In 1959 British novelist and scientist C.P. Snow gave a lecture which fomented much commentary and discussion over the years. In “The Two Cultures” he argued, "The intellectual life of the whole of Western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups...literary intellectuals at one pole--at the other scientists...between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension.”

In 1986, Louis Borgenicht, MD wrote an essay trying to assimilate these thoughts between the literary intellectuals (humanists) and scientists (physicians.) Is this cultural divide relevant to medicine in the 21st century? We will discuss his article, “Medicine Between Two Cultures,” look at current critical responses to C.P. Snow’s paradigm in medical contexts, and explore a new cultural divide between medical humanities and health humanities. These distinctions affect how we educate healthcare providers and trainees and ultimately, the delivery of healthcare.

Background Readings for this session:
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