

# Medical Ethics and Humanities in Utah

Summer 2020

## Medical Ethics and Humanities Amidst a Pandemic



As news of the novel coronavirus spread in the past few months, so did the awareness of the ethical dilemmas that would arise globally and the desire to look to the arts and humanities to help people in these difficult and uncertain times. The Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities has been honored to field an unprecedented number of questions recently about how to face COVID-19 and to be part of the changes required in educational practices.

### In the School of Medicine Curriculum

In mid-March 2020, with safety in mind and following the guidance of national governing bodies, all medical students were pulled from clinical rotations and most of the School of Medicine curriculum moved online. This abrupt but necessary shift called for great creativity and patience, as faculty and staff looked for ways to deliver high-quality education and training from a distance. PMEH faculty have offered two additional elective courses for medical students in their clinical years, who find themselves in the position of not being able to participate in direct patient care. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD, has offered a second, asynchronous online section expressly for advanced medical students of the popular "Health Law for Non-Lawyers," which she and Teneille Brown, JD, have taught annually as an Interprofessional, synchronous online course for health science students. Susan Sample, PhD, MFA and Gretchen Case, PhD, MA, along with Neurology's Awais Riaz, MD, have created and are teaching their new elective called "Narrative Reflection for Clerkship and Beyond." This course is taught with both synchronous and asynchronous elements.



Students in their first and second years also needed to move to distance learning, which meant that course directors, Gretchen Case, PhD, MA and Karly Pippitt, MD, worked with the Office of Curriculum team to move the required "Layers of Medicine" course fully onto online platforms. This course usually concludes with a gallery-style display of student artwork in the Eccles Health Sciences Library. Because that is not possible this year, a selection of

artwork is being posted with artists' permission each weekday on the social media app [Instagram @uusomlom](https://www.instagram.com/uusomlom). **Please follow and see their beautiful work!**

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## Evening Ethics Discussions



These informal, multidisciplinary discussions about current issues in medical ethics take place approximately bi-monthly or as ethical issues arise. A PME member facilitates discussion. Guided by the topic, we invite people with relevant expertise and experience and informed opinions to join us. Generally about 15-40 people from a variety of disciplines, including healthcare, public policy, philosophy, law, and business attend. We distribute short, timely articles from the nation's most thoughtful newspapers, journals, and magazines to the group in advance of our discussions. CME is offered.



**"Emerging Ethical Issues  
in  
Psychedelic Research"  
with Ben Lewis, MD**

**Thursday, June 11, 2020**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**[https://utah.zoom.us/  
j/93456715449](https://utah.zoom.us/j/93456715449)**

**Meeting ID: 934 5671 5449**

**Password: 091386**

For pdfs or questions:

Contact

[linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu)

We are experiencing a renaissance in the scientific study of psychedelics. A prolonged political and social moratorium on the scientific and psychotherapeutic study of this class of compounds is recently lifting, resulting in a dramatic upsurge in clinical research. Recent work in psychiatry- while involving small studies and limited control groups - has nonetheless been remarkably promising with large magnitude therapeutic effects after even single drug administrations, particularly for existential distress or anxiety in cancer patients (Griffiths et al 2016, Ross et al 2016, Grob et al 2011), smoking cessation (Bogenshutz et al 2015, Johnson et al 2014, 2017), treatment-resistant depression (Osorio et al 2015), alcohol use disorder (Krebs and Johansen, 2012) and OCD (Moreno et al 2006). These emerging treatments raise a number of ethical questions. For instance, how ought we to think about the relative importance prior personal experience with psychedelics holds for psychedelic-assisted psychotherapists? And what issues are at stake with any kind of disclosures in this regard given current legal status? What issues arise in thinking through the possible harms of psychedelic tourism - i.e. the flocking of Westerners to S. America for ayahuasca ceremonies? Are there ethical ramifications at stake in the medicalization of this class of compounds, particularly in light of indigenous cultural use and/or the ways in which this set of treatments may interface with Big Pharma?

In this presentation Ben Lewis, MD, will briefly survey some of these questions but will devote the majority of his time to discussing what might be termed 'epistemic risks' at stake with the therapeutic use of psychedelics. Michael Pollan alludes to this set of concerns in his recent book *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*: "It's one thing to conclude that love is all that matters, but quite another to come away from a therapy convinced that "there is another reality" awaiting us after death ... or that there is more to the universe—and to consciousness—than a purely materialist world view would have us believe. Is psychedelic therapy simply foisting a comforting delusion on the sick and dying?" (Pollan 2015). The worry here is that mystical experiences are- in some sense- spooky and if mystical experience is involved in the causal chain for therapeutic change (as suggested by recent clinical research) there is a risk of violating our commitments to naturalism, or inducing non-naturalistic belief states that may carry unintended harms. This possible 'Pascal's Wager' with psychedelic administration has a host of implications, ethical and otherwise, particularly in the context of vulnerable populations.

**Background reading:** "The Trip Treatment" by Michael Pollan <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/09/trip-treatment>

• **Optional readings:**

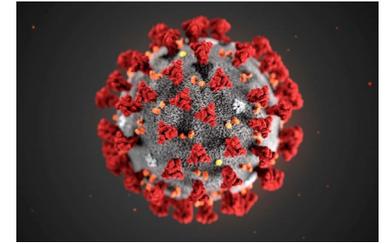
• "Psychedelic Psychiatry's Brave New World " by David Nutt, David Erritzoe, and Robin Carhart-Harris <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.j.cell.2020.03.020>

• "REBUS and the Anarchic Brain: Toward a Unified Model of the Brain Action of Psychedelics" by R. L. Carhart-Harris and K. J. Friston <https://doi.org/10.1124/pr.118.017160>

• The Epistemic Innocence of Psychedelic States by Chris Letheby (no link)

## Continued from Page 1—PMEH Amidst Pandemic

### In the Healthcare Community



PMEH has also been working hard for the wider healthcare community at the U and beyond. On April 1, we responded to numerous requests and added an online Evening Ethics to discuss emerging COVID-19 ethics related issues. This session was attended by nearly 100 participants. We have recorded this session. If you would like a link to this recording, please contact [linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu). Given the success of that discussion, we were contacted by the Dept. of Medical Oncology and subsequently held a smaller online discussion focused on their department's particular areas of ethical concern around the pandemic. While the PMEH does not set policies, we can offer education about the ethical underpinnings of policies, discuss conundrums, and offer ways to think thoughtfully through problems. If other individual departments, divisions, or units would appreciate online discussions with the PMEH of ethics issues tailored to their specific concerns, we are happy to take your requests. (Please contact [linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu) or [gretchen.case@hsc.utah.edu](mailto:gretchen.case@hsc.utah.edu))

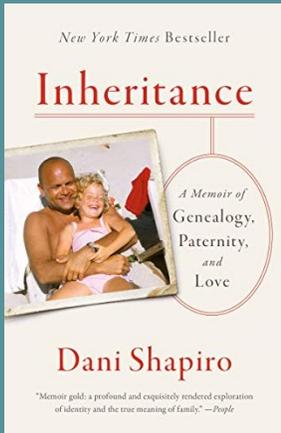
### In the Media

Many of our PMEH have been active in interviews, blogs, articles, conferences, and research during this pandemic. We provide here several of these as resources for issues that concern or interest you. News items can also be found on our website at <https://medicine.utah.edu/internalmedicine/medicalethics/news/> and internally, on the new [Medical Ethics & Humanities Pulse](#) tile, under the Education tile within the COVID-19 page.

1. James Tabery, PhD, interview: [4 Ethical Dilemmas for Healthcare Organizations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
2. Peggy Battin, PhD, MFA, commentary in [Coronavirus sends city dwellers fleeing to second homes, inflaming tensions in towns across the nation](#)
3. James Tabery, PhD, Special to the Tribune article: [How to prepare for the worst-case scenario](#)
4. (Jim Ruble, PharmD, JD) [College of Pharmacy Students Contribute to COVID-19 Fight by Compounding and Distributing Hand Sanitizer](#)
5. Sam Brown, MD, commentary in [Surviving a Severe Case of Coronavirus May Be Just the Start of Recovery](#)
6. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD: [The Week in Health Law Podcast: Disability and Access during COVID-19](#)
7. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD: [Public Health Law Watch – LIVE—discussing the ethical and legal aspects of HIPPA during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
8. Sam Brown, MD: [U of U, Intermountain Researchers Launch Study of Malaria Drug's Use in Coronavirus Cases](#)
9. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD : [The Petrie-Flom Center: Disability, COVID, and Triage](#)
10. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD, interview, [Top of Mind with Julie Rose, speaking on Privacy and Pandemics](#)
11. Margaret (Peggy) Battin, PhD, panelist in the [Conference on World Affairs virtual session "Our Health, Post-Coronavirus: The New Frontier"](#)
12. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD, and Margaret Battin, PhD, MFA [Old and New Ways of Coping with COVID-19: Ethics Matters \(Part I\)](#)
13. Leslie Francis, PhD, JD, and Margaret Battin, PhD, MFA [Old and New Ways of Coping with COVID-19: Ethics Matters \(Part II\)](#)

## Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group

Schedule of 2020 Readings can be found on [our website](#)

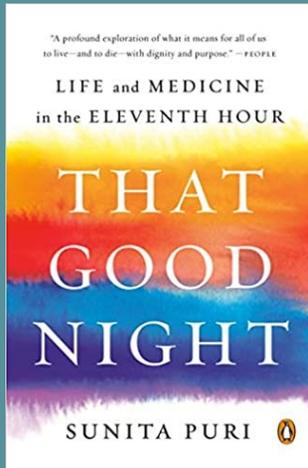


Wednesday, May 13, 2020

6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD (via zoom)

**Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love** by Dani Shapiro

On a whim, the writer Dani Shapiro and her husband decided to take DNA tests. Shapiro received the shock of her life when her results revealed that the man she'd always known as her father, a pillar in the tight-knit orthodox Jewish community in which she grew up, was not her biological father. This realization turns upside down her sense of self, her cultural identity, and her confidence in the world as she knew it. *Inheritance* is the true story of her quest to find her biological father and come to terms with the new facts of her life.

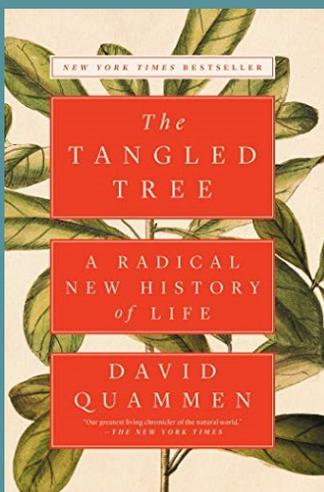


Wednesday, June 10, 2020

6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA (via zoom)

**That Good Night: Life and Medicine in the Eleventh Hour**, by Sunita Puri

Palliative medicine, a relatively new medical specialty, often is mistaken for hospice or dismissed as “giving up” on seriously ill patients. In her eloquent memoir, Sunita Puri, M.D., director of palliative medicine at the University of Southern California Keck Hospital and cancer center, invites readers into patient rooms where she shares their intimate stories of suffering but also trust, honesty, dignity, and compassion. Physicians help patients live; equally important, she says, doctors can help patients live well, even at the end of their lives. Puri, the daughter of Indian immigrants, follows her mother, an anesthesiologist, into medicine but finds herself curiously drawn to the limits of medical care where uncertainty, not the possibility of yet more procedures, reigns. In prose candid yet reassuring, Puri gently encourages physicians and the public alike to accept our mortality. Her memoir and the questions it raises seem especially pertinent during the coronavirus pandemic, which will be a good place to begin our discussion.



Wednesday, July 8, 2020

6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Maureen Mathison, PhD (via zoom)

**The Tangled Tree: A Radical New History of Life** by David Quammen

First used by Charles Darwin, the metaphor Tree of Life has been used to study how species are related (the trunk), evolved, and differentiated (as seen in the branching) to persist. For Darwin and others early thinking was that species evolved vertically, that is, traits were passed down to offspring; mutations were in response to environment so that through natural selection the fittest could survive. With vertical thinking much of the focus in research was on inheritance and change through genetic mutation. Genetic research opened up the study of evolution and led biologists to examine how evolution occurred through gene loss, gene creation and gene duplication. And more. David Quammen's book, *The Tangled Tree: A Radical New History of Life*, takes up Darwin's metaphor augmenting a unique perspective to explanations of evolution that impact human nature and health. The book traces various scientists and their contributions to thinking about evolution, from Charles Darwin to Tsutomu Watanabe (who identified horizontal gene transfer, which accounts for drug resistant bacteria), and to Carl Woese, who redefined evolutionary processes with his discovery of a third “domain of life.”

## Keep the Dates for Upcoming Speakers



**Jonathan M. Metz, MD, PhD**, will be our 2020 Cowan Memorial Lecturer, visiting Utah October 1, 2020. He will present an Internal Medicine Grand Rounds and an Evening Ethics. Watch for more information.



**Victoria Sweet, MD**, our 2020 Medical Humanities Lecturer, has re-scheduled her Utah visit due to COVID-19 to November 4-5. She is the award-winning author of *God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine* and *Slow Medicine: The Way to Healing*. She will lead an **Evening Ethics on Wednesday, Nov. 4, "Slow Medicine, Ethics, and the Case of Mrs. C."** and deliver an informal lecture on the main University campus on **Nov. 5: "Hildegard of Bingen: Medieval lessons for Modern Medicine"** She also will meet with medical students and faculty interested in creative writing.



**Steven Joffe, MD**, will be our 2020 David Green Memorial Speaker, visiting Utah December 10th. He will hold a Pediatric Grand Rounds and an Evening Ethics. Watch for titles and details.

## PMEH Calendar of Events

<p><b>*The Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group 6:00-8:00 pm</b> U of U Hospital Large Conference Room #W1220 (via Zoom until further notice)</p> <p><b><i>Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love</i></b> by Dani Shapiro, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD</p> <p><b><i>That Good Night: Life and Medicine in the Eleventh Hour</i></b> by Sunita Puri, Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA</p> <p><b><i>The Tangled Tree: A Radical New History of Life</i></b> by David Quammen, Facilitated by Maureen Mathison, PhD</p>	<p>Wed. May. 13</p> <p>Wed. June 10</p> <p>Wed. July 8</p>
<p><b>Resident Ethics Conferences 12:30-1:15 pm (on hold due to COVID-19)</b></p> <p><b>*Evening Ethics</b></p> <p><b>"Emerging Ethical Issues in Psychedelic Research"</b> with Ben Lewis, MD, 5:30pm-7pm, via zoom <a href="https://utah.zoom.us/j/93456715449">https://utah.zoom.us/j/93456715449</a> Password: 091386</p>	<p>Thurs. June 11</p>
<p><b>Upcoming Speakers—Keep the Dates</b></p> <p><b>Jonathan M. Metz, Cowan Memorial Speakership</b></p> <p><b>Victoria Sweet, MD: Evening Ethics: "Slow Medicine, Ethics, and the Case of Mrs. C." (this is a re-scheduling)</b></p> <p><b>Victoria Sweet, MD: "Hildegard of Bingen: Medieval lessons for Modern Medicine" (time &amp; location TBD) (this is a re-scheduling)</b></p> <p><b>Steven Joffe, MD, David Green Memorial Speakership</b></p>	<p>Thurs. Oct. 1</p> <p>Wed. Nov. 4</p> <p>Thurs. Nov. 5</p> <p>Thurs. Dec. 10</p>

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## Program Members on the Road and In Print

**Susan Sample** presented reflective writing workshops for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation residents, Feb. 7; a new MS1 student interest group on writing, Feb. 13; and the HCI Communication Office, Feb. 27. Via Zoom, she was a guest lecturer for a science writing class at the University of Idaho School of Journalism and Mass Media April 22. She also was interviewed for "The Art of Healing," a feature story about *Rubor: Reflections on Medicine from the Wasatch Front* in the spring 2020 issue of the University of Utah Magazine.

**Susan Sample's** new book, *Voices of Teenage Transplant Survivors: Miracle-like*, has been accepted for publication by Emerald Publishing at the end of 2020.

**Sam Brown's** new book, *Joseph Smith's Translation*, can be pre-ordered [here](#)

**Gretchen Case** mentored some medical students recently who presented at the Oral History Association national meeting (held in SLC). She continually has a presence at national meetings presenting work from LOM and brings ideas from these conferences to our school. She has also received funding from both the NIH and NEA to develop an evidence-based intervention intended to improve medical trainee's skills regarding difficult conversations by offering them coaching in individual theatrical rehearsal techniques.

**Gretchen Case** will be a speaker on a plenary panel at the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities at the annual meeting in Baltimore in October 2020.