

## **"Cultivating Medical Awareness and Ethics Using the Example of Medicine in National Socialism"**

**- a three-year elective, interprofessional curriculum and didactic model for academic teaching as a contribution to professional identity formation and moral development**

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The Holocaust and Medicine curriculum at Witten-Herdecke Faculty of Medicine, Germany<sup>1</sup> offers annual focal topics and medical ethics seminar trips to memorials of persecution and extermination under National Socialism in Germany. It provides insights into the origins, development, systematic implementation and effects of the barely conceivable and yet humanly possible - and how medical system and actors were interwoven and ground laying in establishing industrialized killing including German psychiatric patients, opponents of the regime, and the Holocaust. This curriculum supports professional identity formation, moral development, and application to contemporary medicine with its medical-ethical challenges. The majority of participants are medical students, to date, psychology and business studies students have also participated.

Curriculum content includes testimonies of Jewish Holocaust survivors, biographical narratives of Jewish prisoners as well as National Socialistic doctors, medical professional behavior including possibilities and forms of resistance, origins of eugenic thinking and "euthanasia", egregious medical experiments, the "distorted image of man" under National Socialism, and systematic persecution, capture and forced labour of enemies as well as opponents of the Nazi system.

Yearly study trips are to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Hadamar, as well as Buchenwald and Erfurt with the latter including a visit to Topf & Sons historical museum (Auschwitz ovens builder). Students can earn up to 4-6 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) within each curriculum year. In addition to the study trip, students meet 7-10 times for 1.5 – 3.5 hours, as well as outside the classroom for content-related small-group and preparatory work for the presentation day (described below). The curriculum is facilitated by the Faculty of Health including the Integrated Curriculum for Anthroposophic Medicine (ICURAM - lead facilitator) and Department of Education of Personal and Interpersonal Competences in Health Care in collaboration with faculty of the Ita Wegman Institute, Switzerland. It is implemented within Studium Fundamentale, a required course module for all Witten-Herdecke medical students which offers course options. Didactics consist of lectures, discussions, task-based learning with individual required reading related to the topic of the year und small group work, multi-day study trips to memorial sites with commemoration, study of files of original material, reflective writings, a diverse set of humanities components, and service learning. The latter occurs as a public presentation of the results of each year's work, prepared and conducted by participating students.

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<sup>1</sup> Tauschel, D., Selg, P., Edelhäuser, F., Witowski, A., & Wald, H. S. (2020). Cultivating awareness of the Holocaust in medicine. *The Lancet*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32613-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32613-3)