

First-year Composition

Reading and Writing about Health

Course Description

How would you describe a healthy person? This course's readings and assignments encourage you to consider your relationship to traditional medical treatment and healthy bodies in order to help you reevaluate your concepts of health, illness, well-being, and medicine. Throughout the semester, we will examine different ways of understanding, characterizing, explaining, and advocating personal health, the health of the nation, and the health of those who are dear to you.

Required Texts

- *Health*. Sujata Iyengar and Allison K. Lenhardt, eds. Fountainhead Press, 2012.
- A rhetoric (addressing research, argument, and/or analysis) of the instructor's choosing

Assignments & Grade Distributions

- **Short Writing Assignments 10%**
 - Throughout the semester, students will be asked to respond to the “Explore,” “Invent,” “Collaborate,” and “Compose” prompts in *Health*. These short writing and research assignments will help students develop the skills they need for creating their larger research and composition projects.
- **Health Memoir 15%**
 - Students will write a short biographical essay that foregrounds their relationship to illness, health and well-being.
- **Explaining a Medical or Healthful Intervention 20%**
 - Students will write an essay or make a YouTube video in which they explain (and demonstrate, if appropriate) a therapy or health intervention.
- **Service-Learning Social Media Campaign 25%**
 - For the first half of this project, students will investigate a nonprofit organization's current approach to social media and write up a synopsis of their findings. For the second half of this project, they will design a new social networking campaign for the organization.
- **Persuasive Research Paper 30%**
 - Students will research and write a persuasive essay to convince someone to try or not to try treating a disease, disorder, or illness with a specific kind of medication or therapy.

Week 1: Course Intro: Health and Healing

“Introduction: Healing Writing,” pp. 1–6; Excerpt from *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, pp. 7–22; Overview of Process Writing from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: Short Writing Assignment (SWA) based on Invent from the Introduction; SWA based on Collaborate from *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*.

Week 2: Health and Identity

Readings: Excerpt from *A Life in Smoke*, pp. 23–40; “‘You Look Great’ and Other Lies,” pp. 41–46; Chapter on Writing a Personal Narrative from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Compose from *A Life in Smoke*; SWA based on Invent from “‘You Look Great’ and Other Lies”

Week 3: Characterizing Health and Sickness

Readings: “A Life Beyond Reason,” pp. 53–60; Excerpt from *Stumbling on Happiness*, pp. 127–40; Chapter on Description from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Invent from *Stumbling on Happiness*; Major Assignment #1 Due

Week 4: Explaining Illness, Injury, and Treatment

“An Immune System Trained to Kill Cancer,” pp. 75–82; “Healing Life’s Traumas,” pp. 207–12; “How Yoga Can Wreck Your Body,” pp. 213–22; Chapter on Explanatory Essays from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Invent from “An Immune System Trained to Kill Cancer;” SWA based on Compose from “Healing Life’s Traumas”

Week 5: Examining Explanations of Health, Illness, and Intervention

Readings: “How to Save a Life,” pp. 83–84; Excerpt from *Cracked: Putting Broken Lives Together Again: A Doctor’s Story*, pp. 85–100; “How to Fix the Obesity Crisis,” pp. 101–114

Assignments Due: Group writing assignment based on Collaborate from “How To Save a Life;” SWA based on Invent from “How to Fix the Obesity Crisis;” Begin Major Assignment #3

Week 6: Medical and Healthful Interventions

Readings: Excerpt from *What to Eat*, pp. 115–124; Film clips from *Food, Inc*; Chapter on Development and Organization from rhetoric textbook

Assignments: SWA based on Explore from the *What to Eat* excerpt; Major Assignment # 3 Due

Week 7: Analyzing Visual and Verbal Rhetoric for Illness and Treatment

Readings: *Surgeons III*, pp. 61–62; “The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt,” pp. 73–74; Excerpt from *Bright-Sided*, pp. 47–52; Film clips of *Wit*; Chapter on Analyzing Visual Rhetoric from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Explore from *Surgeons III*; SWA based on Invent from *Bright-Sided*

Week 8: Analyzing Advertisements and Social Media Campaigns

Readings: “Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse,” pp. 145–150; “RU Healthy? Public Health Efforts Take on Text Messaging,” pp. 151–54; “Weather and Language Lessons,” pp. 141–144

Assignments Due: SWA based on Invent from “RU Healthy?” SWA based on Compose from “Weather and Language Lessons;” Begin Major Assignment #4

Week 9: Analyzing and Designing Social Media Campaigns

Readings: Assign several service-learning social media campaigns for in-class analysis

Week 10: Using Social Media for Health Awareness

* Conferences for Major Assignment #4

Brief presentations of Assignment #4

Assignments Due: Major Assignment #4 Due

Week 11: Analyzing Arguments

Readings: “My Milk: On Becoming a Mother,” pp. 155–62; “Are You Mom Enough?” pp. 163–65; “The Case Against Breastfeeding,” pp. 165–78; “Excerpts from *House of Commons Debates, 30 April 1946*,” pp. 191–206; Chapter on Argument Analysis from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Explore from “My Milk;” Group in-class writing assignment based on Explore and Collaborate from “The Case against Breastfeeding;” SWA based on Compose from “House of Commons Debates, 30 April 1946”

Week 12: Researching Health Topics

Readings: “A Drug for Down Syndrome,” pp. 179–90; Chapter on conducting research from a rhetoric textbook and orientation to library research

Assignments Due: SWA based on Explore from “A Drug for Down Syndrome;” Begin Major Assignment #5

Week 13: Writing about Your Research

Readings: “What are the Public Health Effects of Direct-to-Consumer Drug Advertising?” pp. 63–72 “Excerpt from *Overtreated: Why Too Much Medicine Is Making Us Sicker and Poorer*,” pp. 223–40; Chapter on incorporating research from a rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: SWA based on Invent from the *Overtreated* excerpt

Week 14: Writing Persuasively

Conferences for Major Assignment #5

Readings: Chapter for Review of Citing and Formatting from rhetoric textbook

Assignments Due: Brief Presentation of Research & Argument for Major Assignment #5

Week 15: Persuasive Research Projects and Wrap-up

Assignments Due: Major Assignment #5 Due