

# Literature and Medicine

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Last Updated: Mon, 01/05/2026

**Course prefix:** LMC

**Course number:** 3219

**Section:** A

**CRN**

35311

**Instructor first name:** Perry

**Instructor last name:** Guevara

**Semester:** Spring

**Academic year:** 2026

**Course description:**

In her essay, “On Being Ill,” Virginia Woolf diagnoses the impoverishment of the English language for its failure to accurately represent the experience of sickness. For centuries, writers have attempted to give linguistic shape to physical and mental suffering, but Woolf insists we need a new vocabulary—words “subtle” and “sensual”—to faithfully express the body’s tremors and throes, cancers and convulsions. In this course, we will trace literary and medical representations of illness and healing from the early modern period to the present, paying attention not only to those who suffer but also to those who care for the suffering. Authors may include Audre Lorde, Paul Kalanithi, Atul Gawande, Jeannette Winterson, Margaret Edson, and John Donne. Topics may include biopolitics, illness and metaphor, mental health, the ethics of care, disability, and the evolving field of the health humanities.

**Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. The immediate objective of an Academic Honor Code is to prevent any Students from gaining an unfair advantage over other Students through academic misconduct. The following clarification of academic misconduct is taken from Section XIX Student Code of Conduct, of the Rules and Regulations section of the Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog: Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

Unauthorized Access: Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of a problem set, laboratory report, essay, examination, or other academic assignment.

Unauthorized Collaboration: Unauthorized interaction with another Student or Students in the fulfillment of academic requirements.

- Plagiarism: Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating the authorship.
- False Claims of Performance: False claims for work that has been submitted by a Student.
- Grade Alteration: Alteration of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit.
- Deliberate Falsification: Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a Faculty member and/or Institute Official, so as to obtain unearned academic credit.
- Forgery: Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.
- Distortion: Any act that distorts or could distort grades or other academic records.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor. The Honor Agreement may reappear on exams and other assignments to remind Students of their responsibilities under the Georgia Institute of Technology Academic Honor Code.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies: Ethical Reasoning; Information Literacy; Intercultural Competence.