

# Exploring the Human Condition: Medicine in Literature

**Instructors:** Gonzalo Bearman MD, MPH  
**Teaching Assistant:** Brie Dubinsky  
**Prerequisites:** This elective is open to all 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students  
**Course format:** A reading and writing intensive, online (eCurriculum) course

## **Objectives:**

- To appreciate the role of a physician and to explore humanism through literature
- To develop knowledge of selected readings
- To stimulate students to participate in online discussion of literature and engage in active critical thinking

## **Course requirements:**

- Read three books and one poem from the menu of course texts and write a 1000 word review for each in the eCurriculum discussion forums
- Participate actively in an online forum for peer review, critique, and spirited online discussion

## **Evaluation:**

- Participation in online discussion
- Quality of book reviews

## **Reading list:**

- The Death of Ivan Ilyich, Leo Tolstoy
- Ingenious Pain, Andrew Miller
- The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath
- Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert
- The Tennis Partner, Abraham Verghese
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Ken Kesey
- The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson
- Mrs. Dalloway or On Being Ill, Virginia Woolf
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Anne Fadiman
- "The Red Wheelbarrow," William Carlos Williams
- "The Woman Who Could Not Live With Her Faulty Heart," Margaret Atwood
- "The Mystery of Pain," Emily Dickinson

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