Exploring the Human Condition: Medicine in Literature

Instructors: Gonzalo Bearman MD, MPH
Teaching Assistant: Brie Dubinsky
Prerequisites: This elective is open to all 4th 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
- My Own Country, 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

Questions: Brie Dubinsky (dubinskyb@vcu.edu)