History 066
Disease, Culture and Society in the Modern World: Comparative Perspectives

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TH 11:00 – 12:30

Emphasizing on Latin America, but also discussing European, African, Asian, and North American cases, this course will deal with the diverse ways historians and scholars from other disciplines have been discussing the sociocultural dimensions of certain diseases in specific places and periods. Topics include strategies of public health in colonial and neocolonial contexts; changing ideas about contamination, hygiene, segregation, and contagion; specific epidemic outbreaks and the cultural politics of blame and responsibility; the individual and collective experience of illness; the class, ethnic and racial dimensions that accompanied the efforts to understand certain diseases; metaphors and representations of certain diseases in the media, cinema and in literature; the emergence of health care professions and institutions and the persistent presence of alternative healing cultures.

Requirements

1. Readings:
   Required readings are listed in the course schedule below. A list of books available for purchase follows. All required readings are on Blackboard and marked in this syllabus with an asterisk (*). Blackboard materials are chapters, articles or excerpts of books, most of them available at McCabe library.

2. Writing:
   First paper will take the form of a book review of about 1,500-1,800 words of one or several books. It is advisable to discuss with me in advance your selection. Due March 10

   Second paper of about 2,500 words can take a variety of forms, such as: 1. a critical review of a problem as it was discussed by the secondary literature; 2. a paper on a specific topic or disease involving the use of primary sources; 3. an exercise in historical fiction in which you deal with an imaginary disease in a specific space, time, and biomedical context and explore the individual and collective experiences –at the material and symbolic levels- associated with it. It is advisable to discuss with me an outline and bibliography for this assignment. Paper is due May 7.

   A more detailed information about these two written assignments will be provided in class.
   For those who are not familiar with modes of historical writing, writing conventions, and source documentation I recommend to read Richard Marius and Melvin Page, A Short Guide to Writing about History. Students must complete all writing assignments to pass the course.

3. Class participation:
   Each meeting one or two students will be in charge of commenting on the readings (up to 10 minutes), raising questions and leading the discussion. It is my intention to run this course in colloquium format. Consequently readings must be completed prior to class. You should come to every class, be prepared with questions and thoughts about the readings and participate fully in the discussions. I strongly recommend writing a commentary, paragraph, several questions or a brief outline stating your initial reaction to the assigned reading in order to facilitate your
participation in class discussions. Active participation is vital to receiving a good final grade. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

**Books**


**Course Schedule.**

Readings with (*) are available on Blackboard.

**Week 1**

**January 20**

Introduction

**January 22**

**History, Disease, Historiography I**

Mark Harrison, “Introduction”, in Mark Harrison, *Disease and the Modern World. 1500 to the Present Day* (*)


**Week 2**

**January 27**

**History, Disease, Historiography II**

Charles Rosenberg, “Framing Disease: Illness, Society and History” (*)


**January 29**

**Meeting with McCabe librarian** Melanie Maksin

**Week 3**
February 2
Tuberculosis: From Romantic Disease to Public Health Issue I


David Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease. Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France*, (*)


February 4
Tuberculosis: From Romantic Disease to Public Health Issue II

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* 1-87 (*)


Week 4
February 9
Tropical Diseases in the World Periphery. Malaria


Nancy Stepan, “‘The Only Serious Terror in these Regions’: Malaria Control in the Amazonas,” *Armus, From Malaria to AIDS*


February 11
Tropical Diseases in the World Periphery. Yellow Fever and Chagas


Ilana Lowy, “What / Who Should Be Controlled? Opposition to Yellow Fever Campaigns in Brazil, 1900-1939,” in Andrew Cunningham, *Western Medicine as Contested Knowledge*. (*)

Ilana Lowy, “Yellow Fever in Rio de Janeiro and the Pasteur Institute Mission (1901-1905): The Transfer of Science to the Periphery”, *Medical History* (1990) 34. (*)

Marilia Coutinho, “Tropical Medicine in Brazil: The Case of Chagas' Disease”, *Armus, From Malaria to AIDS*

Simone Petraglia Kropf et all, “Biomedical Research and Public Health in Brazil: the Case of Chagas Disease”, *Social History of Medicine*, 16, April 2003, pp. 11-129 (*)
Week 5
February 16
Tropical Diseases and the Rockefeller Foundation


S. Franco Agudelo, “The Rockefeller Foundation’s Antimalarial Program in Latin America: Donating or Dominating?”, International Journal of Health Services, 13 (1983), 51-67. (*)

Steve Palmer, “Central American Encounters with Rockefeller Public Health, 1914-1921” (*)

Anne-Emanuelle Birn, “Revolution the Scatological Way: The Rockefeller Foundation’s Hookworm Campaign in 192-s Mexico”, in Armus, From Malaria to AIDS


February 18
Leprosy and Exclusion

Diana Obregón, “The State, Physicians and Leprosy in Modern Colombia”, in Armus, From Malaria to AIDS

Susan Burns, “From ‘Leper Villages’ to Leprosaria: Public Health, Nationalism and the Culture of Exclusion in Japan”, in Strange and Bashford, eds. Isolation (*)


Week 6
February 23
Smallpox and the Politics of Vaccination


Nadja Durbach, “‘They Might as Well Brand Us’: Working Class Resistance to Compulsory Vaccination in Victorian England”, Social History of Medicine, 13, 1 (April 2000) (*)

Gilberto Hochman, “The Culture of Immunization: Smallpox and the Brazilian Public Health Agenda” (mimeo) (*)

February 25
Public Health, Morality and Venereal Diseases I
Syphilis

Katherine Bliss, “Between Risk and Confession. State and Popular Perspectives of Syphilis Infection in Revolutionary Mexico” in Armus, From Malaria to AIDS
Allan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet. A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880* (*).

Susan Reverby, ed. *Tuskegee’s Truths: Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study* (*).

**Week 7**
**March 3**
**Public Health, Morality and Venereal Diseases II**
**AIDS**

Jeffrey Weeks, “AIDS and the Regulation of Sexuality”, in Virginia Berridge and Philip Strong, eds. *AIDS in Contemporary History* (*).


Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism and the Politics of Knowledge* (*).


**March 5**
**Cholera and Social Order**

Charles Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: America in 1832, 1849 and 1866* (*).


Nancy Gallagher, “Cholera Goes out of Control”, in *Egypt’s Other Wars. Epidemics and the Politics of Public Health* (*).


**Week 8**
**Spring Break**

**Week 9**
**March 17**

**First Paper Due**

**The Public and Private Sides of Hygiene I**

**March 19**

The Public and Private Sides of Hygiene II

Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*, chaps. III and IV

**Week 10**

**March 24**

Bacteriology and Ideology

Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (*)

**March 26**

No class. Make up TBA

**Week 11**

**March 31**

Migration and Disease

Lara Marks and Michael Worboys, “Introduction to Migrants, Minorities and Health” (*)

Alan Kraut, “A Plague of Nativism: the Cases of Chick Gin and ‘Typhoid Mary’” (*) and “Viruses and Bacteria Don’t Ask for a Green card: New Immigrants and Old Fears” (*)


**April 2**

Disease, Nation and Eugenics

Frank Dikötter, “Race and Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics”, *American Historical Review*, vol. 77, No. 4, pp. 619-635 (*)

Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics. Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America*, Introduction, chaps. 1, 2 (*)

**Week 12**

**April 7**

Healings and Healers I


Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, eds., *Healing Cultures: Art and
Religion as Curative Practices in the Caribbean and its Diaspora (*)

April 9
Healings and Healers II

James Whorton, Nature Cures. The History of Alternative Medicine America (*)

Week 13
April 14
Patients

Nancy Tomes, “Patients or Health-Care Consumers? Why the History of Contested Terms Matters,” in Rosemary Stevens, ed., Putting the Past Back In: History and Health Policy in the United States. (*)


April 16
Medications

Diego Armus, “Domestic Care: Home Remedies and Over-the-Counter Medication," in The Ailing City. (*)

Andre Tome, Medicating Modern America (*)


Week 14
April 21
Diseases and Media I

Walt Disney, On the Front Line

April 23
Diseases and Media II

Leslie Reagan, Medicine’s Moving Pictures (*)

Week 15

April 28
Smoking between Habit and Disease I

Allan Brandt, The American Cigarette. (*)

Richard Klein, Cigarettes are Sublime (*)

April 30
Smoking between Habit and Disease II

Matthew Hilton, Smoking in English Popular Culture, 1800-200. Perfect Pleasures (*)
May 7

Second Paper Due