

***Exploring Human Stories of Illness:  
The Health Humanities Portrait Project***

PI: Sandy Sufian, PhD, MPH  
University of Illinois-Chicago  
College of Medicine



**A Critical Framework for Creating  
a Health Humanities Portrait Teaching Guide**

The teaching guide that accompanies Health Humanities Portraits (HHP) development has two purposes:

1. To layout the principles and process of building the HHP (for faculty core and future faculty engaging in HHP development).
2. To map out the plan and substance of the HHP.

As you develop your portrait and teach it, please understand that building and teaching the HHP is a process; you will receive feedback from your peers and can revise accordingly.

**Pedagogical Principles of HHP**

1. To provide rigorous investigation of a social theme through the perspective of one humanities discipline.

Most health professions educators do not have the breadth of humanities disciplinary perspectives needed to address the social, cultural, political and historical aspects of health and healthcare. Even health humanities faculty are often not fully familiar with the humanities disciplines outside of their own. Thus, this project takes a cross-disciplinary approach such that each HHP should elicit a distinct disciplinary perspective and each expert/faculty team should purposefully highlight the rigor of that discipline in their teaching guide.

To consider: What does your humanities discipline bring to an analysis of this particular structural health dilemma? What is the methodological approach and what types of disciplinary questions do you ask regarding the portrait?

2. To focus on capturing the complex issues inherent in each portrait/social theme to expand the focus of healthcare education to more centrally include socio-cultural dimensions.
3. Where appropriate, to relate the HHP explicitly to how these issues can impact healthcare: the interaction of patient experience, structural forces, and care.
4. **The portrait comes alive through teaching it; the materials used make up the portrait but it's vitality emerges through the act of teaching and rigorous discussion. Therefore, one's approach should be directed toward that end.**
5. HHP teaching should be discussion-based with ideally about 12-15 students. Small-group learning is the format most likely to achieve the learning objectives (LOs) typical of health humanities education.

## Teaching Sessions

Each teaching session should last about 75 minutes.

Lead the students through the portrait you develop; you can be as directive as you see fit. You can adapt the teaching guide provided according to your own goals, class dynamic, and time constraints.

If you do adapt the teaching guide framework, please fill out our website survey so that others can adopt those adaptations/suggested improvements as well. You can also email us at: [hhpuic@uic.edu](mailto:hhpuic@uic.edu)

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*Use the **template** below for your teaching guide; that is, fill in the details of your portrait/teaching plans under each outline letter/number. This will make all teaching guides standardized in format and organization for our website. You can add other, new parts if you see fit but please do not skip over the items in the template below.*

*Prior to Section 1, put your reading materials citations **in the order you wish students to read** the material. Divide the section into First Person Narrative and Scholarly Readings [see HHP teaching guides in our HHP Repository on our website for formatting]*

## Template: HHP content

1. Give a plan for the session. Articulate learning objectives.
    - a. Learning Objectives (LOs) and Discussion Questions for students: key issues to raise
      1. Try to create higher order LOs that raise key elements of social theme.
      2. Identify LOs that encapsulate and unpack the complex interplay of patient experiences, societal forces, and health/illness in relation to the larger social theme.
  2. Background section: How did you choose this patient story and the scholarly readings? Explain process and disciplinary contribution. *[You do not need to spend time going over this during the NEH workshop unless you want to; the faculty core will read the teaching guide before the workshop so can refer to the written material in the teaching guide.]*
  3. Optional Video of you describing any history of the social theme or theoretical concepts, etc. that you want to present to frame the portrait. [approx. 5-7 minutes]. This will be used to set up the session when we teach it in our curriculum. It allows the expert's voice at the beginning of the session because as the creator. [see *Rural Population* HHP Introduction video for an example]
  4. HHP Social Issues, Discussion Questions/Activity: Articulate 2- 3 major sub-issues/themes within your broad social theme that you will concentrate on when teaching the HHP. This will keep the discussion and analysis focused. Lay out questions for discussion. Possibly add why you chose these sub-issues over others that may also be relevant. Identify and insert into the teaching guides the passages to use in teaching for each sub-issues/themes, where appropriate.

*\*Take students through the portrait. Make sure to weave together the narrative with the scholarship; they should be in conversation with one another.*
  5. Consider nuances of *how* to deliver this information, especially since these social themes can elicit charged conversations for students. This may be especially pertinent in cases where facilitators are not experts in humanities.
  6. If you plan on teaching through/with an activity, write the plan, purpose, etc.
  7. Wrap-up Comments: Write out main points of HHP social theme/issues.
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### ***Possible Discussion Questions for Individual HHPs***

Each teaching guide should articulate specific questions relating to the material, discipline and social theme. Below are broad questions to guide the formulation of your specific questions. They can also be found in the framework document. **You can adapt these broad questions to your particular material and/or completely create others that resonate with your HHP (or mix it up). Please provide a short answer to any question you ask on this teaching guide document.**

1. What aspects of the social theme is the author/first person/patient grappling with/representing?
  2. What are the larger structural issues (e.g. poverty, racism, etc.) at play? How might they affect health outcomes and the illness experience?
  3. What other related issues might be at work that the author leaves out?
  4. How do the readings help us more fully understand patients and related social dynamics?
  5. What are the unexpected dimensions of this social theme in its relation to patient experience and care?
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For the purposes of this template, we assume you have 75 minutes to teach the HHP to students in a one-off session/colloquium. Adjust as needed.

### **Possible Needed Adjustments**

*(please make note of these adjustments to submit in our website survey so that other instructors can benefit from your considerations and changes)*

1. Articulate pedagogical setting(s)
  - a. You can note how the discussion questions might change when the pedagogical setting changes to a large group. How might the exercises change as well? Any other considerations?
  - b. Consider differences between mandatory vs. elective settings.
2. Articulate pedagogical questions for discussion:
  1. Was the portrait cohesive? If not, what changes do you recommend?
  2. Are the readings effective? What could be changed?
  3. Were the sub-issues ones that resonate for students? Any others not included that the faculty core thinks should be?
  4. Was the teaching approach effective?
  5. Any other changes that could be made to improve the portrait or the pedagogical approach?

3. Posit additional suggested class activities. Give plan, rationale and aim(s).
4. What do you need to add in the teaching guide and in additional preparatory readings for faculty who will teach the portrait but who didn't develop it?
5. Wrap up Comments: What key ideas, debates, lessons do you want the students to leave with?

### **Background Reading for Faculty/Alternative Readings/Narratives for Portrait and Recommended Readings/Additional resources**

The last part of the teaching guide should provide additional readings, patient stories, relevant educational articles, links and any other relevant material that can provide additional resources and options for health humanities faculty to choose from if they were to teach this HHP to their students. This will give them options and show the versatility of the HHP and social theme.

Divide extra readings into separate sections: please articulate which extra readings you think a faculty person needs to read in order to be adequately prepared to teach the HHP; articulate which readings and additional narratives you think could be exchanged in the case that a faculty person might want to use other material and write up their own teaching guide; articulate additional resources and recommended readings for students and faculty.