

MEDICINE AND SOCIETY
History 79-330
Spring 2014

Room: PH A18A

Time: Tuesday, Thursday 9:00-10:20

Instructor: Caroline Jean Acker

Office hours: By appointment

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Graders: Laura Bradshaw, Robert Hutchings

Texts:

John Harley Warner and Janet E. Tighe, eds. *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. ISBN 978-0-679-75292-9

Sinclair Lewis. *Arrowsmith*. New York: Signet Classics. ISBN 978-0-451-53086-8

Abraham Verghese. *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story*. New York: Vintage, 1994. ISBN 978-0-679

In Medicine and Society, we will examine the experiences of healers, patients, and other people concerned with health and disease. As we move from debates about smallpox vaccination in Boston in the early seventeenth century to physicians' confrontations with AIDS in the late twentieth, we will learn how a wide range of people responded to the challenges and, in some cases, opportunities posed by threats to health. We will read writings of a wide range of historical actors: physicians of many kinds as well as other types of healers; reformers and protestors; innovators and traditionalists; and, in many settings, patients. We will ask what was at stake for each of these people as they faced disease (their own or that of their patients), struggled to maintain their identities and improve their status, and sought to persuade others of the value of new cures or traditional methods.

During the period covered by Medicine and Society, the American medical profession was transformed from an increasingly overcrowded occupation with little consensus on causes of disease or on who counted as a physician to an elite profession grounded in laboratory science and exerting absolute control over who could enter the profession. From about the middle of the nineteenth century, some physicians and other professionals thought about the impact of disease at the population level and gave rise to the study of public health. In the late nineteenth century, the bacteriological revolution transformed ideas about disease causation; decades of debate about the actual meanings of the

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bacteriological discoveries ensued. The challenges posed by disease shifted in the early twentieth century as infectious diseases gave way to chronic disease as leading causes of death.

Throughout this long period, and in spite of continual advances in medical knowledge, patients suffered a range of painful and debilitating conditions. Often they had little choice but to come to terms in some way with the effects of the diseases they suffered. Many sought to find some meaning in their suffering; for some, the experience of illness sparked the desire to become a healer. However much patterns of disease, methods of healing, and hopes of cure changed over time, patients continued to face some of the oldest human challenges, including how to face and understand the serious losses posed by illness and death.

Policies: Class discussions form an integral part of the course; therefore, consistent and punctual attendance is essential. You are expected to have read the day's reading and understood it so that discussion can build from that understanding. Class is most enjoyable and productive when everyone has done the reading and has something to say about it. You are entitled to three unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in your class participation grade dropping by a third (for example, from B- to C+). Absences are excused upon presentation of a note from a health care provider or for religious holidays (notify instructor in advance of intention to observe a religious holiday on a class day).

There will be several forms of written assignments: one brief reaction piece; seven brief analyses (2 double-spaced pages); and two essays (4-5 double-spaced pages). Additional instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. All written assignments are due by 5:00 p.m. on due date; all should be submitted to the Digital Dropbox at Blackboard.

On the Fridays of weeks when we read chapters from Warner and Tighe, two-page analyses are due. Each analysis can be based on any chapter(s) we have read to that point in the semester. In the analysis, develop the points of view of one or two document writers and discuss what is at stake for them in the issues they discuss or the positions they take. The analysis should also set the actor(s) in a larger context illuminated by reference to other documents, to historical essays in Warner and Tighe, and/or to earlier historical periods. **No analysis assignment which only discusses a single document with no reference to other readings will earn a grade higher than C.** More detailed instructions will be provided when we begin reading this book.

Quality of writing is central to assignment grades. Writing commits you to a line of argument, and your writing should develop that argument logically, with clear evidentiary support. Students' writing will be judged for clarity, coherence, and eloquence. Broadly speaking, the following criteria determine letter grades for assignments: D: Problems of content and organization; failure to capture the essential argument of the readings; problems of grammar and style. C: Effective summary of relevant points from the readings; development of your own perspective on the theme of

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the assignment. Some problems of organization, grammar, and style. B: Excellent summary of relevant points from the readings; development of clear analytical perspective of your own; some original thinking of your own; minor problems of organization and clarity; few errors of grammar and style. A: Excellent summary and critical assessment of relevant points from the readings; original and thoughtful argument of your own from a clear analytical perspective; writing that is clear and sometimes elegant; no significant problems of content or organization; very few, very minor errors of grammar and style.

Course grades will be based on the following formula: reaction piece, 5%; analyses, 5% each for a total of 35%; essays, one at 15% (Lewis) and one at 20% (Verghese) for a total of 35%; class participation, 25%.

All students are responsible for reading and understanding the CMU plagiarism policy (available at www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/AcadRegs.html) and “Avoiding Plagiarism” in Hacker and Sommers, pp. 210 to 213.

WEEK 1: Aug. 26 and 28

Aug. 26: Introduction. Video: Hold Your Breath: A Journey into Cross-Cultural Medicine. Maren Grainer-Monsen, director.

Aug. 28: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 2. **Response essay to Hold Your Breath due.** Write a 1.5-2 page (typed, double spaced) essay about Hold Your Breath that answers the questions, what went wrong? Why? Post your essay to the Digital Dropbox by 5:00 pm.

WEEK 2: Sep. 2 and 4

Sep. 2: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 3. First portion of video: A Midwife’s Tale. Lee Kaiulani, Richard P. Rogers, Laurie Kahn-Leavitt, and Laurel Ulrich.

Sep. 4: Second portion of A Midwife’s Tale. Discussion of video and chapter 3: How does a historian develop a coherent story and argument from fragmentary sources?

Sep. 5: First analysis due

WEEK 3: Sep. 9 and 11

Sep. 9: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 4

Sep. 11: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 5

Sep. 12: Second analysis due.

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WEEK 4: Sep. 16 and 18

Sep. 6: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 6

Sep. 8: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 7

Sep. 9: Third analysis due.

WEEK 5: Sep. 23 and 25

Sep. 23: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 8

Sep. 25: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 9

Sep. 26: Fourth analysis due.

WEEK 6: Sep. 30 and Oct. 2

Sep. 30: NO CLASS

Oct. 2: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 10

(No analysis due this week.)

WEEK 7: Oct. 7 and 9

Oct. 7: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 11

Oct. 9: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 12

Oct. 10: Fifth Analysis due.

WEEK 8: Oct. 14 and 16

Oct. 14: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 13

Oct. 16: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 14

Oct. 20: Sixth analysis due. (Changed from Oct. 17)

WEEK 9: Oct. 21 and 23

Oct. 21: Warner and Tighe, Ch. 15

Oct. 23: Lewis, pp. 1-90 (Chapters 1 through 8)

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Oct. 27: Seventh analysis due. (Changed from Oct. 24)

WEEK 10: Oct. 28 and 30

Oct. 28: Lewis, pp. 90-162 (Chapters 16 through 21)

Oct. 30: Lewis, pp. 162-235 (Chapters 16 through 21)

WEEK 11: Nov. 4 and 6

Nov. 4: Lewis, pp. 235-306 (Chapters 22 through 27)

Nov. 6: Lewis, pp. 307-373 (Chapters 28 through 34)

WEEK 12: Nov. 11 and 13

Nov. 11: Lewis, pp. 373-450 (Chapters 35 through 40)

Nov. 13: Verghese, pp. 1-72

Nov. 14: *Arrowsmith* essay due.

WEEK 13: Nov. 18 and 20

Nov. 18: Verghese, pp. 73-143

Nov. 20: Verghese, pp. 144-219

WEEK 14: Nov. 25 and 27

Nov. 25: Verghese, pp. 220-274

Nov. 27: NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 15: Dec. 2 and 4

Dec. 2: Verghese, pp. 275-355

Dec. 4: Verghese, pp. 356-529

Dec. 8: Verghese essay due.