



Medical Humanities Aging Book List 2010

The Geriatric Education and Recruitment Initiative (GERI) is collaborating to improve the image of caring for older people to increase interest in careers focused on geriatric care.

Medical humanities are generally defined as use of humanities (philosophy, literature, ethics, religion, history), social sciences and the arts in medical education and medical practice. The application of these disciplines can improve the care we provide but also positively affect our personal satisfaction with the care we provide. Care of older people is a field well suited to the medical humanities because of the universality of the experience of aging and the fact that ageing as an inevitable stage of the life span has been a focus of creative artists and thinkers for most of human history. Many clinicians working with older patients cite their interest in the experiences and life stories of the people they care for being an important factor in career choice and satisfaction.

This list of novels, short stories and non-fiction are intended to provide a list of reading options for health professionals and students as they try to gain understanding of the aging experience and to use this experience in providing care. It is also for consideration of teachers developing courses on ageing or trying to incorporate the humanities into their academic or clinical work. Most of the links are to the New York University Literature, Arts and Medicine Database but other links are listed when available. The NYU database and website are an excellent resource for health professionals wishing to learn more about this field (<http://medhum.med.nyu.edu/>).

Ideas for using these readings in teaching of undergraduate or postgraduate trainees include: assigned readings with written or verbal commentary, use of themes/characters/plots related to aspects of patient care, asking students to search for writings related to specific topics such as dementia.

Writings with a focus on dementia are identified as a specific "genre" within the reading list.

Short Stories

1. Banks, C. & Rizzo, J., eds. A Loving Voice: A Caregiver's Book of Read-Aloud Stories for the Elderly
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1230>
2. Bly, Carol Gunnar's Sword
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=821>
3. Bontemps, Arna W. A Summer Tragedy
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=170>
4. Borges, Jorge Luis The Immortals
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=16>
5. Bradbury, Ray The Leave-Taking
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=11996>
6. Canin, Ethan We Are Nighttime Travelers
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=937>
7. Forster, E. M. (Edward Morgan) The Road from Colonus
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=11749>
8. Gee, Maurice A Glorious Morning, Comrade
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=76>
9. Goncz, Arpad Old People
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=11906>
10. Maupassant, Guy de An Old Man
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=11750>
11. Norris, Helen Mrs. Moonlight
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1387> (dementia focus)
12. O'Connor, Flannery A Late Encounter With the Enemy
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12093>

Novels

1. Astley, Thea Coda
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=906>
2. Ariyoshi, Sawako The Twilight Years
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12778>
3. Barfoot, Joan **Exit Lines**
[Exit Lines, by Joan Barfoot - Reviews, Books - The Independent](#)
4. Barker, Pat Another World
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1522>
5. Barry Sebastian The Secret Scripture
[The Secret Scripture - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
6. Cohen, Matt Elizabeth and After
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1737>
7. Courtemanche, Gil A Good Death
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12765>
8. Dorner, Marjorie Seasons of Sun and Rain
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1564> (dementia focus)
9. Drabble, Margaret The Seven Sisters
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12214>
10. **Forster, Margaret Have the Men Had Enough**
[Title Information, Have the men had enough?](#)
11. Garcia Marquez, Gabriel Love in the Time of Cholera
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=302>
12. Jones, A. H. Literature and Medicine: Gabriel Garcia Marquez Love in the Time of Cholera. The Lancet 1997; 350: 1169–72
13. Genova, Lisa **Still Alice**
[Still Alice review](#) (dementia focus)
14. Gloag, Julian Only Yesterday
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12695>

15. Guterson, David East of the Mountains
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1517>
16. Ignatieff, Michael Scar Tissue
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1354> (dementia focus)
17. Mann, Thomas Death in Venice
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1533>
<http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/6kv2j949>
18. Hull, Jonathan Losing Julia
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1722>
19. Laurence, Margaret The Stone Angel
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12696>
20. Mistry, Rohinton Family Matters
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12061>
21. Munce, Alayna When I Was Young and in My Prime
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12676>
(dementia focus)
22. Phillips, Kate White Rabbit
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=899>
23. Sarton, May As We are Now
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=176>
24. Shakespeare, William King Lear
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1148>
25. Shields, Carol The Stone Diaries
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=444>
26. Spark, Muriel Memento Mori
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1178>
27. Tan, Amy The Bonesetter's Daughter
<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=11870>
28. Somers, Jane (a.k.a. Doris Lessing) The Diary of a Good Neighbour
<http://www.dorislessing.org/thediary.html>

Non-Fiction

1. Bayley, John Oliver Elogy for Iris (dementia focus; film Iris is based on the book) <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1460> (dementia focus)
2. Berger, John Her Secrets <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=332>
3. Clendinen, Dudley A Place Called Canterbury: Tales of the New Old Age in America <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12884>
4. Freed, Lynn Ma, a Memoir <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1104>
5. Hall, Stephen S. Merchants of Immortality: Chasing the Dream of Human Life Extension <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12133>
6. Johnson, Hillary My Mother Dying <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=152>
7. McLoughlin, J., ed. On the Death of a Parent <http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=1233>