

Editor's Note

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Theme issues are a longstanding tradition in magazines and journals. At their worst, they can seem like a gimmick: a way of creating false unity, or a way to entice a specific set of advertisers. At their best, however, they allow for increased reflection and expansive discussion. In the case of this issue of The York Scholar, we did not set out to create a theme issue, but instead were fortunate enough to find one coming together. All three of the essays featured in this issue of The York Scholar share a common interest in health and medicine, yet each assumes a very different focus.

Many of the Writing 300 courses focus around a particular theme chosen by the instructor, with students selecting research topics that grow out of that theme. This focused issue embodies that particular aspect of the course by showing how different aspects of a topic can be explored in very different ways. Yet the essays in this issue go far beyond the boundaries of a single course; in fact, each of them has grown out of a different section of Writing 300. We hope that presenting them together will allow students and other readers to see the possibilities and connections emerging from the themes they work with.

In the first paper, Ali Syed's "Medical Schools and Emotional Intelligence," the focus is on the qualities that make for an effective and compassionate doctor. While social awareness and the ability to read people are important for a doctor's bedside manner, medical school admissions tend to be heavily decided by an applicants GPA and MCAT score. Syed tackles the difficulty of predicting who will make a good doctor, discussing the key components of Emotional Intelligence and its connection to empathy, a key trait in successful doctors. After describing the controversy over how to measure such traits, he calls for further research to explore how these abilities might be quantified with an aim toward including such a measurement in the screening process for medical school applicants.

Wanda Lopez turns her focus to nurses and the role they play in ensuring healthcare for people living with HIV. Her paper, "HIV: A New Era of Treatment" examines how anti-retroviral medicines have made HIV a treatable manageable illness, greatly prolonging people's lives. Yet, now that people are living much longer with HIV, other complications, such as heart disease, diabetes, and diseases attributed to smoking are increasing in this population.

Taking a look at the role of the medications themselves and lifestyle choices such as smoking, Lopez discusses the complexity of treating HIV infection, while also ensuring that patients receive adequate care for other problems. She focuses particularly on the roles of nurses in evaluating and educating HIV infected patients and calls for more comprehensive treatment programs.

In the third paper, “America’s Prison Problem,” Christian Bouchereau discusses the reality of life in prison and the effects of that life on prisoner’s mental and physical health. Although one of the stated purposes of incarceration is rehabilitation, Bouchereau notes that prisons are instead organized around punishment and frequently employ solitary confinement to isolate and break prisoners. He examines the ways in which incarceration causes physical and mental harm and leads to more crime and recidivism once inmates have returned to their communities. Noting that former inmates are often powerless, Bouchereau suggests restoring voting rights to all so they can have a voice and work for change within the prison system.

Our cover features X by Y.

The support of the York community is key to the publication of the York Scholar. Many thanks are due to: the Office of Academic Affairs, York College Printing Services, the Web Team, and the faculty and staff of The College-Wide Writing Program. Most importantly, we thank all of the students who submitted their work for consideration; it is only thanks to their efforts and their willingness to expose their work to editorial judgment that we have papers to publish. We hope current and future students in the Writing 300 courses will be equally inspired to submit their work.