COURSE COORDINATOR: Rhonda L. Soricelli, MD, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Drexel University College of Medicine

DISCUSSION FACILITATORS: Rhonda L. Soricelli, MD; Aliza Machefsky, Class of 2016; and Adrienne Jenness, MS, Access Services Librarian, Queen Lane.

PURPOSE: Many medical students describe reading for pleasure throughout much of their lives and lament the fact that recreational reading is frequently lost to the pressures and time constraints of medical education. And yet reading beyond medical texts is nourishing to the soul and promotes our understanding of the human condition. Initiated by a group of second year students, this course will take the form of a traditional book club and is designed for those who are “serious readers” and enjoy discussing what they have read.

REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to complete assigned readings in advance of each session. Novels and short stories have been selected for their “readability” during summer and other vacation times as well as during the school year. Students should make the commitment to attend all four meetings of the Book Club in order for everyone involved to benefit optimally from the experience. Academic credit for their involvement will be awarded to students who attend all four sessions, participate actively in discussions, and complete the electronic Course Survey.

READINGS:

Cutting for Stone (2009) by physician-writer Abraham Verghese. This is a long novel (656 pages) set in Addis Ababa and New York City but the pages turn quickly as one becomes absorbed in the story of twin brothers who are orphaned by the death of their Indian mother and the disappearance of their surgeon father. Recommended for summer reading before discussion on August 26, 2013.

Saturday (2005) by Booker Prize-winning author Ian McEwan. At 289 pages this acclaimed novel about an unexpectedly challenging day in the life of a neurosurgeon is another “good read” for the summer. For discussion on October 7, 2013.

A History of the Present Illness (2013), sixteen linked short stories about doctors and patients by physician-writer Louise Aronson. PLEASE NOTE that Dr. Aronson will present Medical Humanities Grand Rounds at Queen Lane on October 10. We will discuss her stories after the Thanksgiving break, on December 2, 2013.

Ethan Frome (1911), one of the great classics of 20th-Century American Literature by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edith Wharton. Even if you have read this short (140 pages) novel before, do revisit it again, perhaps during Winter break, for its stark beauty and powerful insights into human relationships in the context of family caregiving. Available as a free e-book from http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4517. For discussion on January 6, 2014.

NOTE: Two copies of each book are available for borrowing from the Queen Lane Library.

SCHEDULE: There are four Book Club sessions on Mondays from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m., Room A12.

I. Mon. August 26, 2013 Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese
II. Mon. October 7, 2013 Saturday by Ian McEwan
III. Mon. December 2, 2013 A History of the Present Illness by Louise Aronson
IV. Mon. January 6, 2014 Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton

*Limited to 15 registrants on a first-come basis. Please register in advance by contacting Dr. Soricelli at RLSoricelli@comcast.net or (610) 892-7942. Come join us for the fun of reading!