

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

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Office Hours: M 4:00-5:00
 W 4:00-5:00
 F 1:00-2:00

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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, tobacco smoking (as related to pulmonary cancer) and Ebola fever, 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; the emerging field of international health.

Requirements

1. Readings:

Readings are listed in the course schedule below. All required readings available on Moodle are marked in this syllabus with an asterisk (*). Paper versions –and in some cases e-versions- of these books are on-reserve and available at the library. Soon they will also be available at the campus bookstore:

David Oshinsky, *Polio. An American Story* (Oxford)

Diego Armus, *The Ailing City. Health, Tuberculosis and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950* (Duke)

Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in English Popular Culture, 1800-2000. Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester)

Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers, Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955-1975* (Johns Hopkins)

2. Writing:

This is a writing course. Three written assignments are mandatory.

The first two assignments are book reviews focused each one on a book of your

***This syllabus is not definitive. During the semester, please check Moodle on a weekly basis in order to access to the last version.**

choice (after consultation with me) dealing with a disease from a historical perspective. The main goal of these assignments is to gain some experience in the art of writing book reviews, a scholarly genre with its own rules and peculiarities. Final version of book reviews should be at least 3 pages in length. The remaining written assignment is a research paper on a topic of your choice after consultation with me. The paper –12/15 pages in length- can take a variety of formats, 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 associated with it. You will work on this research paper throughout the second half of the semester. Independently of the chosen format, this final paper entails a number of accumulative tasks with very specific deadlines (see schedule below).

Additional information about these written assignments will be provided in class. 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:

Please check the Hist 66 Research Guide at [Tripod-Research Guides-History](#).

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.

If you are having medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean's Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform

your instructor as soon as possible. If you miss too many classes we recommend that you withdraw from the course because it is not possible for us to grant extensions if you miss a significant portion of the course.

Course Schedule.

Week 1

January 21

Introduction

-About primary and secondary sources

Berkin and Anderson, "How can I work effectively with primary, secondary and fictional sources?" (*)

Marius, "Documenting your sources" (*)

- About reviewing books

Bruce Mazlish, "The Art of Reviewing" (*)

Richard Marius and Melvin Page, "Writing Reviews" (*)

Week 2

January 28

History, Disease, Historiography I

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

Charles Rosenberg, "What is Disease? In Memory of Owsei Temkin," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2003, 77: 491-505 (*)

Robert Nye, "The Evolution of the Concept of Medicalization in the Late Twentieth Century," *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 2003, 39, 2: 115-129 (*)

Warwick Anderson, "Postcolonial Histories of Medicine," in Huisman and Warner, *Locating Medical History* (*)

Week 3

February 4

History, Disease, Historiography II

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

Charles Rosenberg, "Anticipated Consequences. Historians, History, and Health Policy," in Rosemary Stevens, ed., *Putting the Past Back In: History and Health Policy in the United States* (Rutgers University Press, 2006. (*)

Alfons Labisch, "History of Public Health – History in Public Health", in *Social History of Medicine*, 11, 1, April 1998 (*)

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* (*)

Optional:

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

-Guidelines for research exercise on the Ebola crisis and its presentation in printed and online media.

-Book reviews: Take a look at the book review sections of these journals and read as many as you can (*Bulletin of the History of Medicine*; *Social History of Medicine*; *Medical History*; *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*; *Nursing History Review*; *Global Public Health*; *Health and History*; *H-Net Reviews*; *American Historical Review*; *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*; *The Americas*; *Journal of Social History*). Bring to the class a couple of book titles, so we can discuss if they are good choices (you will write your first book review on one of those books).

Week 4

February 11

Ebola Fever

-In-class group presentations on the Ebola crisis.

Week 5

February 18

Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease I

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

Robert Proctor, *Golden Holocaust. Origins of the Cigarette Catastrophe and the Case for Abolition*, Prologue, Introduction, (*)

Luiz Castro-Santos, "Misplaced Targets: In Defense of Smokers" (*)

Young-sun Hong, "Cigarette Butts and the Building of Socialism in East Germany" (*)

Solomon Katz, "Secular Morality" (*)

Eric Laurier, "Daily and Life course Contexts of Smoking" (*)

Eric Feldman and Ronald Bayer, "Liberal States, Public Health, and the Tobacco Question" (*)

-Draft of First Book Review Due (WA)

Week 6

February 26

Tobacco Smoking: Between Habit and Disease II

Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in English Popular Culture, 1800-200. Perfect Pleasures*

Week 7

March 4

Polio I

World Health Organization (WHO), *Poliomyelitis* (*)
David Oshinsky, *Polio. An American Story*.

-Final First Book Review Due

Week 8

March 11

Spring Break

Week 9

March 18

Polio II

Edmund Sass, "Polio: Its Definition, History, Current Status, and Late Effects", in *Polio's Legacy. An Oral History* (*)

-Final Paper: Tentative Topic Due

-Identify 2 or 3 books for your second review.

Week 10

March 25

No class. Professor invited to give talks in Mexico City.

Week 11

April 1

Tuberculosis I

World Health Organization (WHO), *Tuberculosis* (*)
Diego Armus, *The Ailing City. Health, Tuberculosis and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870-1950*

-Final Paper: Detailed Tentative Outline (indicating bibliography and primary sources, in case you are planning to use them)

-Draft of Second Book Review Due (WA)

Week 12

April 8

Tuberculosis II

Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (*)
Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*, 4, 5 (*)
David Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease. Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France*, (*)
Flurin Condrau, "Beyond the Total Institution: Towards a Reinterpretation of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium", in Condrau and Worboys eds. *Tuberculosis then and Now* (*)

Sheila Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death. Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History*, part 3 (*)

-Second Book Review Due

Week 13

April 15

Malaria I

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

Marcos Cueto, *Cold War, Deadly Fevers, Malaria Eradication in Mexico, 1955-1975*

Week 14

April 22

Malaria II

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)

Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease* (*)

Week 15

April 29

Recapitulation

-Students' presentations about their final paper.

-First Draft of Final Paper Due (WA)

-May 16th: Final Version of Paper Due.