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.

One more thing....The discussion of HIV/AIDS means a frank discussion of topics and images that many of us might find more graphic that 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 the representation of HIV/AIDS and its implications. You should be prepared to have open and honest discussions about these topics. We don't have to agree on every topic that will arise relative to HIV/AIDS, but we do have 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)**

Ping Chong and Vince LiCata, *Cocktail*
Larry Kramer, *The Normal Heart and the Destiny of Me*
Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*
Stephanie Nolen, *28: Stories of AIDS in Africa*
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're designed to have you experiment with writing outside your own comfort zone, in another discipline.

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

**Paper 2: (15%) Cultural responses to HIV/AIDS:** As you see from the shape of our course, 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!

**Participation (30%):** 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 (30%): As your culminating assignment of the course, we want you to create a final small group project with other students in the class that somehow creates your own "cultural artifact," your own representation of the intersection of art, science, and HIV/AIDS through some creative medium: this could be a film, performance, artwork...or something we have not even contemplated! In the past, students have produced everything from modern dance to public health campaigns to poetry; you are only limited by your imagination.

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

January 15 Welcome to the course!

January 17 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*

January 22 & 24 Early responses to a health crisis: Taking it to the streets
Tuesday: Discuss *How to Survive a Plague* (2012) (This Oscar-nominated documentary, which traces the early history of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) is streaming on Netflix. Please be sure to watch it on your own before class OR attend the screening from 7-9 on Sunday, January 20)

Thursday: Tim Miller, Excerpt from *1001 Beds* ("Activism")
REQUIRED: Attend Tim Miller lecture: "Performance! Body! Self!" at 11 am in the Lilly Family Gallery
Class visit from Tim Miller: Tim Miller is one of the most important queer performance artists in America, and has been a longtime AIDS activist, including work with ACT UP-LA. Come prepared to ask questions based on your response to the readings and the performance/lecture you will have seen just before class.

January 29 & 31

Tuesday: Discovery of AIDS and the first steps toward naming
*New York Times*, "Rare cancer seen in 41 homosexuals"
*New York Times*, "New name is proposed for the cause of AIDS"
Marita Sturken, "Bodies of Commemoration: The Immune System and HIV"
Priscilla Wald, "The Columbus of AIDS: The Invention of 'Patient Zero'"
In class: watch scene from *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*

Thursday: How do we talk about illness? How is illness—and AIDS—a narrative?
Paul Farmer and Arthur Kleinman, "AIDS as Human Suffering"
Susan Sontag, *AIDS and its Metaphors*
Marita Sturken, "AIDS and the Politics of Representation"
"A Cluster of Kaposi’s Sarcoma and Pneumocystis carinii Pneumonia among Homosexual Male Residents of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, California," *MMWR* (18 June 1982)
"Epidemiologic Notes and Reports Pneumocystis carinii Pneumonia among Persons with Hemophilia A," MMWR (16 July 1982)

New York Times, "Case of AIDS traced to vaginal intercourse"

Joan Larkin, "A Review"

February 5 & 7
Tuesday: How do we talk about illness? How is illness--and AIDS--a narrative? (continued from 1/31)
Thursday: Early responses to a health crisis: Who takes charge of an epidemic, and how?

Larry Kramer, The Normal Heart
Selected interviews from the ACT-UP Oral History Project <http://actuporalhistory.org>
Selected first-person accounts of scientists about encountering AIDS, drug testing and approval;
<http://history.nih.gov/nihinownwords/>

February 12 & 14 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"

Thursday:
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.

Douglas Crimp, "Portraits of People with AIDS"

First paper due February 14

February 19 & 21 Testing: What are its scientific and social implications?


New York Times, "AIDS blood test to be available in 2 to 6 weeks";

David Feinberg, "Despair"

Nina Bennett, "CJ 4321"
February 26 & 28 "The Great Work Begins": Asserting life through art

Screening of *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* on Sunday, February 24 from 7-10 pm

Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*

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

March 5 & 7   Spring Break; no class

March 12 & 14 The development of antiretrovirals

Ping Chong and Vince LiCata, *Cocktail*


*New York Times*, "To combat the wily HIV, newer and safer drugs are necessary"


March 19 & 21

Tuesday: The politics of memory

View panels from the AIDS Quilt (*The Names Project*) at <http://www.aidsquilt.org>

Douglas Crimp, "The Spectacle of Mourning"

Van Hillard, "Census, Consensus and the Commodification of Form: The NAMES Project Quilt"

Second paper due March 19

Thursday: Discussion of final project

March 26 & 28 How we live now: what the crisis looks like today

Screening of *The Other City* on Sunday, March 24, from 7-9 pm

Tuesday: Discuss *The Other City*

"HIV/AIDS in America" (*Science*)

Thursday: Fighting AIDS globally: "Sex in boxes"

Elizabeth Pisani, selected excerpts from *The Wisdom of Whores*

April 2 & 4

Tuesday: No class, Easter break

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

April 9 & 11 Fighting AIDS globally: Eastern Europe


The Vienna Declaration <http://www.viennadeclaration.com>

April 16 & 18 Fighting AIDS globally: Africa
What is PEPFAR? <http://www.pepfar.gov/about/index.htm>
What is President Obama’s AIDS strategy?
Stephanie Nolen, selected excerpts from 28: Stories of AIDS in Africa

April 21 Screening/presentations of final projects
April 23 Screening/presentations of final projects

April 30 Screenings/presentations of final projects
May 2 Screenings/presentations of final projects

May 7 Screenings/presentations of final projects; course evaluations