Gregg Mitman  
Professor of History of Science, Medical History, and Science & Technology Studies

**Course Description:**
This course explores the relationships between environment and health through historical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives that highlight 1) the role of illness in shaping changing perceptions of the environment and 2) the impact of environmental change in transforming medical, scientific, and lay understanding and experience of health and illness. How, for example, did the encounter of settler societies with new lands alter medical and popular conceptions of illness? In what ways did diseases contribute to historical patterns of settlement and conquest? How has the rise of emerging diseases shaped visions of the global environment? What historical role have issues of class, gender, and race played in the inequitable distribution of pollution and in activist involvement in combating environmental hazards of the city and workplace? And in what ways has living in toxic environments altered experiences of identity, health, and place? These are just a few of the themes touched upon by this course.

**Expectations:**
This course is based on a seminar-discussion format. Each one in class needs to assume the responsibility of an active participant and learner. Success in the class depends largely upon the time, energy, and commitment you invest. You will be required to arrive at class having read the material assigned for the day and prepared to engage in a thoughtful and constructive conversation that is respectful of others in the classroom and takes seriously the issues and themes presented in the readings.

If any problem arises, either academic or personal, that might jeopardize your performance in the course, you must try to inform me of the problem at the next available office hour, or by leaving a message with the Department of Medical History and Bioethics (262-1460).

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, I urge any student in this course with a disability to inform me as soon as possible, so that I may make any necessary accommodations to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. All such requests are confidential.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the UW policies on plagiarism and to assume responsibility for honesty in all course work.
Requirements:

Undergraduates:
- Attendance/Class participation: 25%
- Critical Response papers (2): 20%
- Film Review: 10%
- Scorecard Assignment: 10%
- Take-Home Exams: 35%

or

Research paper

Graduate Students:
- Class/seminar participation: 25%
- Book reviews (3): 30%
- Research Paper: 45%

Readings:

Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers, *Landscapes of Exposure: Knowledge and Illness in Modern Environments* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Course Packet: A reading packet, in two volumes, is available for purchase in the Department of History of Science, 7143 Social Science Building. These readings are also on reserve in the College Library in Helen C. White Hall.

Writing Fellows:

We are fortunate to have two peer writing tutors, called Writing Fellows, working with us this semester. Writing Fellows are skilled undergraduate writers, who have been selected by the Undergraduate Writing Fellows Program and trained to offer constructive criticism in the drafting process. They work one-on-one with each student by reading drafts, offering detailed comments, and meeting individually with each student to discuss how drafts can be improved.

The Writing Fellows will work with you on two assignments: one critical response paper and the film review. In each case you will submit a draft of your paper to me on the assigned due date. I will then give them to the Fellow who will read and provide written comments. You will then meet with your Fellow to discuss the paper and strategies for the rewrite. These meetings are mandatory. You will then revise your paper and submit both the original draft and your revised version on the specified revision date. You should also include a cover sheet that briefly explains how you responded to your Writing Fellow’s comments.

This is a wonderful opportunity. Having input from someone else before you submit your final draft will only improve the quality of your paper, and thus help your grade. While the Fellows have no special training in the content of the course, they are trained to help you develop a well-constructed and persuasive essay. We can all become better writers, and good writing means rewriting. Writing can also help clarify your own understanding of a particular idea or argument. So, make the most out of this experience.
It is a rare opportunity to get feedback from others who have such a sincere interest in improving our prose.

Class Schedule, Topics, and Readings

1/23  Introduction

1/25  Issues & Approaches


Airs, Waters, and Places

1/30  The Legacy of Hippocrates


2/1  Acclimatization, Race, and Disease

Mark Harrison, “‘The Tender Frame of Man’: Disease, Climate and Racial Difference in India and the West Indies, 1760-1860,” Bulletin of the History of Medicine 70 (1996): 68-93. CP.


2/6  Geographies of Health


2/8 *Traveling for Health*


*The Union Pacific Tourist Illustrated Sketches of the Principle Health and Pleasure Resorts of the Great West and Northwest…* (Union Pacific Railway, 1886), pp. 7-10, 56-61, 69-71. CP.

**Ecology and Infection**

2/13 *Epidemiology, Ecology, and Colonialism*

Michael Worboys, “Germs, Malaria, and the Invention of Mansonian Tropical Medicine: From ‘Disease in the Tropics’ to ‘Tropical Diseases,’” in *Warm Climates and Western Medicine: The Emergence of Tropical Medicine, 1500-1900*, edited by David Arnold (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 181-207. CP.


CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS, FEBRUARY 13

2/15 *Controlling Insects, Engineering Environments*


2/20 Disease Ecology and Agents of Change

Sir Frank MacFarlane Bunet, Natural History of Infectious Disease (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), pp. 1-25, 338-351. CP.


2/22 Meeting with Micaela Sullivan Fowler, Rare Books and Special Collections, Ebling Library.

2/27 The Global Threat of Emerging Diseases


DRAFT OF CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS, FEBRUARY 27

The Industrial Landscape
3/1 Inefficiency, Waste, and the Bacteriological Revolution

Jane Adams, Twenty Years at Hull-House with Autobiographical Notes (New York: MacMillan Co., 1945), pp. 281-299. CP.

PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS, MARCH 8

3/8 **The Nuisance of Smoke**

Charles A. Reed, “The Smoke Question Viewed From a National Standpoint,” American Medicine (20 April 1905): 703-705. CP.

“War on I.C. Smoke Planned by Women,” Chicago Record-Herald, 19 September 1908, p. 3. CP.


3/13 **Harlan County, USA**

3/15 **Workplaces of Death**


3/20  **Black Lung**


3/22  **Biological Citizenship**


**Toxic Subjects**

3/27  **An Airborn Toxic Event**


Devra Davis. When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution (New York: Basic Books 2002), pp. 5-30, 55-88. CP.

3/29  **Nuclear Landscapes-I**

Scott Kirsch, “Harold Knapp and the Geography of Normal Controversy:


TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE IN CLASS, MARCH 29

SPRING BREAK

4/10 Nuclear Landscapes-II

Guest Speaker: Omie Baldwin

4/12  The Suburbs of Silent Spring


FIRST DRAFT OF FILM REVIEW DUE IN CLASS, APRIL 12

4/17  NO CLASS

4/19  Farmworkers and Pesticides


FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS, APRIL 19

4/24  The Anti-Toxics Campaign


4/26  Blue Vinyl

5/1  Bhopal and the Right-to Know

SCORECARD ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS, MAY 1

5/3  The Environmental Justice Movement


5/8  *Community Empowerment and the Politicization of Disease*

Jason Corburn, *Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 111-144. CP.

**FINAL DRAFT OF FILM REVIEW DUE IN CLASS, MAY 8**

5/10  *Activism and Hope*

5/18  **FINAL TAKE HOME-EXAM OR RESEARCH PAPER DUE**