV/AIDS even has its own ribbon (red). But...have we really overcome the fear instilled by the initial depiction? Have we totally shed our conflation of HIV/AIDS and some form of immorality? Is the stigma gone?



You can answer that question yourself (if you don't know the answer already) with a quick search of key words: "HIV", "stigma", and "discrimination".

Your research paper should consider a previously established cultural narrative, document and compare different versions of the narrative through time, offer information on why the narrative has changed, and discuss the implications of unresolved issues surrounding the narrative.

Common narratives:

- Underarm hair on women is undesirable
 - Vegans are "weird" or "pushy"
-

For your final paper, you will investigate a question or topic you find interesting. While the world of possibilities is indeed at your fingertips, your subject should be related to the content or ideas presented in your Narrative Medicine topic section, but it should broaden your understanding of the applications of Narrative Medicine and add to that discourse. In this option, you will still be creating an argument and still need to have some organization to your ideas, though the connection to narrative medicine is decided for you.

Paper length: 1750-2000 words

Sources: Five source minimum. A minimum of one academic (peer-reviewed journal) source, at least one “narrative” source (literature, film, poetry), and a maximum of two sources from your Narrative Medicine reading list.

Formatting and Works Cited page: Use MLA 8th ed. guidelines

Writing schedule

Draft 1 (1000 words): 11/19

Draft 2 (1500 words): 11/26

Draft 3 (Full draft): 12/03

Final Draft: 12/13