

MEDICINE IN THE AGE OF PLAGUE

History 190

Spring 2007

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Office Hours: TBA

Description: This course examines both the healing practices and the bodies of knowledge and belief that structured health care in Renaissance Europe from around 1300 to 1700. We will explore health and healing from the perspectives of patients and practitioners, including a broad spectrum of healers such as herb-women, midwives, charlatans, and learned physicians. How did ordinary people make sense of their bodies, and of sickness and health? How did their ideas relate to those of their healers? The seminar will also try to establish a productive dialogue between Renaissance healing practices and modern-day cultural attitudes. What can we learn about our own responses to epidemics, chronic illnesses, and disabilities from this seemingly distant past?

Texts: The following texts are available for purchase at the Emory University bookstore: Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*; David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*; Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*; Sister Bartolomea Riccoboni, *Life and Death in a Venetian Convent*. All other materials are available on e-reserve through Woodruff Library.

Requirements: Each student is expected to come to class meetings prepared to discuss the readings, and to contribute to the weekly, required electronic bulletin board hosted on Blackboard (<https://classes.emory.edu>). Our Blackboard site also allows you to access readings on e-reserve directly, as well as to study visual images correlated to weekly topics. Since the success of the seminar depends on your regular attendance and engagement, seminar participation, including weekly e-postings, counts as 40% of your course grade. Assignments include two short papers (1000 words apiece, each worth 15% of your course grade; one essay will focus on a disability-related topic), and a final project that integrates web resources, images, and library research (30% of final grade) due at the end of the semester. Additional information about assignments will be distributed shortly.

Policies: It is the policy of Emory University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss arrangements as soon as possible. All information will be held in strict confidence.

Course Map:

Wk. 1. Introduction to the Course

Part I. Medical Theory and Practice

Wk. 2. Sickness and Health in Renaissance Europe

- Peter J. Brown, “Belief and Ethnomedical Systems: Conceptual Tools” and “The Social Construction of Illness and the Social Production of Health: Conceptual Tools,” in idem, *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, 108-109, 144-46
- Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 1-65, 155-92

Wk. 3. Everyday Healers and the Medical Marketplace

- Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*, 193-230
- Katherine Park, “Medicine and Magic: The Healing Arts,” in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis, 129-49
- David Gentilcore, “‘Charlatans, Mountebanks and other Similar People’: The Regulation and Role of Itinerant Practitioners in Early Modern Italy,” *Social History* 20 (1995): 297-314

Wk. 4. Patients and Practitioners: The Learned Tradition

- Lindemann, *Medicine and Society*, 66-119
- Michael McVaugh, “Bedside Manners in the Middle Ages,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 71 (1997): 201-23
- Source Reading: the 1507 casebook of a Florentine physician, Antonio Benivieni

Wk. 5. The ‘New’ Anatomy: Opening the Body

- Andrew Cunningham, “Vesalius: The Revival of Galenic Anatomy,” in idem, *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients*, 88-142
- Katherine Park, “The Criminal and the Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994): 1-33
- Source Readings: a) Vesalius, “The Fabric of the Human Body” b) Baldasar Heseler, “Eyewitness Report of a Dissection, 1540” c) Felix Platter, “Journal of a Medical Student” in *Medicine and Western Civilization*, eds. Rothman, Marcus, Kiceluk, 54-67

Wk. 6. The Discourse of Disability in Renaissance Europe

- Catherine J. Kudlick, “Disability History: Why We Need Another ‘Other,’” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 763-793
- Anne Jacobsen Schutte, “‘Such Monstrous Births’: A Neglected Aspect of the Antinomian Controversy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 85-106
- Edward Wheatley, “Blindness, Discipline, and Reward: Louis IX and the Foundation of the Hospice des Quinze Vingts,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 22 (2002): 194-212
- Source Reading: Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels* (excerpts)

Part II. Experiencing Illness and Disability

Wk. 7. How Plague Changed Europe

- David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*
- Source Reading: Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (excerpts)

Wk. 8. The Plague Returns (Again and Again)

- Source Reading: Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year* (excerpts)

Wk. 9. Blaming the 'Other': Sex, Sin, and Disease

- Peter Lewis Allen, "To Live Outside the Camp: Medieval Leprosy," in idem, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present*, 25-40
- Claude Quézel, *History of Syphilis*, 9-72
- Source Readings: a) Ulrich von Hutten, "Of the Beginning of the French Pox" b) Antonio Benivieni's account of syphilis

Wk. 10. Interpreting the Afflictions of Everyday Life

- Source Reading: Sister Bartolomea Riccoboni, *Life and Death in a Venetian Convent*
- Encarnacion Juarez, "Autobiography of the aching body in Teresa de Cartagena's *Arboleda de los enfermos*," in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Snyder, Brueggemann, Garland-Thomson

Wk. 11. Renaissance 'Madness' and Mental Disabilities

- Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*, 1-71
- David M. Colón, "Martin Luther, the Devil and the Teufelchen: Attitudes toward Mentally Retarded Children in Sixteenth-Century Germany," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 14 (1989): 75-84
- Source Readings: excerpts from Michel de Montaigne, "On the Power of the Imagination" and Robert Burton "The Anatomy of Melancholy"

Part III. Research Projects

Wk. 12. Individual consultations about projects

Wks. 13 and 14: Student presentations