

21A.216J
Professor Erica Caple James
Reflection Paper Topic #2
Due Monday, March 7, 2005 at 11 am.

Write two, double-spaced, 12-point font pages on the following issue:

Byron Good and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good both describe the way in which American biomedicine is a materialist, scientific endeavor that not only constructs its object, the body, through particular techniques and practices, but also constructs physicians in a professional realm with its own moral order.

Atul Gawande writes from within the world of medicine and asserts the following: “We look for medicine to be an orderly field of knowledge and procedure. But it is not. It is an imperfect science, an enterprise of constantly changing knowledge, uncertain information, fallible individuals, and at the same time lives on the line. There is science in what we do, yes, but also habit, intuition, and sometimes plain old guessing” (2002: 7).

Good, Good, and Gawande are on a panel discussing Gawande’s chapter “When Doctors Make Mistakes.” They have been asked to debate the following statement: “The Morbidity and Mortality Conference is the best means of reducing clinician error.” In your paper discuss how each would respond to this statement and give your own critique of their perspectives.

As you build your argument be sure to use the theories and analyses of Good and Good – i.e., the concepts of “formative practices,” “medical gaze,” “soteriology,” “performance,” “narrative,” “clinician competence,” “professional civility,” the “professional moral voice,” etc. – and do give a strong thesis statement. If supporting case material is needed, use the cases presented in their texts.

Good luck!