IMH Welcomes Visiting Scholar: Eric Weissman, Ph.D.

Please join us in welcoming our newest visiting scholar to the IMH. Eric Weissman, Ph.D. is a filmmaker, writer, artist and educator. He received a Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Toronto in 1986. Between 1987 and 2009, he was successful as an artist and scenic painter, working on feature films, museum installations and various private and public commissions.

At the same time, he worked as a researcher for Exile, a literary quarterly in Ontario Canada and as a documentary filmmaker amongst homeless groups in Toronto. The theme of his documentary work is that housing and housing policy cannot be thought of as separate from ethical issues inherent systems of healthcare. In fact, housing is requisite for healthcare, and, homelessness is, therefore, a concern for academic and practical inquiries into community health. His film series, Subtext – real stories, follows the rise and fall of Toronto’s illegal and infamous shantytown, Tent City between 2000-2002, and then follows a group of ex-residents as they navigated transitions into mainstream housing. Dr. Weissman was awarded the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) Filmmaker Assistance Program Grant, and the Ontario Arts Council, Emerging Video Artist Grant in 2004. Subtext... was featured at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) as the video component for an exhibition on street art and poverty called Housepaint Phase II, which ran between 2008-2009. This work continues, 13 years later and became the basis for his recent dissertation research.

In 2013 Dr. Weissman completed his Doctorate in The Special Individualized Programs at Concordia University in Montreal. His dissertation, Spaces, Places and States of Mind: a pragmatic ethnography of liminal critique, explores intentional homeless communities by focusing on Dignity Village, Oregon, the first city contracted emergency homeless community in US history where he did participant observation in 2010 and 2011. His dissertation incorporates debates about the use of public space on the basis of perceptions of “worth,” exploring how massive displacements of citizens from economic roles create more tolerant moral and political discourses on spatial occupations by poor people. It also addresses the question of what it means to be an activist citizen within the context of constitutional democracies. He problematizes what freedom means when winning the right to self-govern in unhealthy and poverty-stricken tent camps and shantytowns is seen as an expression of constitutional rights. At a theoretical level, he addresses the classic post-structural conundrum of how to reinvest critique with the power to influence social change. In his research, the liminal aspects of classic critical positions provide a positive opening to transformative thinking. Finally, the dissertation asks public ethnographers and applied social science to think about the ethical implications of doing visually supported research in communities of struggle, especially by addressing the risks of producing critical knowledge about communities, knowledge that can be divisive just as it might be liberating.

~ Continued on Page 2
IMH Welcomes Visiting Scholar: Continued

The dissertation was granted “outstanding” status, and was recommended for the thesis award. A version of this research appears in his book, *Dignity in Exile, tales of struggle and hope from a modern American shantytown* (2012).

It is towards understanding how bioethical and often implicit understandings of healthcare expressed as the stories we tell ourselves and each other about rights to space and care, deserving-undeserving categories of poverty and ethical treatment of the other, that his research now looks. Importantly, image systems such as, photos, fine art and film figure prominently in his research because of the evidential weight we tend to give things we can see. His main research interest while at UTMB IMH is to initiate and publish the results of field inquiries in which members of various communities will be asked to look at and comment on their emotional and ethical attachments to images of poverty and homelessness. Working with scholars at UTMB and the University of Houston, Dr. Weissman will investigate how an online visual mapping tool called VWIRE, can be used to integrate, even unite practitioners, service workers, policy makers, homeless folks and various others by revealing how the stories we use to understand poverty and health issues, despite our diverse socio-economic or mental health histories (including addiction) link us along continua of other common experience. Just how other is the Other? Currently in the US, close to 146 million people must choose between food, clothing, rent and healthcare each month. Of these, only 47 million are considered by federal policy makers to live below the poverty line. This research will reveal how traditional narrative divides about deserving and undeserving poor are collapsing into a general awareness about citizenship as a continuum of democratic experience. The fact that residents of tent camps, shantytowns and other forms of poverty activism, understand themselves to be fighting for their constitutional rights, suggest that at a profound and basic level, all citizens are united around certain basic ethical premises that are often lost in the stories we tell.

You can reach Dr. Weissman by email, er-weissm@utmb.edu, should you wish to discuss his research or just get acquainted. He will be with us through September, 2014.

~ Information Courtesy of Donna Vickers, IMH

IMH Accolades: Translational Sciences Research Forum

The Office of the Provost and the Institute for Translational Sciences (ITS) hosted the 2nd Annual Clinical & Translational Research Forum on February 12, 2014. The forum provided a venue for exchanging information about the full spectrum of research at UTMB and identifying resources provided by UTMB Institutes, Centers, and core laboratories.

A major component of the ITS mission is to accelerate discoveries toward better health by facilitating networking and collaborations across the various scientific and clinical disciplines. The ITS hosts the annual forum as part of its ongoing efforts to provide resources for the conduct of translational research, and training opportunities for those who wish to consider careers in translational research. Through the institute’s Clinical and Translational Science Award (UL1TR000071, PI: Brasier), the ITS seeks to facilitate translational research as a rigorous discipline, develop translational research training programs at all levels in the graduate continuum, effectively conduct and bridge all levels of translational research, and interface productively with the state and national CTSA consortia. Dr. Michele Carter is the director for UTMB’s Research Ethics Consultation Service and the ITS Ethics Support Resource.

IMH Faculty*, Students† and alumni¥ had the following posters accepted at the Forum:

- **Jonathan Banda†**: Community Dialogue to Identify Ethical Issues in Patient-Centered Outcomes Research
- **Dr. Michele Carter***: Reimaging Research Ethics: Imperatives for Translational Science
- **Dr. Andrew Childress***: Engaged Humanities and Translational Science
- **Dr. Evelyn McKinney***: Ethics Education Needs Assessment for Translational Research

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**News and Views from the Institute for the Medical Humanities**
IMH in the Media

Oncologists Can Cut Costs While Maintaining Quality of Care—Medscape, Feb. 14, 2014

What is impressive about a new report in the Lancet detailing costing in cancer care is that it presents evidence indicating that more compassionate and less expensive courses of action actually produce better outcomes, said Howard Brody, MD, PhD, director of the Institute for the Medical Humanities and a professor of family medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. "Or at least they do not limit survival chances," explained Dr. Brody, who was approached by Medscape Medical News for independent comment. "The entire goal of Choosing Wisely and related efforts is not simply to cut costs, but more importantly to improve the quality of care for patients. It's heartening to know how often these 2 desirable ends can be accomplished together," he noted. The "next important point to stress is the absolute need to incorporate patients’ perspectives into the policy approaches," he said. Dr. Brody is currently involved in a pilot effort to engage community groups in discussing the ethical issues related to comparative-effectiveness research. "One point mentioned by the 2 community groups we have convened is the need for patients to grasp any thread of hope, no matter how slim, when faced with a devastating disease like cancer," Dr. Brody told Medscape Medical News. "One can deal with this and still provide patients and families with the tools needed to make rational choices that will ultimately provide for better quality of life, but it takes time, effort, and sensitivity."


UTMB student Rimma Osipov writes in this guest column: On Saturday, a group of UTMB students invites the Galveston community to join in celebrating Mardi Gras in a very special way by taking part in a Healthy Living Event for adults and children in the Galveston Community. Organized by Students Together for Service, a group that brings together service organizations from across the UTMB campus, this second annual event will take place at McGuire-Dent Recreation Center from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will feature booths run by students and clinicians ranging from healthy cooking demonstrations to free yoga classes to games and activities for the kids. There will be door prizes for the first 50 attendees, and a healthy living raffle will feature items such as blenders and cookbooks. Some other special activities include a bike safety booth that will provide helmets for children and information booths on fitness, nutrition and sun safety.

IMH Former Visiting Scholar Accolades:
Sara van den Berg

Dr. van den Berg was invited to present the 38th Historia Medica Lecture at the Washington University School of Medicine Becker Library on February 27, 2014. This lecture entitled, Cultural Meanings of the Dwarf Body, centered on the cultural meanings of dwarfs in Western Culture from the Renaissance to the present. Dwarfs have been popular objects in art, literature, and society since the Renaissance, but their bodies have had different symbolic meanings over the centuries. This lecture will explore those meanings, and how they affected the social role and personal experiences of dwarfs. Older meanings endure even as the medicalization of dwarfism has developed from measurement to surgery, hormone treatment, and genetics. Much of the research for this project was completed during her time at the IMH.

Sara van den Berg’s research and teaching focus on three areas: Seventeenth-Century English Literature, especially the works of Ben Jonson and John Milton; Disability Studies, with special emphasis on the cultural meanings of disability; and Medical Humanities, with special emphasis on the problem of pain.
IMH Colloquia: Jeffrey Bishop

Jeffrey Bishop, MD, PhD—February, 6, 2014

Marcel & Josephine Patterson Memorial Lecture in the Med. Humanities

Popular (Neuro) Science and Other Political Schemes

Dr. Jeffrey P. Bishop is a social and moral philosopher, teaching medical ethics and philosophy at Saint Louis University. He is also a physician. Prof. Bishop holds the Tenet Endowed Chair in Health Care Ethics and is the Director of the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics. Bishop's scholarly work is focused on the historical, political, and philosophical conditions that underpin contemporary medical and scientific practices and theories. His interests are diverse, with publications in medical journals, philosophical journals, theological journals, and medical humanities journals. He has also written on diverse topics from transhumanism and enhancement technologies to clinical ethics consultation and medical humanities. His first book, The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying, is a philosophical history of the care of the dying, from ICU care to palliative care. He is working on a second book with colleagues M. Therese Lyshaught and Andrew Michel tentatively titled, 'Chasing After Virtue: Neuroscience, Economics, and the Biopolitics of Morality'. Lately, his scholarship has been focused on the body, exploring how medical and scientific conceptions of the body shape the kinds of moral claims made by medicine, science, and bioethics.

IMH Colloquia: Ricardo Nuila

Ricardo Nuila, MD—February 13, 2014

Sponsored by the Institute for the Medical Humanities

Mistresses and Wives: The Fiction of Medicine

Dr. Ricardo Nuila is an Assistant Professor at Baylor College of Medicine, where his duties include working as a hospitalist at Ben Taub General Hospital, as well as teaching internal medicine and medical humanities to residents and medical students. His essays have appeared in The New England Journal of Medicine. Nuila is also a fiction writer. His stories have appeared in McSweeney’s, Ninth Letter, and The Indiana Review, among other places, and have been anthologized in The Best American Short Stories 2011. He is currently working on a collection of these stories. He teaches the Literature and Medicine course in the Medicine and Society program, and collaborates with other faculty within the Honors Program in Health Professions.

The respondent during this colloquium was Dr. Anne Hudson Jones.
Registration is now open!  Click Here to Register

This conference is scheduled for May 8-11, 2014 and will bring together scholars, clinicians, scientific investigators and artists to discuss the role of visual images in the medical humanities: how they are being created, circulated, used in medical settings and beyond. We are interested in recognizing how the visualization of health impact patients and healers (broadly defined) in dynamic ways to develop new languages in which to speak to and about them with people around the world. We see this conference as the first step in establishing a collaborative dialogue regarding the contemporary and historical status of the visual image within the medical humanities through a series of follow-up meetings and projects held in USA & Europe.

Thank you for your overwhelming interest and response to our call for papers!

The presenters have been selected and we are developing the program now. Topics will include:

- Medical procedures and the visual image
- The visualization of the medical environment
- The patient’s self-image / the medic’s self-image
- The medical image and historical change
- Images and ethical issues
- Visual representation of aging
- Contexts of creation, circulation and use

Registration Fee: Professionals $55 — Students $35

Dinner: $30 per person. Saturday, May 10, 2014, 6:00–8:30 pm at Fisherman’s Wharf Restaurant, Pier 21, Galveston. Vegetarian options will be available.

Conference Catalogue: $25 Available for purchase at time of registration and will be distributed at the conference. Title: Conference Catalog: Visual Images and the Future of the Medical Humanities. The catalog contains abstracts and artwork submitted and presented at the May 2014 conference.

Sponsors
- Institute for the Medical Humanities, UTMB, TX
- Honors College, Univ. Houston, TX
- Art & Design Research Institute, Univ. Ulster, UK

Co-organizers
- Jerome Crowder, UTMB
- Dan Price, Univ. Houston
- Terrence Wright, Univ. Ulster
The Texas Medical Jurisprudence Examination:

A Self-Study Guide


Price: $100 including shipping and handling

You can view the Table of Contents and read the Introduction HERE:

If you need additional information please contact Beverly Claussen either by email at beclauss@utmb.edu or by phone at (409)772-2376.

Introduction: All physicians licensed to practice medicine in Texas must pass an examination on Texas Medical Jurisprudence. This examination covers primarily statutory and administrative law rather than case law. The summaries in this Study Guide attempt to assist physicians in gaining access to portions of the law that the editors believe are most important to the practice of medicine.

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- Presentations at Conferences
- New Team Members
- New funding
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Please contact us at: d1ramire@utmb.edu