

# HEALTH HUMANITIES

Health Humanities is a rapidly growing, interdisciplinary field that applies humanistic perspectives to health and health care. The humanities (cultural and language studies, history, literature, philosophy, theology and religious studies, and the arts) are indispensable to humane health care because they teach us about the human condition, about human suffering and healing, and about human well-being and flourishing. The Health Humanities Program emphasizes the study of human dignity, human values, and health care ethics (bioethics). The program employs holistic and integrated understandings of what it means to be human, in contrast to what has been called "biomedical reductionism." Human beings cannot be reduced to biochemical processes but are complex wholes of body, mind, and soul. Humane health care depends on that recognition: on seeing patients as whole persons. Students who successfully complete a Health Humanities major or minor, along with required science courses outside the program, will be well-prepared for admission to medical school, to Physician Assistant programs, and to other health science graduate programs. The program is also ideal for students who have an interest in law school, in earning a graduate degree in public health, or in pursuing an administrative career in health care.

## Programs

The Health Humanities Department offers these programs:

- Health Humanities, B.A. (<http://catalog.css.edu/programs-az/arts-letters/health-humanities/health-humanities-ba/>)
- Health Humanities Minor (<http://catalog.css.edu/programs-az/arts-letters/health-humanities/health-humanities-minor/>)

## Contact Information

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## Health Humanities Courses

**HHU 2301 - Health, Happiness, and Human Well-being (Conceptions : VCPH - Philosophy) - 4 cr.**

Examines concepts like health and illness, ability and disability, and happiness and well-being from a philosophical perspective. It explores the philosophical aspects of some of the central questions in medicine and health care: What is health? What is health in relation to happiness and human well-being? What are suffering and healing? What are the goals of medicine and what is the purpose of health care? To what extent are health, disease, and illness biological realities or social constructions? How have concepts of health, disease, and illness been used to harm people? What is mental health and illness, why are their meanings contested, and how has psychiatry been abused? Further, the course considers such issues as the different types of knowledge in health care, medical knowledge and power, human rights and health care, ethical principles and practices in health care, and current ethical dilemmas and controversies in the field.

**Equivalent Course:** PHL 2301

**HHU 2777 - Topics in Health Humanities (Conceptions : VCOP - Electives) - 4 cr.**

Topics in Health Humanities.

**HHU 2900 - Health Humanities Foundations (Conceptions : VCOP - Electives) - 4 cr.**

Introduces the interdisciplinary field of Health Humanities. It considers the unique contributions, approaches, and resources that the humanities and arts bring to health care. The course discusses basic methodological issues such as the differences between the health sciences and health humanities, fundamental concepts such as human dignity and personhood, and core philosophical questions such as materialism and biomedical reductionism, mind-body dualism, and the meaning and mystery of being human. The course introduces biomedical or healthcare ethics and its primary principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. Topics related to spirituality and illness are investigated, including the meaning of human suffering and mortality, end-of-life issues and ethical care of the dying, and hope. The course is concerned throughout to develop compassion and empathy as essential skills in humane health care.

**HHU 3010 - Trauma and Recovery: Medicine and Literature (Integrations : VILI - Literature) - 4 cr.**

A course in literature and narrative medicine. If we know that trauma cannot be told without a witness who encourages the tale by offering words and gestures of sympathy, we also know that to bear witness to trauma is to share its burden. Disciplined objectivity and reducing the patient to his illness have traditionally protected clinicians in the health care fields from experiencing the trauma of "caring too much" for their patients. But practitioners in the Health Humanities argue for the recovery of humanity in health care. They argue that encouraging the stories of both patients and family members invites all sufferers to find meaning in their pain, and to work towards emotional, if not always physical, healing. The field of Health Humanities positions the literature classroom – with its emphasis upon close reading, attention to semiotics, analysis of gesture, the mending of fractured narratives, and the adoption of alien points of view – as a safe place to learn to listen to trauma. And, while reading literature enables students to practice authentic listening, reflective writing shared in groups enables students to make meaning from their own trauma and to begin this rich process of storytelling. In this course we will closely read and analyze the narratives of wounded patients, healers, and family witnesses while we write and share our

**Equivalent Course:** ENG 3010

**HHU 3401 - Health Care Across Cultures (Integrations : VISS - Social Science) - 4 cr.**

A course in Health Humanities and cultural competency. It proceeds from the premise that since a person's experience of health and illness is highly dependent on his or her culture, cultural understanding is essential for humane health care in today's multicultural societies. The course aims to help students achieve cultural competency, with particular attention to the development of culturally competent communication skills. It analyzes the influence of culture on human experiences of health and illness, and on health beliefs, values, and healthcare practices. Through interactive exercises, case studies, interviews, role plays, guest speakers, reflection papers, research and literature, the course investigates the increasingly complex intersection between healthcare delivery and culture. Students also examine the value assumptions of their own health beliefs in an effort to increase their effectiveness in intercultural healthcare settings

**Equivalent Course:** GCL 3401

**HHU 3777 - Topics in Health Humanities - 0-4 cr.**

Topics in Health Humanities

**HHU 4400 - Health Humanities Capstone Seminar - 4 cr.**

Required capstone seminar for Health Humanities majors and minors. Topics will vary according to professor and may include the history of medicine, philosophy of medicine, and literature and narrative medicine. The seminar includes a final project such as a research paper.

**HHU 4777 - Topics in Health Humanities - 0-4 cr.**

Topics in Health Humanities