

## MEDICINE IN HISTORY

(Draft Syllabus for Summer Session II: June 30 – August 5, 2022; Thursday 12:00pm-3:50pm and  
Tuesday 12:00pm-3:50pm)

HSOC 002 | HIST 036 | STSC 002

Instructor: Leah B. Samples (leahbeth@sas.upenn.edu)

\*Please note that this syllabus is an evolving document. Changes may be made throughout the semester to accommodate student and professor needs.



**Course Description:** This course surveys the history of medical knowledge and practice from antiquity to the present. No prior background in the history of science or medicine is required. The course has two principal goals: (1) to give students a practical introduction to the fundamental questions and methods of the history of medicine, and (2) to foster a nuanced, critical understanding of medicine's complex role in contemporary society. The course takes a broadly chronological approach, blending the perspectives of the patient, the physician, and society as a whole--recognizing that medicine has always aspired to "treat" healthy people as well as the sick and infirm. Rather than history "from the top down" or "from the bottom up," this course sets its sights on history from the inside out. This means, first, that medical knowledge and practice is understood through the personal experiences of patients and caregivers. It also means that lectures and discussions will take the long-discredited knowledge and treatments of the past seriously, on their own terms, rather than judging them by today's standards. Required readings consist largely of primary sources, from elite medical texts to

patient diaries. Short research assignments will encourage students to adopt the perspectives of a range of actors in various historical eras.

**Accessibility:** It is very important to me to create an environment that is inclusive and is attentive to different learning needs. Please contact me if you have specific needs that require accommodations. Online learning is probably new to many of us; it requires different strategies concerning preparation, planning, classroom interactions, and information retention. To assist with this new reality, I encourage every student to visit the Weingarten Learning Resource Center <https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/>

**Plagiarism:** Research is a collaborative activity to advance knowledge. The university is a community dedicated to contributing to this project. To do so, everyone including students must correctly attribute the ideas, words, and data generated by others through proper citation. All course work submitted in this class must be authentically your own. I and the University hold a zero-tolerance policy for cheating and plagiarism. You will receive a failing grade on a plagiarized assignment and the offense will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Such offenses permanently mark your academic record. Please consult Penn's Code of Academic Integrity: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

## Grading and Assignments

- 1) Participation and Quizzes (25%)
- 2) Weekly Discussion Board Posts (25%)
- 3) Midterm: Primary Source Analysis (25%)
- 4) Final Blog Post and/or Op-Ed (25%)

## COURSE SESSIONS

### June 30 (Thursday): Medicine in the Ancient World

*Topics:*

*Read:*

- Syllabus
- [The Hippocratic Oath](#). Translated by Michael North, National Library of Medicine (2002).  
PRIMARY SOURCE

*Watch:*

- [“Ancient and Medieval Medicine: Crash Course History of Science #9”](#) (12 Minutes)

*Listen:*

- [“The Hippocratic Oath.”](#) *Sawbones* Podcast (40 Minutes; If you prefer, transcript available [here](#))

*Assignment:*

## July 5 (Tuesday): Medicine in the Medieval World

Topics:

Read:

- Nükhet Varlik, [“From Black Death to COVID-19, pandemics have always pushed people to honor death.”](#) *The Conversation*, October 26, 2021.
- Hildegard of Bingen, [Cause and Cure](#): “Elements and Humors,” “Disorders and Diseases,” “Treatment,” and “Diagnostic and Prognostic Signs” PRIMARY SOURCE  
OR
- Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, [“The Florentine Chronicle,”](#) 1370s – 1380s. Black Death PRIMARY SOURCE

Listen:

- “Hildegard von Bingen,” *Stuff You Missed in History Class Podcast* (26 Minutes)
- Elaine van Dalen, “The Translation Movement and Islamic Medicine,” *Bottled Petrichor Podcast*. (36 Minutes)

Watch:

- [“The Black Death and Its Aftermath.”](#) *Origins Ohio State University* (8 Minutes)

Assignment:

## July 7 (Thursday): Gender and Sex in Late Medieval and Early Modern Worlds

Topics:

Read:

- Mary Fissell, [“When the Birds and the Bees Were Not Enough: Aristotle’s Masterpiece.”](#) *The Public Domain Review*, August 19, 2015.
- Read: [“Anatomy of Generation,”](#) by Kathleen Crowther, *Nursing Clio*

Explore:

- Andreas Vesalius, [De humani corporis fabrica](#), 1555. PRIMARY SOURCE

Watch

- [“Ancient Rome’s Most Notorious Doctor,”](#) *TED-Ed* (5 Minutes)

Assignment:

- TBD

## July 12 (Tuesday): Medicine in the Colonial and Early Modern World

Topics:

Read:

- [“Dying to Heal: Women and Syphilis in Colonial Lima, Peru”](#) by Kathleen Kole de Peralta, *Nursing Clio*
- Vanessa Harding, “Reading Plague in Seventeenth-century London”, *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 32, no. 2, (May 2019): 267–286.

Explore:

- Samuel Pepys’ Diary online (<https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/>); spend 20 minutes browsing as you like through June-Aug. 1665. PRIMARY SOURCE

Listen:

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

*Assignment*

- TBD

## July 14 (Thursday): Medicine in 18th Century America

*Topics:*

*Read:* Pick one article to read

- [“Spreading the News of Yellow Fever,”](#) *New York Historical Society Blog*
- Erin Blakemore, [“How an Enslaved African Man in Boston Helped Save Generations from Smallpox,”](#) February 1 2019.
- [“Vaccines alone aren’t enough to eradicate a virus: lessons from history,”](#) by Caitjan Gainty and Agnes Arnold-Foster, *The Conversation*
- Evan P. Sullivan, [“Misinformation, Vaccination, and “Medical Liberty” in the Age of COVID-19,”](#) *Nursing Clio*.
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*Explore:*

- [“The Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia,”](#) *Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics*; spend 20 minutes browsing these primary sources as you like.

*Listen:*

- Maiken Scott, [“Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793,”](#) *NPR*.

*Watch:*

- [“Fever \(1793-1820\) - Philadelphia: The Great Experiment,”](#) History Making Productions.

*Assignment:*

- TBD

## July 19 (Tuesday): It All Starts with a Pump

*Topics:*

*Read:*

- Projit Bihari Mukharji, “The ‘Cholera Cloud’ in the Nineteenth Century ‘British World’: History of an Object-Without-an-Essence,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 86, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 303 – 332.
- Dora B. Weiner and Michael J. Sauter, “The City of Paris and the Rise of Clinical Medicine,” *Osiris*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. 18 (2003): 23 – 40.

*Watch:*

- [“The 1850s map that changed how we fight outbreaks,”](#) *Vox*.
- [“John Snow and the 1854 Broad Street cholera outbreak,”](#) *HarvardX*

*Assignment:*

## July 21 (Thursday): The Professionalization of Medicine

Topics:

Read: Pick TWO to read

- [“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*
- [“The International History of Women’s Medical Education: What Does Imperialism Have To Do With It?,”](#) by Sarah Pripas, *Nursing Clio*
- [“When Legs and Arms Won: The Culture of Dissection and the Role of the Camera at the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania,”](#) by Brandon Zimmerman, *Nursing Clio*
- [“Quacks, Plagues, and Pandemics: What charlatans of the past can teach us about the COVID-19 crisis,”](#) by Elisabeth Berry Drago, *Distillations*

Explore:

- [Patent Medicine Trade Cards](#)
- [“Medical Education in America: Rethinking the training of American doctors,”](#) by Abraham Flexner, *The Atlantic*, 1910

Assignment:

## July 26 (Tuesday): Title TBD--Germ Theory of Disease, Surgery, and Antisepsis

Watch:

- [Pre-modern surgery.](#) *The Knick*
- [“How a few scientists transformed the way we think about disease.”](#) *Ted-Ed*

Listen:

- [“Germ Theory and Popular Culture with Nancy Tomes,”](#) *Infectious Historians*

Read:

- Nancy Tomes, “The Private Side of Public Health: Sanitary Science, Domestic Hygiene, and the Germ Theory, 1870 – 1900,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 64, no. 4 (1990): 509 -539.
- [“Inside the Operating Theater: Early Surgery as Spectacle”](#) by Rebecca Rego Barry, *JStor Daily*

Explore:

- Joseph Lister, [“On the Antiseptic Principle in the Practice of Surgery.”](#) 1867.

Assignment:

## July 28 (Thursday): Technology, Technique, and Medicine

Read:

- Read Introduction to Joel Howell, “Technology in the Hospital: Transforming Patient Care in the Early Twentieth Century”
- [“The Existential Horror Created by the First X-Ray Images,”](#) *Atlas Obscura Blog*

- Read Introduction to Lundy Braun, “Breathing Race Into the Machine: The Surprising Career of the Spirometer from Plantation to Genetics”

*Assignment:*

### **August 2--The “Golden Age” of Medicine?**

*Read:*

- “Introduction” in “Remaking the American Patient: How Madison Avenue and Modern Medicine Turned Patients Into Consumers,” by Nancy Tomes
- [“The Black Politics of Eugenics,”](#) by Ayah Nuridden
- [“Remembering Nurse Eunice Rivers Laurie, the Black Face of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, and Why She is an Important Figure for Students to Know,”](#) by Ezelle Sanford III in *The Common Reader*

*Listen:*

- [“Ezelle Sanford III & Virvius Jones: The Homer G. Philips Hospital Story,”](#) Podcast

*Explore :*

- [“Turning People into Paperwork”](#); spend 20 minutes browsing these primary sources as you like.

*Assignment:*

### **August 4--Modern Medicine**

*Read:*

- [“The Dangers of Ignoring History Lessons During a Pandemic,”](#) by Graham Mooney
- [“How to Talk About Freedom During a Pandemic,”](#) by Graham Mooney