NON-CREDIT ELECTIVE TITLE

VISUAL LITERACY

COURSE NUMBER

MDC 0925

LOCATION

RWJMS PISCATAWAY

ELECTIVE DIRECTOR(S)

SONIA GARCIA LAUMBACH, MD

ELECTIVE FACULTY

SONIA GARCIA LAUMBACH, MD

ELECTIVE CONTACT

Sonia Garcia Laumbach, MD

CONTACT PHONE/FAX/EMAIL

sgarcia@rwjms.rutgers.edu

BLOCKS AVAILABLE

SPRING SEMESTER

DURATION/WEEKS

7 SESSIONS

HOURS PER WEEK

1.5HR/SESSION+ THREE 30MIN ASSIGNMENTS

STUDENTS

NO LIMIT

LECTURES/SEMINARS

YES

OUTPATIENT

No

INPATIENT

No

HOUSESTAFF

No

NIGHT CALL

No

WEEKENDS

No

LAB

No

EXAM REQUIRED

No

OVERALL EDUCATIONAL GOAL

To utilize visual art in a didactic role in order to enable students to translate visual information into descriptive language, both written and spoken, stressing the importance of communication during interaction with both patients and colleagues. Students will deconstruct, analyze, and interpret visual images while discussing the importance of detailed observation and its application in deriving conclusions in the context of the patient encounter.

OBJECTIVES

The core competencies of RWJMS that are addressed include:

Patient Care: Through the use of guided discussion of selected works, students will identify specific visual characteristics that deal with the biopsychosocial issues involved in the care of patients (race, gender, mental health). Students will discuss the visual representation of such issues and reflect on their meaning in the context of health care.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement: In addition to developing descriptive language to describe artwork, the small group discussions and assignments are aimed to elucidate the distinction between objective observations and subjective interpretation of visual information. Self-reflection will be an integral component in this exercise, as students will begin to question their own “visual assumptions.” In addition to promoting self-reflection, the small group discussions will foster a collaborative environment in which the students are working together to build upon each other’s observations to construct “visual differentials.” Finally, exposure to visual art within a medical educational framework will illustrate how different types of learning can be applied to the clinic.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills: Learning to describe and discuss visual information is vital to the practice of medicine. The small group format of the elective will require students to translate their sensory experiences of seeing into other forms of communication (written and verbal) as well as translate descriptive language into visual information. In order to make effective interpretations, students will need to support their conclusions with visual information.

Professionalism: Students will be expected to participate and contribute to discussions in addition to completing assignments. The small group format of the elective will require that students be respectful and non-judgmental of their classmates’ responses. Students will also be required to maintain good attendance and punctuality.

Systems-Based Practice: The inclusion of guest speakers and qualified individuals from a variety of different fields including art therapy, art history, and medicine will demonstrate how the coordinated effort of a multi-disciplinary team can impact upon medical education, patient care, and the greater health care system in general.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES
Students will be shown selected visual works including paintings, photographs, and video-clips and will be instructed to describe the visual elements of the piece. This description will include an analysis of the individual artistic elements that define the image (line, color, shape, form, value, texture, space), the medium and its application, and the overall structure and design of the composition. After a primary visual analysis, students will be asked to derive conclusions as to the content, purpose, and meaning of the piece and support those conclusions with visual evidence. Pertinent historical information and contextual information of selected pieces will be disclosed to the students after they have made their own visual arguments. Students will then be instructed to use this information to visually re-evaluate and re-examine the piece once again in an attempt to identify any information that was missed during the first attempt. Students will then be shown a clinical image and asked to describe what they see and what conclusions may be drawn from the image. The 30min assignments will give the students an opportunity to dually translate visual information into written language as well as using written information to construct a visual image.

(The development of this visual analysis procedure is partly based on art historical techniques used in formal analysis as well as a visual teaching method titled Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) co-developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine and has been implemented in other medical institutions)

METHOD OF EVALUATION
Attendance of at least 5 out of 7 lectures is required for completion of the elective. In addition, students will be required to complete 3 visual reflection assignments.