



UNC  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES

THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

HONORS CAROLINA

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### Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Honors Minor in Medicine, Literature and Culture

Honors Carolina, in consultation with the Departments of Social Medicine and English and Comparative Literature, is proposing a new Honors Interdisciplinary Minor in Medicine, Literature, and Culture. The minor is the outgrowth of ongoing discussions of new programming that initially resulted in the undergraduate cluster Medicine and Culture and will include at a future date a proposal for a new track in the MA program in English and Comparative Literature called Medical Humanities.

Medical Humanities is a thriving discipline at many research universities here and abroad (including our partner, King's College London). Combining research and teaching in a constellation of departments, including History, English and Comparative Literature, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Social Medicine, the field seeks to explore the cultural and historical dimensions of medical practice. How is the practice of medicine not simply an application of chemical and biological analyses of and interventions in the functioning of the human body, but also a cultural practice embedded in changing ideas of disease, health, doctors, patients, medical institutions, and ethics?

The Honors Interdisciplinary Minor in Medicine, Literature, and Culture will appeal to a broad range of students across the physical and life sciences, the humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral sciences. Health care professionals and those who train them have demonstrated an increasing interest in the larger cultural and social questions surrounding medical practices—evidenced in the establishment of Social Medicine departments at medical schools around the world. Students looking to apply to medical school as well as those entertaining careers in other aspects of health policy and health affairs will be drawn to this minor. This appeal is particularly important for Honors Carolina, where nearly 40 percent of students major in physical, life, or behavioral sciences and many of them intend medical careers. We have already been able to gauge that appeal through our funding of English 268H, which will serve as the gateway course for the minor. In its first year, our Honors section of the course was entirely filled; by the second year, we were forced to add a second section to accommodate demand. Our two new Honors seminars in the field, Dr. Terence Holt's course on Doctors' Narratives this fall and Dr. Barry Saunders' course on the Undead in the spring, have generated enormous student interest.

The Honors Interdisciplinary Minor in Medicine, Literature, and Culture will be administered by Honors Carolina. As in all our curricular offerings, the minor and its courses will be available to students in Honors Carolina and to all undergraduates who have achieved and maintain a GPA of 3.00 or better. Requirements for the minor include completion of English 268H and four other courses chosen from at least two other departments. Options include, but would not be limited to, the following courses:

ENGL 266: Science and Literature

ENGL 317: Medical Rhetoric

ENGL 390: Studies in Literary Topics: Representing Medicine

ENGL 489: Literature, Medicine, and Disability

CMPL 383: Literature and Medicine

ANTH 444: Medicine, Politics, and Justice

ANTH 470: Medicine and Anthropology

ANTH 473: Anthropology of the Body and the Subject

JOMC 560: Medical Journalism

HNRS 650: Topics in the Medical Humanities (we began this fall to offer two of these courses per year taught by faculty in the Department of Social Medicine)

We also expect to offer a History of Medicine course taught by Raul Necochea, who holds a joint appointment in History and Social Medicine, and several Bioethics courses taught by Rebecca Walker, who holds a joint position in Philosophy and Social Medicine.

These courses will be offered as H-designated versions of regular departmental courses or as HNRS seminars.

## Honors Carolina

Comment [EL1]: Pending Ad Boards approval (January).

RITCHIE KENDALL, *Assistant Dean*

### Introduction

The interdisciplinary honors minor in medicine, literature, and culture is among the many opportunities offered to students through the programs sponsored by Honors Carolina. This academic minor, developed in collaboration with the Department of English and Comparative Literature and the Department of Social Medicine in the UNC School of Medicine, explores the cultural and historical dimensions of medical practice. The minor encourages students to view the practice of medicine not simply as an application of chemical and biological analyses of and interventions in the functioning of the human body but also as a cultural practice embedded in changing ideas of disease, health, doctors, patients, medical institutions, and ethics. Consequently, the interdisciplinary honors minor in medicine, literature, and culture appeals to students majoring in disciplines as varied as the physical and life sciences, the humanities and fine arts, and the social and behavioral sciences.

### Program of Study

An interdisciplinary honors minor in medicine, literature, and culture is offered.

### Minoring in Medicine, Literature, and Culture

The interdisciplinary honors minor in medicine, literature, and culture is available to students accepted into Honors Carolina and to any undergraduate student who has achieved and maintains a grade point average of 3.00 or better. Requirements for the minor include five courses representing at least three different subject codes. ENGL 268H Medicine, Literature, and Culture is required and is considered one of the three subject codes. Options for additional courses include, but are not limited to, the following courses:

ENGL 266 Science and Literature

ENGL 390 Studies in Literary Topics: Representing Medicine

ENGL 489 Cultural Studies—Contemporary Issues: Literature, Medicine, and Disability

CMPL 383 Literature and Medicine

ANTH 444 Medicine, Politics, and Justice

ANTH 470 Medicine and Anthropology

ANTH 473 Anthropology of the Body and the Subject

JOMC 560 Medical Journalism

HNRS 650 Topics in Medicine and the Humanities

Additional courses can be applied to the requirements for this minor with the approval of the advisor for the minor.

At least three courses used to fulfill requirements for the minor must be counted exclusively in the minor and cannot be double-counted with a major or second minor. A minimum of 12 hours of C (not C-) or better is required in the minor. All courses must be taken for a standard letter grade, with the exception of one course (three to four credit hours) of By-Examination (BE) credit.

## **Graduate School and Career Opportunities**

Training in the medical humanities combined with appropriate major fields of study will prepare students for a variety of careers in medicine and health care, health affairs and policy, and social services. The minor may also be a value for those planning postgraduate studies in more traditional humanities fields such as literature and history.

## **Contact Information**

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