

SOCIAL HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Fall 2020

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Description

This reading seminar will track major themes in social histories of medicine and examine the variations of health and disease among different temporal, geographic, local, and global contexts. Who has made claims to histories of the body? How have experiences and understandings of disease entities and disease concepts shifted over time? To answer these questions, this course will offer a historiographical review of medical histories that engage with social, cultural, epistemological, political, technological, and institutional concerns. Topics will include medical ethics, the politics of race and biology, the social history of cancer, and epidemics.

Aims

This course has three aims. Students will 1) develop a critical appreciation for medical historiography; 2) analyze and assess historical arguments; 3) compare research methodologies in global histories of medicine.

Assignments

Students will read two books (and/or articles) each week and produce a weekly reading response no more than 1000 words due before class. Each student will select one reading from that week to closely read while skimming the other two readings and identifying its broader arguments. We will develop a list of “big questions” for each week. Participation is mandatory.

Skills

Although this course does not require the writing of a research paper, it will require students to learn how to produce citations using Zotero and practice recognizing primary arguments in the history of medicine.

READING LIST

HISTORIOGRAPHY: Patients v. Doctors v. Historians

Brandt, A. M. 1991. “Emerging Themes in the History of Medicine.” *The Milbank Quarterly* 69 (2): 199–214.

Porter, Roy. 1985. “The Patient’s View: Doing Medical History from Below.” *Theory and Society* 14 (2): 175–98.

Rosenberg, Charles E, and Johns Hopkins University Press. 2007. *Our Present Complaint: American Medicine, Then and Now*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

1. PROFESSIONALIZATION & INSTITUTIONS

Rosenberg, Charles E. 1995. *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America’s Hospital System*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

Starr, Paul. 1984. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry*. Reprint edition. New York: Basic Books.

Scull, Andrew. 2007. *Madhouse: A Tragic Tale of Megalomania and Modern Medicine*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

2. RACE

- Metzl, Jonathan. 2011. *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*. Boston, Mass: Beacon.
- Pollock, Anne. 2012. *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference*. Duke University Press.
- Whitmarsh, Ian, and David S Jones. 2010. *What's the Use of Race?: Modern Governance and the Biology of Difference*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

3. PUBLIC HEALTH

- Freidenfelds, Lara. 2009. *The Modern Period: Menstruation in Twentieth-Century America*. 1 edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Nelson, Alondra. 2013. *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*.
- Shah, Nayan. 2002. *By Nayan Shah - Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown: 1st (First) Edition*. University of California Press.

4. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- Barnes, Djuna. 1995. *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Humphreys, Margaret. 1999. *Yellow Fever and the South*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wooten, Heather Green. 2009. *The Polio Years in Texas: Battling a Terrifying Unknown*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.

5. DISEASE BIOGRAPHY

- Hacking, Ian. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Healy, David. 2011. *Mania: A Short History of Bipolar Disorder*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Willrich, Michael. 2011. *Pox: An American History*. 1 edition. Penguin Books.
- Benton, Bruce, and James D. Wolfensohn. 2020. *Riverblindness in Africa: Taming the Lion's Stare*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

6. EPIDEMICS

- Deer, Brian. 2020. *The Doctor Who Fooled the World: Science, Deception, and the War on Vaccines*.
- Johnson, Steven. 2006. *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic--and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World*. 1 edition. Riverhead Books.
- Jones, David S. 2004. *Rationalizing Epidemics: Meanings and Uses of American Indian Mortality Since 1600*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

7. GENETICS

- Comfort, Nathaniel C. 2014. *The Science of Human Perfection: How Genes Became the Heart of American Medicine*.
- Nelson, Alondra. 2016. *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation After the Genome*.
- Marsh, Margaret, and Wanda Ronner. 2019. *The Pursuit of Parenthood: Reproductive Technology from Test-Tube Babies to Uterus Transplants*.

8. CANCER

- Aronowitz, Robert. 2013. *Unnatural History: Breast Cancer And American Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Livingston, Julie. 2012. *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Scheffler, Robin Wolfe. 2019. *Contagious Cause: The American Hunt for Cancer Viruses and the Rise of Molecular Medicine*. University of Chicago Press.

9. DRUGS

- Courtwright, David T. 2002. *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*.
- Greene, Jeremy A. 2016. *Generic: The Unbranding of Modern Medicine*.
- Tamara Venit Shelton, *Herbs and Roots: A History of Chinese Doctors in the American Medical Marketplace* (Yale University Press, 2019).