
UAMS Medical Humanities and Bioethics Newsletter - August 2026

From Med Humanities <MedHumanities@uams.edu>

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Clinical



As part of the Department's mission to provide a strong ethical foundation in clinical practice, we have created **new education videos** covering some basic clinical ethics topics—from how ethics support happens in hospitals to the ethics of adult and pediatric decision making, surrogate decision makers,

advance directives, requests for medically inappropriate treatments, and more. We hope to be adding other topics over the coming academic year.

The videos are typically run 7-10 minutes long and can be found at <https://medicine.uams.edu/humanities/videos/>. Versions of each video exist for the broader public as well as for UAMS staff (which includes institutional policy information, where relevant; if you work for UAMS, please contact us at humanities@uams.edu for the password).

Education

With the arrival of August comes the arrival of new students at UAMS. In particular, new medical students will begin orientation the first week of the month, with classes starting thereafter. One class that students will have over the first two years here at in the College of Medicine is the Practice of Medicine course (designated at POM1 and POM2). This course focuses on learning to think and act like a physician—integrating basic science content with the need to connect with the humanity of patients.



POM1, led by Angie Scott, MD, PhD (see her profile in the [February 2026 newsletter](#)), with Lauren Bunch, PhD, as co-director and ethics content expert (see her profile in the [May 2025 newsletter](#)), introduces students to the idea of professional identity development, helping see that “doctoring” is more than learning about anatomy, physiology and pharmacokinetics—emphasizing communication, ethical insight and norms, and the importance of human connection. UAMS is fortunate to have such great leaders for this course, and that those leaders are faculty in the Department of Medical Humanities & Bioethics helps ensure that medical education remains grounded in the purpose of serving each patient’s interests and values.

Research/Scholarship



While the primary faculty in the department continues to produce important scholarship through publications and conference presentations, for this issue of the newsletter, we wanted to highlight the work of a couple of faculty members whose full-time positions reside elsewhere at UAMS but who produced important scholarship related to the department's mission.

Karina Clemmons, EdD, Assistant Dean for Curriculum in COM has her faculty appointment in the department and recently was part of a writing group that published.

- Steciuch CC, Baños JH, Bates TA, Bauckman KA, Clemmons KR, Costin JM, Fairbrother H, García Osorio ME, Greenberg A, Hubner BA, Huynh PB, Kiefer M, Lahoti S, Laird-Fick HS, Song X, Sturtevant JE, Wang L, Zinski A, Fontes JD. Contemporary Step 1 Predictive Methods Across 12 US MD-Granting Medical Schools. *Teach Learn Med* . 2026 Apr 13:1-13. doi: 10.1080/10401334.2026.2655826. PMID: 41969173.



Catherine O'Brien, PharmD, MA (bioethics), professor in the College of Pharmacy (see her profile in the [November 2025 newsletter](#)) , had both a poster (Dr. Bunch was also part of this poster) and a presentation at the AACP Annual Meeting (American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy).

- Poster: O'Brien CE, Johnson J, Keisner S, Bunch L. Thematic analysis of pharmacy students' written ethics assignments.

- Presentation: "Ivermectin: The Tip of the Misinformation Iceberg" Co-presenters: Kate Rotzenberg and Kathleen Horan

We are very fortunate to have affiliated faculty doing good work like this, getting national recognition they deserve for their scholarship.



Faculty Profile

Trish Starks, Ph.D. Distinguished Professor of History and Director, University of Arkansas Humanities Center. Though she lives and works in Fayetteville, Dr. Starks has been an affiliate faculty member at UAMS for several years, supporting the humanities offerings and education for medical and other health professional students. This fall (2026) marks the first time that she will be teaching her first M4 medical student elective, History of (American) Medicine—which will be taught all online, and has 20 students enrolled).

Dr. Starks earned her bachelor's degree from University of Missouri adding a master's and doctorate in history from THE Ohio State University. Her scholarly work focuses on the history of Russian and Soviet Public Health, as well as history of tobacco and addiction. She will bring all this and more to bear in the teaching of her new elective, and we are fortunate to have her as part of our elective faculty.



Some Questions

How does your work connect with the department?

It would seem, on first look, that history and looking backward would not have that much to do with a field like medicine, which is so occupied with technology and moving forward, but I think history is essential to a more mindful practice of medicine and better standards of care. Not only can we learn from the mistakes of the past, but we can also see the roots of

so many of the problems we are still addressing, build empathy by reading of past patient experiences, and develop perspective by seeing how others have dealt with uncertainty and change. I like to think that history helps us understand our world and plot a better course for the future. That's an especially powerful lesson for those in medicine.

What book or movie would you recommend to a friend?

Harriet Washington's *Medical Apartheid* (2006) is the book in the history of medicine that most changed my understanding of the field. It's tough. At times, you might have to put it down and go touch grass, but it is worth the time and energy.

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