

## **Questions and Answers – History of Medicine Program at Western U**

Visit Website: <http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/historymedicine>

- Prof Shauna Devine [sdevine7@uwo.ca](mailto:sdevine7@uwo.ca) (Office hours: HSA 041 Thurs 11:30-3:30 or by appointment)
- Prof Shelley McKellar [smckell@uwo.ca](mailto:smckell@uwo.ca) (On sabbatical leave for 2016-17 academic year)

### **1. How do I choose a history of medicine topic?**

The Office of Medical History has a suggested list of potential topics. These are broad, recommended topics in the history of medicine, which we believe you will find interesting as you read more about the subject area. However, you are not limited to these subject areas and may choose to learn about any topic in the history of medicine, broadly defined, that you find fascinating.

### **2. How do I formulate my questions and find readings?**

You can choose to work independently, or you can work with a member of the history of medicine faculty. The instructor will recommend readings, help you formulate your questions and direction, narrow or widen your focus, help you write an abstract, and generally be a resource for you.

### **3. Where can I present this research?**

There are a few options for you, however, your immediate goal is to have your project selected for presentation at the History of Medicine Days in Calgary (there is financial support for those students selected to present). Or, you may present your research at the History of Medicine Colloquium at Western (March each year) and have an opportunity to win student history of medicine awards! For more information on our March colloquium: [Western Colloquium](#) Why not present your project twice – in Calgary and at Western?

### **4. What are the History of Medicine days in Calgary?**

It is a History of Medicine Conference which attracts medical students from across North America to present their work on the history of medicine. The conference is two-day, nation-wide, and held at the University of Calgary. Undergraduates and early graduate students from across Canada and the United States are invited to submit an abstract for an oral or a poster presentation on the history of medicine and health care. The presentations will be 10 to 12 minutes for oral or 2 to 3 minutes for a poster (with additional discussion time afterwards). The topics for presentation may cover a wide range and could include areas such as the Classics, the History of Public Health, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, Human Biology and Neuroscience, and more. Prizes will be awarded in different categories and all active participants are invited to attend the Awards Banquet on the last evening of the conference. *“This is a wonderful venue for our Schulich Medicine students to present their history of medicine research, to network with other Canadian medical students, and to increase the profile of our School’s medical education program,”* said Shelley McKellar, PhD, Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine at Western University. For more information: [History of Medicine Days Conference](#)

### **5. What is an abstract and how do I write one? (Please see attached Sample Abstract)**

To be accepted to present at either Calgary or Western you will need to submit a short abstract (not more than 300 words). An abstract is a summary of your research project. You want the reader to be able to grasp the purpose and central ideas of your project. Thus it should include the nature of the research question(s) that motivates the project; purpose of the project; methods, documents, or evidence analyzed; conclusions reached or what does your early research tell you; the significance of your research; what is new to our understanding; why does it matter today.

## 6. How long should my project be?

If your abstract is accepted for Calgary you will either be selected to give a longer presentation (10 minutes maximum) or a poster presentation (2-3 minutes maximum). So you are simply presenting the larger questions around your topic, giving a brief history, raising some discussion points, and concluding with how your topic is relevant today. For example, if you looked at the changing standard of care for compound fractures pre and post WWI, you might look at the training of surgeons, the use of the X-ray and its impact on practice, organization of care and training (the development of the American and Canadian College of Surgeons for example), new techniques for managing fractures, and conclude with a discussion of what is happening today (e.g. Despite the improvements in technology and surgical techniques, rates of infection and non-union are still troublesome, which led to research projects and new protocols such as early antibiotic administration, early and meticulous irrigation and debridement.)

## 7. What is a poster presentation?

A poster is a shorter, visual presentation of your topic. Basic guidelines include an Introduction/ Historical methodology (how did you approach your theme? / Sources used (e.g., newspaper clippings, personal interviews, film, etc.), General context (How does your research contribute to the existing literature?) A. Historical narrative B. Main text C. Discussion D. Acknowledgements E. Bibliography. So just as it sounds, you will make a poster, which may combine photos, diagrams, graphs, and text—anything to help you relate the main points of your topic. You will put the material together and Schulich graphics will print the poster for you. You have five minutes to present your material and answer questions. For more information: <https://hom.ucalgary.ca/system/files/poster-presentation-guidelines-february-12-2015.pdf>

## 8. Should I write an essay or give a PowerPoint presentation?

You may choose to read a ten-minute paper, but most students use PowerPoint as it tends to better engage a medical audience. The instructor will offer suggestions on how you might develop such a presentation.

## 9. What student awards are available in the history of medicine at Western?

- **The Rowntree Prize in Medical History** (value \$250, awarded at Western's History of Medicine Colloquium)
- **The Harvey Club Prize** (value \$250, awarded at Western's History of Medicine Colloquium)
- **History of Medicine Award at Western** (value \$1000, awarded to a fourth year student who has shown initiative, excellence and enthusiasm in the history of medicine at Western throughout their medical education; notation in convocation program)

## 10. Are there any other opportunities to present or develop this research?

Yes – there are numerous venues for you to share and be recognized for your research – such as:

- [William Osler Medal](#) for best essay written by a medical student, awarded by American Association for the History of Medicine
- [William B Bean Award](#) for medical student research project funding, awarded by American Osler Society.
- [H.N. Segall Award](#) for best student paper presentation at Canadian Society for the History of Medicine annual meeting
- [Hannah Summer Studentships](#) for research project funding for an undergraduate student medical history project, awarded by Associated Medical Services, Inc.
- Various specialist meetings have history of medicine/ medical humanities poster or presentation sections -- ie. [Vanessa DeMelo, Meds2017 presented on the evolution of tracheostomy at the Third International Tracheostomy Symposium at Johns Hopkins University, April 29-30, 2016 UWOMJ](#)
- History of Medicine Section (print) as well as UWOMJ blog "[The Osler Files](#)" and "[Learning from Hippocrates](#)". See for example, <http://blog.uwomj.com/>

## 11. Why is the history of medicine important in my medical education?

- As a doctor or medical researcher you will need all that science has to offer but a deeper understanding of history will help you preserve your humanity/bed-side manner
- Understand how the medical humanities illuminate the patient experience of illness
- Use specific narratives written by a physician, patient, or writer to examine how the process of becoming a doctor transforms one morally, beyond the acquisition of technical skills
- Explain in what sense biomedicine constitutes a distinct culture of its own
- Provoke you to think about integrating medical humanities into your ongoing development as a physician
- You will meet other medical students with similar interests
- And above all, it's fun!

**Recommended reading:** David Jones, Jacalyn Duffin, Jeremy Greene, John Harley Warner, "Making the Case for History in Medical Education," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Vol. 70 4 (2014): 623-653. (Digital copies available via Western Libraries or email History of Medicine faculty)

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### SAMPLE ABSTRACT

#### **Serendipity, Super Glue and Surgery: Cyanoacrylates as Hemostatic Aids in the Vietnam War**

By: Chantelle Champagne Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta  
Preceptor: Dr. Sasha Mullally, PhD

In 1942, H.W. Coover was working to develop a clear plastic for WWII machine gun sights. The compound he developed, cyanoacrylate, proved to be a complete failure. After setting the formula aside for many years, Coover was inspired to rethink the use of the compound and began to explore its potential as a strong, quick drying glue. In 1951, what we now know as "superglue" was first marketed as "Eastman 910". It was not long before Coover and his colleagues began exploring its potential as a biological adhesive.

In the early 1960s, Coover, in collaboration with Ethicon Co., applied for FDA approval of cyanoacrylate glues as tissue adhesives. The most dramatic and innovative medical application of cyanoacrylates was as a hemostatic agent during trauma surgery. This presentation will outline the aforementioned use of Coover's cyanoacrylates, discussing the promising outcomes of superglue in military surgery of the 1960s, and explain why it did not achieve widespread usage outside of the Vietnam conflict.

Using scientific journal articles, medical reviews and case studies of cyanoacrylate use in military casualties, this presentation will focus on the most extensive medico-surgical application of superglue: its use by American forces in Vietnam. Armed with Freon propelled n-butyl cyanoacrylate spray developed by the military, specially trained surgical teams achieved instant hemostasis in about thirty, otherwise fatal, cases of hemorrhage. Although not all patients survived, experts did not attribute the deaths to complications of cyanoacrylate use. Despite the dramatic results observed in Vietnam, further studies required for FDA approval of this "surgical superglue" were not economically feasible for Coover and Ethicon Co. and the project was reluctantly abandoned. It was not until 1998 that the FDA approved cyanoacrylates for medical use; Coover's dreams of saving countless lives with his tissue adhesive are finally being realized in modern surgery.