**A person with a stethoscope around his neck

Description automatically generated**

**UWS 4a. Medical Ethics**

Monday and Wednesday: 2:30-3:50 PM (We will only have once class during conference weeks)

Instructor: Professor Rourke

Classroom:

Office: Rabb 225

Student Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:15-2:15 PM and by appointment

Email: **lrourke@brandeis.edu**

**Introduction:**

This course introduces students to the power of writing as a means of communication and a process of thinking and understanding. As students complete a series of writing assignments, they will engage in a process of reading, drafting, reviewing and revising, working in peer groups and individually with their instructors.

The Hippocratic Oath is a guiding principle amongst doctors: “First, do no harm.” But what if your patient is a potential mass murderer? Does the doctor’s obligation lie first with the patient or with society at large? We will explore these questions and others across a variety of genres, including the acclaimed medical mystery television series House and other forms of social media. In addition, students will have the opportunity to research a case study on a topic of their choice ranging from designer babies to physician assisted suicide. This course will foster the development of incisive analysis and sophisticated academic writing as well as an understanding of disciplinary differences through the exploration of bioethical dilemmas.

**First Year Experience:**

UWS is the centerpiece of the First Year Experience, which introduces students to the rich intellectual life of the university. As part of the UWS, students will attend one Critical Conversation between faculty from different departments. The goals of the Critical Conversations are to build first year cohort identity and introduce students to Brandeis’ scholarly discourse and the variety of ways in which our faculty engage with the world and each other. Each seminar will also assign a brief experiential learning activity to expand the boundaries of the conventional classroom. All students taking UWS are encouraged to participate in faculty-led small group discussions as a way to connect with faculty and other members of your cohort.

**UWS Goals:**

The University Writing Seminar introduces you to the power of writing as a means of communication and as a process of thinking and understanding. You will formulate meaningful arguments, support them with observations and evidence, and convey them clearly and persuasively. You will gain the tools to be a successful and confident writer in any discipline and become an active participant in critical conversations across the University and beyond. Most importantly, these skills will prepare you to engage as an informed citizen in a global society.

**UWS Outcomes:**

Students will be able to:

* Understand writing as a recursive process of thinking and communication
* Articulate elements of effective writing and integrate them into their own work
* Participate in critical conversations by responding to openings, problems or contradictions in existing scholarship
* Assess their own and others’ writing with respect to audience and purpose
* Generate original questions and pursue independent research
* Identify and evaluate sources and use them responsibly
* Develop awareness of disciplinary differences in writing and adapt their writing to different genres and contexts

**Required Course Texts**

All of the readings, videos and handouts are posted on latte.

**Course Requirements**

**Major assignment 1**: Lens essay. For this essay, you will analyze “The Tyrant” episode from the television series House through the lens of a theoretical essay by John Stuart Mill or Immanuel Kant and make a claim about how concepts from the essay help to shape your understanding of “The Tyrant.”

**Major assignment 2**: Research proposal. After selecting a case study of your choice, you will write an in-depth proposal for your research essay that includes your research questions, a literature review and an annotated bibliography.

**Major assignment 3**: Research essay. For this assignment you will use your research proposal as a guide to make an argument about how your case study reflects societal norms and values.

**Portfolio**: At the end of the semester you will assemble all of your work (including pre-draft assignments, rough drafts, final drafts, and peer review sheets) in an electronic Word document and upload it to latte, together with a letter describing how your understanding of yourself as a writer has changed over the course of the semester and the ways that you will use the skills from this class in other disciplines. **This means that you need to electronically save all your writing from the semester**.

**Drafting:**

Four steps lead up to the final draft of each essay:

* **Pre-draft assignments.** Each essay will be preceded by two or three pre-draft assignments—short pieces of writing designed to help you develop ideas. These assignments will receive either a check or a note telling you to redo the work and will count as part of your overall grade. You can re-submit any work until the end of the unit.
* **First drafts.** You are required to turn in a first draft of each paper. These drafts are important opportunities for you to receive feedback from me and your classmates in peer review. I do not expect these drafts to be polished, but I do expect them to be complete—otherwise we cannot give you useful advice.
* **Peer Review.** After the first draft of each paper is due you will form a group with two of your classmates and read each other’s drafts. In class you will give your partners feedback. I will collect your peer review letters and they will count as part of your grade. These activities increase your sense of audience awareness and give you an opportunity to reflect on the concepts we have discussed in class.
* **Conferences.** Each student will have two twenty-minute zoom conferences with me over the course of the semester, one to discuss the first draft of each major assignment. Attendance is required; missing a conference is the equivalent of missing a class. Sign-up sheets will be distributed in class. Note that we will only have one class during conference weeks.

**Class participation:** Your consistent participation in class sessions constitutes a significant portion of your grade and is the most critical component of a successful course. Class participation includes:

* Your prompt, prepared, alert, consistent attendance
* The completion of reading assignments by the dates listed in the syllabus
* Your thoughtful contributions to class discussions

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center offers free online help in two formats: [60 minute face-to-face appointments](https://www.brandeis.edu/writing-program/center/wc-zoom-instructions.html) over Zoom and [an e-Tutoring document drop service](https://www.brandeis.edu/writing-program/center/asynchronous.html) for written feedback. Writing Center feedback balances larger writing issues, such as organization and use of evidence, with more mechanical concerns, such as sentence structure and syntax. For both options, feedback will be guided by issues that you raise. Regardless of your chosen format, you will receive clear steps to improve your writing from a trained consultant.

**Students who take advantage of this service will receive a form during their tutorial that will entitle them to a 24-hour extension on either the draft OR revision of their essay.** Essays will be due electronically by 11:55 PM on the following day. Only one extension is allowed per essay (either the draft or revision). Click [here](https://www.brandeis.edu/writing-program/center/index.html) for more information about Writing Center consultations and workshops.

**Grades**

Researched Essay: 35%

Lens Essay: 25%

Writing Community Membership: 20% (Attendance & Engagement breakdown below)

· Attendance: 10%

· Participation: 10%

Research Proposal: 10%

Portfolio (Pre-Drafts, Peer Letters, Reflective Cover Letter): 10%

**Formatting**

Please submit all essays to latte in Word (no pdfs!) and to your peers in a google doc. **Microsoft Office is available to all Brandeis students for free.** You can download it from the internet using your Brandeis login. Essays must use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. Do not enlarge your punctuation—I can tell. Essays must have a title and be double-spaced. For every written piece of work please have your name, date, course name and my name in the upper left hand corner.

**Writing Community Membership** (20%)

*Participation (10%)*

You are a valued and integral part of our writing community and, as such, have important responsibilities to our class regarding on-time arrival and consistent participation. Your primary obligation is social in nature: your commitment is to our course community and to making it work well. Thus, you are expected to contribute to a communityatmosphere that promotes a supportive exchange of insights and ideas. Before class, complete and puzzle over assigned reading and/or viewing and finish all homework and/or other assignments. Since much of our class time will be spent in class activities and workshops, your preparation is critical both to your success and the success of others. While in class, (1) volunteer meaningful comments and contribute to small group discussions to move discussions forward, (2) listen actively, (3) give useful and thoughtful input to members of our writing community, and (4) welcome all community members to share, learn, think, and grow. Each of you has something exceptional to contribute, and we look forward to learning from you.

*Attendance (10%)*

Your experience in our UWS writing community relies on collective attendance. Studies show that academic student success is highly correlated to attendance. One of the benefits of the UWS is its small class size, and this benefit is best realized when everybody regularly attends. That said, you are permitted to miss up to 3 classes. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Each additional absence beyond those permitted will lower your attendance grade by one full letter grade. For example, if you miss 4 classes you’d earn a B. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate. It is also your responsibility to keep track of and complete the missing work.

**Late Work, Extensions and Minimum Page Requirements**

I am usually willing to offer extensions, given legitimate reasons. **If you are afraid your work will not be completed in time, please contact me more than 24 hours before the due date and arrange for an extension.** **You are entitled to a 24-hour extension on either the draft OR revision of their essay but not both.** Otherwise, late work, including first submissions, will lead to a reduction of third of a grade per day (B+🡪B🡪B- and so on) on the final paper. If a paper is due electronically at 11:55 PM and you submit it at 11:56 PM, it is late. In addition, final papers that do not meet minimum page requirements will receive a third of a grade reduction for each page that the paper falls short.

**Laptops**

Bring your laptops to class so that you can access materials on latte.

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Potential sanctions include failure on the essay, failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

**Artificial Intelligence Policies**

In this class, we will use writing as a way to sharpen both our critical thinking and analysis skills as well as to develop communication skills that allow us to clearly communicate our ideas. While it is appropriate to use artificial intelligence (AI) for tasks like checking spelling or grammar and brainstorming ideas, you may **not** use AI to generate full sentences, paragraphs, or papers. For example, you may notuse AI to generate pre-drafts and drafts/revisions, reflections, in-class exercises, peer letters, or communications with your instructor. This is because claiming the work of others as your own, whether created by another human or by AI, is regarded as plagiarism and therefore will be subject to the penalties outlined in the “Academic Integrity” section of the syllabus. If you have any questions about appropriate or inappropriate use of AI, please don’t hesitate to ask.

**Accommodations**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in class, please see me right away.

**Email Etiquette**

When you write to me or another professor or professional, please include a greeting (“Dear Professor Rourke”), full sentences, proper punctuation, and your name at the bottom of the email. **Always** include a brief note with an attachment. This is good practice for when you enter the world beyond college.

Four-Credit Course

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

Unit 1: Lens essay

**Week 1**

Wed. Sep 6 Read: Syllabus and Mukherjee prologue

Write: Fill out questionnaire. In addition, bring to class a few answers to the following questions: 1) why do you think I assigned this? 2) What does Mukherjee do that makes you want to read the rest of the book? In other words, what tactics does he employ that encourages you to keep reading?

In-Class: Introductions, syllabus, Mukherjee prologue, close reading

**Week 2**

Mon. Sep 11 Read: “Ethics and Values in Medical Cases” pp. 1-16 (Veatch) (latte)

Watch: “The Tyrant” (latte)

Write: From the Veatch reading post to latte a paragraph explaining the different perspectives (such as duty-based ethics) that, according to Veatch, individuals use to determine “what it is that makes acts right.” Cite at least one piece of evidence with page number in your response. **Due on Sunday, 9/10 by 5:00 PM.**

In-Class: Lens assignment sequence, frameworks for ethical problem solving, close reading, what is a lens

Wed. Sep 13 Read: “Elements of the Academic Essay by Gordon Harvey” (handout), “What is a good thesis,” (handout) and “Motivating Moves (handout)

Write: **Pre-draft 1.1 due on latte on Tuesday, 9/12 by 11:55 PM**. In addition, post to latte two questions you have about “The Tyrant. **Posts are due by** **5:00 PM on Tuesday, 9/12.**

In-Class: “The Tyrant,” “class poll,” thesis, motive

**Week 3**

Mon. Sep 18Read: Mill’s “Utilitarianism” and Kant’s “Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to the Metaphysics of Morals” and

Write: **pre-draft 1.2 reverse outlines due on latte on Sunday, 9/17 by 11:55 PM--also** **have them available on your laptop for in-class discussion**

In-Class: Mill and Kant

Wed. Sep 20 Read: None

Write: **Pre-draft 1.3 mini-lens analysis due on Tuesday, 9/19 by 11:55 PM.** In addition, email me your motive and thesis by 11:55 PM today (9/20). I will respond by Thursday afternoon.

In-Class: Matching Mill, Kant and “The Tyrant,” in-class debate

**Week 4**

Mon. Sep 25 **No Class (Yom Kippur)**

Tues. Sep 26 Read: None

Write: **Pre-draft 1.4 (outline) due on latte by 11:55 PM**

In-Class: Paragraph structure exercise, snowman structure, commas

Wed. Sep 27Read: *Write Now* essay “The Social Responsibility of Business is Not Fraud: Friedman and The Big Short” and Stephen Pincker article on audience

Write: Post a paragraph to latte in which you summarize the argument and comment on the ways that the writer integrates the primary and lens texts for the *Write Now* essay. Cite at least one piece of evidence with a page number. Posts are due by **11:55 PM on Tuesday, 9/26**

In-Class: *Write Now*, titles, quoting dialogue, audience, passive voice, career objectives

**Attend the Critical Conversation from 5:30-6:30 in Sherman Function Hall. We will sit together as a class.**

Thur. Sep 28 **Lens essay draft with cover letter due on latte by 11:55**

Unit 2: Comparative Genre Analysis

**Week 5**

**\*\*\*CONFERENCES ON TUESDAY (10/3) AND WEDNESDAY (10/4) \*\*\***

**Attend a Zotero workshop between 10/3 and 10/10**

Mon. Oct 2 Read: Your peers’ essays. Read/skim: articles on Moderna’s Covid vaccine (Medicine) and racial inequality in waiting rooms (English)

Write: **Write peer letters and mark up peer essays by 5:00 PM on Sunday, 10/1.** Post peer letters to latte and email them to your peers. Also take notes on the articles using the worksheet in the CGA assignment sequence.

In-Class: Peer review, revision, introductions and conclusions

Wed. Oct 4 No class (conferences

**Week 6**

Mon. Oct 9 **No class (Indigenous People’s Day)**

Tues. Oct 10 Upload your Critical Conversation reflection letter to latte by 11:55 PM

Wed. Oct 11 Read: articles on smallpox (History) and vaccine hesitancy (Psychology)

Write: Take notes about the articles using the assignment sequence worksheet and **post the worksheet to latte with notes on all four articles by 11:55 PM on Tuesday, 10/10**. Also post a screenshot of you Zotero library by 11:55 PM on Wednesday, 10/11 by 11:55 PM

In-Class: Comparative Genre Analysis

Thur. Oct 12 Read: Harvard Guide to Using Sources

Write: **Lens essay revisions and cover letter due to latte by 11:55 PM.**

In-Class: Research assignment sequence, plagiarism Jeopardy

Unit 3: Research Essay

**Week 7**

Mon. Oct 16 Read: Sample research proposal in “handouts”

Write: P**ost CGA reflection letter to latte by 11:55 PM on Sunday, 10/15** and enter the name of your research topic and primary text into the

google doc on latte by 11:55 PM on Sunday, 10/15. **Post a screenshot of your Zotero library to latte by 11:55 PM**

In-Class: CGA reflections, research proposal guidelines and example, scholarly sources, primary vs secondary sources, evaluating sources, audience

Wed. Oct 18 Watch: OREMS (Online Research Education Modules) “brainstorming keywords” and “choosing a database”

Write: Complete OREMS quizzes

In-Class: In-class library session (meet at library information desk)

**Week 8**

**Make an appointment to meet with Laura between 10/23 and 10/27 to find sources for your paper**

Mon. Oct 23 Read: Lisa Sanders NYT article and article comments at the end on the woman who craved salt (one page).

Watch: 3 minute video on “Narrowing your research topic”

Write: None

In-Class: Source functions across the disciplines, narrowing your research topic, writing a literature review

Wed. Oct 25 Read: Review research proposal on gene editing and disabilities and read *Write Now* research essay on gene editing and disabilities to see how the essay evolved from the proposal

Write: Two paragraph response to the *Write Now* essay explaining the author’s argument and how she uses sources to support it. Cite at least one piece of evidence. What was effective and what was less effective? Due on latte by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, 10/24**

In-Class: In-class library session to search for sources for your topic

**Week 9**

Mon. Oct 30 Read: "A Daunting Operation Offers Relief to Obese Teenagers"

Write: One paragraph response with two or more questions and observations about how this article explores and reflects societal norms and values by **5:00 PM on Sunday, 10/29**

In-Class: Presentation guidelines, *Write Now* essay, articulating your research project, modeling a research essay

Wed. Nov 1 Read: Your sources and handout on integrating quotations from outside sources

Write: **Pre-draft 2.1 (research proposal) due on latte by 11:55 PM**

In-Class: Research proposal workshop, integrating outside sources, summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting, short presentations of paper topics

Fri. Nov 3 Sign up for a research proposal conference on either 11/6 or 11/7

**Week 10**

**\*\*\*CONFERENCES ON MONDAY (11/6) AND TUESDAY (11/7)**

Mon. Nov 6 No class (conferences)

Wed. Nov 8 Read: Dr. Krishnamurthy’s case study on latte

Write: Post a two paragraph response to Dr. Krishnamurthy’s

case study: what should the doctors do and why? What ethical frame are you drawing on? Responses are due by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, 11/7**

In-Class: Case study with Dr. Babu Krishnamurthy

**Week 11**

Mon. Nov 13 Read: None

Write: **Pre-draft 2.2 (introduction) due on latte by 5:00 PM on Sunday, November 12**

In-Class: Presentation guidelines, case study feedback, introductions workshop, style exercise

Wed. Nov 15 Read: Portfolio instructions, counterargument handout

Write: **Pre-draft 2.3 (outline) due to latte by 11:55 PM**

In-Class: Counterarguments, short presentations on research paper

**Week 12**

Mon. Nov. 20 Read: Common Zotero citation errors and how to fix them (handouts), and review Zotero citation guide

Write: None

In-Class: Common Zotero errors, short presentations on research paper

**Nov 22-26 THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 13**

Mon. Nov. 27 Read: None

Write: **Research essay draft with cover letter due on latte by 11:55 PM and in google doc to your peers**

In-Class: Titles, short presentations on research paper

Wed. Nov 29 Read: Your peers’ essays

Write: Peer review letters and comments on their essays due by **5 PM on Sunday, 11/28.** Email your peers their letters and essays and also post the peer letters to latte by **5 PM on Tuesday, 11/28**

In-Class: Peer review, short presentations on research papers

Fri. Dec 1 Optional research conferences

**Week 14**

Mon. Dec 4 Read: None

Write: None

In-Class: Short presentations on research papers

Wed. Dec 6 Read: None

Write: **Portfolios due on latte by 11:55 PM (must be in one document), including: portfolio cover letter, final research cover letter and final research essay. See portfolio handout for order of assignments**

In-class: Discussion of reporting medical errors, wrap-up

In-Class: Wrap-up (Comic strip image by Pirillo & Fitz: a young boy wearing glasses and holding a paper marked with the letter grade "F" asks a woman, probably his teacher, "Whaddya mean all my facts are wrong? I copied everything straight off the internet!!")

Avoid Plagiarism - Source: Pirillo & Fitz (webcomic)

“The only kind of writing is rewriting”--Ernest Hemingway