

NEWThe Required First Year School of Medicine Holocaust Education Curriculum at New York Medical College and Elective Curricular and Co-Curricular Programs, Valhalla, New York USA

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I. Background

Founded in 1860, New York Medical College is a health sciences university with schools of medicine (MD), dentistry (DDS), health professions (MPH, DPH, MS in speech language pathology, MS in biostatistics, DPT), graduate basic biomedical sciences (MS, PhD), and nursing (BSN). Since 2011 New York Medical College has been part of the Touro College and University System.

II. The Curriculum

The required Holocaust education program is taken, each year, by approximately 211 students in the first year MD class. The Holocaust education program is a component of a one semester course, taught during the spring semester, entitled “An Introduction to the History of Medicine for Students of Medicine”.

The required lectures of this course which address the Holocaust and its correlative subjects are:

Lectures 1, 6, and 7

The roles of physicians in the North American slave trade in the 17th to 19th centuries, eugenics, the role of physicians in

involuntary sterilization, US Supreme Court Case of Buck v. Bell, the role of physicians in the identification and execution of children with developmental disabilities and of adults with psychiatric diseases, the role of physicians in unconsented medical experimentation in Concentration Camps and German and Austrian research institutes and universities, the “Doctors’ Trial” in Nuremberg, Hannah Arendt and the concept of the banality of evil, the scientific identification of ashes from the Dachau Concentration Camp and their disposition by New York Medical College in collaboration with the forensic laboratory of the New York City Medical Examiner

Lecture 13

A history a medical education anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire, United States, and Canada; anti-Semitic medical school admissions quotas, the Brooklyn NY anti-Semitic medical interns hazing episodes of 1916 and 1927, the Montreal anti-Semitic medical interns strike of 1934, the concept of “The Jews Will Not Replace Us” in Nazi ideology and modern white supremacist ideology and how it relates to medical education anti-Semitism

The term paper and interviewing a Holocaust survivor

This course requires an end-of-the-term research paper. Students are offered a variety of choices as a topic for this term paper. About 25% of the class each year elects to interview a Holocaust survivor, read correlative information about medicine and the Holocaust from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and read related papers in the peer-reviewed literature, and use these activities as a basis for their term paper. Each year six to eight Holocaust survivors are identified

by the Westchester County NY Holocaust Speakers Bureau as the subjects for these interviews. The remaining 75% of the class chooses to write a biographical essay about a famous person in the history of medicine.

III. The Endowed Chair

In October 2021 New York Medical College will announce a lead philanthropic donation for the creation of an endowed chair in Biomedical Ethics after the Holocaust.

IV. Campus co-curricular programs related to the Holocaust

- A. New York Medical College observes Yom Hashoah every year with a campus wide program that includes a lecture and a memorial observance. Over the past years visiting lecturers have included Robert Jay Lifton MD, New York Medical College Class of 1948, discussing his book The Nazi Doctors; a lecture on the creation of the Pernkopf anatomical atlas and the ethic of its use; a lecture on “un-naming” neurological diseases named for neuroscientists who conducted their work on brain material obtained from Concentration Camp victims and/or executed political prisoners; and a lecture on the teaching of medical ethics in German medical schools during the Nazi regime.
- B. New York Medical College has a display case in the library showing the Pernkopf atlas and describing the ethical issues related to it. There is also a wall display describing the identification and interment of human ashes from the Dachau crematoria by our faculty.
- C. In April 2022 New York Medical College will host an international symposium on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of The Doctors’ Trial in Nuremberg.

D. New York Medical College hosted the traveling exhibit from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Deadly Medicine”, for several months prior to the pandemic. Several thousand people visited the exhibit and attended correlative “meet-the-author night” events sponsored with the local public library system in which authors of Holocaust-related books discussed their work. We also hosted a panel discussion concerning the exhibit. The panel included a Holocaust survivor, a historian, and the child of survivors.

V. Conclusion

We believe that New York Medical College may have the most extensive required and elective Holocaust education program of any medical college in the United States.