ENGLISH 489/005 – WINTER 2014
LANGUAGE MAJORS SEMINAR
THE RHETORIC OF PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING 1870-2013
W 2:00 – 4:00
Buchanan D228
Professor Judy Segal

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Description

This is a course, in the first instance, in rhetoric: it examines strategies of persuasion within social and cultural contexts. Its topic is pharmaceutical marketing over time, and it addresses the relation between advertising discourse, on the one hand, and the consumer of health and health products, on the other. It begins with an examination of rhetorical strategies used by marketers of patent medicines in the 1870’s, when no literate household was without a comprehensive domestic health guide, and when most treatment decisions were made at home, without the aid of doctors.

A lot has been said in the past several years, in both the public press (broadly defined) and scholarly literature, about the well-informed and newly-empowered health consumer, a rational agent with Internet access and choices to make. The self-determining, engaged, health subject is, however, not a new character on the scene of health and medicine. So, in part, this course takes a look at the rhetorical ancestors of the contemporary health subject and considers how that health subject was made. It focuses, for example, on the form that so much patent-medicine advertising took in the 19th Century: the testimonial, typically—an illness narrative with a healthy resolution enabled by a pharmaceutical product. That is, the contemporary health consumer is not an ahistorical free agent, empowered by the endless information she can access with her keystrokes; rather, she is the descendant of a character in a historical narrative that has her already poised to accept a particular sort of health intervention.

We will have access to a range of primary advertising material, as well as research across periods and disciplines on topics of pharmaceutical marketing, styles of prescription, pharmaceutical values, the relation of pharmaceuticals and diagnoses, and, recently, medical over-treatment (often the result of over-screening and the discourse of risk). Our course will focus on the contribution rhetorical scholars make to an increasingly public conversation about drugs.

Readings

See attached list. All course readings are either journal articles accessible online through the Library, or book chapters/excerpts available directly in e-books or through the Reserve link on Connect. Book chapters/excerpts are (for those students who prefer hard copies) also available to be purchased, printed on demand, at CopyRight, in the Student Union Building:
http://www.ams.ubc.ca/at-the-sub/businesses/copyright/
Assignments and breakdown of marks

Seminar paper and presentation – 40%
Take-home exam – 40%
Seminar participation – 20%

Seminar papers will take the form of scripts for 20-minute talks. So, papers will be 8-9 pages long, and will be composed for oral delivery. The purpose of each presentation is to introduce a reading unfamiliar to other students and to indicate how it illuminates the week’s topic and other readings. Papers shouldn’t take more than 20 minutes to read—to allow for 10 minutes of discussion/q & a following each paper. I’ll assign a respondent for each presentation, to start the discussion. Scripts are due on the day of the presentation. A mark will be assigned for the script (30%) and the presentation of it, including the discussion period (10%). Presentation readings are assigned to the presenters only, not to the whole class. (In cases where the reading is not a journal article, I’ll make the reading available to the presenter.)

The take-home exam will offer two questions as prompts for synthesizing course readings. You will write an essay on one of the questions. You’ll receive the questions on March 26 and your essays will be due on April 9. Essays should be 8-10 pages long.

All written work should be submitted by email, as Word documents. Typescripts should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-pt font, with 1” margins.

The lateness penalty for the seminar script is one mark of the course total per day; for the take-home exam, it is two marks of the course total per day. Penalty includes weekend days. A physician’s or counselor’s note is required for waiving the penalty.

Course/university policies

Regular attendance is expected.

The penalty for plagiarism is severe. Consult the university calendar and the Faculty of Arts website (http://www.arts.ubc.ca) for information.

We will discuss the in-class use of laptops/tablets.

Week-by-week topics and (readings)

January 8. Introductions and Introduction: the argument the course seeks to make and test (Segal [2005], Palumbo and Mullins)

January 15. The problem (Dumit, Healy, Cassels, Schwarz)

January 22. DTCA (Mintzes et al, Kravitz et al, Parry, Angelmar et al, Calfee)

January 29. Conditions and their representation, over time (Smith [2 chapters], LeBesco, Moynihan and Cassels, Metzl) Presentation: Adams et al

(NB Jan 28-30: STS/Medical Humanities talks and colloquia by Susan Squier and Jacqueline Duffin at Green College. You are all invited to attend.)
February 5. The problem of drug marketing—as told in 1961, 1980, and 2001 (Young, Consumer’s Union, Tomes) \emph{Presentations: Elliott, Martin}

February 12. How ads work/ed (Young, Conrad and Leiter, Segal [2011]) \emph{Presentation: Tone}

February 19 – NO CLASS – READING WEEK

February 26. Historical anxieties about drug marketing (Kallet and Schlink, Holbrook) \emph{Presentations: more Kallet and Schlink, more Holbrook}

March 5. Medicalization (Conrad, Lane) \emph{Presentation: Rubin}

March 12. Contemporary health culture (Segal [2009], Belling, Henwood et al) \emph{Presentation: Fosket}

March 19. Pharmaceuticals and identity (Foucault, Kramer, Meldrum) \emph{Presentations: Emmons, Rasmussen}

March 26. Case: Enhancement (Amsden, Talbot, Hall) \emph{Presentation: Elliott}

April 2. Corrective (Strasser) \emph{Presentation: Parker}

Take home exam/essay due April 9

\textbf{Resources for pharma advertising (history)}


Hagley Museum and Library. History of Patent Medicine. \url{http://www.hagley.org/online_exhibits/patentmed/browse/advertising.html}

\textbf{Resources for pharma advertising (contemporary)}

UBC Therapeutics Initiative \url{http://www.ti.ubc.ca/}

Rxisk \url{https://www.rxisk.org/Default.aspx}

David Healy blog \url{http://davidhealy.org/}

Consumer Reports: health \url{http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/health/drugs/index.htm}
Consumer Reports: Choosing Wisely

Consumer Reports Ad Watch
http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2012/04/consumer-reports-adwatch/index.htm

Reading list

[JA] = journal article available through UBC Library
[EB] = eBook available through UBC Library (link provided)/available in course packet
[OS] = online source
[C] = on Reserve at Connect/available in course packet


http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=6405222

http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=6522247

http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=6310998


http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=4592787

http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=4621622

http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=3976090


Kallet, Arthur and F. J. Schlink. Chapters I and IV. 100,000,000 Guinea Pigs: Dangers in Everyday Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics. 1933. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1940. 3-18 and 61-77. [C]

http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=4585774


http://resolve.library.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/catsearch?bid=6485736


http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/magazine/16growth.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0


For Seminar Presentations (Readings assigned only to presenters)


