

LIVING LAB CASE STUDY

ANCIENT MEDICINE, CLSA:1181

IOWA

COURSE INFORMATION

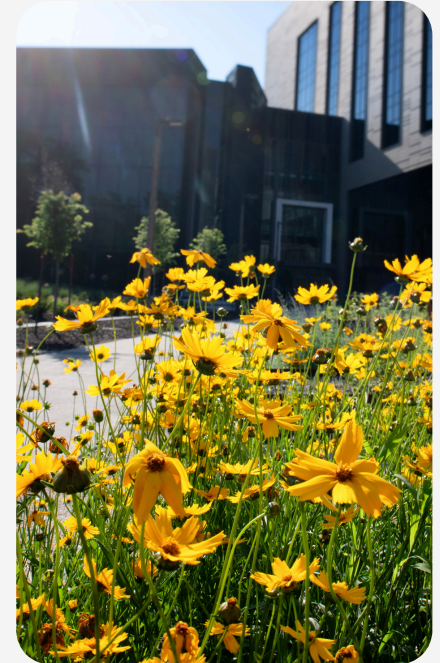
- Ancient Medicine, CLSA:1181
- Katherine Beydler, Affiliate Faculty, CLAS, Classics
- 150 students, 6 discussion sections with 25 students each

PEDAGOGICAL GOALS

- Develop a historical understanding of medical thought
- Analyze medical practices across time and culture
- Understand transmission and influence of medical traditions

LIVING LAB USAGE & INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Each discussion group, led by TAs, meets once per semester at **Roots of Medicine**, the College of Pharmacy's medicinal garden.



During the outdoor lesson, students select a plant discussed in class to observe in the medicinal garden. They use a guided worksheet to structure their observation. Over a 20-minute period, they examine its physical characteristics, such as the appearance, scent, texture, and, when appropriate, taste. By scanning the plant's QR-coded tag, they access the College of Pharmacy's and Hardin Library's **Roots of Medicine** website, which provides historical and contemporary medicinal uses along with current research related to the plant. Students then reflect on how their chosen plant is used in modern and classical medicine.



FREQUENCY OF OUTDOOR LESSONS

1x per semester

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COURSE

150

LIVING LAB(S) VISITED

Roots of Medicine,
Medicinal Garden,
College of Pharmacy

STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES

- Students demonstrate stronger content retention of the outdoor lesson, where multisensory engagement enhances memory and learning.
- Students seem more engaged and enthusiastic about the content when learning in the Medicinal Garden.
- Visiting the garden makes the course content more relevant and concrete. Rather than reading about plants in a book, they get to see the plants growing and explore their properties in person.
- The plants help students make clear connections between ancient and modern medicine, highlighting medicine as an evolving practice rather than a sharp divide between past and present.
- For many students, this experiential approach builds new learning skills centered on observation, critical thinking, and reflection. They carry those skills forward to connect concepts and apply knowledge in other academic and real-world contexts.
- Student feedback from course evaluations highlights the garden visit as a highly valued and memorable component of the course.

INSTRUCTOR ADVICE FOR IMPLEMENTING OUTDOOR LEARNING

- Prepare yourself, your TAs, and your students in advance.
- Ask students to arrive at the specified location at class start time rather than using class time to walk to the site.
- Provide directions and estimated travel time to the meeting site from multiple locations on campus.
- Have a way for students to contact you if they get lost enroute.
- Make accommodations in advance for accessibility if needed.
- Design a lesson plan that encourages student-led exploration while offering enough structure and guidance to support their participation.
- Because students have strong retention of the outdoor lesson, use it as an opportunity to introduce core concepts and skills early in the semester that can be built upon throughout the course.
- Design subsequent classroom activities that allow students to practice their experiential learning skills.

