

Topics in History: Disease and Society in History

HIST 4397, Tuesdays-Thursdays, 2:00-3:20
CAS 257
3 Credit Hours

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Tuesdays,
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Or by appointment (in person or via Zoom)

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Course Description

This course looks at the relationship between disease and societies and cultures in world history from the times of Hippocrates up to the 21st century. It will explore topics such as how diseases have spread and affected people through all fabrics of life, from the social to the political, from the economic to the cultural; how societies have responded to pandemics; how disease shapes understandings of the world around people in a variety of cultures; how medicine and medical practices have transformed across centuries; and how human responses to disease have transformed (or not) across time.

Learning Outcomes

This class is designed to help students develop knowledge in two areas: the content and contours of medicine and disease through history and the broader analytical skills that historians use both in the profession and in their broader daily lives.

On the one hand, students will gain familiarity with the content and particulars of disease, medicine, and their effects on society in history. Students will learn about the shifts in medicine as well as the role of disease in shaping historical processes in the political, economic, social, and cultural arenas around the world. Relying on a blend of lecture materials, secondary sources, and primary voices, students will apply the course content as they identify key transformations, contexts, and consequences of medicine and disease across the world.

Consequently, based on the content, in this course:

- Students will identify key events, ideas, people, and institutions in the history of disease and medicine from ancient times to the present.
- Students will evaluate the impact of race, gender, class, and ethnicity in the history of disease and society.
- Students will compare and contrast the experiences of diverse societies in different contexts of disease and medicine.
- Students will identify key transformations in human approaches to medicine from ancient times to the twenty-first century.

- Students will assess the causes and everyday experiences of, and reactions to, disease and pandemics at diverse moments throughout history.
- Students will differentiate different moments of epidemic, pandemic, and societal responses to disease and medicine, and the transformations of these phenomena over time.
- Students will examine the place of disease and medicine in global contexts across multiple centuries.
- Students will identify individuals, institutions, places, and processes and assess their roles in social, political, economic, and cultural changes and processes in human history through the lens of disease and medicine.

If the basic content serves as one of the two arms of knowledge in this course, students will also develop the broader tools and techniques to be able to understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate materials in the ways historians do. This course's content will serve as a gateway to challenge students to analyze and discuss the ways we think about history and history-making processes more generally at the local, regional, national, and global levels. Drawing on historical materials, students will formulate their own analyses and understandings of the history of different eras, peoples, and cultures. In the process, they will develop skills to use in this class, in classes as history majors more generally, and in their lives beyond college. Through classroom discussions, readings, written assignments, exams, and other components, students will also develop broader skills in critical analysis and expression, such as:

- Students will apply analysis of primary and secondary sources in order to develop historical investigation.
- Students will analyze primary sources and situate them in their broader social, political, cultural, and economic milieus in order to develop their ability to contextualize materials
- Students will interpret language and understand language as a window into relations of power, emotion, and bias in human interactions and institutions.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills that apply an ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while improving creative thinking, innovation, and inquiry.
- Students will develop communication skills that reflect the ability to apply, interpret, and express their own ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- Students will demonstrate a sense of social responsibility that reflects intercultural competence, an ability to empathize and reflect upon people of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.
- Students will develop a sense of personal responsibility that the ability to connect individual choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making and civic responsibility.

Texts and Readings

This course will approach the history of disease and society through primary voices and secondary monographs. These resources will allow students to consider how history is produced, who produces it, and how historians used and interpreted history. Books for the course will be available in the bookstore. Required texts are:

Arnold, Catherine. *Pandemic 1918: Eyewitness Accounts from the Greatest Medical Holocaust in Modern History*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2018.

Crosby, Alfred W. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. 30th Anniversary Edition. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.

Skloot, Rebecca. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Crown, 2010.

Assignments

Identifying and Applying Medicine and Disease History

In order to demonstrate familiarity with the content of medical history in line with the course's learning outcomes, students will be given a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of medicine and disease history. These opportunities will come in two forms: quizzes and exams.

Quizzes (10% of final grade)

In order to demonstrate familiarity with the content of the course, including people, places, institutions, events, processes, and other important terms and ideas, students will take a weekly quiz that draws on the materials contained in lectures. Students **must** attend the lectures each week; failure to do so will leave students unequipped to pass these quizzes and will negatively affect their ability to do well on the exams. These quizzes will be short quizzes that may use a variety of methods, including (but not limited to) multiple choice, matching, or ID terms in which students identify who, what, when, where, and the significance of the term. There will be 14 of these quizzes, occurring each week and building on that week's coursework. Each of these quizzes will be 1% of the student's final grade, and the professors will drop the student's four lowest quiz grades, leaving 10 grades counted for 10% of the final grade.

Exams (20% each = 40% of final grade)

Building on the information and the books, students will combine recall and analysis on exams that will ask students to identify, analyze, compare and contrast, and contextualize broader historical processes and narratives in the history of medicine and disease. There will be two such exams: a mid-term exam in week 7, and a final exam in finals week. Each exam will be worth 15% of the final grade. Students will be kept apprised of the materials covered in the exam and the exam format as the dates approach.

Assessing, Evaluating, and Discussing Medicine and Disease History

Those who say history is "boring" insist it is so because it is "just a bunch of names and dates." This could not be further from the truth – history is the analysis and contextualization of the words, actions, and ideas of the past in order to understand their causes, their effects, and the ways change over time occur. With that understanding, historians not only understand what factors shaped the past, but also gain insight into how similar processes might unfold in other times or places, including in our present. As a result, historians rely upon the analysis of primary documents – letters, diaries, newspapers, government decrees, artwork, economic data, religious tracts, trial records, and much, much more – to analyze the past and draw broader arguments and conclusions about the past and its relationship to the present. Given this fact, analyzing primary sources is an integral part of history more generally, and of this class specifically.

Thus, in addition to demonstrating familiarity with the content of this course, students will also analyze that history, assessing primary documents, contextualizing them in the broader narrative of world history, and providing their own arguments about and evaluations. These opportunities will help students simultaneously meet the learning outcomes of developing a knowledge of medicine and disease even while also developing students' own broader analytical skills used in this class, in the major, in college, and in life beyond college. These opportunities will come in three forms: short book analyses, participation via discussions, and papers.

Source Analyses and Reflections (10% of final grade)

Throughout the semester, students will provide three book analyses to the three

monographs they will be reading for class. These analyses will be used to get students to think about the critical components of a book – the questions it asks, the analysis it offers, the depth of research, the strengths or limitations of the source – that historians regularly perform when reading secondary sources. Each of these source analyses will be worth 3.3% of your grade, for a total of 10% of the final grade.

Attendance (5% of final grade)

Because of the nature of this course and the return to live lectures instead of an asynchronous online format, student attendance is required so that students may have the knowledge, narrative, and details of the course content. As a result, student attendance is required in both the face-to-face and live-Zoom lectures. Attending is not only rewarding and allows you the chance to engage with the faculty and your peers through questions and comments; it's the easiest part of the class. Students who miss four or more in-person or online lectures will receive an automatic zero for this portion of their grade.

Papers (15% each = 45% of final grade)

Analysis of and insights into the materials are meaningless if they are not connected to broader historical ideas and arguments. Indeed, if analysis of historical materials is the foundation of historical thought, then expressing one's own analysis and understanding of, and arguments about, the past is the keystone of history. As a result, students have one of two options for final papers:

- **Option 1:** In this option, students will have a chance to write on each of the three books we are reading throughout the semester. Students will be provided with a set of options on a paper prompt regarding each book, and then they develop their own analysis and argument built around the book, its arguments, and its connection to the broader themes of the class. In this option, each paper will be 1250-1500 words in length, with an introduction, a thesis sentence, a conclusion, and citations throughout. Citations should be in Chicago/Turabian author-title format (students will be provided with formatting guidelines in the assignments). These **papers** will be due concurrently with when we are reading these books in class (see course schedule below).
- **Option 2:** In this option, students will write an original research paper on a topic of their choice revolving around disease and/or medicine and society in history. This paper will be built on primary sources that the students find, read, analyze, and use to compose an original argument. The students may consult with the professors and librarian Sarah Meisch-Lacombe to develop the project throughout the semester. In this option, each paper will be 3750-4500 words in length, with an introduction, a thesis sentence, a conclusion, and citations throughout. Citations should be in Chicago/Turabian author-title format (students will be provided with formatting guidelines in the assignments). This paper would be due at the end of the semester. Students who select this option would not do the three papers in Option 1.

Note for papers:

- Failure to cite your sources wherever you use them – whether as a direct quotation or

as a synthesis of a detailed passage – will result in **an automatic F for the assignment**. Remember: you **must always cite your sources**.

Grades and Percentages

Based on the above assignments, students' final grades will be evaluated based on the following percentages and following a standard grading system (A, 90-100; B, 80-89; C, 70-79; D, 60-69; F, 0-59) both on the individual assignments and on the final grade:

Quizzes	10%
Exams (2 x 20%)	40%
Attendance	5%
<u>Paper assignments (Option 1 or 2)</u>	<u>45%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Email Policies

Each of your professors will check email regularly each day. You may expect a reply within 18 hours during the weekdays (Monday 8AM-Friday 5PM), and within 24 hours on the weekend (Friday 5PM- and Sunday 5PM). When emailing any of your professors – us or any other faculty on campus – please greet them properly (e.g., “Dear Dr. Link,” “Hello, Dr. Snider,” “Good evening, professor,” etc.). Avoid starting with “Hey,” “I have a question,” “Can you tell me...?”, “Yo holmes,” etc. – and yes, we have seen all of these and even worse in emails before. We will always address you directly and respectfully in our individual emails to each of you; we ask the same courtesy in return. If students continue to refuse to address the faculty by name, we reserve the right to not reply to the email. If you are still uncertain about proper email etiquette, you may find useful hints for both your college and professional careers at <https://wordcounter.io/blog/15-essential-email-etiquette-tips-for-every-college-student/>.

Attendance and Makeup Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate regularly. Failure to do so will be reflected in the Participation grade. In cases of **emergency** (i.e., serious illness, family emergencies, etc.), deadlines may be flexible, but such a decision will be at the prerogative of the professors. The student should make sure to consult with the professor as soon as possible in order to inform the professor of challenges and obstacles as soon as possible. Students also must put forth every effort to submit their papers on time. Each day a written assignment is late, the assignment's grade will be reduced by one letter grade. For example, a paper that was an A paper but was submitted three days late earns a D; a B-level paper one day late earns a C; and so on. If the assignment is one week late, it will not be accepted, and the student will receive an **automatic zero** for the assignment; assignments will not be accepted later than one week late. In the event a student needs an assignment extension due to serious illness, family emergency, etc., they must make every effort to speak with the professor in advance, keeping in mind that paper extensions remain the professor's prerogative.

Life in the Times of COVID-19 (Still)

Given that the pandemic resulting from COVID 19 continues as societies respond in different ways and the virus continues to transform and affect daily life, the structure of the class will remain hybrid at the start of the semester, with both face-to-face and live-Zoom lectures that will not be recorded. However, please be advised that we will work toward what's in the best interests of you and the entire community; as a result, if we determine the format and structure of the course need to change in response to transformations in the pandemic, we reserve the right to do so, but in such an event,

these changes will occur in full consultation with and explanations to the students. In other words: as professors, we know what we would *like* the next few months to look like, but as historians, we know better than to predict what will happen in the next few months, and we ask your understanding in these times, and we will work towards reciprocate that understanding.

Syllabus Notice

The instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus in areas such as readings, due dates, and other matters. In the event such changes occur, deadlines and due dates will *never* be moved forward, and students will be given ample warning to any possible changes well in advance.

Academic Integrity

Student Standards of Academic Conduct Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered

for credit.

iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

Course Outline

Week 1 – Introduction

Tuesday, August 24 – Introduction: The Terminology and Ancient Roots of Disease, Medicine, and Society

Thursday, August 26 – “Bring out your dead”: The Black Death in Europe

Week 2

Tuesday, August 31 – “We were born to die:” Disease and the Conquest of the Americas

Thursday, September 2 – Gradual Transformations: The Scientific Revolution in Europe

Week 3

Readings: Crosby, The Columbian Exchange

Tuesday, September 7 – Wonder Drugs and Native Practices: Indigenous Medicine, Disease, and Society in the Colonial Americas, 1600s-1700s

Thursday, September 9 – “With disease, want, and misery stamped upon them:” Disease, Medicine, and the Slave Trade in the Atlantic World, 1700s-1800s

Book Analysis 1 due

Week 4

Tuesday, September 14 – Disease in the Late Colonial and Early Republican Era in the Americas

Thursday, September 16 – Disease and Empire in the Nineteenth Century World

First paper in Option 1 due

Week 5

Tuesday, September 21 – Disease and Empire in the Nineteenth Century World

Thursday, September 23 – The Professionalization of Medicine in the Late-19th Century

Week 6

Tuesday, September 28 – Mosquito Empires and Vaccine Riots: Empire and Public Health at the Turn of the Century

Thursday, September 30 – “The War to End All Wars”: World War I

Week 7

Readings: Arnold, Pandemic 1918

Tuesday, October 5 – “Valkyries in knicker bockers”: Women, Medicine, & World War I

Thursday, October 7 – “The Deadly Fangs of Death”: The Flu Pandemic of 1918

Book Analysis 2 due

Week 8

Tuesday, October 12 – Of Prostitutes and Mothers: Medicine, Empire, and State-Society Relations in the Early 20th Century

Thursday, October 14 – “We must establish incredible events by credible evidence.” World War II

Second Paper in Option 1 due

Week 9

Tuesday, October 19 – World War II continued

Thursday, October 21 – Public Health in the 20th Century

Week 10

Readings: Skloot, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Tuesday, October 26 – Scientific Racism, Medicine, and Society in the Early Cold War

Thursday, October 28 – Ideology as Illness: Disease and Society in the Cold War

Book Analysis 3 Due

Week 11

Tuesday, November 2 – The Age of (Hopes for) Eradication in the Mid-20th Century

Thursday, November 4 – “New Challenges, Imperfect Solutions: Mental Health, Drugs, and Treatment in the 20th Century

Third Paper in Option 1 due

Week 12

Tuesday, November 9 – Indian “Services” and Health in the US

Thursday, November 11 – Delayed Rights: Disability and Society

Week 13

Tuesday, November 16 – Globalizing Disease: Treatment & Society in the Late 20th Century

Thursday, November 18 – “Act up! Fight Back!”: The AIDS Epidemic

Week 14 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15

Tuesday, November 30 – A New Millennium, Familiar Stories: SARS, Ebola, and Epidemics in a Post-Eradication World

Thursday, December 2 – Lessons Learned? Disease, Medicine, and Society in the 21st Century

Paper in Option 2 due

Finals Week