Health, Disease, and Healing II: 
Patients, Medicine, and Doctors in Modern History

Welcome! Since the eighteenth century, western biomedicine has become increasingly interwoven with science and technology. The mapping and classification of the human anatomy, the discovery of a microbial universe, the development of modern diagnostic and therapeutic technologies, and the increasing professionalization of medical practice have all contributed to dramatic successes in the struggle against disease. But have these achievements come at a cost? How has the doctor-patient relationship changed with the advancement of scientific medicine? What medical challenges face contemporary patients, doctors, and society, and how have they developed historically?

This course explores these questions and others by setting modern medicine in its historical and social contexts. We will examine key developments in the history of medicine since about 1700, concentrating on Europe. Major foci include changing approaches to the body and its ailments, the relationship between medicine and the state, the politics and economics of sickness and health, and popular responses to medicine. As a principal theme, we will question how ideas about health, illness, and healing have functioned—politically, socially, and culturally—in different historical settings.

Each session will include lecture material and discussions of the readings. The discussions will be the core of the course. Your active, informed, and regular participation in the discussions is therefore a major course requirement; along with attendance, participation counts for 25% of your final grade. There will also be three take-home essay exams, each of which constitutes 25% of your grade.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, I urge any student with a disability to inform me as soon as possible, so that I may make any necessary accommodations. All such requests are confidential.

**Required Books (at the University Bookstore):**

Margaret R. Higonnet, ed. *Nurses at the Front: Writing the Wounds of the Great War*
Albert Camus, *The Plague*
Hervé Guibert, *The Compassion Protocol*
Ann Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

*An asterisk refers to material in the course reader, available in the History of Science Department, 7143 Social Science Bldg.*
Introduction

Tues., Jan. 21—Why study the history of medicine?

Thurs., Jan. 23—Health, Disease, and Healing in Culture and History

Kleinman, Preface and Chs. 1, 2, and 14.

Enlightenment in Theory and Practice

Tues., Jan. 28—Beginning with the Body


Thurs., Jan. 30—Practicing before Professionalism


Porter, The Greatest Benefit to Mankind [henceforth GBM], Ch. 10.

Tues., Feb. 4—Medical Science before Scientific Medicine: Statistics and Experiments


Thurs., Feb. 6—Toward a Healing Profession


Porter, GBM, Ch. 12.
Contagion and Illness, Place and Race

Tues., Feb. 11—Miasmas, Medical Geography, and Public Health before Germs


Thurs., Feb. 13—Epidemic Disease and the Social Consequences of Sickness


Porter, GBM, Ch. 13.

Tues., Feb. 18—Death, Disease, and Environment


Thurs., Feb. 20—Colonial Medicine and the Civilizing Mission


Porter, GBM, Ch. 15.

Recasting Disease: Infection and Vulnerability in a Universe of Germs

Tues., Feb. 25—Rethinking Contagion


Thurs., Feb. 27—Transforming Medicine and Public Health


*Andrew Cunningham, “Transforming Plague: The Laboratory and the Identity of Infectious Disease,” in *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*, ed. by Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams (New York, 1992), 209-44.

Tues., Mar. 4—Infection and the Face of Danger


Thurs., Mar. 6—Infection and Invisibility


FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE BY 5 PM IN MY MAILBOX, FRIDAY, MARCH 7.

**Gender, Legitimacy, and Professionalism in Modern Medicine**

Tues., Mar. 11—Women and Medical Training


Thurs., Mar. 13—Professional Medicine and Legitimacy


Porter, *GBM*, Ch. 18.

**Tues., Mar. 18, Thurs., Mar. 20—No class, Spring Break**
Toward the Twentieth Century: Sickness and Health in a Technological Era

Tues., Mar. 25—The Price of Modernity: Technology and Economics of Healthcare


Porter, *GBM*, Ch. 19.

Thurs., Mar. 27—Devastation and Healing: The First World War

Higonnet, *Nurses at the Front: Writing the Wounds of the Great War*.

Pictures of Sickness and Health

Tues., Apr. 1—Sickness, Health, and Wealth


*George Orwell, “How the Poor Die,” in *MWC*, 368-75.

Thurs., Apr. 3—Health and Breeding: Preventing Sickness


Porter, *GBM*, Ch. 20.

Tues., Apr. 8—Eugenics, Biology, and Genocide


SECOND EXAM DUE BY 5 PM IN MY MAILBOX, Wednesday, APRIL 9.
Thurs., Apr. 10—Illness as Metaphor? Epidemics, Community, and Healing


Tues., Apr. 15—Illness as Metaphor, continued.


**Pharmacy, Biology, and Society: The End of Disease?**

Thurs., Apr. 17—Better Living through Chemistry?


*John Parascandola, “The Introduction of Antibiotics into Therapeutics,” in *Sickness and Health in America*, 102-12.

Tues., Apr. 22—Genetics: Molecular Healing


**Health, Disease, and Healing in the Contemporary World**

Thurs., Apr. 24—AIDS and the experience of illness

Hervé Guibert, *The Compassion Protocol*.

Tues., Apr. 29—Camus’s promise: Drug resistance and the return of the plague


Thurs., May 1—Illness and Healing in a Pluralist Society


Tues., May 6—Medical Cultures in Conflict

Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. 
Thurs., May 8—Conclusions: Modeling Human Healing in a Technological Era


Porter, *GBM*, Ch. 21.

FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE IN MY BOX BY NOON, Monday MAY 12.