

Capstone for Impact Submission | GY2019

Project Title: Narrative Medicine

Student Name(s): Tout, Wala

Advisor Names(s): Nancy Barbas

Branch: Systems & Hospital Based Care

Path of Excellence: Global Health and Disparities

Handover/Transition:

If this project can be continued by another UMMS student, you may contact them at the following email address/phone number (N/A if project cannot be handed over): **N/A**

Summary:

My capstone project was an exploration of narrative medicine and creative writing. My goals: (1) to learn about the philosophy and practice of narrative medicine and (2) to practice the creation of narrative through a creative writing curriculum.

Methodology:

Goal #1: I created a syllabus with selected chapters from two Narrative Medicine texts. My adviser and I met twice during my IMPACT month to discuss these readings. I also wrote a short reflection about each text at the end of the month.

Goal #2: I completed four creative writing courses offered by Wesleyan University through Coursera. As part of these classes, I worked on many writing projects. At the end of the month, I submitted a creative nonfiction piece to Pulse literary magazine.

Results/Conclusion:

Please see "reflections", below. My Impact project was not a traditional research project, so there is no clear conclusion to be drawn aside from my reflections on the project as a whole. If this doesn't meet criteria I can just submit my GHD capstone as an Impact project instead.

Reflection/Lessons Learned:

Medical school, and the clerkship experience in particular, involves not only formal and experiential learning but also some intense socialization. This project forced me to critically reflect on the norms and values of medicine and how I had adapted to them. In reading the narrative medicine texts, I learned about why medicine so often separates body and disease from mind and person; the importance of story in creating identity; and the therapeutic value of crafting narratives to reaffirm a sense of self when that identity is disrupted by illness or trauma. Through the creative writing exercises, I was able to experience for myself the therapeutic value of writing.