This class is meant to facilitate an interdisciplinary conversation of the representation of HIV/AIDS in many different media sources: science writing, journalism, visual art, literature, drama, and popular culture. At the core of this class is the organizing question: what does it mean to put the perspectives of the scientist and the literary critic in conversation when discussing these widely varied representations of HIV/AIDS? What is at stake for the scientist or for the literary critic in these different depictions of HIV/AIDS? What is the science behind cultural depictions of HIV/AIDS, and why is it important that we think about it? What are the social and interpretive meanings behind the representation of HIV/AIDS, and why/how are these relevant for both the scientist and critic? Ultimately, this course is meant to remind its participants that the personal and political of necessity intersects with the scientific—and that scientists and critics can learn valuable lessons from one another in engaging with one another even as they conduct their individual work about HIV/AIDS. Today, over 30 years since the first scientific reports of HIV/AIDS, the pandemic remains a major health concern throughout the world. But we also see rays of hope that have led some to speculate that an AIDS-free generation may be possible. In such a timely moment, we welcome students from all disciplines, and are excited to connect with them across the "two cultures" as we consider the implications of HIV/AIDS in representation.

This semester, you will have opportunities to engage with representations of HIV/AIDS that are new for us, too. You will be able to tour the exhibition Re/Presenting HIV/AIDS, which we, along with Lia
Newman and Rosemary Gardner, have curated in the Van Every/Smith Galleries. You also will help us teach a DavidsonX course, also entitled “Representations of HIV/AIDS,” during which you will engage with other students around the world in discussions of the pandemic.

One more thing....

The discussion of HIV/AIDS means a frank discussion of topics and images that many of us might find more graphic than we're used to, or feel uncomfortable with: poverty, injustice, drug use, death, prostitution, and sexuality. But we have to engage with all these topics if we are to have a frank, thoughtful, and productive interdisciplinary conversation about representations of HIV/AIDS. Be prepared to have open and honest discussions about these topics. We don't need to agree on every topic that arises, but we do need to listen and engage; we assume that your continued presence in this class means you agree with that basic premise, and that you are ready to be a vital part of such dialogue.

**Book List (All other readings will be available on course Moodle page)**

You may use print or electronic versions of these texts in class.

Ping Chong and Vince LiCata, *Cocktail*
Larry Kramer, *The Normal Heart and the Destiny of Me*
Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*
Elizabeth Pisani, *The Wisdom of Whores: Bureaucrats, Brothels, and the Business of AIDS*
Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphor*

**Course Requirements:**

**What you'll be graded on....**

**Two short papers (you can decide which to do first, depending on your comfort level):** Together, they are designed to let you experiment with writing outside your own comfort zone, in another discipline.

**Paper 1: (15%) Scientific aspects of HIV/AIDS:** Here, we want you to investigate some scientific aspect of or development in HIV/AIDS that is of interest to you. Your work will be to research that topic, to review pertinent scientific writing on it, and to offer some view of how others have written about the topic.

**Paper 2: (15%) Cultural responses to HIV/AIDS:** Scientific advances in HIV/AIDS have been responded to/engaged with by writers, artists, and cultural critics. Choose some work that engages with HIV/AIDS, and analyze what you think it is contributing to the discourse--for better or worse. We are open to many different kinds of "texts," from music to art to popular culture to memoir to literature; the text can be (in your estimation) progressive, problematic, political, or anywhere in between!

**Interacting with and responding to DavidsonX 002 participants (15%):** Starting on October 7, we will be teaching a 7 week online version of this course. During the run of this DavidsonX course, you will help run class discussion boards and post thoughts about the experience on a class blog. You also will submit
a one-page response paper to us at the end of the course, assessing your experience. It is our hope that your connecting to students globally about discussions of HIV/AIDS will more deeply enrich your classroom experience.

**Participation (25%)**: We expect you to come prepared with thoughtful questions, comments, and a willingness to engage in extended dialogue with your classmates. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of our work, expect the class to be more seminar-like in how it is conducted (i.e., heavily discussion-driven). Just showing up having read the assignments will not earn you an "A." You must consistently show engaged, thoughtful response to the assignments through questions as well as comments. But think about how you speak, not just how often: we're looking for critical thinkers, not pundits. In other words, you need to engage others (authors, classmates, us) in your comments thoughtfully and respectfully, not simply comment for the sake of commenting.

**Cultural artifact (10%)**: After thirty years, there have been many ways in which HIV/AIDS have been interwoven into the fabric of our culture. In this assignment, you will pick any cultural text discussing HIV/AIDS (public art, movie, commercial, video, music, video game, etc.). Then, you will present briefly on what response to HIV/AIDS you think it is effecting to the class and lead a subsequent discussion with the class; expect to be presenting/discussing for 15 minutes or so. The object of this assignment? To engage the pleasure of cultural studies work and think about locating many different ways in which HIV/AIDS is represented in our culture.

**Final project (20%)**: Material and cultural objects teach us history in a visceral way. Students in DavidsonX 002 will be curating an online exhibition of cultural artifacts that reflect their own varied responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We would like to give you the chance to engage with this exhibition, and experience some of the excitement of curating, which is another way to tell the story of HIV/AIDS. As your culminating assignment of the course, you will create a final small group project with other students in the class that curates your own online exhibition. You’ll draw from the online collection on DavidsonX 002, and create your own exhibition design that you think tells an important story of HIV/AIDS at the intersection of art and science. We’ll talk more about this in class; you can also visit Visual AIDS (www.visualaids.org) to see how they’ve encouraged similar curation through their online archive of art by HIV+ artists.

**Other course policies....**

**Attendance**: Because this is a course that depends heavily on discussion, we need your presence, and you need to be here. You are allowed two unexcused absences, no questions asked. Any absences after that will have an adverse effect on your final grade. If there is a medical, family, or other emergency, you should contact the Dean of Students, your academic advisor, and both of us immediately. Davidson College policy requires us to give an automatic "F" to anyone missing 25% or more of the class meetings.

**Accommodations for Disabled Students**: Full accommodations are the legal right of students with disabilities of all kinds. We are committed to providing accommodations for students with learning disabilities that have been documented by Davidson College. If you are a learning disabled student, please identify yourself to us as soon as possible, so that we can strategize ways to accommodate your needs in this classroom community. Students with other disabilities are also encouraged to self-identify
as soon as possible and discuss with us how we can make accommodations that will enhance your learning experience.

**Getting in touch with us:** Dr. Fox can be reached at x2012, and her office is in 201 Carolina Inn. Dr. Wessner can be reached at x2846, and his office is in 218 Watson. We will announce our office hours the first week of class, and we welcome your coming by to see us during them any time! If you wish to meet with both of us together, feel free to email to set up an appointment.

Please note that both of us should be included in any emails pertaining to course matters. As a courtesy, please don’t substitute e-mail messages for information that it would be more appropriate/timely for you to communicate in person.

**Honor Code:** All work for the course is assumed pledged. It is not an Honor Code violation to share your written work with others to get their feedback and critique, as long as they are not making changes for you (proofreading by others, therefore, is not acceptable). But they can offer advice and suggestions for how you might revise, expand, or re-see something. We encourage you to visit the Writing Center for help with your written work; they are an excellent resource!

**Course Calendar**

**August 26**  
*Welcome to the course! Introduction to course policies and DavidsonX 002*

**August 28**  
*Confronting the unknown for the first time*

- Susan Sontag, "The Way We Live Now"
- Joan Larkin, "Inventory" <http://www.joanlarkin.com/Poems/Inventory.html>
- "Reading and Understanding the Primary Literature," from David Wessner, et al., *Microbiology*

**September 2 & 4**  
*Early responses to a health crisis: Taking it to the streets*

**Tuesday:**

**Wednesday:**
- Required: Lecture by Nelson Santos, Executive Director of Visual AIDS, at 7pm in Semans Lecture Hall (Visual Arts Center)

**Thursday:**
- Class visit from Nelson Santos, Executive Director of Visual AIDS, and artist Shan Kelley
- Opening of *Re/Presenting HIV/AIDS* from 6-8 pm in the Visual Arts Center: Join us!!
September 9 & 11 Naming a disease: How is illness a narrative?

Tuesday:
- New York Times, "New name is proposed for the cause of AIDS"
- Priscilla Wald, "The Columbus of AIDS: The Invention of 'Patient Zero'"
- In class: watch scene from Angels in America: Millennium Approaches

Thursday:
- Class visit from Joan Lipkin
- Discuss How to Survive a Plague (2012). This Oscar-nominated documentary is streaming on Netflix and on reserve in the library. It also will be screened on September 10 at 7pm in Semans Lecture Hall (VAC). Please watch it on your own before class or attend the screening.
- Paul Farmer and Arthur Kleinman, "AIDS as Human Suffering"
- New York Times, "Case of AIDS traced to vaginal intercourse"  

September 16 & 18 Who takes charge of an epidemic, and how?

Tuesday:
- Joan Lipkin: “The Date”

Thursday:
- Larry Kramer, The Normal Heart (Screening TBA)
- Selected interviews from the ACT-UP Oral History Project <http://actuporalhistory.org>
- Selected first-person accounts by NIH scientists about encountering AIDS,  
  <http://history.nih.gov/nihinownwords/>

Saturday
- Attend one of the performances of “Let’s Talk About Sex, Baby!” 7 and 9 pm, Tyler-Tallman Hall

September 23 & 25 Spokesperson for an illness: What’s at stake?

Tuesday:
- From Frontline: The Age of AIDS (2006), "A Death Gives AIDS a Face" (12 minute excerpt discussing Rock Hudson and Ryan White)  
  <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/aids/view/#morelink>
- Douglas Crimp, "Accommodating Magic"
- New York Times, "An emotional Ashe says that he has AIDS"  
- New York Times, "Magic Johnson ends his career, saying he has AIDS infection"  
Wednesday:
  • Required: Talk by Dr. Sallie Permar '97: “Can we achieve the goal of an HIV-free generation?” 7 pm, Semans Lecture Hall, Visual Arts Center

Thursday:
  • Susan Sontag, *AIDS and Its Metaphors*  
  • Michael Bronski, "Picturing AIDS"  
    <http://www.artistswithaids.org/artery/centerpieces/centerpieces_picturing.html>  
  • Gallery of images from Thomas McGovern's "Bearing Witness"  
    <http://www.artistswithaids.org/artery/centerpieces/bronski_index.html>  
  • Selected images of AIDS photography by Nixon, Solomon, *et al.*  
  • Selected images from Albert Winn <http://albertjwinn.com>  
  • Douglas Crimp, "Portraits of People with AIDS"  
  • First paper due

September 30 & October 1 *Re/Presenting HIV/AIDS; Talking about testing*

Tuesday:
  • Visit Re/Presenting HIV/AIDS exhibition in VAC

Thursday:
  • Talk about MOOC discussion boards  
  • *New York Times*, "AIDS blood test to be available in 2 to 6 weeks":  
  • David Feinberg, "Despair"  
  • Nina Bennett, "CJ 4321"

October 7 & 9 *"The Great Work Begins": Asserting life through art*

Tuesday:
  • Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Screening TBA)

Thursday:
  • David Roman, "November 1, 1992: AIDS/Angels in America"

October 14 & 16

Tuesday:
  • Fall Break; no class

Thursday:
  • Discussion of MOOC issues
October 21 & 23 The development of antiretrovirals

Tuesday:
• Ping Chong and Vince LiCata, *Cocktail*

Thursday:

October 28 & 30 The politics of memory

Tuesday:
• View panels from the AIDS Quilt (*The Names Project*) at <http://www.aidsquilt.org>
• Douglas Crimp, "The Spectacle of Mourning"

Thursday:
• Class visit by Liss LaFleur, Visiting Asst. Prof. of Art, Davidson College
• Watch *One Way Home* at www.1wayhome.com
• Discussion of final project

November 4 & 6 How we live now: what the crisis looks like today

Tuesday:
• Discuss *The Other City* [*Screening TBA*]
• "HIV/AIDS in America" (*Science*)

Thursday:
• Elizabeth Pisani, selected excerpts from *The Wisdom of Whores*

November 11 & 13 Current issues: Criminalization

Tuesday:
• Elizabeth Pisani, selected excerpts from *The Wisdom of Whores*

Thursday:
• The Vienna Declaration <http://www.viennadeclaration.com>
• Human Rights Watch – carrying condoms http://mm.hrw.org/content/cops-arrest-sex-workers-carrying-condoms
• Court rulings <http://iowapublicradio.org/post/nick-rhoades-talks-his-hiv-conviction-and-what-comes-next>
November 18 & 20 Current issues: Treatment as prevention; Vaginal microbicides

Tuesday:

Thursday:

November 25 & 27 No class

- December 2 Student Presentations
- December 4 Student Presentations
- December 7 Student Presentations
- December 9 Student Presentations

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DAVIDSON COLLEGE RESEARCH STUDY

The college is seeking to understand how online learning might enhance or support residential courses and the liberal arts broadly. This course was one of four courses selected for Davidson’s edX Ed Tech Initiative out of the President’s Office. The course is a hybrid model, meaning it will include an online component with other learners from around the world.

The goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the residential learner experience in this hybrid course, as well as the potential for online learning components, only from the perspective of Davidson College students. Students under 18 will not participate in the study.

The research consists of in-class observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Face to face sessions will be recorded, solely for the purpose of accurate transcriptions. Recordings will only be accessible by the researchers, and will be deleted upon transcription. Student names will not be disclosed in any reports concerning this research without their consent, or disclosed to anybody else unless compelled by law. Participation in this research is voluntary. You may agree to an interview or you may decline an interview. If you agree to an interview, you may refuse to answer any question and you may end the interview at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact your professor. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may call the Chair or Vice Chair of the Davidson College IRB, Dr. Meghan Griffith, (704) 894-2403, or Ms. Sharon Byrd (704) 894-2158.