



**ROLLINS**  
SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH  

---

**EMORY**

**DEPARTMENT:** Behavioral Science and Health Education

**COURSE NUMBER:** 579

**SECTION NUMBER:** 00P

**SEMESTER:** Fall, 2005

**CREDIT HOURS:** 2

**COURSE TITLE:** The History of Public Health

**COURSE DESCRIPTION (3-4 Sentences)**

The goal of this class is to explore the history of American public health in comparative perspective. We will examine the role of infection, nutrition, genetics, immunity, environment and behavior and the scientific and philosophical systems that underlie our understanding of them as "causes" of disease. Second, the course will examine the social and environmental factors in that have influenced population health including an examination of the categories of race, class, gender, and sex.

**ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

**The RSPH requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic course of study must be the original work of the student.**

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES OR COMPETENCIES OF THE COURSE**

*By the end of the semester, students should be able to:*

1. Define the difference between public health and medical health in historical and environmental perspective. Students should be able to articulate the way biological, environmental, and social/cultural factors interact in “disease” production and how an understanding of these influences can influence prevention strategies.
2. Explain the difference between disease, syndrome, and illness. Students should be able to explain how signs and symptoms contribute to the broader understanding of diseases, syndromes, and illnesses as they relate to the population health.
3. List historical examples of the changing definitions of public health in a variety of cultures and times.
4. Explain how population health is framed and how public health responds, using tools such as epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, health education, and qualitative/quantitative research methods.
5. Provide examples of how race, class, gender, and sex have influenced modern responses to public health crises.
6. Compare and contrast the response to public health issues in different times and different cultures.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES OR COMPETENCIES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM TO WHICH THE COURSE CONTRIBUTES**

Under Health Education Track:

- Communicate both in written and oral format, with public health programs, community based organizations, and others involved in improving the public’s health
- Advance the profession of public health
- Apply appropriate research principles and methods in health education
- Provide critical analysis of lessons to be learned from the past and present
- Conduct research using the highest ethical standards

Behavioral Science Track

- Communicate both in written and oral format, with public health programs, community based organizations, and others involved in improving the public’s health
- Promote the adoption and integration of ethical behavioral science research methods and findings into a unified public health practice
- Provide critical analysis of lessons to be learned from the past and present

## The History of Public Health

**Teaching Assistants:** Darren Mays & Rebecca Thompson

**Office:** 5<sup>th</sup> Floor RSPH

**Phone:** Darren: 404-727-4263

Rebecca: (706) 633-8917 cell

**Email:** [dmmays@sph.emory.edu](mailto:dmmays@sph.emory.edu) (Darren)

[Rthomp3@sph.emory.edu](mailto:Rthomp3@sph.emory.edu) (Rebecca)

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 2:30pm-3:30pm and by appointment

### **Class Organization:**

Although there are a number of ways to organize the history of public health, this course will take a modified chronological approach in which issues affecting population health will also be examined comparatively. For instance, we will examine an initial epidemic of a particular disease and then compare it to later reoccurrences and to outbreaks in different geographic areas. In this way we should reach a more complex understanding of how particular population health issues have been understood in different times and places and what those responses may illuminate for current and future outbreaks.

Our historical examination will call on the tools and disciplines of public health—including epidemiology & biostatistics, environmental health, health policy, health education, and qualitative/quantitative methods—recognizing, at the same time, the extent to which these tools and disciplines have been constructed and shaped by the categories of public health concerns. What constitutes public health concerns, like so much else in medicine, have been greatly influenced by economics, politics, culture, and society. Nevertheless, the role of organic mechanisms cannot be ignored in any history of public health. Thus, we will also become familiar with the biological mechanisms of disease to the extent that they influence and inform political, social and cultural experience of public health.

A related goal of this seminar is to examine the rules for determining causation in public health and how those rules have developed and mutated. Thus, we will explore the historical development of biomedical and epidemiological criteria for determining causality and definition of disease based on clinical evidence, pathology, laboratory data, and exposure. The seminar will examine these criteria in the context of the contribution of cultural, environmental, and political factors. Having done this, we expect that seminar participants will be able to critically evaluate more general claims of disease causality.

### **Assignments:**

Using a problem-based approach, seminar members, working in teams, will explore an issue in the history of public health not explicitly examined in the course readings and syllabus and offer tentative explanations for determining its risks to health in an historical and comparative framework. Each topic must include an environmental component. Topics will be selected in consultation with the instructor. Teams will begin their collaborations in January. Each team will examine the cultural, historical, environmental, and epistemological assumptions that have framed the understanding of what constitutes necessity and (in)sufficiency in the etiology and of a selected disease or condition associated with the history of public health. In addition, teams

will then relate their final projects, in a cumulative manner, to major issues discussed in the class (e.g. issues of stigma and TB/Typhoid outbreaks; pollution and cholera). Teams will make presentations for the seminar in April. Details of the final assignments will be posted on the blackboard homepage early in the semester.

### **Student Involvement:**

As a seminar, this course is designed to be interactive. In order to facilitate a high level of discussion, students are required to:

1. Read the assigned reading prior to the class meeting and to participate in discussions. The quality of participation in seminar discussions will influence the final grade.
2. Come to all class meetings on time. If you are unable to attend a meeting, or will be late, please inform me in advance. Unexcused absences and lateness will be reflected in your final grade.
3. Each week, a question or issue will be posed on Blackboard and students will be required to prepare concise answers and discussions of these questions and issues, as instructed for that week on Blackboard. The responses should reflect underlying themes or issues arising from the readings for that week and informed by the issues that have emerged during the semester. Responses must be posted on the course Blackboard site by 5:00pm on the Tuesday prior to that week's class meeting. To post your weekly summary paper, go to the "Discussion Board" area of Blackboard, locate the current unit for the week, and "respond" to that unit's designated thread.

### **Writing Assignments:**

A detailed description of the oral and written assignments is found in section three. Briefly, teams will have three reports due:

- (1) 2 March: abstract and annotated bibliography of team project
- (2) 20 April: 3 teams present PowerPoint presentation; papers posted to blackboard 2 WEEKS later
- (3) 27 April: 3 teams present PowerPoint presentation; papers posted to blackboard 1 WEEK later
- (4) 4 May: 2 teams present PowerPoint presentation; papers posted to blackboard 4 DAYS later

**Required Text**

Wills, Christopher. *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996.

**SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS**

All readings are available on blackboard; however you might want to purchase the following books because they provide useful supplemental material.

Watts, Sheldon. *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power, and Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Garrett, Laurie. *Betrayal of Trust: The Collapse of Global Public Health*. Indiana: Little Brown, 2000.

**Useful Reference Tools:**

Kiple, Kenneth F., editor. *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

**Please check the course Blackboard website frequently as the syllabus is subject to change**

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

***7 September: Introduction: What is/was Public Health? What Constitutes Etiology in Public Health?***

*Sources for Discussion:*

Wills, Christopher Wills, "The Delicate Balance Between Life and Death," in *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996, 3-49.

Rosenberg, Charles E. "Introduction: Framing Disease: Illness, Society, and History," in *Framing Disease: in Cultural History*. Charles E. Rosenberg and Janet Golden, eds. New Brunswick: NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991, pp. xiii-xxvi.

Aronowitz, Robert A. "Making Sense of Illness: Science, Society, and Disease." New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1-18.

*Recommended:*

Evans, Alfred S. "Concepts and Background of Causation," and "Causation and Occupational Diseases" in Evans, *Causation and Disease: A Chronological Journey*. New York: Plenum Publishing Co, 1993, pp. 1-12.

Sutter, Morley C. "Assigning Causation in Disease: Beyond Koch's Postulates," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 39 (1996): 581-592.

***14 September: Black Death: Bubonic Plague or Was it?: What an Understanding the Environment of People and Rats may Reveal***

*Reading:*

McEvedy, Colin. "The Bubonic Plague," *Scientific American*, 258 (1988): 118-123.

Cunningham, Andrew. "Transforming Plague: The Laboratory and the Identity of Infectious Disease," in *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*, edited by Andrew Cunningham and Perry Williams, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 209-244.

Risse, Guenther B. "'A Long Pull, A Strong Pull, and All Together': San Francisco and Bubonic Plague, 1907-1908." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1992, 66: 260-286.

*Recommended:*

Cohn, Samuel, J. "The Black Death: End of a Paradigm," *American Historical Review*, 107 (June, 2002), 703-738.

Garrett, Laurie. "Filth and Decay: Pneumonic Plague Hits India and the World Responds," in *Betrayal of Trust: The Collapse of Global Public Health*. Indiana: Little Brown, 2000, pp. 15-49

Wills, Christopher Wills, "Chief Monster That has Plagued the Nations, yet," in *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues* Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996, 53-102.

***21 September: Smallpox***

*Reading:*

Crosby, Alfred. "Conquistador y Pestilencia," in *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Alfred W. Crosby, Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1972.

Leavitt, Judith Walzer, "'Be Safe, Be Sure.' New York City's Experience with Epidemic Smallpox," in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, Editors Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, 3rd revised ed., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997, 407-417 pp. 385-389.

Mack, Thomas. "A different view of smallpox and vaccination." *The New England Journal of*

*Medicine*, 348, no. 5, 2003, 460-463.

*Recommended:*

Breman, J.G., & Henderson, D.A. "Diagnosis and management of smallpox." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 346, no. 17, 2002, 1300-1308.

Watts, Sheldon. "Smallpox in the New World and the Old," in *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power, and Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 84-121.

(Useful background in:

Baxby, Derrick. "Should Smallpox Virus be Destroyed? The Relevance of the Origins of Vaccinia Virus," *Social History of Medicine*, 9 (1996): 117-119.

Razzell, Peter. "The Origins of Vaccinia Virus--A Brief Rejoinder," *Social History of Medicine*, 11 (1998): 107-108. )

**28 September: Sample Student PPT presentation (Scarlet Fever, Leprosy in India & ??)**

**5 October: Tuberculosis & Typhoid Fever: Public Health Interventions that "Worked?"**

*Readings:*

Feldberg, Georgina D. "Coping with Koch's Challenges: Bacteria, Biologics, and the Economy of Disease," in Feldberg, *Disease and Class: Tuberculosis and the Shaping of Modern North American Society*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995, pp. 36-80.

Hunter, Tera W. "Tuberculosis as the 'Negro Servants' Disease," Chapter 9 in Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War*. Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

*Recommended:*

Dubos, Rene and Jean Dubos. *The White Plague: Tuberculosis, Man, and Society*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1987, pp. iv-xxxiv; 94-228.

***Typhoid Fever: Quarantine or Prejudice***

*Readings:*

Wills, Christopher. Chapter 7: "A Cleverer Pathogen" in *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996, pp. 131-145.

Leavitt, Judith Walzer. "'Typhoid Mary' Strikes Back: Bacteriological Theory and Practice in Early Twentieth Century Public Health," *ISIS*, 83(1992): 608-629.

Mendolsohn, J. Andrew. "'Typhoid Mary' Strikes Again: The Social and Scientific in the Making of Modern Health," *ISIS*, 986(1995): 228-277.

### **12 October: Cholera**

#### *Reading:*

Wills, Christopher. "Chapter 6: Cholera, The Black One," in *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996, pp. 105-130

Watts, Sheldon. "Cholera & Civilization: Great Britain and India, 1870 to 1920," in *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power, and Imperialism*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 167-212.

Arnold, David. "Cholera and Colonialism in British India." *Past and Present*, no. 113, 1986, 118-151.

#### *Recommended:*

Rosenberg, Charles. "Cholera in Nineteenth-Century Europe: A Tool for Social and Economic Analysis." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8, 1966, 452-463.

Shears, Paul. "Recent Developments in Cholera." *Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases*, 14, 2001, 553-558.

### **12 October: Abstracts and Annotated Bibliography DUE**

### **19 October: "Race" and Disease**

#### *Readings:*

Brown, JoAnne. "Purity an Danger in Color: Notes on Germ Theory and the Semantics of Segregation in Gaudilliere & Lowy eds. *Heredity, and Infection: the History of Disease Transmission*, New York, Routledge, 2003, 101-131.

Galishoff, Stuart. "Germs Know No Color Line: Black Health and Public Policy in Atlanta, 1900-1918." *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 40 (1985): 22-41.

Braun, L. "Race, Ethnicity, & Health: Can Genetics Explain Disparities," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 42 (2002), 159-174.



Wailoo, Keith, "Race Pathologies, Apparent and Unseen," in *Dying in the City of Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*. Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2001, pp. 55-83

Recommended:

Tapper, Melbourne. "An 'Anthropology' of the 'American Negro': Anthropology, Genetics, and the New Racial Science, 1940-1952," *Social History of Medicine*, 10 (1997), pp. 263-289.

**26 October: The Decline of Infant Mortality: Public Health, or Medical Science?**

Reading:

McKeown, Thomas. "Food, Infection, and Population." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 14 (1983): 227-247.

Condron, Gretchen A., Henry Williams, and Rose A. Cheney. "The Decline of Mortality in Philadelphia from 1870-1930: The Role of Municipal Services," in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, Editors Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, 2nd revised ed., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 385-389 .

Marmot, Michael. "Understanding Social Inequalities in Health," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 46, Supplement (2003), s9-s23.

Fogel, Robert W., "Secular Trends in Physiological Capital: Implications for Equity in Health Care," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 46.3 Supplement (2003) S24-S38.

Recommended:

Marks, Harry, Gretchen A. Condron, Richard A. Meckel, Gerry Kearns, and Samuel Preston. "Demography and History around 1900: A Symposium on the Fatal Years," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 68(1994): 85-128.

Grob, "Stopping the Spread of Infection," from *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America*, Harvard Univ. Press, 2003, Ch 8 pp. 180-216.

**2 November: Tuskegee Syphilis Study**

Reading:

Brandt, Allan M. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study," in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, pp. 331-

343. Editors Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, 2nd revised ed., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

Benedek, Thomas G. and Jonathan Erlen. "The Scientific Environment of the Tuskegee Study of Syphilis, 1920-1960" in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 43:1 (1999): 1-30.

*Recommended:*

Jones, James H. "Nothing Learned Will Prevent, Find, or Cure a Single Case," in *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*. New York: New York Press, 1993, pp. 188-219.

Wills, Christopher. Chapter 9: "Syphilis and the Faustian Bargain" in *Yellow Fever, Black Goddess: The Coevolution of People and Plagues*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996, pp. 186-211.

Watts, Sheldon. "The Secret Plague: Syphilis in Western Europe and East Asia, 1492-1965" in *Epidemics and History: Disease, Power and Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 122-166

***9 November: Epidemics Influenza from Pandemic of 1918 to the Bird Flu of 2003-5***

PBS Frontline Video: "Influenza 1918, The Worst Epidemic the United States has ever Known"  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/filmmore/index.html>

Readings:

Kolata, Gina *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused It*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999. pp. 1-28; 48-84.

John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History*, "The Swarm," chapters 7-8, pp. 98-115.

Garrett, Laurie. The Next Pandemic?, *Foreign Affairs*, 84, July/August 2005:3-24.

Suggested for further reading:

Crosby, Alfred W. *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Garrett, Laurie. "The American Bicentennial: Swine Flu and Legionnaire's Disease," in *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance*. New York: Penguin, 1994, pp. 152-189.

Karesh, William B., Cook, Robert A., The Human-Animal Link , *Foreign Affairs*, Jul/Aug 2005, Vol. 84, Issue 4, 38-50.

Niall P. A. S. Johnson and Juergen Mueller, "Updating the Accounts: Global Mortality of the 1918-1920 "Spanish" Influenza Pandemic," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 76.1 (2002) 105-115

Reynolds, Gretchen, "The Flu Hunters," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 7 November 2004.

***16 November: Smoking, Obesity, and Public Health: A Problem of Classification***

*Reading:*

Brandt, Alan. "The Cigarette, Risk, and American Culture," *Daedalus*, 1990: 155-776.

Sullum, Jacob, "Smoke Alarm," in *For Your Own Good: The Anti-Smoking Crusade and the Tyranny of Public Health* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), pp. 138-180 .

Gibbs, W. Wayt "Obesity: An Overblown Epidemic?" *Scientific American*, 00368733, Jun2005, Vol. 292, Issue 6

*Recommended:*

Colin Talley, Howard I. Kushner, & Claire E. Sterk, "Lung Cancer, Chronic Disease Epidemiology, and Medicine, 1948-1964," *Journal of the History of Medicine*. 2004, 59:329-373.

***23 November: No Class Thanksgiving Break***

***30 November: 4 Team PowerPoint Presentations***

- Please post your PPT presentations to blackboard by 5pm the night before
- If you present 30 November, your papers are due 14 December
- Please post papers to Blackboard on due date as well as hand in a hard copy

***7 December: 4 Team PowerPoint Presentations***

- Please post your PPT presentations to blackboard by 5pm the night before
- If you present 7 December, your papers are due 14 December
- Please post papers to Blackboard on due date as well as hand in a hard copy

***14 December: All Final Papers Posted by 5 PM***

- Please post your PPT presentations to blackboard by 5pm the night before
- If you present May 4, your paper is due May 4<sup>th</sup>
- Please post papers to Blackboard on due date as well as hand in a hard copy

