

HL4036

LITERATURE AND MEDICINE

Graham Matthews

This module explores the literary representation of health and sickness. Our understanding of illness is not simply determined by physical symptoms but influenced by class, gender, and ethnicity, and perceived differently by patients, practitioners, and policy-makers. This module examines the myths and metaphors that contribute to our understanding of health and sickness.

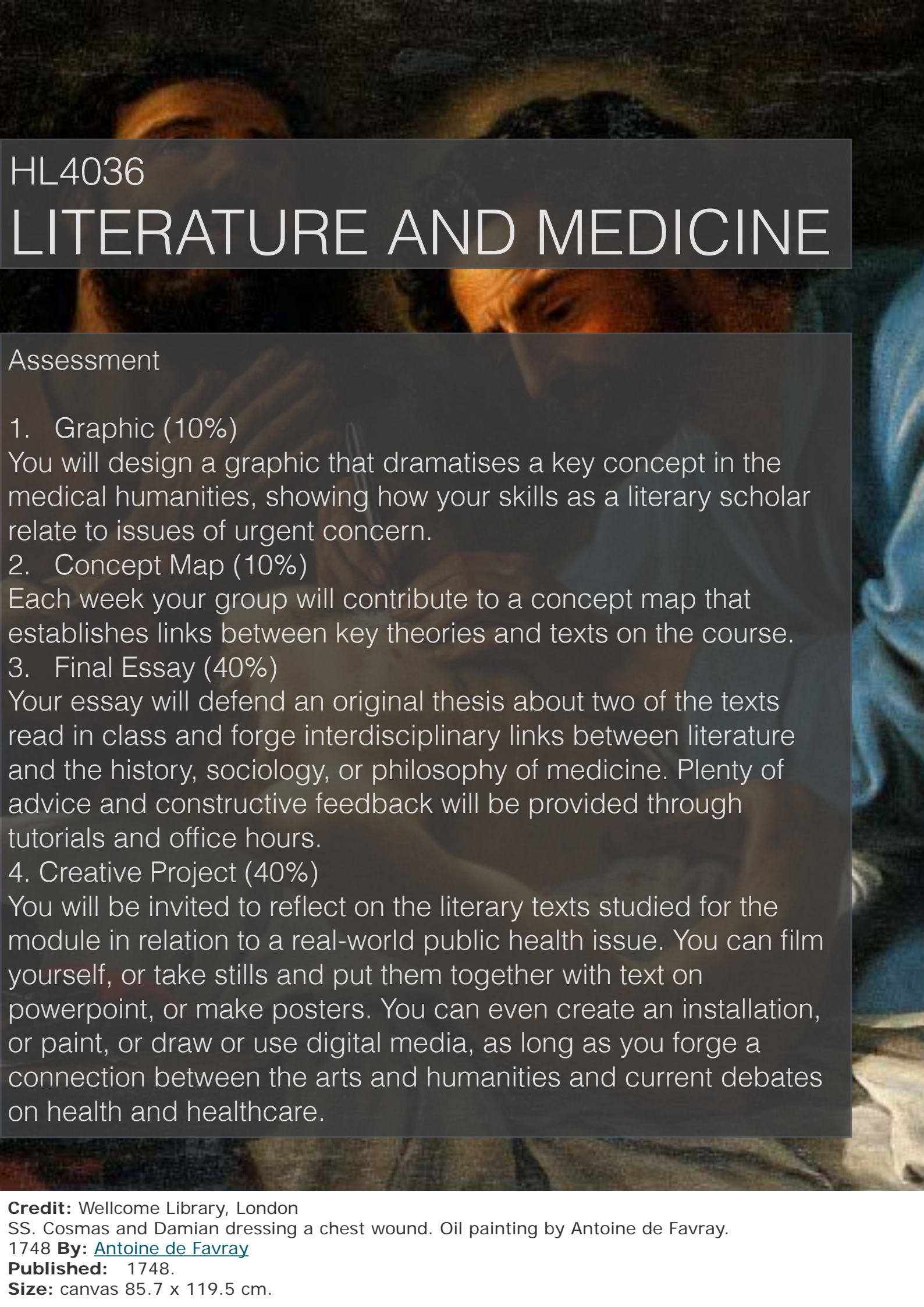
Together we will read a selection of short literary texts by authors such as A.S. Byatt, J.M. Coetzee, and Ian McEwan and you will be introduced to a selection of material from the history, philosophy and sociology of medicine. Teaching and learning are supported by a comprehensive website and videos designed specifically for this course.

No medical knowledge required.

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1. Introduction to the Medical Humanities: extracts from Kathryn Montgomery, *How Doctors Think* (2006) and Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine* (2006).
 2. The Doctor-Patient Relation: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892).
 3. Class and Anxiety: Extract from James Kelman, *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994) and David Lodge, *Therapy* (1995)
 4. Gender: Fay Weldon, 'A Hard Time to be a Father' (1998)
 5. Neuroscience and the Novel I: Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (2005)
 6. Neuroscience and the Novel II: Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (2005)
 7. Hypochondria: Graham Swift, 'The Hypochondriac'
 8. Recess Week
 9. Pathography: Extracts from Sarah Manguso, *The Two Kinds of Decay* (2008) and Susanne Antonetta, *Body Toxic* (2002)
 10. Graphic Medicine: Extract from Julia Wertz, *The Infinite Wait* (2012)
 11. Grief: A.S. Byatt, 'A Stone Woman' (2003)
 12. Euthanasia: Will Self, 'Leberknodel' (2009)
 13. Disability: Extract from J.M. Coetzee, *Slow Man* (2005)
 14. Creative Project exhibition
- Please purchase: McEwan.



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Assessment

1. Graphic (10%)

You will design a graphic that dramatises a key concept in the medical humanities, showing how your skills as a literary scholar relate to issues of urgent concern.

2. Concept Map (10%)

Each week your group will contribute to a concept map that establishes links between key theories and texts on the course.

3. Final Essay (40%)

Your essay will defend an original thesis about two of the texts read in class and forge interdisciplinary links between literature and the history, sociology, or philosophy of medicine. Plenty of advice and constructive feedback will be provided through tutorials and office hours.

4. Creative Project (40%)

You will be invited to reflect on the literary texts studied for the module in relation to a real-world public health issue. You can film yourself, or take stills and put them together with text on powerpoint, or make posters. You can even create an installation, or paint, or draw or use digital media, as long as you forge a connection between the arts and humanities and current debates on health and healthcare.

Credit: Wellcome Library, London
SS. Cosmas and Damian dressing a chest wound. Oil painting by Antoine de Favray.
1748 **By:** [Antoine de Favray](#)

Published: 1748.

Size: canvas 85.7 x 119.5 cm.

