

Abstract

Due to ever increasing technology, more skills, and new theory content, all within a limited timeframe for classroom delivery, nursing faculty and nursing curricula are constantly struggling for instructional space. As a result something has to be minimized or eliminated from the curriculum. Increasingly that topic is nursing history. However nursing history is an extremely important topic within nursing education and the nursing profession. Nursing leaders such as Dock and Stewart (1931) called for the study of nursing history over 100 years ago and the call was repeated soon afterwards by the National League for Nursing (NLN) (Davis, 1995). Today that call is still echoed by the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) in Standard I, the AACN in Essentials Standard VIII, Quality and Safety Education for Nurses Initiative, U.S Department of Health and Human Services in Healthy People 2020, National Partnership for Action, Institute of Medicine (IOM), and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Orkiszewski, Pollitt, Leonard, and Lane, 2016). The strongest of all calls is from the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN) (Keeling, 2002).

In a small public state university in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., nursing history within the undergraduate nursing program had been drastically decreased within the structured curriculum. This decrease followed the national trend repeated within many American nursing programs. It had become a single module and video in the foundations or introductory course. A new hybrid course was created and introduced by the author as first a special topics course to meet the requirement for the nursing elective and would then evolve into the Nursing Honors course to meet the upper level requirement for the Honors College. The format included a didactic portion utilizing a nursing history textbook with online power points and a formal lecture, but expanded beyond that approach. A second portion included reading literature about or by historical nursing figures or viewing films (or clips) illustrating nurses in action during a historical period. This arts portion of the class involved extensive in-class student lead discussions and included an understanding of the historical importance and application to today's profession. Critical thinking within the situation was always emphasized. A third portion of each class involved the examination and discussion of a historical nursing or medical artifact. The artifact and its importance to that time period are discussed as well as its impact on healthcare today. Additional historical nursing books are read and discussed outside of class in small groups. Since the course neither involved any lab or clinical component nor required any pre-knowledge of nursing it was ideal for Honors students, for pre-nursing students, for upper level nursing students, and for RN-to-BS students. The multiple levels of students and their experiences only added to the discussions.

Course Catalog Description

The History of Nursing will exam 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.

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"

Introduction, Explanation, Importance to Nursing & Healthcare, Evolution, Equivalence Today
Examples: 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



Artifacts: left - Nurses Pocket Kit with instruments, 1895, belonging to Laura Slingerland, Long Island School of Nursing graduate of 1892; center - Cap and School Pin from Salisbury State College 1979; right - U.S. Army Medical Dept Glass Syringe in wooden case with reusable needles. Author's collection & SU Museum

Examples of Audiovisual Media Used in Course

Supplemental Books
▪ 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
▪ Pearl Harbor
▪ 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

Davis, Sandra Kress. (1995). *A Mandate for Nursing History in Nursing Curricula*. Journal of Nursing Education, 34(9), 427-430.
Dock, Lavinia and Stewart, Isabel. (1931). *A Short History of Nursing*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
Judd, Deborah and Sitzman, Kathleen. (2014). *A History of American Nursing*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
Keeling, Arlene. (2002). *Nursing History in the Curriculum: Preparing Nurses for the 21st Century*. Dean's Notes (NSNA), 23(5), 2-3.
Orkiszewski, Paul; Pollitt, Phoebe; Leonard, Andrea; & Lane, Susan Hayes. (2016). *Reaching Millennials With Nursing History*. Creative Nursing, 22(1), 60-64.