HISTORY OF MEDICINE

Antiquity to Scientific Revolution
Graduate Student Survey

Ahmed Ragab, MD. PhD.
M, W 10-10.50 am; Gilman 132 + Section W 3-5.30 (Seminar Room, Wlech)
INTRODUCTION

What happened when one got sick in ancient Greece, China or India? What types of medicines they took? How did physicians think about diseases, bodies and healing? How did this change over the medieval period and into early modernity? What did race, sex and gender mean from a medical perspective? And how did religion and medicine interact throughout this period?

In this course, we will take a journey through the history of medicine from antiquity to the early modern period. Throughout these centuries, we will trace how human bodies were understood, how diseases were diagnosed and treated, how physicians and other medical practitioners learned, were certified and practiced. We will also consider how medicine contributed to concepts of race, sex, gender and human difference, what role medicine played in early colonial history, in slavery and genocide of native peoples; and how religion affected or influenced medical knowledge and practice. Thinking comparatively, we will trace major developments and trends in medical thought and practice and how they resonated across different regions around the world.

In the grad seminar, we will also focus on historiography of premodern medicine, questions that animated scholarship and new directions and questions in the field

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each week, you will attend the undergraduate lectures on Monday and Wednesday. We will meet for the graduate seminar, where we will discuss new primary sources as well as questions of methodology and historiography. The assignments in the course are meant to help you develop new skills in premodern history of medicine.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance and participation are key part of the course. If you cannot make it to class, let me know as soon as you can. We will work together to facilitate make-up discussions.

Disability and mental health

I will do my best to ensure that you are in the best position to learn. If you have any disability, difficulty in learning or using the course materials, including lectures, or in participating in the seminar, let me know. We will work together to alleviate these difficulties.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation in lecture and section
Participation in lecture and section are key to the course. As part of your participation, before the seminar, choose a paragraph or a short quote from one of the readings that spoke to you, you found difficult, challenging, or interesting.

2. Primary “Sourcing”
An important part of a historian’s work with primary sources is related to finding these sources, knowing where to look and choosing which sources can address particular questions and why. Every week starting on week 3, one student will sign up to find a primary source for all of us to discuss. A signup sheet will be available in our first meeting. I will work closely with you every week to find primary sources. You will send the selected source on the Monday before the seminar meeting and briefly present it during the seminar.

3. Syllabus (due on 12/2)
Prepare a syllabus for a seminar (13 weekly meetings) that addresses one or more of the themes in the course, and/or focuses on any of the different periods that we cover in the course. We will discuss syllabus development in several meetings throughout the semester.

4. Prepare an exam (due on 12/2)
Prepare an exam composed of three essay questions based on this course. This should be designed as an open-book exam. Each question should be answerable in about 7 hours. We will discuss the exam in section.

5. Final exam
This is the department exam.
The exam is composed of 3 sections. You will choose one question from each section. Each question should be answered in an essay, which should have a clear structure and argument. Consider the questions as prompts for essays or short papers.
- Sections 1: composed of 2 questions from which you will choose one. Each essay should be 2000 words
- Section 2: Choose one question from the exam that you prepared and we workshoped, and answer it. This essay should be 2000 words
- Section 3: This is a primary source analysis question. You will be given two primary sources to choose one and analyze. This essay should be 1500 words

This is an open-book exam. You can check your notes, use books, etc. You will have 35 work hours (1 week) to answer the questions. If you have difficulty during the exam period, encounter health or mental health problems or concerns, let me know. We will work out a make-up plan.
1. **Introduction: Medicines and Bodies 8/31**

How can we study the ancient world? What does ancient mean? And why does history of medicine matter?


2. **Ancient Bodies, Ancient Medicine 9/7**


3. **Medicine, Religion and Empire 9/14**


4. **Roman and Byzantine medicine 9/21**


Magoulias, Harry J. "The lives of the saints as sources of data for the history of Byzantine medicine in the sixth and seventh centuries." (1964): 127-150.
5. **Eastern Humorism: From Syriac to Islamic Medicine 9/28**


Budge, E. A. Wallis Syrian Anatomy, Pathology and Therapeutics: Or, "the Book of Medicines"; the *Syriac Text, Edited From a Rare Manuscript, with an English Translation, Etc..* London: Oxford University Press, 1913. Pp. i-15; 441-49


6. **The New Islamic Medicine 10/5**


7. **The Age of the Hospital 10/12**


8. **How different was Hospital Medicine 10/19**


9. **Universities, Madrasas and Yixue: medical education and licensing 10/26**

Vivian Nutton, “Medicine in Medieval Western Europe, 1000-1500,” 139-206


10. **Black Death: Medicine in pandemic times 11/2**

Sussman, George D. "Was the black death in India and China?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (2011): 319-355. (Read this article over the two Black Death sessions)


Sussman, George D. "Was the black death in India and China?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (2011): 319-355. (Read this article over the two Black Death sessions)


11. **New Bodies: Orientalism, Humanism and Race 11/9**


Charles Webster. *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-33


12. **Anatomy, sex and gender 11/16**


Andrew Wear, “Medicine in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700,” *The Western Medical Tradition*, 250-280; 298-310


13. **Slavery and genocide 11/30**


14. **Quarantine: Plague and the making of Europe 12/7**
