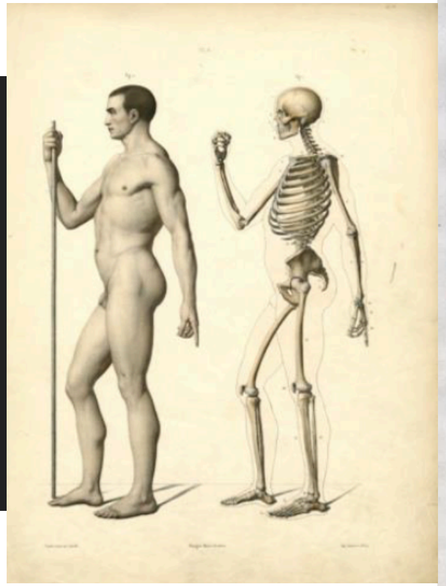
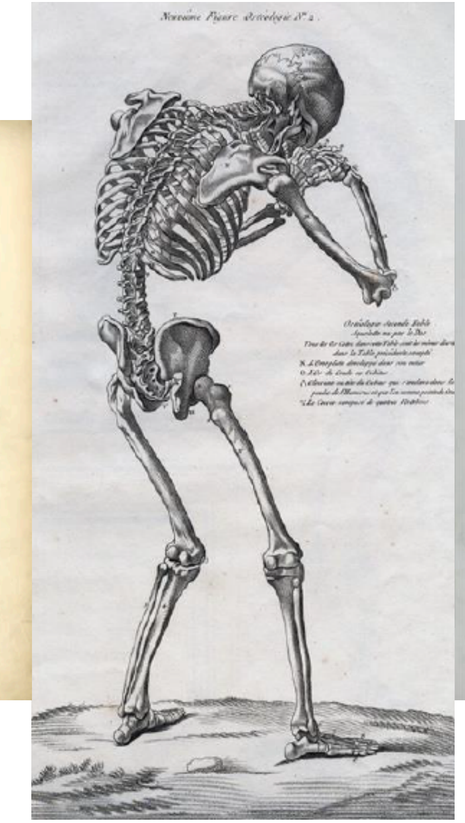
Pennsylvania Academy *of the* Fine Arts PAFA

Art and Medicine Program





Images: (Left & Right) The anatomy of the external forms of man, intended for the use of artists, painters and sculptors.: Julien Fau; Robert Knox. Language: English. 1849.
(Center) Nouveau traite d'anatomie : accommodée aux arts de peinture et de sculpture par Tortebat, exécutée dans le genre du crayon par T. LeClere dessinateur pour la facilité des jeunes élèves et gravée par Petit.: Roger de Piles. Language: French. 1750

What Makes PAFA Unique

PAFA: Where tradition meets innovation. Experience a unique fine arts education that combines the best of both worlds. Hone your skills in a vibrant environment where renowned faculty are dedicated to fostering your artistic growth. Connect with a diverse student body from across the globe and unlock your creative potential.

A recipient of the National Medal of Arts, PAFA offers a world-class collection of American art, innovative exhibitions of historic and contemporary American art, and educational opportunities in the fine arts. The PAFA Museum aims to tell America's diverse story through art, expanding who has been included in the canon of art history through its collections, exhibitions, and public programs, while classes educate artists and appreciators with a deep understanding of traditions and the ability to challenge conventions.

Founded in 1805 as the first school and museum of fine arts in the United States, PAFA celebrates the transformative power of art and art-making.

PAFA educates artists from around the world to be innovative makers and critical thinkers with a deep understanding of traditions and the ability to challenge conventions.

Our specialized and unique art school attracts some of the most committed and promising art students from around the globe to study with a distinguished faculty of working artists. The school holds a position of national prestige, with cutting-edge studio and classroom facilities, private studios for students, a historic cast collection, and the opportunity for students to exhibit in a world-class museum.

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Program Description

PAFA's Art & Medicine Program currently provides humanities-based training for medical students, nursing students, university faculty members and practicing physicians to enhance both hard and soft skills, and to provide respite from the rigors of medical school and practice.

As one Cooper student said in a 2024 course evaluation:
"I liked that I had to use my brain in a different way than I normally do while studying. It was helpful to learn how to look at things differently and be able to describe what I see in terms of basic shapes and colors and movement instead of immediately jumping to conclusions. For example, instead of reporting to a physician that a patient has shingles, I might say they have a cluster of small blisters with clear fluid that wraps around the trunk without crossing the midline, which I think is shingles. It is a skill to be able to describe what we see and explain what we see and why we jump to conclusions and diagnoses."

Other recent students from Temple explained the importance of what they learned at PAFA from slowing down, building awareness of bias, and close looking:

"How I perceive a patient and what I write about them in their chart could follow them for a lifetime. I need to recognize my biases and look carefully before jumping to conclusions."

"Seeing can mean life or death if you look at a black & white image like an MRI or x-ray and miss something. Drawing in charcoal connects well to radiology class, learning to read an x-ray."

Offerings include courses for medical school students (primarily pre-clinical, first or second year students), workshops or retreats for clinical staff, and content-based talks, open to the general public.

PAFA's Art & Medicine Program currently teaches 12-hour, 1 credit courses in top local medical schools including:

- *Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson*
- *University Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania*

These courses are part of each school's medical humanities program and are valued both for the specific skills and competencies they teach and for the respite offered to students from a very rigorous, memorization-heavy pre-clinical curriculum. Each program is tailored to the specific needs of each client, especially timing.

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Course Offerings

Art of Observation

Course Overview

This course offers medical students a chance to add a humanities element to their course of study, focused particularly on honing their observational abilities and understanding their inherent biases when approaching visual objects and broadening to more universal themes, using perspective transformation, leading to transformative learning. The Art of Observation focuses on developing skills for clinical practice through looking at works of art.

Utilizing PAFA's collection (which is also virtual), students in the course will improve visual literacy skills, which include the ability to observe, analyze, interpret, and make meaning from images. The course uses the power of art to promote the analysis and communication necessary in addressing ambiguity in the medical field. These skills will then be built on to discuss topics like emotional intelligence, implicit bias, and socio-cultural issues in medicine. Research from Harvard and Yale has shown that observational skills for clinical application are proven to be enhanced by learning to look at art.

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of art and composition such as line, form, and color and will then embark on a series of looking exercises in the gallery in which the focus is to expand first from the individual to the group, then to broader empathy and understanding of the community, and finally to universal considerations.

The art is specifically selected to reflect the underlying goals of each session. As such, it will start off with images meant to stimulate discussion about the deeper meaning imparted in images, the goals of the artist, and the supporting details that lead to those conclusions. Subsequent looking exercises will progressively build on these concepts and will expand on the observational abilities learned in the earlier sessions. Understanding and broadening of the concepts will be ascertained through scaffolded group discussion and dialogue.

Course Offerings

Art of Observation

Course Goals & Objectives

- Identify strengths, deficiencies and limits in one's knowledge and expertise.
  - Distinguish between observation and interpretation of data in an arts-based setting.
  - Identify applications for enhanced observational skills in clinical practice.
  - Recognize the prevalence of ambiguous information in decision-making.
  - Define common heuristics and cognitive biases in education and healthcare by exploring them in an arts-based setting.
  - Apply an understanding of how visual information is processed by the brain.
  - Build enhanced visual vocabularies and communication skills which increase tolerance for nuance, ambiguity, and pertinent negatives and increase empathy for the importance of visual language in both speaking and listening.
- Demonstrate empathy and an understanding about human emotions that allow one to develop and manage interpersonal interactions.
  - Identify and describe the visual composition of basic human emotions using artworks.
  - Practice the deliberate conveyance of emotions through kinetic learning and discuss applied concepts like emotional contagion, automatic mimicry.
  - Understand the basic definition and application of emotional intelligence in medical practice, including both inter- and intra-personal behaviors.
  - Discuss and apply the concept of emotional intelligence in building rapport with patients and colleagues, problem-solving, advocacy and dealing with ambiguity.

Course Offerings

Art of Observation

Course Goals & Objectives

- Communicate effectively with patients, families, peers, and other team members of diverse backgrounds, languages, cultures, and communities using strategies to build therapeutic alliances, promote inclusion and equity, and ensure understanding.
  - Identify cultural biases throughout history that contribute to contemporary, implicit biases in a diverse patient population.
  - Discuss structural inequalities in health care relating to intersectional factors around race, gender, and class.
  - Demonstrate visual communication skills that can convey problems and solutions to a diverse population of patients.
  - Collaborate on hypothetical patient care scenarios that demonstrate sensitivity to the complexity of observable data and cultural contexts in which a patient exists.
- Apply understanding of current and historical factors affecting health equity, including structural inequities in access to and quality of health care to improve the health of patients and communities.
  - Practice using visual art to unpack and dismantle individual racial bias in decision-making.
  - Demonstrate understanding of how systemic inequities, including around race, affect individual decision-making.
  - Build an understanding of the importance of self-regard and self-regulation in addressing ones own ability to combat structural inequity in a professional setting.

Course Offerings

The Art of Anatomy: Fundamentals of Life Drawing

Course Overview

The Art of Anatomy is an elective focusing on developing skills for clinical practice through hands-on artmaking. Utilizing PAFA's collection and classrooms, students will improve their observational drawing skills. Students will engage with a series of drawing approaches to create accurate representations of live figure models and classical sculptures. Through group discussion and critique students will hone their artistic language skills, learning to describe what they see and how it relates to their medical school experience, specifically the gross anatomy lab.

Course Goals & Objectives:

- Develop skills essential to observational drawing
- Improve observational skills
- Develop fine motor skills
- Provide opportunities for reflection on the experience of the anatomy lab

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts of art and composition such as line, form, and color and will then embark on a series of looking exercises in the gallery in which the focus is to expand first from the individual to the group, then to broader empathy and understanding of the community, and finally to universal considerations.

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Contact Information

PAFA Website:

www.pafa.org/education/lifelong-learning/art-medicine-programs

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