

PHARMACEUTICALS, POLITICS, & CULTURE

Vanderbilt University
Medicine, Health, and Society
MHS 290-5 – Spring 2009
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:15
Location: Buttrick 205

Instructor

Dr. Jill A. Fisher, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
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Thursday – 1:00-3:00
Other – By appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

How do prescription drugs come to market? What are the political, economic, and cultural factors that shape the drugs that are available in the U.S. and around the world? This course focuses on the processes of drug development and marketing to explore the relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare systems. The course will cover such topics as the U.S. government's role in regulating drugs, the pharmaceutical industry's ability to define the range and cost of drug treatments, physicians' problematic associations with pharmaceutical companies, and patients' identities as consumers of prescription drugs.

Course Content

Required Texts:

- Marcia Angell (2005). *The Truth About the Drug Companies*. New York: Random House.
- ClassPak available for purchase from Campus Copy Rand.

Reading: Complete all readings (and other assignments) **prior** to the class meeting for which they are scheduled. You must bring your course reader and/or book to class each class period. See the course outline below for details on weekly readings.

Attendance: This class will be conducted with a focus on in-class discussions and presentations. Because of this format, you are expected to attend all classes for the full scheduled time. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence. You can miss up to 2 classes throughout the semester without penalty, but you must still hand in all due materials on time. Your final grade will go down by 2 points (out of 100) for each additional class missed above these two. Please let me know in advance if you are planning on missing a class.

Participation: Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. It is through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation – within a community – that

individual learning flourishes. This course requires full participation (including active listening, facilitating, note-taking, and question-asking) to create an environment of open and shared learning. An effective participant is not someone who simply talks frequently, but someone who reliably offers thoughtful insights that help others to learn.

Course Assignments & Grading

Exams: There will be two exams in this course. Exams will consist of short-answer and essay questions from the readings, lectures, and films. The first exam will be administered in class on February 26. A makeup exam will only be allowed with a medical excuse for a documented illness or family emergency. The makeup exam will not be the same test taken by the rest of the class. There will be no exceptions to this policy. The second exam will be a take-home test distributed in class on April 21 and will be due on Friday, April 24. No tests will be accepted after April 24 at 5 PM. Students not taking the tests will receive a 0.

Reflection Papers: You are responsible for four reflection papers. Each paper is worth 10% of your grade (for a total of 40%). For each of these papers, you will write 5-6 typed pages (double-spaced, one inch margins, please). These papers are based on clusters of readings and should critically engage the topics, themes, and course materials.

Paper topics and due dates:

1. Drug development – Thursday, February 5
2. Marketing – Thursday, February 19
3. Industry definitions of illness – Thursday, March 26
4. Role of gender and race – Thursday, April 9

These papers should NOT be summaries of the readings. Instead, you should see these papers as an opportunity to compare the perspectives of multiple authors, react to the readings (with thoughtfulness to *why* you reacted the way that you did) or trace a particular theme through the multiple readings. I will provide you with a list of sample questions that you can choose to answer in your papers, but you are also encouraged to pick a topic that interests you. You are not required to complete any additional reading or research, but you are welcome to do so if you would like to develop your paper in a way that deviates from the material we have covered together in class.

Participation / In-Class Assignments: Part of your final grade will be based on your active participation in class. In addition, this portion of your grade may also consist of in-class exercises, such as worksheets, writing assignments, and/or group activities.

Note: If you miss an in-class exercise due to illness, family emergency, or a sports-related absence, please come and talk with me during my office hours or after class. I will do my best to accommodate you, but please note that there will be some activities, like group work, that are impossible to make up. All missed work must be made up within one week of the original assignment.

Grading:

Midterm Exam	25%	[Grading Scale: A =95-100, A- =90-94, B+ =87-89,
Final Exam	25%	B =84-86, B- =80-83, C+ =77-79, C =74-76,
Reflection Papers (4)	40%	C- =70-73, D+ =67-69, D =64-66, D- =60-63]
Participation	10%	

Ground Rules

Out of respect for your classmates and yourself and in order for you to get the most from the course, please: 1) do all of the readings; 2) come to class promptly and attend regularly; 3) be courteous and respectful to one another, even in cases of disagreement; and 4) keep a sense of humor!

Honor Code: You are required to adhere to the Honor Code, which governs all work in this course (e.g., exams, papers, homework assignments). For information regarding the Honor Code, go to <http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/>.

Gender-Fair Language: Language structures thought and action. Biases in language can (and do) naturalize inequities. Imprecise language also signifies un-interrogated values and sloppy thinking. For all of these reasons, the use of gender-fair language is expected in this course. For example, do not use words like "mankind" or "men" when referring to people in general; alternate between "she" and "he" instead of always using "he", or construct sentences in the plural instead of the singular so you can use "they" or "them" and avoid the problem altogether.

ESL/LD Students: Course requirements can be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of ESL and LD students. Please speak with me during the first two weeks of class to make arrangements. Students may be advised to attend additional sessions during my office hours so they can draw comparable value from the course.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week One: Introductions

Thursday, January 8: Introductory Discussion

In-Class Reading:

- Facts & Figures about prescription drug use and cost
- CNN.com, "Prescription drugs found in drinking water across U.S."

Week Two: Theoretical and Empirical Framing of Course

Tuesday, January 13: How do we study pharmaceuticals from a social science perspective?

Readings:

- Van der Geest et al., Anthropology of Pharmaceuticals
- Etkin, "Side Effects": Cultural Constructions and Reinterpretations of Western Pharmaceuticals

Thursday, January 15: Why should we study the pharmaceutical industry?

Readings:

- Angell, Preface, Introduction and Ch. 1 (pp. ix – 20)
- Pecoul et al., Access to Essential Drugs in Poor Countries
- Dumit, Drugs for Life

Week Three: Drug Development, Part 1

Tuesday, January 20: How does a chemical become a drug? How much does it cost (and whom?)?

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 2 & 3
- Gozner, The Price Isn't Right
- PhRMA, What goes into the Cost of Prescription Drugs?
- Public Citizen, Critique of the DiMasi/Tufts Methodology

Thursday, January 22: The “Clinical Trials Industry”

Readings:

- McGee, Clinical Trials on the Move
- Shuchman, Commercializing Clinical Trials
- Fisher, “Ready-to-Recruit” or “Ready-to-Consent” Populations?

Week Four: Drug Development, Part 2

Tuesday, January 27: Why do doctors participate in clinical trials? Should we be concerned?

Readings:

- Lader et al., The Clinician as Investigator
- Fisher, Pursuing Contract Research
- Bodenheimer, Uneasy Alliance

Thursday, January 29: How innovative are new drugs?

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 4 & 5

Week Five: Drug Development, Part 3

Tuesday, February 3: How do industry interests shape what we know about new drugs?

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 6 & 9 (skip 7 & 8 for now!)

Thursday, February 5: Patents & Generics

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 10
- Hayden, A Generic Solution? (pp. 475-489; *optional*: commentary pp. 489-493)

Writing Assignment #1 due at the beginning of class

Week Six: Marketing Drugs to Doctors

Tuesday, February 10: Physicians' Relationships with Industry

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 7 & 8
- Rothman & Chimonas, New Developments in Managing Physician-Industry Relationships
- Pain, Playing Well with Industry

Thursday, February 12: Drug Reps

Readings:

- Saul, Gimme an Rx! Cheerleaders Pep Up Drug Sales
- Brody, The Drug Rep Today
- Oldani, Thick Prescriptions

Week Seven: Direct-to-Consumer Advertising (DTCA)

Tuesday, February 17: History of DTCA

Readings:

- Donahue, A History of Drug Advertising

Thursday, February 19: Effectiveness of DTCA

Readings:

- Jeffords, Direct-to-Consumer Drug Advertising: You Get What You Pay For
- DeLorme et al., "Others are influenced, but not me"

Writing Assignment #2 due at the beginning of class

Week Eight: Pharmaceutical Employees' Perceptions of the Industry

Tuesday, February 24: What do pharmaceutical employees' think of their companies?

Readings:

- Martin, Pharmaceutical Virtue

Thursday, February 26: **Mid-Term Exam**

Week Nine: Spring Break

No Classes or Readings

Week Ten: Pharmaceutical Constructions of Illness, Part 1

Tuesday, March 10: Cholesterolemia

Readings:

- Greene, The Abnormal and the Pathological

Thursday, March 12: ADD/ADHD

Readings:

- Smith, Psychiatry Limited
- Hart, Making the Grade
- Harris, Use of Antipsychotics in Children Is Criticized

Week Eleven: Pharmaceutical Constructions of Illness, Part 2

Tuesday, March 17: Pharmaceuticalization of mental illness

Readings:

- Zuvekas, Prescription Drugs & the Changing Patterns of Treatment for Mental Disorders
- Healy, Shaping the Intimate
- Rose, Neurochemical Selves

Thursday, March 19: “Side” effects of pharmaceuticalization of mental illness

Readings:

- Blum & Stracuzzi, Gender in the Prozac Nation
- Lakoff, The Anxieties of Globalization
- Harris, Spitzer Sues a Drug Maker
- Martinez, Glaxo Settles New York Lawsuit

Week Twelve: Dangerous Drugs

Tuesday, March 24: Vioxx

Readings:

- Angell, Epilogue
- Biddle, Lessons from the Vioxx Debacle

Thursday, March 26: Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs)

Readings:

- Corrigan, A Risky Business
- Public Citizen, Adverse Drug Reactions
- Katsanis, et al., A Case Study of Personalized Medicine
- Berenson, Lilly E-Mail Discussed Off-Label Drug Use

Writing Assignment #3 due at the beginning of class

Week Thirteen: Gendering Pharmaceuticals

Tuesday, March 31: Birth Control and PMS/PMDD

Readings:

- Bunkle, Calling the Shots?
- Mason, Pressing to Look Closer at Blood Clots and the Pill
 - Also, check out this website: <http://www.notmypill.org/>
- Greenslit, Pharmaceutical Branding
- Good Morning America, Debate Over PMS Drugs

Thursday, April 2: Viagra

Readings:

- Marshall, "Hard Science"
- Fishman, Sex, Drugs, & Clinical Research

Week Fourteen: Race & Pharmaceuticals

Tuesday, April 7: BiDil

Readings:

- Kahn, Exploiting Race in Drug Development
- Roberts, Legal Constraints on the Use of Race in Biomedical Research

Thursday, April 9: Osteoporosis

Readings:

- Fausto-Sterling, Bare Bones of Race

Writing Assignment #4 due at the beginning of class

Week Fifteen: Reforming the Industry

Tuesday, April 14: Lobbying & legislation

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 11
- Ridgeway, Medicare's Poison Pill
- Carpenter, The Political Economy Of FDA Drug Review

Thursday, April 16: Future industry trends

Readings:

- Angell, Ch. 12 & 13

Week Sixteen: Course Wrap-Up

Tuesday, April 21: **Last Day of Class**

Friday, April 24: **Take Home Exam Due at 5 PM**