

MEDICINE IN HISTORY

(*Preliminary* Syllabus for Summer 2021)

HSOC 002 | HIST 036 | STSC 002

Instructor: Taylor E. Dysart (tdysart@sas.upenn.edu)

Asynchronous and Synchronous Class

Students are expected to meet in Zoom from 11:45 – 12:50

Zoom Meeting ID: TBD



Since the coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020, we have often heard that we are living in unprecedented times. While much is unique about the current pandemic—the rapid development of vaccinations, the rise of telemedicine, the abundance of virtual technologies for connection and communication—there is much that we can learn from past episodes in the history of medicine to understand our historically significant present. This class is a survey of the history of western medicine from Ancient Greece and China to the present. Geographically, we will focus primarily on Europe and the Americas, while also examining medicine in their colonial territories. We will examine changes in how patients and healers have understood health, illness, life, and death; where and by who has medicine been practiced; how have treatments for diseases changed over time; and how have citizenship, race, class, gender, and disability impacted medical care. This course has been designed for our current moment; we will address the ongoing pandemic throughout the semester. As a learning community, we will develop an appreciation for historical thinking and how this thinking can be mobilized to build a better future.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1) Participation and Quizzes (20%)

- 2) Journal: COVID-19 or Humoral Body (25%)
- 3) Midterm: Primary Source Analysis (25%)
- 4) Final: Free Form (30%)

Course Materials:

All course materials—lectures and readings—will be available on Canvas. Each session has its own module with all materials posted or linked below. The materials have been posted in the order that I think will be the most accessible and engaging for students. The module for a session will be posted by 5 pm EST the day before class. Please come to our Zoom sessions having read/watched/listened to all materials posted under the module for that day.

1) Participation (20%)

Your participation grade is made up of the following weekly activities: synchronous meetings; asynchronous meetings; lectures and quizzes.

Synchronous Meetings:

We will meet on Zoom from 11:45 am to 12:50 pm each session to collectively discuss the material. These meetings allow for you to further explore the material and to collaborate with your peers. Thus, it is essential that you come to our Zoom sessions having read/watched/listened/pondered all the materials posted under the module. I will be available in our Zoom session from 11:00 am onwards to address any questions or concerns, to chat about course materials or assignments, or to hear about your history of medicine interests.

If making these synchronous meetings is an issue, please let me know and we will make other arrangements to assess your participation.

Asynchronous Participation:

Students are expected to actively participate in our course's Campuswire. In the Canvas modules, I will post discussion prompts for each session. Over the course of the week, students are expected to respond to these prompts and respond to their peers' posts as well. You must respond to both the original prompt and to your peers; your participation will be assessed based on how you engage each other, not based on the length of your posts. For example, three shorter posts in which you respond to the original prompt and two of your peers will be graded more favorably than merely one long post in which you do not respond to others. Depending on the class size, students may be assigned to smaller breakout rooms for a more intimate discussion of the material. At times, students may be asked to discuss the material in smaller groups and then report back to the larger group. This instruction will be included in the discussion prompt. I will be actively participating in the chats as well.

Lectures and Quizzes:

Each recorded lecture will contain a short quiz at the end. These quizzes are not designed to trick you. They will be gauging 1) whether you have *actively* watched the lecture and 2) whether you are comprehending the material. Quiz grades will be included in your final participation grade.

2) Journal: Humoral Body or COVID-19 (25%)

For this daily journal assignment, you have two options. The first is a humoral body journal and the second is a COVID-19 journal. Both options require daily reflection, writing, and engagement with course material. Please let me know by 5 pm on May 25th which option you will be selecting. Detailed assignment instructions and rubric will be provided on Canvas.

Due June 24th at 10 pm EST.

a) Humoral Body Journal

In this journal option, students will document their own health through the lens of humoral medicine and will turn in a brief reflection, along with the daily journal, at the end of the course. This journal should be updated daily; it'll be easy to do daily, but difficult to fabricate at the end of the term. Reflect on how you feel in your body, in your environment, in your mind through the lens and language of humoral medicine. We will discuss what this means on the first day of class. This option might be more preferable for students who want to develop their historical analytical skills, who feel inundated with or fatigued by news coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, who want to think creatively, or who are simply interested in other ways of thinking about bodies, health, and the environment.

b) COVID-19 Journal

In this journal option, students will document their own experiences and observations about COVID-19 and will turn in a brief reflection, along with the daily journal, at the end of the course. This journal should be updated daily; it'll be easy to do daily, but difficult to fabricate at the end of the term. Reflect on how COVID-19 has impacted your day, including your relations, your emotional, mental, and physical health, your consumption of the news, your behaviors, and how this connects to class material. This option might be more preferable for students who are interested in public health policy, infectious diseases, or epidemiology, who actively consume much news of the pandemic and wish to reflect on it, or who are simply interested in connecting class material to the pandemic.

Note on Confidentiality: Everything written in this journal, and shared in class more broadly, is confidential and will not be shared with anyone without your written, explicit consent to do so. The only exception is that, if you reveal instances of sexual harassment or assault in this journal, then I am legally required to report it to Penn's Title IX Officer.

3) Midterm: Primary Source Analysis (25%)

For the midterm, students will write a primary source analysis between 500 to 700 words in length. I will upload several sources on Canvas and students will pick one source to write about. This source could be: a travelogue; a photograph; a newspaper article; a video; a diary entry; a piece of correspondence. Analyses of primary sources are the basis of historical research. As much of our reading will be secondary literature, this assignment gives you a chance to critically and creatively engage with historical sources. Students will be expected to connect the sources to content, concepts, and theories discussed in class. Detailed assignment instructions and rubric will be provided on Canvas.

Due June 10th at 10 pm EST.

4) Final: Free Form (30%)

For the final, students will create a final project in a format of their choosing, with instructor feedback. Possible final projects include: visual art piece(s); poems; monologues; creative fiction or non-fiction pieces; policy proposal; standard term paper; podcast episode; recipe book, etc. While the topic and format must be approved by the instructor on June 3rd, know that I want you to choose what format will be most fulfilling, rewarding, and challenging for you. We will discuss this more in the first week of class. Detailed assignment instructions and rubric will be provided on Canvas.

Due June 29th at 10 pm EST.

COURSE SESSIONS

May 25: The Body and Medicine in the Ancient World

Topics: Class Introduction; Divine and Demonic Theories of Disease; Ancient Greek and Chinese Medicine; Hippocratic and Galenic Medicine; The Humors

Read: Class Syllabus, Journal Assignment Instructions, Introductory Form

Watch: [“Ancient Rome’s Most Notorious Doctor.”](#) TED-Ed

Listen: “The Hippocratic Oath,” *Sawbones* Podcast

[“In Other Times.”](#) Season 1, Episode 2, OMNIA Podcast

Assignment: Begin journal assignment

May 27: Medieval Medicine and the Black Death

Topics: Learned Medicine; Heroic Therapeutics; Women’s Bodily and Botanic Knowledge; The Black Death and Its Consequences

Read: [“How do pandemics end? History suggests diseases fade but are almost never truly gone.”](#) by Nükhet Varlik, *The Conversation*

[“Debunking a Myth.”](#) by Katharine Park, *The Harvard Gazette*

Watch: [“Medieval Barber Theorodic of York.”](#) *Saturday Night Live*

Listen: “The Translation Movement and Islamic Medicine with Dr. Elaine van Dalen,” *Bottled Petrichor* Podcast

“Hildegard von Bingen,” *Stuff You Missed in History Class* Podcast

Assignment: Submit introductory form

June 1: Medicine in the Colonial and Early Modern World

Topics: Medicine in Colonial Latin America; Early Modern Anatomy and Dissection; Smallpox and Settler Colonialism; Reproduction and Venereal Disease

Read: [“Anatomy of Generation.”](#) by Kathleen Crowther, *Nursing Clio*

[“When the Birds and the Bees Were Not Enough: Aristotle’s Masterpiece.”](#) by Mary Fissell, *The Public Domain Review*

[“Dying to Heal: Women and Syphilis in Colonial Lima, Peru”](#) by Kathleen Kole de Peralta, *Nursing Clio*

Listen: “Hot for Chocolate: Aphrodisiacs, Imperialism, and Cacao in the Early Modern Atlantic,”
Dig: A History Podcast

June 3: Evidence and Enlightenment Medicine

Topics: Evidence and Empiricism; Yellow Fever in Philadelphia; Inoculation and Vaccination; Synchronous Discussion of Final Project Proposals

Read + Listen: [“Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793,”](#) *WHYY*

Read: [“An African slave taught America how to vaccinate itself from smallpox,”](#) by Carey Baraka, *Quartz Africa*

[“Vaccines alone aren’t enough to eradicate a virus: lessons from history,”](#) by Caitjan Gainty and Agnes Arnold-Foster, *The Conversation*

Assignment: Final Project Proposal Due; Will Be Discussed in Class

June 8: Sanitation and Sites of Medical Knowledge

Topics: Hospitals in Paris; Laboratories in Germany; Poverty and Public Health in Britain; Consumption and Class

Read: [“How Tuberculosis Shaped Victorian Fashion,”](#) by Emily Mullin, *Smithsonian Magazine*

Watch: [“Smelly Facts About London’s The Great Stink of 1858,”](#) *Weird History Channel*

[“Connecting with history: Anne-Emanuelle Birn at TEDx Stouffville”](#)

Listen: “John Snow’s Ghost Map,” *Stuff You Missed in History Class Podcast*

June 10: Making a Medical Profession

Topics: Education, Regulation, Professionalization; Medical Marketplace; Body Snatching; Medicine and Slavery

Read: [“African Americans, Slavery, and Nursing in the U.S. South,”](#) by R.J. Knight, *Nursing Clio*

[“A Short History of Homeopathy: From Hahnemann to Whole Foods,”](#) by Jacqueline Antonovich, *Nursing Clio*

[“The Blackwell Sisters and the Harrowing History of Modern Medicine,”](#) by Casey Cep, *The New Yorker*

Read + Watch: [“Beware of Fraudulent Coronavirus Tests, Vaccines and Treatments,”](#) FDA

Listen: “Burke and Hare,” *The Serial Killer Podcast*

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis Due at 10 pm EST

June 15: The Reaches of Medicine

Topics: Germ Theory of Disease; Imperial and Tropical Medicine; Surgery and Antisepsis

Read: “India’s initial coronavirus response carried echoes of the colonial era,” by Shinjini Das, *The Conversation*

Watch: [“Manson & Ross: Death by mosquito.”](#) *The BMJ*

Listen: “The Dirt on Handwashing: The Legacy of Dr. Semmelweiss,” *CBC Ideas* Podcast

[“Lindsey Fitzharris on ‘The Butchering Art.’”](#) *WHYY* Podcast

June 17: Medicine, the State, and Belonging

Topics: Immigration and Citizenship; Disability and War; Eugenics; Medical Experimentation

Read: “From Mooktie to Juan: The Eugenic Origins of the ‘Defective Immigrant,’” by Aparna Nair, *Nursing Clio*

[“Canada’s Shame: Coerced Sterilization of Indigenous Women.”](#) by Jaipreet Viridi, *New Internationalist*

Watch: [“Typhoid Mary: The Most Dangerous Woman in America.”](#) *PBS*

Listen: “Choice, Sterilization, and Eugenics in Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico,” *Dig: A History Podcast*

[“Ric Burns ‘Debt of Honor’ traces America’s complicated relationship with disabled vets.”](#) *WHYY* Podcast

June 22: Therapeutic Revolutions

Topics: Antibiotics; Pharmaceuticals; Women’s Health; Environmental Health and Toxicity

Read: [“Hysterical Housewives, Radical Feminists, and the Gendering of Expertise about the Pill.”](#) by Chris Choglueck, *Lady Science*

[“COVID Vaccine Distrust in Black Community Stems from Real Abuses.”](#) by Shaylah Brown

Watch: [“How on scientist took on the chemical industry.”](#) *TED-Ed*

Listen: “Mother’s Little Helper: Psychiatry, Gender, and the Rise of Psychopharmacology,” *Dig: A History Podcast*

[“‘Henrietta Lacks: A Donor’s Immortal Legacy.’”](#) *NPR*

June 24: Patients and Technology in Modern Medicine

Topics: Medical Genetics; HIV/AIDS; International and Global Health; Risk

Read: [“Addicted to Mammograms.”](#) by Robert Aronowitz, *The New York Times*

TBD

Watch: Bending the Arc (2017)

Listen: “Life with AIDS: Success without a Cure?” Distillations Podcast

Assignment: Journal assignment due by 10 pm EST.

June 29: Changes and Ongoing Challenges in Medicine

Topics: COVID-19; Racism; Opioids and Psychedelics; Wrap-Up

*Read: [“Meet Carl Hart: parent, Columbia professor—and heroin user.”](#) *The Guardian**

*“[Reckoning with histories of medical racism and violence in the USA.](#)” by Ayah Nuriddin, Graham Mooney, and Alexandre White, *The Lancet**

*Watch: [“Addicted: America’s Opioid Crisis.”](#) *BBC Three**

*Listen: “Psychedelic Therapy with Roland Griffiths, PhD” *Speaking of Psychology* Podcast*

Assignment: Final project due by 10 pm EST.

A Note on Online Teaching, Learning, and Community

As the course instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the course prior to the beginning of the term and as the course progresses. Given the challenging nature of online teaching and learning, I am open to suggestions, concerns, and holding space to discuss how we can best move forward in this class as a community.

To maintain a collaborative and open exchange of ideas in this recitation, we should all strive to respectfully engage with our classmates’ comments and questions. Please note that I will assign both materials that I, partially or fully, agree with and materials that I, in partially or fully, disagree with. The history of medicine is a fascinating and complex terrain to navigate. I will make every effort to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment and I expect you to do the same. It’s important to keep in mind that students are coming to this class from a variety of educational and personal backgrounds and with varying levels of experience with this material.

Over the course of the semester, I will try to facilitate a variety of activities that are tailored to different learning preferences. These may include: sitting in silence to think more critically about the material; pairing students to discuss the material; small or large group discussions; asking students to submit written work in class, amongst others.

CENTERS AND RESOURCES

Counseling and Psychological Services, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps/>

Penn Violence Prevention, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/pvp/>

Office of Student Disability Services, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>

Weingarten Learning and Resources Center, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/>

The Tutoring Center, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/tutoring/>

Penn LGBT Center, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lgbtc/>

La Casa Latina, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lacasa/>

Makuu: The Black Cultural Center, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/makuu/>

Pan-Asian American Community House, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/paach/>

Penn Women's Center, <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/pwc/>