Nursing History: An Honors Elective Nursing Course

William T. Campbell, Ed.D, RN
Nursing Department & Honors College
Salisbury University
Salisbury, MD, USA

Course Design

Undergraduate, junior level, 4 credits, hybrid delivery, face-to-face 1 day per week for 3 hrs, and 1 hr enhancement (small group activity), credit as honors and/or nursing elective.

I. Textbook Readings with Power Points
   Lecture (moving to online), Discussion
   Covering 1-2 decades per weekly class, beginning early 1800’s
   Format: Timeline, People, Sociopolitical Climate, Image of Nursing, Education of Nurses, Advances in Practice, War & Its Effect, Workforce Issues, Licensure & Regulation, Research

II. Audiovisual Media (literature or film) with Study Guide
   Student or faculty led discussion

III. Medical/Nursing “Artifacts Under Examination”
   Example: glass syringes, glass mercury thermometer, monoaural wooden stethoscope, school caps & pins & lamps, invalid feeder, cupping glass

IV. Small Group Activity Outside of Class
   Choice of 1 of 3 optional books
   Out-of-class small group discussions on selected book
   Oral presentation by group of their selected book to entire class

V. Assessment
   2 Quizzes, 2 Exams
   Academic paper on a historical nursing figure
   Student discussion leader, Class discussion participation
   Small Group Presentation

Course Catalog Description

The History of Nursing will examine the history, trends, eras, compromises, accomplishments, and challenges of the profession of nursing in America during the last 200 years. It will also highlight the historical events that impacted nursing, nurses, and healthcare during this period. The course will investigate the advances and growth of the profession of nursing through the images of film and the words of period literature. Special attention will be focused on war as a catalyst for changes in nursing & healthcare and the rapid growth of nursing in America during and following the Civil War and WWI & WWII.

Examples of Audiovisual Media Used in Course

- Notes on Nursing by Florence Nightingale
- A Woman of Valor: Clara Barton (1994) by Stephen Oates

Educational Films
- Nursing History: The Early Years
- Nursing History: The Beginning of a Profession
- WWII Recruitment & Training Films
- Vietnam Nurses Documentary
- If Florence Could See Us Now

Movies
- Florence Nightingale
- Cold Mountain
- Glory
- In Love & War
- Miss Evers’ Boys
- M*A*S*H
- Wit

Optional Books for Small Group Discussion & Presentations
- A Fatal Decision: Edith Cavell by Terri Arthur
- We Band of Angels by Elizabeth Norman
- Home Before Morning by Lynda Van Devanter

Student Comments

"I'm so glad I took this course!! Every nursing major should learn the history of nursing to know where they have come from." "I've gained insight that I know will help me (and my patients) in the future." "...to look at the bigger picture of nursing." "Great class, would highly recommend to others of all majors." "...was really cool and helped me to get an understanding of what was really going on in history." "the movies along with the study guides really helped me to visually see what was going on during that time period. I also really enjoyed...artifacts from different eras or time periods and this helped me to get an understanding of the time...Very interesting and the mixed media kept us engaged.” "...the best class I have ever taken...super interesting.” "...helped intrigue me into a subject (history) I don't normally enjoy.”

References

Orikszewski, Paul; Pollitt, Phoebe; Leonard, Andrea; & Lane, Susan Hayes. (2016). Reaching Millennials With Nursing History. Creative Nursing, 22(1), 60-64.