THE URBAN ILLNESS EXPERIENCE

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

PURPOSE: Compared with suburban and rural settings, areas of high population density are characterized by increased exposure to waste, other pollutants and infectious diseases; increased rates of stress, mental health disorders and suicide; increased rates of social breakdown leading to violence, addictions, crime and domestic abuse; low income and poverty leading to overcrowded and unsafe housing, food insecurity and homelessness. Ethnic and racial minority populations tend to congregate in urban areas with resultant cultural conflicts and higher numbers of folks with limited access to education, jobs and health care. Through short readings, film, photography and art set in different physical spaces, this interactive course will explore the ways in which these factors and others contribute to the urban experience of illness. The course is not intended to be a guide on how to care for patients in the urban setting, rather it is designed to heighten our awareness of the socioeconomic circumstances that influence the well-being and care of this patient population.

CLASS PREPARATION: Student input to this course is most welcome! You are invited to participate by suggesting topics and/or relevant materials that can be shared with classmates. The majority of materials selected by the instructor will be available in advance of class on the medical humanities web site and will also be accessible in class.

REQUIREMENTS: To receive academic credit for the course, students must sign-in and participate in the interactive portions of the classes offered, and submit an online Course Survey no later than Friday, March 14, 2014. Students may miss up to 2 of the 10 scheduled classes and still receive academic credit by completing one make-up assignment per class missed. Make up assignments should be obtained directly from Dr. Soricelli at RLSoricelli@comcast.net and must be submitted by email no later than Friday, March 14, 2014.

SCHEDULE: There are ten sessions scheduled on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12:00 – 12:50 p.m. in SAC-A unless otherwise noted.

I. Tuesday, January 7 Setting the stage: scenes from urban America
II. Friday, January 10 At the adult clinic
III. Tuesday, January 14 At the hospital for children
IV. Friday, January 17 In the Emergency Department
V. Tuesday, January 28 At school
VI. Friday, January 31 On the streets (NOTE: This class will be held in AUD-A)
VII. Tuesday, February 18 Behind closed doors
VIII. Friday, February 21 At the shelter
IX. Tuesday, February 25 Elderly and disabled neighbors
X. Friday, February 28 At the mall

Registration for this course is at Session I or II. Pre-registration is not required but appreciated to assist in course planning – submit your name to Dr. Soricelli: RLSoricelli@comcast.net. If you have any questions, please contact Manju Mathen, Humanities Academic Coordinator, by email: Manju.Mathen@DrexelMed.edu or call: (215) 991-8464. You may also contact Dr. Soricelli by phone: (610) 892-7942 or by email.

** OPEN TO FACULTY AND STAFF