



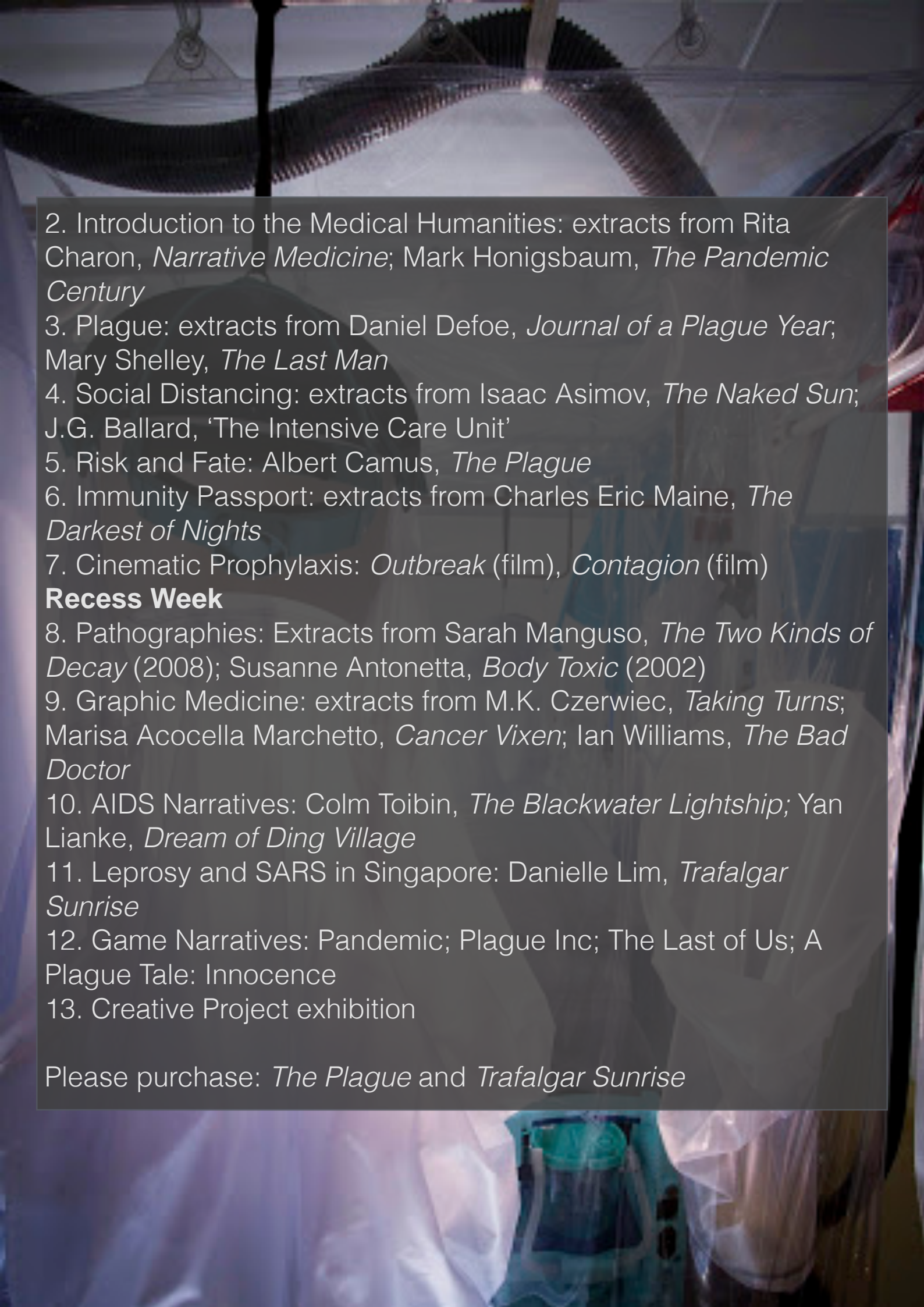
HL4036: LITERATURE & MEDICINE

EPIDEMIC NARRATIVES

Graham Matthews

This course explores the literary and cultural representation of epidemics and the myths, facts, and metaphors that shape our knowledge and understanding of the covid-19 pandemic. We will discuss topics such as conceptions of risk and fate, the human cost of social distancing, the ethics of 'immunity passports', and the social construction of health. Together, we will analyze the narratives that are shaping the age of covid-19.

The course features a selection of literary texts by authors such as Albert Camus, Jose Saramago, and Mary Shelley and you will be introduced to a selection of material from the history, philosophy and sociology of medicine. Classes are supported by a comprehensive website filled with resources and videos designed specifically for this course.

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2. Introduction to the Medical Humanities: extracts from Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine*; Mark Honigsbaum, *The Pandemic Century*
 3. Plague: extracts from Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*; Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*
 4. Social Distancing: extracts from Isaac Asimov, *The Naked Sun*; J.G. Ballard, 'The Intensive Care Unit'
 5. Risk and Fate: Albert Camus, *The Plague*
 6. Immunity Passport: extracts from Charles Eric Maine, *The Darkest of Nights*
 7. Cinematic Prophylaxis: *Outbreak* (film), *Contagion* (film)

Recess Week

8. Pathographies: Extracts from Sarah Manguso, *The Two Kinds of Decay* (2008); Susanne Antonetta, *Body Toxic* (2002)
9. Graphic Medicine: extracts from M.K. Czerwicz, *Taking Turns*; Marisa Acocella Marchetto, *Cancer Vixen*; Ian Williams, *The Bad Doctor*
10. AIDS Narratives: Colm Toibin, *The Blackwater Lightship*; Yan Lianke, *Dream of Ding Village*
11. Leprosy and SARS in Singapore: Danielle Lim, *Trafalgar Sunrise*
12. Game Narratives: *Pandemic*; *Plague Inc*; *The Last of Us*; *A Plague Tale: Innocence*
13. Creative Project exhibition

Please purchase: *The Plague* and *Trafalgar Sunrise*



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 you 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 seminars 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 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.

