UHC Medical Humanities: Politics, Biology, and the Body

This is a cross-disciplinary seminar taught by a humanist and a physician. In this seminar, students will read basic texts on the concepts of biopolitics and Biopower. The seminal works of Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, *Discipline and Punish*, and *I, Pierre Riviére, having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother: A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, will form a foundation from which we will consider both their theoretical implications and the real-world milieux they attempt to describe. This seminar brings critical theory into close dialogue with forms of medical knowledge. To that end, we will read Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* along with successor texts such as Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” and Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie*. We will read some high literature by authors such as Kafka and Mann along with a variety of texts constructing the body vis-à-vis drugs (licit and il-), disease, treatment, medicalized gender and sexuality, and the discourses and practices of medicine upon ‘pathologies.’ We will deploy these texts to interrogate and alienate each other as well as our own conceptions of medicine and its ambitions for the human.