FALL 2023 Inside-Out Course Application

HC444/431H ***The Ethics of Ambiguity: Studies in Fiction and Narrative Medicine***Instructor: Dawn Marlan   
*Fall 2023 / OSP / Tuesday* ***4pm-10pm\****

Class Description:

Institutions manage and process people. Medicine, like many institutions, tends to define people in terms of their problems – disease, drugs, mental illness. Fiction inverts this structure, seeing character as something that transcends problems. Fiction tends not to diagnose, pathologize, or moralize. And while medicine leans toward closure (a cure, death), narrative’s drive toward resolution is most satisfying, I would argue, when the questions that drive the narrative remain, to some degree, unanswered, retaining mystery.

The new field of Narrative Medicine, inaugurated at Columbia University by a team of doctors, scientists, literature and film scholars, and fiction writers, begins with the premise that medicine centrally involves a nuanced human exchange mediated by language, specifically narrative. A patient tells a story, and a practitioner interprets, retells, alters, and “concludes” it, often without doing justice to the complexity of such an exchange, the power relationships that animate it, and without recognizing the ways in which “closure” eludes us. Institutions are designed to solve problems, not multiple them. Yet by imposing closure prematurely, science “ignores the ethical demand out of which it arises,” namely, its commitment to doubt, uncertainty and ignorance, hallmarks of scientific inquiry. The promise of narrative medicine is that literary values and techniques of interpretation can answer this ethical demand in multiple ways: by restoring attention to the ambiguity and nuance, which fruitful narrative exchanges require; increasing tolerance for uncertainty; sharpening powers of observation and reflection; developing awareness of our affect and its interference in interpretation; building cooperation and trust in relationships that are traditionally hierarchical; respecting different forms of knowledge and experience; adopting a practice of radical listening, and fostering creativity. In this course, we will study some of the most striking and innovative short stories in various linguistic traditions and periods alongside theoretical materials that will help us to better understand the elements of narrative and the principles of Narrative Medicine. By focusing on moments of ambiguity and problems of closure, we will accept the Jamesian challenge laid out in *The Art of Fiction*: “Try to be one of those on whom nothing is lost.” Assignments will be both interpretative and creative.

Application Instructions

Submission deadline: May 14th

**→ Email completed application to**

**uoprisoned@uoregon.edu and damarlan@uoregon.edu**

You will be notified of a phone or in-person interview, if selected for one, shortly after the applications are submitted.

\*Note: the class itself runs from 6 – 8:30. The 4:00–10:00 timeframe above is the time commitment for class each week.

Logistics

**Last Name: First Name:**

**Email: Phone:**

**Major(s): Student ID:**

**Class Standing: Freshman 𑂽 Sophomore 𑂽 Junior 𑂽 Senior 𑂽 Fifth Year + 𑂽**

Short Answers Please respond to each with no more than a few sentences

**[1] How did you hear about Inside-Out? / What attracts you to this course?**

**[2] How does this course fit into your educational goals / life goals as a person?**

**[3] What do you seek to gain from this experience?**

**[4] What life experiences - if any - have you had that might prepare you for this**

**course?**

**[5] What do you feel you could bring to this course?**

**[6] How do you feel about interacting with others whose life and experiences differ from your own?**

**[7] Do you have any concerns about taking this class?**

**Additional Information**

**Have you previously been involved with Inside-Out?**

𑂽Yes! I have already taken an Inside-Out course

𑂽Yes! I applied for a spot in a previous Inside-Out course (but didn’t take it)

No, but I am applying to another Inside-Out class spring term

𑂽No, This is my first application

If you answered any but the final question, please note the following information about the other Inside-Out course you applied to or took:

**Term / Academic Year: Professor:**

**Institution: 𑂽**

**References** Please provide the contact information of two individuals who can speak to your character and academic experience. At least one must be a professor; additional references may come from graduate students, graduate employees, or other faculty.

Reference 1 | Name: Email:

Reference 2 | Name: Email:

Thank you for your interest and time filling out this application.

We will be in touch with you within a few days of receipt of your application.