

The Art of Observation Course Spring 2018

UT Southwestern Medical School – ENRH 115

Course Directors:

Bonnie Pitman, Distinguished Scholar in Residence, Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History, UT Dallas

Heather Wickless, MD, (faculty sponsor) Associate Professor of Dermatology, UTSW

Courtney Crothers, UTSW Art Curator

Lindsay O'Connor and Amy Copeland, Education Staff, Dallas Museum of Art

RATIONALE

The Art of Examination is a preclinical elective focusing on developing skills for clinical diagnosis through looking at works of art. Through experiences with artwork, students in the course will improve visual literacy skills, which are the ability to observe, analyze, interpret, and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image and relates to both examining patients as well as artwork. The course uses the power of art to promote the analysis and communication necessary in addressing ambiguity in the physical exam and patient interaction.

We discuss factors influencing what we see, and how we interpret visual information. Other topics include conservation, artists with disease, empathy, physician burnout and cultural influences, with their implications for medical practice. Participants will cultivate habits of close observation, inspection, and cognitive reflections to shape his or her early medical career. Students will learn to synthesize observations and one's own knowledge and experiences as well as an awareness of the collaborative thinking process of the group, a skill vital to successful clinical practice.

The class will engage students in discussions, drawing and writing exercises, lectures, and interactive experiences that will foster communication. This is not an art history class and students need no previous training in art to participate. The course meets in accordance with the schedule at the Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center, The Warehouse, The Crow Collection of Asian Art, and UT Southwestern Medical Campus.

COURSE GOALS

- To make detailed observations and improve visual analysis
- To communicate observations more effectively

OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate visual analysis skills through accurate and detailed descriptions of art and clinical images
- Increase comfort speaking and writing about visual observations
- Develop strategies for dealing with ambiguity and evaluating diverse interpretations
- Demonstrate empathetic communication in the discussion of the human body
- Increase student engagement with the arts, The Dallas Museum of Art and other museums

FORMAT

- 8 two-hour sessions THURSDAYS 4-6 pm
- Small group discussions and lectures
- Drawing, writing, or other creative experience each week
- Minimum of 20 students, capped at 30
- Classes are held at The Dallas Museum of Art, Nasher Sculpture Center, The Warehouse, The Crow Collection of Asian Art, and UT Southwestern Campus

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each class meets at the designated museum for that date. We will discuss the agenda for that date and work in large and small groups directly with works of art in the galleries to develop visual literacy skills through observation, description, analysis, collaborative interpretations, and presentations of their findings. Each session has a wrap-up discussion for students to provide feedback and discuss how the activity might apply to clinical practice. Sessions will incorporate drawing, photography and writing.

READINGS

1. Pitman, Bonnie. *The Dallas Museum of Art: A Guide to the Collection*; Dallas Museum of Art, 2011.
2. Elkins, James. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. Harvest, Harcourt Press, 1996
3. Naghshineh, Sheila, Janet P. Hafler, Alexa R. Miller, Maria A. Blanco, Stuart R. Lipsitz, Rachel P. Dubroff, Shahram Khoshbin, and Joel T. Katz. "Formal Art Observation Training Improves Medical Students' Visual Diagnostic Skills." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 23.7 (2008): 991-97. Web.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2517949/>
4. Schaff, Pamela B., Suzanne Isken, and Robert M. Tager. "From Contemporary Art to Core Clinical Skills: Observation, Interpretation, and Meaning-Making in a Complex Environment." *Academic Medicine* 86.10 (2011): 1272-276.
Web. http://journals.lww.com/academicmedicine/Fulltext/2011/10000/From_Contemporary_Art_to_Core_Clinical_Skills.25.aspx

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Students attending 7 of the 8 sessions and completing a course evaluation will fulfill requirements for course transcript acknowledgment and a passing grade. Evaluations are used to improve future curriculum.

Shuttle Transportation to and from UT Southwestern campus will be provided

MISSED CLASSES: Contact Betty Shaw, Enrichment Electives Coordinator 214-648-9176

A courteous 2-day notice for missed classes with arrangement for a substitute student to attend in lieu of the absent student is polite and requested.

ART OF OBSERVATION Enrichment Elective - MED - 1039, 2017

THURSDAYS from 4-6 PM

- Session 1 *The Power of Observation*
February 1 | Dallas Museum of Art
- Session 2 *The Science of Conservation*
February 8 | Dallas Museum of Art
- Session 3 *Tolerance of Ambiguity*
March 1 | The Warehouse
- Session 4 *Artists as Patients/Healing and the Arts*
March 15 | Dallas Museum of Art
- Session 5 *Visual Exploration: Color*
April 12 | Clements Hospital
- Session 6 *Mindfulness and Burnout*
April 19 | The Nasher Sculpture Center and The Crow Collection of Asian Art
- Session 7 *Visual Investigation with Art: The Human Form*
May 3 | Dallas Museum of Art
- Session 8 *Empathy and Compassion*
May 10 | Dallas Museum of Art

ADDITIONALLY, TWO visits to private collections and a tour of Dallas art galleries will be scheduled in the spring. The entire class is encouraged to attend. These sessions can also be used to make up a missed class.

There is a minimum of 20 Students with a maximum of 30 for this year's elective. A wait-list for students beyond the maximum limit will be created and maintained by Betty Shaw.

