

English 4371, Fall 2012
T-TH 11:30-1:00
Instructor: Dr. Laurie Lambeth

LITERATURE AND MEDICINE: MEDICINE IN FILM

How does film reflect our own anxieties and discoveries, and how does that reformulate our own lives as the screen reflects them back to us? How do these ideas then form general conceptions of disease, disability, and the image of medicine? How, in effect, does the mirror film creates shatter, fragment, and re-inscribe our fears of and belief in medicine, freakishness, and the body itself?



from Bigger Than Life, dir. Nicholas Ray, 1956

We will examine the representation of illness and medicine through the history of film, from the earliest “moving pictures” Edward Muybridge crafted for medical purposes, through the silent era, on through the twentieth century, in the films of such directors as Kurasawa, Sirk, and Nicholas Ray, up to our contemporary moment, in films such as 50/50. Prepared with the vocabulary and architecture of film, we will ask questions relating to the representation of illness in performance and the reflection of medical discoveries in film and culture. Some films will be viewed outside of class, and rarer films will be viewed in class.