Honors 3900 / History 4730
Diagnosing Disease: Perspectives from the Past and Present

Scott Moore (Medical Laboratory Sciences) and Matt Romaniello (History)

Class meetings via Zoom: Every Friday 1:30-2:20; there may be other Zoom meetings, check the class schedule below or the Zoom tab in Canvas

Course Objectives:

1. Explain why diseases cannot always be diagnosed with perfect accuracy
2. Describe the current state/burden/causes of the diseases covered
3. Explain the appropriate clinical presentation, laboratory testing, and complications of the diseases covered
4. Describe challenges to the elimination of influenza and how Donald Ainslie was able to eradicate smallpox
5. Describe emerging threats to health security
6. Identify and explain the change and continuity of the history of medicine from the early modern to modern era
7. Understand that knowledge is culturally constructed and reflects the historical era in which it is produced
8. Interpret and use a variety of primary sources to understand the patient experience
9. Demonstrate historical empathy by understanding the perspective of people in past societies as different than our own.
10. Develop a clear argument using recognized historical methods, and express these ideas in clear expository prose.

Course Description:

The first four weeks lay the groundwork of the course, offering students background in the history of medicine and a simple overview of biostatistics. By drawing upon the expertise of a pathologist and a historian, we offer a grounded approach to the medical humanities. This allows the students to practice methodologies available to historians studying medicine as well as those of modern scientific and diagnostic methods. Over the next nine weeks of the course, we will apply these methodologies to a variety of diseases, presented in “historical” order as they first entered the written record, but alternating between historical records and modern clinical approaches. These case studies, including malaria, smallpox, influenza, and tuberculosis, will allow the students to consider the challenge of studying disease both in its own terms and as a human experience of illness. As the students practice and apply these new methodologies to the case studies, they will be preparing to conduct their own research on an illness currently facing society. This could be diseases with a long history such as cholera that still plagues society or more recently identified diseases including ebola or dengue fever. The final week of the semester will provide the students an opportunity to prepare and then present their research to the community, allowing them to apply the lessons of history to contemporary developments.
Required Readings:

• J. N. Hays, The Burdens of Disease: Epidemics and Human Response in Western History

There will also be a selection of articles available on the course Canvas site, under “Files,” or accessible through the embedded links.

Requirements:

This course is designed to understand and evaluate the challenges created by human disease in the past and present. In doing so, the expectation is that you will develop the skills to employ historical thinking, the ability to evaluate primary and secondary source material, and empathy for a variety of human experiences, both in its universality and its diversity. It is also designed to give you experience writing and thinking critically about the topics we examine.

Assignment = % of your final grade
Participation = 20
First short paper = 20
Second short paper = 20
Research presentation = 15
Final research paper = 25

Participation: You are expected to be prepared and engaged throughout the semester. Our typical week will involve watching two lectures via Canvas, some short readings, and then virtual class discussion every Friday. You are expected to participate in our class discussions; participation includes asking questions, answering questions, and offering opinions or ideas about the topic under discussion. Your attendance in our virtual class is required, and will be an important part of your final grade.

Short Papers: During the semester you will write two short papers (4-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, in a 10 or 12 point font). The first paper will be a primary source analysis that compares the diagnosis of a disease from both its traditional (humoral) depiction as well as modern medical evaluation. The second will be an in-depth analysis of the changing ideas of the one of the first four diseases discussed (malaria, plague, syphilis and HIV). Both papers will provide you an opportunity to conduct outside research on a specific topic, as well as practice the various methodologies for diagnosing diseases presented in class. Specific topics will be suggested in class, but your task is to develop your own thesis based on your reading of the books. You may use outside readings (properly cited in your paper), if you desire.

Final research paper and presentation: The final project for the class will be an analysis of a disease of your choosing, either by placing it within its historical context or by evaluating its contemporary challenges to society. You should pick your topic no later than week 10, and prepare a bibliography of resources for your project. You will have two opportunities to present your research. The first will be a short, oral presentation via Zoom during the final week of the semester, and the second will be as a research paper (4-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, in a 10 or 12 point font) submitted during exam week. Further instructions for the paper will be handed out in class following the submission of your second paper.
The grade for an unexcused paper is a zero. Late papers will lose 5 points per day late, starting immediately at the end of class (weekends included). Acceptable excuses include unavoidable family obligations, serious illnesses, court appearances, and incarceration. Students who are absent for any reason should provide a legitimate reason for their absence.

Course Policies:

Student Acknowledgment of Coronavirus Mitigation Protocols:

I will contribute to the health and safety of the Weber State community by following any required mitigation protocols that reflect the university's core value of respect for other people. I understand what is expected of me, the risk of exposure to COVID-19, and that no one can guarantee there will be no transmission of communicable diseases. I also understand that I must use common sense and wise judgment to help protect myself and others' health. I further understand that Weber State University will make appropriate accommodations when warranted as well as enforce rules according to existing policies (See PPM 6-22, The Student Code). Violation of these requirements may result in removal from the classroom (or other spaces) or lead to disciplinary action under the Student Code. Finally, I recognize that requirements, courses, and other elements of university services may be revised or suspended at any time as conditions change.

Professionalism: This course does not replace professional medical advice, nor does it qualify the student to advise others regarding any potential medical treatment. This decision to treat or observe an illness should be left to the patient's physician.

Inclusivity Statement: Pivotal to Weber State University's mission is the need to embrace and value the diversity of its members. Acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual, we seek to cultivate an environment that encourages freedom of expression. Because the University is a community where inquiry is nurtured and theories are tested, every individual has the right to feel safe to express ideas that differ from those held by other members of the community. However, all persons who aspire to be part of our campus community must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Therefore, expressions or actions that disparage an individual's or group's ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability are contrary to the mission of Weber State University.

“Core Beliefs” Statement: According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student’s core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not obligle the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student’s request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student’s beliefs.”

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will not be tolerated in this class on any assignment. If you are in any way uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, or you
have any concerns about the proper citation for references included in your written work, please ask me. As a general rule of thumb, anytime you use **two or more words** taken directly from a text – you must have a citation.

_Disability Access:_ Any student requiring accommodations or services because of a disability should contact the WSU Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in the Student Services Building, room 181.

_Recording Class:_ According to PPM 6.6.3, students must obtain a faculty member's permission before making audio or visual recordings of non-public University-sponsored academic experiences, supervised by faculty and designed to impart particular knowledge or skills to students, including classes, course related activities, and related academic meetings. Where a faculty member grants permission, students may only use these recordings for personal educational purposes unless otherwise agreed in writing by the faculty member. Students who have been granted permission to record may not share these recordings with other people through any means (e.g. sharing on social media, posting online, giving to other students, etc.) unless each recorded person gives their written permission.

_Emergency Closure:_ If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will continue to meet via Zoom. Look for full details on Canvas. Look for university announcements on your Weber email. Code Purple is a good way to be alerted to campus closures, and you are encouraged to sign up for it.

_Course Fee Statement:_ There is no course fee for this class.

_General notes:_ We are happy to read drafts of papers, outlines, or theses before your papers are due. Please give me at least 48 hours before the due date to read it and get back to you with comments. Any and all feedback will help you sharpen your argument and evidence, resulting in a clearer paper and better grade.

_Nota Bene:_ We reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. Any such changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings:** If specific days are mentioned in the schedule (MWF, that indicates a virtual Zoom meeting – check Canvas for full details). We will be recording the virtual Zoom meetings and making those recordings available after the class meets, if you are unable to attend for any reason.

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<th>Week 1: Diagnosing Disease (8/30-9/3)</th>
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<td>M: Introduction</td>
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<th>Week 2: Evolving Knowledge (9/6-10)</th>
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<td>Monday (Labor Day)</td>
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Week 3: Modern Medicine (9/13-17)
Watch on your own time: Contemporary Public Health

F: Discussion of the Malaria and Diabetes case in the module; as well as the other readings

Week 4: Patient Experience v. Diagnosis (9/20-24)

M: Lecture – the Patient Experience


PAPER 1 DUE (submit through Canvas by September 24th before midnight)

Week 5: Malaria (9/27-10/1)
Watch on your own time: Medieval Medicine and Malaria; and Contemporary Malaria


Week 6: Plagues in History (10/4-8)
Watch on your own time: Contemporary Plague; and Black Death


Week 7: Syphilis and HIV (10/11-15)
Watch on your own time: Chemical Medicine and Syphilis; and Contemporary STIs


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<th>Week 8: Nutritional Diseases (10/18-22)</th>
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<td>Watch on your own time: Miasma Theory and Scurvy; and Contemporary Nutritional Diseases</td>
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**PAPER 2 DUE** (submit through Canvas by October 21st before midnight)

**Fri:** No discussion (Fall Break)

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<th>Week 9: Smallpox and Inoculation (10/25-29)</th>
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<td>Watch on your own time: Smallpox; and Contemporary Smallpox</td>
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<th>Week 10: Cholera (11/1-5)</th>
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<td>Watch on your own time Contemporary Cholera; and Germ Theory &amp; Cholera</td>
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**Research paper topic/proposal due** (submit through Canvas by November 5)

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<th>Week 11: Tuberculosis (11/8-12)</th>
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<td>Watch on your own time: TB; and Contemporary Tuberculosis</td>
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Resources/bibliography for research paper due (submit through Canvas by November 12)

**Week 12: Influenza (11/15-19)**
Watch on your own time: Influenza Pandemic, and Contemporary Influenza


**Outline for research paper due (submit through Canvas by November 19)**

**Week 13: Biosecurity: Dengue Fever and Ebola (11/22-26)**
Watch on your own time: Contemporary Biosecurity and Emerging Threats


**Fri: No discussion (Thanksgiving Break)**

**Week 14: Prep week (11/29-12/3)**
Consult with us for research or presentation help

**Week 15: Student Research Presentations (12/6-10)**
(schedule will be posted ahead of time)

**Week 15: Exam week (12/13-17)**

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE** (submit through Canvas, by midnight on December 16th)