In this graduate seminar we will examine how concepts of disease and health have changed over time and across place. We’ll move from debates over the identity of the Black Death in 14th century Europe to the treatment of infectious diseases in Imperial China and colonial India, and to the contested diagnoses of AIDS and fetal alcohol syndrome in late 20th century United States. Along the way we’ll evaluate the different methodological approaches used by scholars to study the history of disease, and we’ll examine the ways in which social values, cultural assumptions, and political interests have shaped how diseases have been defined, experienced, and treated, and we’ll consider the role that diseases have played in the shaping of health care institutions, policies, and practices. At the same time, we’ll examine the processes of medicalization and demedicalization; colonialism, post-colonialism, and the politics of state-building; the ecological understandings of disease, environmentalism, and the politics of place; and the increasingly visible role of the politicized consumer and patient activist in late 20th century health care politics.

Course Requirements
The focus of this graduate seminar is on detailed and careful reading of the assigned texts, and lively and engaged in-class discussion of the texts. As such, evaluative emphasis will be placed on class participation and short weekly response papers to the reading. There will be no final writing assignment for this course.

Leading Discussion and Participation: At each of our meetings, one or two students (depending on final class numbers) will lead discussion of the weekly reading. This will mean formulating a list of discussion questions ahead of time and steering the course of the discussion during the seminar.

Weekly Response Papers: Students will write weekly response papers to the week’s reading assignments (2-4 pages). A good response paper not only consists of a summary of the texts but also includes your critical response to the texts as well as your analysis of the material found in the texts. This means that you will be assessing the information found in the texts and stating your position towards it. It isn’t necessary to analyze and respond to every aspect of a text. In fact, it is usually better to select from the text two or
three specific things to respond to and analyze -- perhaps something that particularly interests you, raises questions for you, or troubles you. Or you may want to contrast and compare the perspective presented by one author to the perspective offered by another. Whatever approach you wish to take is fine, as long as you provide evidence to support your position, and as long as it demonstrates your comprehension of the material and your ability to think critically about it.

Your response paper should have an introduction (just one paragraph)—a mini overview of your paper—which includes your thesis statement. This is a sentence or two in which you state the argument you will be making in this paper. Your paper should also include a brief summary of the texts you are responding to that includes a concise statement of the authors’ arguments and an overview of how they made their case. In other words, what evidence did the author use? It is very important that you demonstrate that you understand what the author is trying to communicate, but it is equally important that you do this as concisely as possible. The remainder of the paper should be your critical response to the reading; it is where you evaluate the author’s argument, and where you tie this reading into other readings and the themes of the course. Be sure to include why you responded as you did, offering relevant supporting ideas, examples, details, and explanations from the text itself, other readings, and from class.

Syllabus
January 19
Disease and Disease-Concepts in History
- Charles Rosenberg, “Framing Disease: Illness, Society, and History,” in Rosenberg and Janet Golden (eds.), Framing Disease: Studies in Cultural History
- Oswei Temkin, “The scientific approach to disease: specific entity and individual sickness,” The Double Face of Janus and Other Essays in the History of Medicine, pp. 441-455.

January 26
Historiography of the Black Death

February 2
Diagnostic uncertainty, sexuality, and the French Pox in Early Modern Europe

February 9

**Disease as Cultural Lens**
- Joan Jacob Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa*

February 16

**Social History and the Disease Experience**
- Barbara Bates, *Bargaining for Life: A Social History of Tuberculosis, 1876-1938*

February 23

**Polio, Germ Theories, and the “New Public Health”**
- Naomi Rogers, *Dirt and Disease: Polio Before FDR*

March 2

**The Experience and Transformation of Breast Cancer**
- Robert A. Aronowitz, *Unnatural History: Breast Cancer and American Society*

March 9

**Disease and the Politics of State-Building**
- Margaret Humphreys, *Yellow Fever in the South*.

March 16

**SPRING BREAK**

March 23

**Race, Disease, and the (Post)Colonial Enterprise**
- David Arnold, “Occidental therapeutics and Oriental bodies” and “Cholera” in Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in 19th Century India*, pp. 11-60, 159-199.
March 30
Ecological Perspectives on Global Disease
- Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease: A Short History of Malaria*, pp. 1-149
- Susan Jones, *Death in a Deadly Package: A Short History of Anthrax*, pp. 1-127, 225-276

April 6
Geography, Environment, and Disease in China

April 13
The Industrial and Urban Politics of Disease
- Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*

April 20
The Cultural Politics of Chronic Disease
- Robert A. Aronowitz, *Making Sense of Illness: Science, Society, and Disease*

April 27
Patient Activism and Disease Politics
- Stephen Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge*

May 4
The Making and Career of a Modern Diagnosis