This course deals with the diverse ways historians and scholars in general have been interpreting the sociocultural dimensions of certain diseases in specific places and periods. Emphasizing on tuberculosis, malaria, polio, and tobacco smoking (as related to pulmonary cancer) topics include strategies of public health in metropolitan centers 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, gender, ethnic and racial dimensions that accompanied the efforts to understand certain diseases; disease metaphors and representations 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:
Readings are listed in the course schedule below. A list of books available for purchase follows. All required readings available on Moodle are marked in this syllabus with an asterisk (*). Paper and/or electronic copies of these books are on-reserve and available at the library:
David Oshinsky, Polio. An American Story (Oxford) (paper)
Marcos Cueto, Cold War, Deadly Fevers. Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955-1975 (Johns Hopkins) (paper)

2. Writing:
Four papers are due.
-First paper –of about 1,000 words- should be a reaction paper on the
historiographical issues discussed during the first three weeks. Due September 25th.

- Second and Third papers – of about 1,000 words- should deal with issues related to two of the four diseases under discussion. It could take the form of a). A review of a book, collection of articles, movie or documentary; b). An essay focusing on one or several specific issues. Due November 11th and December 7th.

- Fourth paper – of about 2,000/2,500 words- can take a variety of forms, such as: a). A critical review of a problem as it was discussed by the secondary sources but focusing on various diseases; b). A primary sources based paper focused on a specific topic or disease; c). An exercise in historical fiction in which you might 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. Due December 23rd.

Additional information about these written assignments will be provided in class. It is advisable – not mandatory- to discuss with me in advance your first, second and third papers. It is mandatory to discuss with me your fourth paper. Students must complete all written assignments to pass the course.

3. Class participation:
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.

4. Resources:

5. The History Department affirms the following student learning goals specific to the study of history:
  • Students will recognize and appreciate the differentness of the past and the diversity of other cultures and peoples, and gain an understanding of the processes and causes of change and continuity over time.
  • Students will acquire foundational knowledge of, and learn the issues, debates, and interpretations of historians for the complex making of historical processes.
  • Students will develop the ability to evaluate critically the arguments and analytical methods of historians, and learn to assess critically the evidence of the past through first-hand exposure to primary sources and historical research.
  • Students will develop the skills of clear and coherent historical writing as well as confident oral presentations.
Course Schedule.
Readings with (*) are available on Moodle.

Week 1

September 4
Introduction

September 6
History, Disease, Historiography I

Richard Marius and Melvin Page, *A Short Guide to Writing about History* (*)
Carol Berkin and Betty Anderson, *The History Handbook* (*)

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

Week 2

September 11
History, Disease, Historiography II


Optional:

September 13
History, Disease, Historiography II


Week 3

September 18
History, Disease, Historiography III

Susan Reverby and David Rosner, “Beyond the Great Doctors” Revisited: A Generation of the “New” Social History of Medicine”, in Huisman and Warner,
Locating Medical History (*)


September 20
History, Disease, Historiography IV

Alfons Labisch, “Transcending the Two Cultures in Biomedicine. The History of Medicine and the History in Medicine,” in Huisman and Warner, Locating Medical History (*)

Alfons Labisch, “History of Public Health – History in Public Health”, in Social History of Medicine, 11, 1, April 1998

Allan Brandt, “Behavior, Disease, and Health in the Twentieth-Century United States” in Morality and Health (*)

Week 4
September 24: FIRST PAPER DUE. Leave your paper in my mailbox (Trotter 220) by Noon.

September 25
Tuberculosis I.

World Health Organization (WHO), Tuberculosis (*)
 Susan Sontag. Illness as Metaphor (*)

Video material (on reserve)
The Forgotten Plague

September 27
Tuberculosis II

Diego Armus, The Ailing City, 4, 5
Nancy Tomes, The Gospel of Germs, 4, 5 (*)
David Barnes, The Making of a Social Disease. Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France, (*)

Week 5
October 2
Tuberculosis III
Diego Armus, *The Ailing City*, 2 (67-83)
Flurin Condrau, “Beyond the Total Institution: Towards a Reinterpretation of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium”, in Condrau and Worboys eds. *Tuberculosis then and Now* (*)

Video material
*On the Lake* http://www.onthelakemovie.com

**October 4**
No class. Professor invited to deliver talks overseas

Video materials (on reserve)
*Historic Films on TB*

**Week 6**
**October 9**
**Tuberculosis IV**

Diego Armus, *The Ailing City*, 3, 9

**October 11**
**Tuberculosis V**

Diego Armus, *The Ailing City*, 6

**Week 7**
Break

**Week 8**
**October 23**
**Malaria I**

World Health Organization (WHO), *Malaria* (*)
Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease*, Preface, Introduction, 1, 2 (pp. 36-38; 44-53) (*)
Nancy Stepan, “‘The Only Serious Terror in these Regions’: Malaria Control in the Brazilian Amazon,” in Diego Armus ed., *Disease in the History of Modern Latin America. From Malaria to AIDS* (*) (e-book)
Video materials (on reserve)
*Historic Malaria Films
*On the Front Line

**October 25**
**Malaria II**
Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers. Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955-1975*, 1, 2.

**Week 9**
**October 30**
**Malaria III**
Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers*, 3
Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease*, 4 (*)

**November 1**
**Malaria IV**
Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers*, 4

**Week 10**
**November 6**
**Malaria V**
Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers*, 5
Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease*, 8, Conclusion (*)

**November 7**: SECOND PAPER DUE (on tuberculosis and/or malaria). Leave your paper in my mailbox (Trotter 220) by Noon.

**November 8**
**Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease I**
World Health Organization (WHO), *Tobacco* (*)

**Week 11**
**November 13**
**Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease II**
Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in English Popular Culture*, 4, 5, 6, 7
Young-sun Hong, “Cigarette Butts and the Building of Socialism in East Germany” (*)
November 15

**Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease III**
Solomon Katz, “Secular Morality” (*)
Mark Nichter, “Smoking: What Does Culture Have to Do with It?” (*)

Video materials (on reserve):
*The Last Cigarette*
*Smoke that Cigarette*
*Search for a Safe Cigarette*
*Classic TV Commercial Advertising*
*Vintage Tobacco & Cigarette Films*

Week 12

November 20

**Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease IV**

Rosemary Elliot, “‘Everybody Did It’—or Did They?: The Use of Oral History in Researching Women’s Experiences of Smoking in Britain, 1930–1970(*)
Eric Laurier, “Daily and Life course Contexts of Smoking” (*)
Luiz Castro-Santos, “Misplaced Targets: In Defense of Smokers” (*)

November 22

Thanksgiving

Week 13

November 27

**Polio I**

World Health Organization (WHO), *Poliomyelitis* (*)

Video materials (on reserve):
*A Paralyzing Fear: Polio in America*
*The Final Touch*
*Conquering the Crippler: History of Polio in Canada*
*Historic Polio Vaccine Films*

November 29
**Polio II**  

**Week 14**  
**December 4**  
**Polio III**

David Oshinsky, *Polio. An American Story*, 6-16

**December 6**  
**Polio IV**

David Oshinsky, *Polio. An American Story*, Epilogue  
Siddharth Dube, *The End of Polio. A Global Effort to End a Disease* (*)

http://www.polioeradication.org/  

**Week 15**  
**December 10:** THIRD PAPER DUE (on smoking or/and polio). Leave your paper in my mailbox (Trotter 220) by Noon.

**December 11**

Recapitulation and students’ brief presentations about the content of their fourth paper.

**December 23rd**  
FOURTH PAPER DUE (send it by email to darmus1@swarthmore.edu). If you do not receive an acknowledgment message by December 26th it means I do not have your paper.