Writing and Rhetoric - Biomedical Ethics

Naomi Rachel (PhD)  
nami.rachel@colorado.edu

Cell phone on campus- 303-810-1124. My home is out of cell phone reception so the best way to reach me is email. If you leave a message on my cell, you might not receive a response for more than 24 hours. If you email, it is only a matter of hours. You can always email me and ask to speak to me on the phone. Then we can arrange a good time.

Meeting times= 1-1:50 M-W-F. Or 10 AM or 3 PM by arrangement. We can always arrange other times to meet. If you want help, I am always willing to make the time to work with you. We will meet outside The Laughing Goat if weather allows or the second floor of the Atlas building or in the lobby of Engineering building. I will give you all the time you need. I prefer to be called Dr. Rachel and I will call you whatever you choose. Let me know.

The quotes on the syllabus were chosen because they relate to my views of science and education. You will be finding quotes that reflect your philosophy as part of your News Updates. We will discuss these quotes midterm. The quotes are in red online so you can locate them.

Course Description and Objectives -

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH ETHICS

ALL THAT GRAY AREA............

“ The effective practice of medicine requires narrative competence, that is, the ability to acknowledge, absorb, interpret and act on stories and plights of others. Medicine practiced with narrative competence, called NARRATIVE MEDICINE, is a model for humane and effective medical practice”

Dr. Rita Charon- Program for Narrative Medicine Columbia University.
My goal for this course is to enable students to read analytically and to write with clarity and focus. This class will teach you to write well in a variety of styles and genres and to state and defend an argumentative thesis. An educated person must be able to read with in-depth comprehension and to be able to communicate complex ideas in economical and elegant prose. Language = communication = power.

The work done in this class will enable you to do well on graduate school exams (MCATs/ GRE/LSAT) job applications and generally empower you through the analysis of the issues that matters to us now and in our future. We all write best about what we care about and the essays read and written in this class will inspire both thought and passion . I promise that at least some of the material will be very surprising and shocking. The emphasis will be on HOW we convey medical ethics. Medical schools are now recruiting English majors because they can analyze, think critically and read and write with care.

Rhetoric is the art of discourse that aims to improve the facility of speakers or writers who attempt to inform, persuade, or motivate particular audiences in specific situations.

The goal of this class is to improve both your writing and your ability to speak well in public to specific audiences. We will explore narrative as a way to educate others about complex medical concepts and cases. Due to the extensive reading, you will also learn a great deal about medicine and the ethics of biomedical research. All your papers will relate to this reading.

WRTG 3020 meets the Colorado Commission on Higher Education’s criteria for an Advanced Writing Course (GT-CO3) in the Colorado higher education system.

By the end of the term, the goal is that you will have improved in these areas-

1. Rhetorical knowledge
   Diverse texts- critical analysis- communication to appropriate audiences. A greater understanding of the subject and how the use of narrative relates to STEM.

2. Experience in the writing process
   Multiple drafts and radical revision- learning to critique your own work and that of your peers- writing and research tools and the correct use of citations.

3. Mastery of writing conventions
   Exploration of genre for specific audiences- vocabulary and documentation - improved writing and thus better communication. The use of specialized language for diverse audiences.

4. Creative Communication- Various styles and approaches both in written form and in presentations. How do we make readers care about the subject matter? What are the great questions to ask? Putting the A into STEM for STEAM!
“Many people call a doctor when all they want is an audience.”
Dale Carnegie - "How To Win Friends And Influence People" 1936

This is a small seminar and I am not going to determine the entire direction of the course before I get to know each of you and your needs and interests. This is a class for flexible minds. This syllabus is only meant to give you a general idea - I reserve the right to make changes during the term. I will have a weekly very detailed update on our D2L site. I promise only to subtract, not add, work. The Program for Writing and Rhetoric requires at least 50 pages per student.

“IT is well to open one’s mind, but only as a preliminary to closing it- only as a preparation, in short, for the supreme act of judgment and selection.” Sinclair Lewis

**Class Text (the majority of reading will be on D2L)**

Main Text= **CASE STUDIES IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH ETHICS**
by Timothy F. Murphy, MIT press

**Junk English** by Ken Smith A wonderful small book that will help you say more in fewer words and also make you aware of our collective bad writing habits. It’s a gem. Junk English is like junk food- learn to avoid it for smart, healthy papers.

“Man is a credulous animal, and must believe something: in the absence of good grounds for belief, he will be satisfied with bad ones. ” Bertrand Russell

**Class Website=** D2L 3020005 Topics in Writing
I will post most of the reading and all the handouts (including the syllabus) here. I will also give you hard copies in class. You are invited to share materials and ideas with others here too. D2L is a good place to provide additional in advance of your presentations. We will use the discussion section for sharing work to be critiqued.

The remainder of the reading is available free online. I am saving you money by not requiring you to buy more books, and in return, I expect you to print (when I require it) the assigned reading and bring it with you to class. You can bring in electronic copies but only on a devise at least 7”. You can’t discuss or critique an article on your cell phone.

“I am not opposed to optimism, but I am fearful of the kind that comes from self delusion” Dr. Martin Davis- writing about the cure for cancer in the "New England Journal of Medicine.”

**Articles:** not necessarily in this order- some are only a few pages. We might not be able to read them all but assume you will have reading assigned for every class.

Homework for second class- watch Part Two of Australian "Love and Other Drugs"


For debate on 9.10 = www.procon.org/
Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsusa.org/ Overall GREAT resource.

*Deadly Medicine* by Donald Barlett and James B Steele. VANITY FAIR
*Making a Killing* by Carl Elliott. MOTHER JONES 9/10/ 2010
*The Truth Wears Off* by Jonah Lehrer. THE NEW YORKER 12.13.2010
*The Checklist* by Atul Gawande THE NEW YORKER 12.10.2007
*God Knows Where I Am* by Rachel Aviv THE NEW YORKER 5.30.2011
*The Abyss* by Dr. Oliver Sacks BEST SCIENCE WRITING 2008
*Letting Go* - Atul Gawande THE NEW YORKER 8.2.2010

“ In solving a problem of this sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backwards.. That's a very useful accomplishment and a very easy one, but people do not practice it much.” Sherlock Holmes (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)

**Class Policies:**
Remember to turn off cell phones before class begins. I prefer that students do not open laptops unless there is a disability issue (which must be presented in the first week) or I make an exception. You can bring in the assigned reading on a laptop or any decent size reading devise (minimum 7”) but only if everyone is actually reading what is assigned. If you don’t have sufficient self discipline, then bring in a hard copy of the reading. Please be on time. Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to everyone. I also request you remain in class for the entire period. Since participation is critical to the success of this course, I will provide a sign in sheet every class. If you are late more than three times, it will be considered as an absence.

I allow students to be absent four times during the term without penalty. I urge you to save those four times for illness or emergencies. Rather than look at doctor’s notes, I just give you four days. If you miss more than four classes, your grade will be lowered as follows: Participation = 20% of your grade. 15% for class discussions and 5% for attendance. After 4 allowed absences each additional one, I will subtract 1%. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to be prepared the next class. You can also receive extra credit (a surprise at the end of the term) for perfect attendance if you also have turned in all work on time. To pass the course, you must complete all assignments - even ungraded work. Late work will be downgraded one grade the first time, two grades the second time and will not be accepted the third time. For work to be considered on time, it must be submitted (via email if you aren’t in class and then a hard copy the next class) at the end of the class period on the day it is due. I promise to give you at least a week’s notice before an essay is due. Students who miss two classes the first two weeks will be dropped from the class.

“Science is facts. Just as houses are made of stone, so it science made of facts. But a pile of stones is not a house, and a collection of facts is not necessarily science” Herni Poincare

**Assignments and Grades:**
For each assignment, I will give you several topic choices, so you won’t always be writing and
critiquing exactly the same work. That's where we can be flexible and I can direct you to articles which hold a special interest. At the beginning of the class, I will suggest the most positive ways to critique work so you will help your fellow students and also learn how to improve your own work. Each critique will be different so you will have the experience of thinking and writing in different formats and voices. I grade for improvement. My general grading philosophy is that talent can't be graded, but improvement can. If your first paper, for example, receives a B- and your second an A, you can earn an A in the class. (It works the other way too, so making a good impression at first won't help if you slack off later) I do not have a rigid point system. Your final grade will consist of the following percentages:

*Written work- originals and revisions: 65% (including final exam unless incentive is met)
*Participation and critiques including workshop and peer review and news report: 20%
*Class presentation of interview- ideally two students to a group : 15% (Option to do the interview as part of the final paper but then this 15% is added to the 65%. Do the math)

Again, since I grade for improvement, each paper counts more than the last. But improvement must be consistent and you should not depend on the final paper to raise your grade. Almost all work can be (and mostly should be if you receive lower than a B) revised.

"The goal of education isn't to get students to answer the right number of questions. The goal is to have curious and creative students who can function in life" Dr. John Ewing- Director of the American Math Association.

**NEWS UPDATE:** Biomedical and ethical issues are in the news daily, and each student will have to present an item from the news once during the term. You will sign up on Friday for the following week. This will be counted as part of your participation grade. I want you to keep your report to five minutes and be prepared to answer a few questions. You should address why the topic is of interest to you, why it matters to our society, the name of publication and its intended audience and the author if known. Is there a problem you can identify and address? You must also find a more general quote (similar to ones on this syllabus) to share and to help explain your view of the issue. Remember the ethical component. Find something controversial.

"The most important scientific revolutions all include, as their only common feature, the dethronement of human arrogance from one pedestal after another of previous convictions about our centrality in the cosmos." Stephan Jay Gould

**Papers and Essays:**
Since I hope you would prefer that your time be spent improving your writing and enjoying the reading and research, I will only give graded exams if students aren't engaged in learning. If the classroom discussions and critiques are informed and lively, testing won't be necessary. There will be five papers and you can revise all but the final paper. Papers will receive peer critiques as well as extensive feedback from me.

The papers and essays assigned are as follows:
Ethics Paper (personal narrative)- 3 pages
Research on Live Subjects essay (persuasive)- 3-5 pages
Deadly Medicine essay (research) - 4-6 pages
Aviv Q & A - (opinion and reflection on reading) 3+ pages
The Very Slow Research Paper - 12 pages

There will also be a proposal for your presentation which you will write in your group as well as peer evaluations for a total of five additional pages. This paper will also be outlined.
Six additional pages= short one page or less assignments.

All papers must be typed, 12 point font, 1.5 spaced, pages numbered and stapled. Either MLA or APA rules are accepted. Almost all work can be revised. If you want to improve, you should revise all work that receives a grade of B- or lower. Consider every paper you submit (except for the final paper) a draft which can be improved. You have two weeks to submit the revision. The original grade stands, but the second grade will count more.

"The greatest difficulty in education is to get experience from ideas" George Santayana

Presentations - Interviews: Ideally you will form a pair (solo is possible but no trios) and be responsible for interviewing an expert in the field of Biomedical Ethics. I must approve your subject. These must be live or Skype. No email or phone. Then you and your partner will present the interview to the class and answer questions. You will sign up for this the second week of class. Each team will be expected to present and then answer questions for a total of 30 minutes and be prepared to answer questions. Everyone will critique three presentations and then you can earn extra credit by writing critiques for the additional presentations. These interview presentations should be rehearsed in your group and they must add new content to our discussion. You will select your own topic and interview subject, and you must submit a typed proposal for approval at least twelve days before your presentation date. Your group must meet with me at least a week prior to your presentation. Before the meeting, you must submit a detailed script of your presentation and convince me you are ready. I am interested in originality in different formats. This is a writing class, so I have decided to ban bullet points for these presentations. These presentations are often the most engaging part of the class. You will also be submitting an evaluation of your partner and those will be due the date of your presentation. Student in the audience will also critique the presentations and these critiques are due by 10 AM the next day via email to me.

If the interview pairing doesn't work out and you can't, for some reason, give a solo interview, you can add the live interview to the paper for a minimum of 18 pages. Keep in mind that the interview is worth 15% of your grade. I recommend the double assignment (paper and interview presentation) to put less pressure on final paper as percentage of your grade. There will only be a final exam if the presentations are not exceptionally well done.

"In science, 'fact' can only mean 'confirmed to such a degree that it would be perverse to withhold provisional assent.' I suppose that apples might start to rise tomorrow, but the possibility does not merit equal time in physics classrooms." Stephen Jay Gould
A syllabus is intended as a contract for the majority of students in the majority of situations, but “stuff happens” and I can be flexible in unusual situations. It is your responsibility, therefore, to alert me to exceptional circumstances as soon as they occur. Generally, I can be more helpful if I know more about your situation. I urge you to share with me if you have any concerns.

“High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation” Charles F. Kettering- inventor and engineer. This could well be the slogan for all my courses!

Below is a tentative schedule which I reserve the right to change. Again, I promise this will be the most work and we might not get to everything. If you are absent, check with me or a colleague rather than assuming this overview is exact. Also, it is your responsibility to be prepared if you miss class. I will update this syllabus on D2L weekly since once you sign up for presentations we need to be flexible.

AR= Assign reading  HW= Homework . This does not include in class assignments.

8.25- Intro syllabus- HW- view Sally and Sam video. Listen to song I email.
8.27- Discuss Sally and Sam- Collective grammar pet peeves- Intro Junk English
8.29 I give sample News Update. Friday is sign up day for following week all term. Common Knowledge exercise. AR for Wednesday- “The Truth Wears Out”. HW- Thesis statement + five key words or phrases for search.

9.1- LABOR DAY!
9.3- Groups discuss “The Truth.” Develop collaborative thesis. AR Intro to Text.
9.8- Peer interviews. Discuss chap 1. AR chap 2- prepare debate. Procon website
9.10 Debate chap 2. Ethics essay due next class.
915- Sign up presentations. AR Making A Killing
9.17- Discuss Making a Killing. Assign RESEARCH ON LIVE SUBJECTS paper due 9.29
9.19- Q and A groups Making a Killing. AR- How to Critique and Student X paper on D2L 3 questions for science librarian.
9.22- Library questions due. Critique Student X paper. AR- Junk English. 3 examples+ 3 questions.
9.24- Groups for Junk English. Prepare for library visit. Have research questions !
9.29 Research on Live Subjects paper due. Set up critique groups. HW- read papers.
10.1- Critique papers in small groups. AR- Radical Revision on D2L
10.3- Discuss revisions. AR- Deadly Medicine
10.6- Discuss Deadly Medicine- Create and answer questions. AR- Chap 3
10.8 Assign Deadly Medicine paper due 10.22. Discuss Chap 3. Prepare for SC Friday.
10.10 Class held in SPECIAL COLLECTIONS- Third floor north side Norlin Library. HW- prepare oral review of our visit to share.
10.13 Oral Review of Special Collections. AR- The Abyss- focus on the writer’s voice
10.15- Discuss The Abyss. HW- find quotes that reflect your world view + medical ethics.
10.17- Discuss their quotes. HW- paper due Wednesday
10.20- Arrange DM critiques. Discuss value of feedback
10.22. DM papers due. Prepare for Terry.
10.24 Class guest- Terry Leichner PTSD expert . HW- read papers for critiques.
10.27- DM critiques
10.29 DM critiques AR- God Knows Who I Am

10.31 - Discuss God Knows- Assign Q and A Due 11.7 AR Chap 4 😳 Be scared!!!!!!
11.3- Discuss Chap 4- Explain THE VERY SLOW RESEARCH PAPER. Topic sign up
Monday 10.10 . AR- The Checklist
11.5 Discuss The Checklist- using student essay questions. Q and A due Friday.
11.7 God Knows Q and A due. HW- Final paper topics research
11.10 Sign up for research paper topics. Prepare discuss quotes on syllabus.
11.12 Discuss quotes in relationship to reading and bioethics. Give infamous Procrastination lecture . AR- Letting Go
11.14 Write abstracts in groups for Letting Go. AR- Chap 7
11.17- Discuss Chap 7- Assign paper outline and abstract. Due 12.3. Can turn in sooner if you want feedback over Fall Break.
11.21- Gambling trivia teams. Have a great Fall Break. Can email me if you have questions.

Big Break ’14

12.1 Research paper update and questions. Outlines and Abstracts due 12.3.
12.3 Outlines and abstracts due.
12.5 Outline feedback in groups. Final paper due Monday
12.8 Final Paper Due. SHARE
12.10 Share
12.12 Final class- rewards for perfect attendance and term end game.

"As our own species is in the process of proving, one cannot have superior science and inferior morals. The combination is unstable and self-destroying." Arthur. C. Clark
CU POLICIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices

A Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See polices at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/