**American Medical Student Association**

**AMSA Academy**

**Cultural Sensitivity Scholars Program**

2016-2017

**Thursday at 8:15PM EDT/EST**

**Course Director**: Sage Timberline

**Vice Director**: Ryan Kollar

**Course E-mail**: CSSP@asma.org

**Grading**: Pass/Fail (see below for Completion Requirements)

**I. Course Description**

Health is a fundamental good, necessary for humans to thrive. As prospective clinicians who will directly oversee people’s health, we are in a uniquely important position both in individuals’ lives and in society. With this enormous influence in the lives of many comes an imperative to work effectively and comprehensively, and to strive to provide those we serve with equal opportunity to understand their options, be an active participant in their choices, and ultimately obtain the care best suited to their needs and preferences.

While it would be ideal if physician expertise and patient autonomy always converged seamlessly, facilitating care that both meets patients’ needs and results in the best health outcomes is not always easily tenable. As such, in the Cultural Sensitivity Scholars Program, we aim to describe what great care might look like for different people, identify barriers to providing that care, and develop strategies to overcome those barriers. We hope that scholars will come to recognize the need to embrace cultural sensitivity, a framework and mindset that is predicated on an attitude of humility and an approach to interpersonal communication that requires unrelenting self-awareness and perspective, in order to best serve their patients and our ever-changing world.

**II. Course Objectives**

By the end of this Scholars Program, scholars will be able to:

***Knowledge***

* Describe the difference between cultural competence and cultural sensitivity.
* Understand the principles of broad social grouping systems relevant to patient populations.
* Identify circumstances of contextual privilege in social groups and the roots of bias, stereotypes, and stigmas.
* Demonstrate awareness of diverse health beliefs and challenges experienced by patients.
* Define health literacy, language services, and appropriate protocols for working with interpreters.

***Skills***

* Identify challenges in interpersonal communication and therapeutic relationship for patient groups.
* Apply models of cross-cultural communication in clinical scenarios.
* Evaluate personal perceptions and generalizations ascribed to patient groups.
* Understand effective use of medical interpreters.

***Attitudes***

* Recognize and manage the impact of bias, class, and power on the clinical encounter.
* Demonstrate respect and relativism for a patient’s cultural and health beliefs.
* Acknowledge personal biases, stereotypes, and stigmas and the potential impact they have on the quality of healthcare.

**III. Format and Procedures**

***Class Structure***

* The course will largely be conducted via webinar using an online-based web conference platform. You will need access to either a phone or a computer equipped with audio.
* In the two weeks prior to the webinar: scholars will be expected to complete selected readings, videos, media clips, or other assignments related to the module topic on their own time. Scholars should review the speaker provided agenda/objectives to be covered in the monthly webinar (1-3 hours).
* Prior to the webinar itself, scholars will come up with their own substantive questions, based upon the module assignments and the speaker’s agenda, to ask the speaker and their peers (due 11:59 pm the day prior to webinar). Then the webinar will take place, beginning with a speaker and followed by a group discussion (1-2 hours).
* Following the webinar, scholars will complete a short reflection to summarize their thoughts about the module. Reflections are expected to be between 250-500 words, and scholars should strive to write professionally, with precise language. Scholars are encouraged to write about whatever inspires them, but are also welcome to use the following prompts (1-2 hours):
  + *What is something new that you learned from this speaker and module, and how could you see this concept manifesting in your own life and clinical experience?*
  + *Pick a topic that was discussed during the webinar and explain why you agree or disagree with it.*
  + *Describe an experience you had that is relevant to this module, and reflect on what you may or may not have done differently after participating in discussions with the speaker and your peers.*
* Ultimately, the time-commitment is likely to be 4-8 hours every month, depending on the individual scholar’s style and the webinar schedule.

***Course Credit***

* Scholars may be able to receive elective credit from their home institution for this course. While AMSA unfortunately cannot grant elective credit at this time, we are happy to support you with documentation that will aid you as you seek elective credit.
* Each scholar that completes the requirements outlined in Section V below will be provided an official Certificate of Completion.

**IV. Expectations of Scholars**

Scholars are expected to:

* Attend each webinar, or watch the recorded version if a scheduling conflict exists (see Completion Requirements for additional details).
* Prepare as instructed for all webinars and assignments/projects by completing the requirements as enumerated below and by following the class format outline mentioned previously.
* Participate in discussion during webinar, when appropriate.
* Notify the course directors if the scholar is unable to complete the questions, reflection assignments, or attend a webinar.
* Treat speakers, course directors, and other scholars with respect and humility, and to possess an open mind.
* Scholars will be highly encouraged, but NOT required, to attend the AMSA National Convention, February 23-26, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

**V. Completion Requirements for Certification**

* Class attendance
  + *Domestic Students & International Students in the Caribbean and Americas:*
* Must attend 80% of webinars
* Can watch **up to two** recorded webinars and complete a reflection of the webinar to obtain make-up credit for attendance
* Complete quizzes prior to and following each webinar
  + *International Students in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia*
* Must watch 80% of recorded webinars within 48 hours of the original session
* Submit a SHORT reflection of the webinar to the Course Directors within 72 hours of the original session
* Complete quizzes prior to and following each webinar
* Participation policy
  + Must post to 80% of online discussion questions
* Mid-Term Assignment
  + Requirements
* This assignment will require scholars to write a 500 to 1,000-word essay in the form of a personal, introspection that addresses the following:
  + Define and describe what your thoughts were regarding cultural sensitivity prior to beginning this program, and how, if at all, that definition changed?
  + Further, your essay should evaluate the cultural sensitivity (or lack thereof) in a clinically relevant personal experience or current event or series of events.
* Scholars are expected to demonstrate an integrated understanding of the material covered in the Scholars Program to this point by either directly or indirectly citing the assigned readings or topics discussed during webinars.
  + Ideas
* Select a patient in your medical experience up to this point and briefly detail both their clinical problem and some of the populations into which the patient was categorized. Suggest what unforeseen challenges and negative attitudes you and your healthcare team could have faced during that encounter. If you were aware of any such stigmas at the time of the actual encounter, as a student did you speak up? Why or why not?
* Select a recent event or series of interrelated events that pertain to clinical medicine and identify those who might be of a minority cultural interest and describe their stake in the situation. Are predominant societal views or stereotypes influencing the medical outcomes for those involved? Or is society imposing a disingenuous, damaging, or disenfranchising narrative against a party who might otherwise be “in power” (e.g. a clinician or research team led by a minority group)? Perhaps those involved are being ostracized for their decisions despite acting according to their own beliefs, principles, or morals? Describe critically and concisely the context for this event and relate the importance of cultural sensitivity and social groups in understanding the perspectives of the involved parties.
* Final Project
  + Requirements
* The project should address at least one of the following three components: advocacy, education, or (community) engagement. Furthermore, the project should relate to the topics explored in this Scholars Program or closely related topics.
* A brief, written description of the intended project, including a listing of other scholars, if applicable (this can be an individual or group project), and an approximate timeline detailing the completion of necessary tasks, should be submitted to the course directors as described in the Timeline section.
* A final written statement describing the goal of the project, the mechanism(s) through which it was completed, and the actual outcome of this work should be submitted to the course directors as described in the Timeline section.
  + Guidelines
* Begin generating ideas for a project and collaborating with fellow scholars as early as possible to ensure sufficient time for conception and completion of a substantive project. Additionally, continually reach out to the course directors to assess the efficacy of your intended project.
* Reach out to mentors at your home institution to identify areas of interest, inspiring projects, or resources that might be of benefit to developing a course-appropriate project.
* Attempt to collaborate with your local AMSA chapter to see if your project might be able to fit into a currently existing mission, or if you might be able to garner some support or ideas for your project from those already involved in work related to AMSA.
  + Ideas
* Advocacy - Find a piece of legislation that is currently being debated or an amendment to such (could be at any political level) related to cultural sensitivity, and meet with local representative to discuss its implications and importance to you as a prospective healthcare provider and as an informed and compassionate citizen.
* Education – Develop a curriculum, syllabus or discussion related to cultural sensitivity, and deliver a talk, lecture, or debate to your school or local AMSA chapter.
* Engagement - Find a local community group that actively works on behalf of minority or disenfranchised social groups, as defined in the parameters of this Scholars Program. Identify a way in which to meaningfully and sustainably contribute to their work while applying the skills and knowledge acquired through this Scholars Program.
  + Timeline
* Initial general topic check-in between December 1 and 20, 2016.
* Initial project description and proposed timeline due by 1/22/2017.
* Informal check-in initiated by the course directors will occur by 2/5/2017.
* Final informal check-in by 2/20/17.
* Final project statement and actual completion of project by 3/6/2017.

**VI. Inclusivity Statement**

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The American Medical Student Association (AMSA) Academy is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

* Share their unique experiences, values and beliefs.
* Be open to the views of others.
* Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
* Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community.
* Value each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.
* Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.
* Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and within the AMSA community.

**VII. Course Schedule: (*May change to accommodate guest presenters’ needs*)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Module – Number and Topic** | **Questions Due** | **Reflection due** |
| 10/13/16 | 1- Implicit bias/intro to social groups | -- | -- |
| 10/20/16 | 2 - Mistrust of the medical system | 10/19/16 | 10/27/16 |
| 11/10/16 | 3 - Ethics of Cultural Sensitivity | 11/9/16 | 11/17/16 |
| 12/15/16 | 4 - Challenges with rural underserved | 12/14/16 | -- |
| 1/9/17 | ***Mid-Term assignment due (500+ words)*** | -- |  |
| 1/19/17 | 5 - Sensitivity on the gender spectrum | 1/18/17 | 1/26/17 |
| 1/22/17 | Initial project description with timeline due | -- | -- |
| 2/16/17 | 6 - Addiction/mental health stigma | 2/15/17 | 2/22/17 |
| 2/23-26/17 | ***AMSA National Convention in Washington, D.C.*** | -- | -- |
| 3/2/17 | 7 - Culturally sensitive policy | 3/1/17 | -- |
| 3/6/17 | ***Final project due*** | -- | -- |
| 3/23/17 | 8 - Project Presentations and Course Wrap-Up | -- | -- |