Introduction to the History of Medicine
Online Program in the History of Medicine
ME 150.722
Term 2, 2018

3 credits

Course Leaders: Mary Fissell and Graham Mooney, Department of the History of Medicine, Welch Medical Library; mfissell@jhu.edu, gmooney3@jhmi.edu,
Online Office Hours: TBA

Course Description
This course introduces students to key themes and approaches in the history of medicine, healing, and public health. Topics include the history of disease, the history of therapeutics, and patients and healers. The course explores a variety of approaches to the interpretation of primary and secondary sources; a range of analytic frameworks for understanding history; and different techniques for writing histories of scientific research, healing practices, or technologies. We will examine how various historical developments were not predestined, but instead were produced by real people, with interests, wants, needs, motives, and limitations. Students will explore the history of medicine and public health as a way of knowing balancing primary and secondary sources.

Please note:
1. Students wishing to take a comprehensive chronological approach to the history of medicine should register for the four-course Survey in the History of Medicine.
2. The topics offered are subject to change, depending on the faculty teaching the course in any given year.

Course Prerequisites
Introduction to Online Learning.

Course Learning Objectives
Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Describe key themes in the history of medicine, healing, and public health.
2. Develop skills in the analysis of primary and secondary historical sources.
3. Identify a range of techniques for writing about the history of medicine, healing, and public health.
4. Demonstrate the value of different analytic frameworks in the history of medicine, healing, and public health.

Course Assignments and Grading
This course is Pass/Fail. Assessment is based on a combination of weekly assignments (completed alone or in small groups) and a final paper. The percentage breakdown for each component is:
Weekly Assignments: 80%
Final Paper: 20%

All students with disabilities who require accommodations for this course should contact Catherine L. Will, Disability Services Coordinator for Graduate Biomedical Education (cwill@jhmi.edu or 410-614-3781) at their earliest convenience to discuss their specific needs. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive.

Readings
Weekly readings and additional references for the Final Paper are available on CoursePlus and in Welch Library eReserves.

Toolbox
The Online Program has made a number of brief videos that provide guidance on specific aspects of historical work, such as reading primary sources, or avoiding plagiarism. All the videos are available on our YouTube channel in the ‘Toolbox’ playlist.

Week 1: Introduction and The Black Death (Oct. 27)

Lecture 0: Introduction
Provides an overview of the objectives and structure of course. Outlines major themes. Explains learning objectives and assessment strategy.

Lecture 1: The Black Death: Two Stories
This class explores the different ways that historians think about medicine, health, and healing in the past, using the lens of the Black Death. It introduces the concept of multiple ways of looking at a historical event. Using the Black Death in the fourteenth century as an example, we explore how humans ‘made’ the disease, i.e. how trade routes created the 1348 pandemic. We also consider how Christianity, Judaism, and Islam responded to the Black Death. Though we now know what germ caused the Black Death, human agency and culture made the epidemic what it was.

Required Readings
Primary Sources:

Secondary Sources:

Assignment
This week’s assignment:
1. Please subscribe to the course Voice Thread; the link is available on Course Plus. Go to the Introductory Voice Thread and introduce yourself.
2. Written response: Students should read all the primary sources, and choose one to characterize using the framework in the Toolbox video “How to Read a Primary Source” available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dVr-SAc2vU&t=7s Write a characterization (the who? what? when? etc.) of your chosen primary source – no more than 1 page double-spaced, and submit to Dropbox by 5:00 pm EST, Wednesday, October 31st 2018. [Note: assignments are usually due Saturdays, but this one should be completed before the Live Talk.]
3. Live Talk discussion: What is the “best” source of all the primary sources you have read? Why? Be ready to describe your ideal primary source on the Black Death. Think about the likelihood of its ever having been written and having survived.

Live Talks:
Wed. Oct 31st 5:00 PM EST
OR
Wed. Oct 31st 7PM EST

Learning Objectives:
1. Understand the range of sources historians employ.
2. Critically evaluate the different frames of analysis used in narrating history.
3. Describe a range of interpretive methods historians have adopted to analyze the history of the Black Death.
Lecture 2: What is Disease?
The diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of disease have long played a central role in defining the task of medicine. Yet the burden of disease on a given population, the delineation of health and pathology, and the kinds of logics used to distinguish the two have changed drastically over time. How do diseases get defined and demarcated? Who gets to decide what is a disease and what is not? What are the consequences of such decisions? This lecture discusses some of the issues that emerge when disease is considered in historical context by using the 1973 American Psychological Association’s demedicalization of homosexuality as an example.

Required Readings

You may also be interested in this podcast about how homosexuality was de-listed as a psychiatric disease:

Assignment
Voice Thread: Join the conversation on this week’s Voice Thread.

Learning objectives
1. Understand the historical processes by which disease changes over time, in both its classification and social meanings, on the one hand, and its epidemiology, prognosis, and treatment on the other.
2. Approach disease as historically contingent, and appreciate the role of historical analysis in understanding disease in context.
3. Assess what is at stake—and to whom—in differentiating between the normal and the pathological.

Week 3: Patients and Healers (Nov. 10)
Lecture 3: Patients and Healers
How has the relationship between patients and healers changed over time? How does this relate to structures of health-care delivery? How do medical theories/practices and patterns of patient/practitioner interactions fit together? This lecture introduces the history of the patient as a theme in the history of medicine by drawing on the observations of a seventeenth-century provincial German physician, Johann Storch.

Required Readings
Primary Sources
Samuel Sholl, A short historical account of the silk manufacture in England ... with some remarks on the state of the trade ... London, Sold by M. Jones, (1811): 37-47.

Secondary Sources

Assignment
1. Response paper: In a 1-2 page double-spaced essay, compare and contrast the experiences of Horace Walpole and Samuel Sholl as patients. How do their very different life experiences shape the ways that they experienced and described illness? Submit to the Dropbox by 11:59 PM EST Sat. 17 Nov. 2018. Once all the papers have been submitted, we’ll do a peer assessment. You’ll read an anonymized paper by a fellow student and offer a brief assessment, so please don’t put your name on your paper this week!
2. Voice Thread: Join the conversation on this week’s Voice Thread.

Learning objectives
1. Analyze how patients’ beliefs shape medical encounters.
2. Discern how historians can pull information about patients’ perspectives from sources written by healers.
3. Understand that ideas about sickness and the body in the past aren’t wrong, just different models from our own.
Lecture 4: Rethinking Efficacy: Therapeutics in Historical Perspective
Therapeutics lie at the heart of the interactions between healers and patients, yet the value of many past approaches to therapy (like bloodletting, cupping, or purgatives) cannot be understood outside of historical context. What makes a medicine effective in the eyes of patients and practitioners? How does the process of assessing efficacy change over time? This lecture introduces students to the problems of studying therapeutics in history and the role of therapeutics in medical practice. It examines one therapeutic form found across many places and time periods: bloodletting. Focus is on one particular moment in the practice and theory of bloodletting, namely Benjamin Rush’s heroic therapy. How can we use this example to broaden our frame of discussion to a more general evaluation of therapeutics in practice, and contextual approaches to understanding efficacy?

Required Reading
Primary Sources

Secondary Sources

Assignments
1. The Voice Thread discussion will focus on thinking about therapeutics in historical context. We will consider what therapeutics can tell us about different medical cultures (Kuriyama), why medical practitioners in the early nineteenth century thought of bloodletting as an effective remedy (Rosenberg, Warner), and what sort of narratives historians construct about therapeutic change (Louis).

2. This week you are going to read another student’s paper and make comments. We find that students learn a great deal by seeing how another student tackles the same assignment. All assessments will be double-blind. Please be supportive, and offer at least one positive comment (“I liked the way you...”) and one constructive criticism (“I think the paper could be stronger if...”). You will receive an email from the instructors with a fellow student’s paper to assess; you will return the paper to the instructors via email, and then the instructors will send your comments on to the author. Feel free to use “Track Changes” for your comments; we will re-anonymize the papers before
returning them to their authors. Submit your assessment to the Peer Evaluation Dropbox by 11:59 PM EST Monday Nov 26. Note extended deadline due to Thanksgiving holiday.

Learning objectives
1. Understand how historians use therapeutics to approach the problems of medical practice
2. Analyze how to think about the problem of efficacy in historical perspective
3. Consider the role of cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparisons in the history of medicine

Week 5: Cultural Histories of Pain (Nov. 24)

Lecture 5: Cultural Histories of Pain
It seems obvious to us that the relief of pain is an unambiguous good in healing, but historically as now, managing pain is complex, and cost/benefit ratios are often difficult to interpret. Pain and suffering are intimately connected. The Latin root of the word ‘patient’ has to do with suffering, and medicine’s role in reducing suffering includes, but is not limited to, pain relief. This lecture investigates how pain has been viewed at different moments in time and it contextualizes the dominant, and somewhat narrow, narrative of the anesthetic revolution. It considers the medical uses of opium in the nineteenth century to think about the significance of the alleviation of ‘pain’ and suffering. It also highlights how pain has successfully resisted measurement. Can an intensely personal experience ever be objectified?

Required Reading
Primary Sources

Secondary Sources

Assignment
1. Response paper: In a 1-2 page double-spaced essay, compare and contrast the readings by Winter and Pernick. What social factors does each author invoke to explain the uptake and uses of anesthesia? Submit to Dropbox by 11:59pm EST Sat. Dec. 1.
2. Live Talks:
Learning Objectives
1. Analyze how categories of class, race, and gender are essential to understanding pain (or any other historical theme).
2. Identify how pain can be used to produce different types of history, e.g. cultural; economic; political.
3. Evaluate the notion that pain is a universal phenomenon that is nonetheless a historically-specific experience.

Week 6: Bodies and Representation (Dec. 1)

Lecture 6. Bodies and Representation
The human body has been depicted anatomically and physiologically for hundreds of years. In this session, we explore how social and cultural concerns, as well as changing medical knowledge, become embedded in the ways that we represent the body and its functioning. This lecture discusses how historians read images, using William Hunter’s *Anatomy of the Gravid Uterus* as a case study.

Required Reading
Secondary Sources

Primary Sources
1. Read two pages of the NLM online exhibit Dream Anatomies for background:
2. Visit the NLM Historical Anatomies on the Web page:

Choose two books from this list to explore in the online exhibit:

**Assignments**
1. In a two page written response, compare and contrast an anatomical image from each of the books you have chosen. What technology is used to make the images? How does that technology shape the representations of the human body? What aspects of the body did the authors/illustrators emphasize? Submit to Dropbox by Sat., Dec. 8, 11:59pm.
2. Voice Thread: Post a slide of the images for your Response Paper comparison by **Tuesday Dec. 4, 11:59 PM EST**. Post to the “Gallery of Anatomy” Voice Thread.
   (For help in posting images, see the instructional Voice Thread “How to Upload to Voice Thread”). Introduce your slide in a video comment, and then comment on at least 2 other students' slides.
3. Join the discussion of the readings on the Voice Thread.

**Learning Objectives**
1. Describe a range of ways people in the past opened up dead bodies, and the purposes for which they did so.
2. Analyze how representations of the human body encode social and cultural themes. Identify methods historians use to analyze images.

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**Week 7: Body Counts (Dec. 8)**

**Lecture 7: Body Counts**
Why do we count things? Medicine and public health have often been embroiled with the business of counting, but only in the past several hundred years has it enumerated, registered, and classified people in the interests of the state. This has had multiple impacts on the patient/practitioner relationship in terms of demarcating the ill from the well; categorizing the ‘normal’ from the ‘abnormal’; and by recalibrating the private clinical encounter into a resource for public knowledge. Counting has also been an important component of how individuals are molded as citizens; of how particular groups of people are invented and represented; and of how people go about identifying and understanding themselves. This lecture examines the emergence of quantification and the accumulation of knowledge about ‘populations’ under the conditions of mercantilism and political economy in the seventeenth century. By focusing on one particular example—the debate about the registration and surveillance of tuberculosis
patients in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries—the class explores how statistics of population, health, and medicine were used in an instrumental way.

**Required Reading**

**Primary Sources**


**Secondary Sources**


**Assignment**

**Voice Thread**

Read the excerpt from Waring, *Work of the Colored Law and Order League*. Think about the kinds of evidence this primary source provides. How does Roberts deploy this evidence to make his argument? Critically evaluate Roberts’s use of the Waring report overall. Refer to maps and quotes from the primary and secondary material to illustrate and back up your observations.

**Final Paper**

Submit to Dropbox by 11:59 pm, Saturday Dec. 15, 2018. Pick one of the following pairs of readings. In a five page, double-spaced essay, compare and contrast the two articles with regards to their arguments, the sources they use, and the methods they employ.

**Option 1**


**Option 2**


Learning Objectives
1. Discuss the role of the state in the development of data collection in health and medicine.
2. Explain how forms of registration and enumeration are a central component of citizenship and individual identity.
3. Critique the forms of prejudice and blame that can arise when systems of enumeration and classification are used in medicine and public health.
4. Evaluate how historians write about controversies.
5. Explain how different historians create a variety of narratives about the same topic.

Week 8: Tuskegee (Dec. 15)

Lecture 8: The Tangle of History: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment
This lecture acquaints students with the Tuskegee syphilis experiment (also known as the Tuskegee syphilis study or Public Health Service syphilis study). The study was conducted between 1932 and 1972 in Tuskegee, Alabama by the US Public Health Service to study the natural progression of untreated syphilis in poor, rural black men who thought they were receiving free health care from the US government. It discusses the ethics of the study in the context of prevailing historical norms of research, the circumstances surrounding the termination of the study in the early 1970s, and the impact that revelations about the study had on the practice of research.

Required Readings
Primary Sources
“Cast of Characters” sheet

Secondary Sources
Assignment

1. “End of Course Reflection Piece” Submit to Dropbox by Saturday Dec. 22 11:59 PM EST.
2. Live Talks:
   Wed. Dec. 19, 5:00 PM EST.
   OR
   Wed. Dec. 19, 7:00 PM EST.

Learning Objectives

1. Analyze primary historical evidence.
2. Develop skills in the analysis of secondary historical literature.
3. Detect the ways that historians make arguments.