

Medicine, Rhetoric, and Doctor-Patient Communication

The medical profession, like all professional fields, relies heavily on a properly situated use of rhetoric. Understanding this rhetoric and how it is used is crucial to understanding medicine as a rhetorical community. This annotated bibliography contains peer-reviewed academic articles dealing with the use of rhetoric in medicine. The purpose of this topic is to investigate rhetorical communication within medical scenes. The intended audience of this annotated bibliography is any scholars or students interested in rhetoric within the medical profession. This research topic's findings will help students planning to enter the medical field. It can also provide further context for rhetoric scholars who may be unfamiliar with this particular setting. The criteria for the articles listed here are based on two categories: an analysis of the medical scene as rhetorical situation, and a closer examination of rhetorical communication within that setting.

Devitt, Amy J., Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff. "Materiality and Genre in the Study of

Discourse Communities". *College English* 65.5 (2003): 541 – 558. Web. 17 Feb. 2016.

This article, by three well-known writing researchers, deals with the concept of discourse community, which is crucial to the area of research I plan to do. Notably, it looks at how the needs of various communities dictate the genres used by those communities. As three

examples of this, the article presents analyses of a legal, a pedagogical, and, of highest interest to my research, a medical community. I see this article as helping to lay the groundwork for the more specific primary research that I will carry out later.

Goldner, Melinda. "Using the Internet and Email for Health Purposes: The Impact of Health Status". *Social Science Quarterly* 87.3 (2006): 690 – 710. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Feb.

2016. This article is important to my goals because it looks at an area that I plan to explore in my own research – the recent phenomenon of potential patients seeking health-care information online. Not only does this article analyze common methods for finding this information, it also examines the types of people, with specific medical issues, who usually do this. Most interestingly, the article analyzes email communication between doctors and their patients, and what effect this digital medium has on that dialogue. The author, Melinda Goldner, specializes in researching trends in the healthcare profession, and is a suitable authority for this topic.

Hughes, David. "Control in the Medical Consultation: Organizing Talk in a Situation Where Co-participants Have Differential Competence". *Sociology* 16.3 (1982): 359 – 376. *JSTOR*.

Web. 16 Feb. 2016. This article is an excellent source for me, for a number of reasons. It covers an aspect of the topic I discussed in the first major project, the genre analysis, the relationship between patient and professional. This article approaches this idea by analyzing the influence that both the professional and the professional community's genres have on shaping the patient's views. This reflects some concepts that I brought up in the first major project, as well as from the course reading by Devitt, Bawarshi, and Reiff. This article is excellent as an expansion upon ideas I have previously found. The

author David Hughes, of the University of Swansea, specializes in the social interactions of the medical field. Although this paper is rather old, the subject it looks at, the interpersonal relationship between doctor and patient, is still present today in much the same form.

Kopelson, Karen. "Writing Patients' Wrongs: The Rhetoric and Reality of Information Age Medicine". *Journal of Advanced Composition* 29 1/2 (2009): 353 – 404. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Feb. 2016. This source is a valuable collection of ideas on an aspect of medical rhetoric that I want to further explore: the recent emergence of online sources of medical information and the accompanying rhetorical contexts and genres. Karen Kopelson, of the University of Louisville, specializes in the intersection between health and rhetoric, and is therefore an excellent source for this information. This article applies many broader ideas about medical rhetoric more generally, analyzing how the online context affects them.

MacDonald, Malcolm N. "Pedagogy, Pathology and Ideology: The Production, Transmission and Reproduction of Medical Discourse". *Discourse & Society* 13.4 (2002): 447 – 467. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 Feb. 2016. This article, though somewhat old, is perfect for the area of my research. It is primarily an analysis of three common genres in the medical profession: the research article, the doctor-patient interview, and the medical textbook. The author, Malcolm MacDonald, of the University of Stirling, examines how language is used differently and how the profession's overall "ideology" is constructed in each of these three genres. Considering that my first major project, a genre analysis,

concerned the doctor-patient interview form as a genre, this source could help me further explore this genre and its interactions with other genres in the community.

Schleifer, Ronald. "Narrative Knowledge, Phronesis, and Paradigm-based Medicine". *Narrative* 20.1 (2012): 64 – 86. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Feb. 2016. Ronald Schleifer, of the University of Oklahoma, is a prominent authority in rhetoric research. This article analyzes the role that narrative plays in the medical profession, especially in the communication between professional and patient. Schleifer, who specializes in researching rhetoric in science and medicine, also brings up the Aristotelian concept of phronesis, or "practical reason," and how a medical professional's phronesis is largely based on understanding the patient's narrative. The main thrust of this article, looking at the dynamics of communication in medicine, fits very well with where I want to take my research.

Segal, Judith. "Patient Compliance, the Rhetoric of Rhetoric, and the Rhetoric of Persuasion". *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23.3/4 (1994): 90 – 102. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Feb. 2016. In this article, the relationship between caregivers and patients is approached from a specific perspective. It examines the problem of patient noncompliance with a view toward understanding and rectifying this issue. The researcher, Judith Segal, is experienced in the area of interpersonal dealings within medical contexts. This source approaches my research topic with a unique and highly practical exigency. It adds a perspective that seeks to solve a pressing contemporary problem, giving it a unique kind of application.

Wagner, Todd H., et al. "Free Internet Access, the Digital Divide, and Health Information".

Medical Care 43.4 (2005): 415 – 420. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Feb. 2016. This article discusses recent developments in how patients receive care, in light of technological changes. Todd H. Wagner, of Stanford University, specializes in researching developments in the medical field, and is a well-known authority on the subject. In particular, this article analyzes some of the factors that work to prevent some individuals from accessing medical information online. This information is useful to me in that it provides a great deal of research into modern medical scenes from a more patient-oriented perspective.

Wilce, James M. "Medical Discourse". *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (2009): 199 – 215.

JSTOR. Web. 16 Feb. 2016. This article covers a number of important ideas. It offers historical background, specifically in discussing ways that scholars have looked at medical discourse in the past. It also looks at how the community's genres can be adjusted in different cultural or institutional contexts. The author, James M. Wilce, is known for studying this kind of intersection between rhetoric and public practice. This article is useful to me in that it offers another perspective, a highly social perspective, from which to analyze medical genres and their functions.

Yoels, William C., et al. "Role-Taking Accuracy in Medical Encounters: A Test of Two

Theories". *Sociological Focus* 26.3 (1993): 183 – 201. *JSTOR*. Web. 18 Feb. 2016. This article examines how doctors and patients interact, in the context of two proposed models regarding that relationship: the social contact theory and the institutional resource theory. These ideas will help me

to establish a foothold in the academic conversation on this topic. Also, it is just this aspect of the medical community, how its members interact with patients, that I want to further investigate. After the genre analysis, I have somewhat of an understanding regarding the genres of the medical community; this article can assist me in understanding the workings of that community itself. This article's authors also offer an eclectic mix of backgrounds, from Jeffrey Michael Clair, an authority in the study of medical rhetoric, to Richard M. Allman, an experienced medical clinician.



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