

History of Science 112: Medicine and Society in Medieval and Renaissance Europe

Spring 2002: Monday, Wednesday, (Friday), 11:00-12:00

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This course explores the history of medical theory and practice in Europe from the twelfth to the early seventeenth century, using methods from social, intellectual, and cultural history. The principal themes of the course include: 1) the place of naturalistic medicine and medical practitioners within a larger world of healing that included a wide range of religious and magical techniques; 2) changing views of the body and its functions; 3) the cultural and social significance of disease; 4) and the gradual emergence of “modern” medical institutions and structures such as the hospital, the medical profession, and highly developed regimes of public health. Teaching through a combination of lecture and discussion, the latter focusing on the analysis of primary sources. This course assumes no previous knowledge of medieval or Renaissance European history.

READINGS:

The required course readings fall into four groups:

1. Books available at the Coop (also available on reserve in Lamont and Hilles Libraries):
Nancy G. Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
Mary Lindemann, Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
Andreas Vesalius, Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels (Dover, 1950).
Carlo M. Cipolla, Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany (New York: Norton, 1981).
2. Primary sources collected in Readings for History of Science 112, available through Harvard Printing and Publication Services (basement of Science Center).
3. Articles and book chapters on reserve in Lamont and Hilles; in the case of articles in an edited collection, you should check under both the name of the author of the article and the name of the editor(s) of the collection, since the article may appear under either. There is an extra set of these readings in the History of Science Reading Room (Science Center 229C), which is open during regular working hours. Readings in this category are marked “on reserve” in the syllabus. Please note that some of these are optional reading.
4. Readings on the worldwide web.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Two papers (ca. 7 pages = 1750 words): due 3/4 and 4/22. Please keep backup copy of papers submitted (25% of grade each).
2. Midterm (in class): Monday 3/11 (25%).
3. Final examination (25%).
4. Preparation for and participation in class discussions—day and time to be determined (no specific weighting in grade, but will be taken into account).

SYLLABUS:

Unless otherwise indicated, reading should be completed for the scheduled class discussion that week. Please bring the assigned *primary* sources to class.

Part 1: MEDICINE IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD, 500-1490

Week 1 (1/30) Introduction

THERE WILL BE NO DISCUSSION SECTION THIS WEEK.

Week 2 (2/4-2/8) Medicine in the Islamic world

THERE WILL BE A DISCUSSION SECTION THIS WEEK. IF ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION TIME(S) HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET UP, THE CLASS WILL MEET FOR DISCUSSION AT 11 ON FRIDAY, 2/8.

Primary sources:

Edward Grant, A Source Book in Medieval Science (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), no. 91/pp. 717-19 only (Avicenna, Canon, Doctrine III, ch. 1, and Doctrine IV, ch. 1). In Readings for History of Science 112.

Max Meyerhof, "Thirty-Three Clinical Observations by Rhazes (circa AD 900)," Isis 23 (1935): 321-56. In Readings for History of Science 112.

- To what extent does the theory of illness and the functioning of the body in Rhazes' clinical notes reflect the theoretical system laid out by Avicenna (see also Green's synopsis)? Are there ways in which it departs from it?
- Make a list of the various discrete types of healing available to sick people in Baghdad around 900. What do Rhazes' notes tell you about the relationships between the different types of healers (or between healers of the same type)? What do they show you about the patients' relationship to these healers?

Other required reading:

Emilie Savage Smith, "Islamic Culture and the Medical Arts" [online: web], updated 15 April 1998. Visit in entirety. URL: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/islamic_medical/islamic_00.html#toc.

Nancy G. Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), ch. 1.

Monica Helen Green, "Resume of Galenic Medicine," from The Transmission of Ancient theories of Female Physiology and Disease through the Early Middle Ages (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1985). One-page class handout.

Week 3 (2/11-2/15) From the Islamic world to the medieval West: Transformations in medical learning and education

Primary sources:

Grant, Source Book no. 93/pp. 722-24 (Isidore of Seville, Etymologies); no. 94/pp. 724-26 (Anatomy of the Pig); no. 95/pp. 727-29 (Master Nicholas, Anatomy); no. 96/pp. 729-39 (Mondino de' Liuzzi, Anatomy). In Readings.

- Identify the approximate date of each text and correlate it with the chronology of developments in medical thought and practice outlined in Siraisi (chs. 1, 3, 4) and class lectures. (Constructing a rough timeline may be useful in this regard.)
- What differences do you see in the approaches of these four treatments of anatomy? Considering these differences as the result of change over time in response to changing historical circumstances, how would you explain them? (Use materials from Siraisi and lecture.)
- Characterize the evolution of Christian European cultural attitudes toward human dissection in these texts (Park) and/or contrast it with Islamic cultural attitudes (Savage-Smith), depending on which of the required readings you choose.

Other required reading:

Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine, chs. 3-4.

Emilie Savage-Smith, "Attitudes toward Dissection in Medieval

Islam," Journal of the History of Medicine 50 (1995): 67-110. On reserve.

-AND/OR-

Katharine Park, "The Life of the Corpse: Division and Dissection in Late Medieval

Europe," Journal of the History of Medicine 50 (1995): 111-32. On reserve.

Week 4 (2/18-22) Practitioners and practice I

NO CLASS MONDAY, 2/18 (HOLIDAY)

Primary sources:

Grant, Source Book, no. 98/pp. 742-45 (Archimatheus, On the Instruction of a Doctor); and no. 100.2/pp. 751-52 (Arnald of Villanova[?], De cautelis medicorum). In Readings.

- What differences do you see between the first text, written in the first half of the twelfth century, and the second, written ca. 1300? To what changes—outlined in Siraisi and lecture—would you attribute those differences?

Other required reading:

Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine, chs. 2, 5.

Week 5 (2/25-3/1) Practitioners and practice II

Primary sources:

Grant, Source Book, no. 103/pp. 761-67 ("Trotula," Diseases of Women). In

Readings. ADD OMITTED PP. 83-7 ON SUFFOCATION, FROM Book on the Conditions of Women, [45-50], in Monica Green, ed. and trans., The Trotula: A Medieval compendium of Women's Medicine (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 83-87.

Jean-Claude Schmitt, The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children since the Thirteenth Century, trans. Martin Thom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-8.

Required viewing: "The Sorceress" ["Le moine et la sorcière"], produced by Paméla Berger, Annie Leibovici, and Georges Reinhart; directed by Suzanne Schiffman, 1988 (96 minutes). Details TBA.

- "The Sorceress" is based on an anecdote told by the Dominican friar and preacher Stephen (Etienne) of Bourbon in a treatise left unfinished at his death in 1261 (included in the assigned section of Jean-Claude Schmitt, The Holy Greyhound, above). How have the director and producers used Stephen's story? How have they altered his intentions?
- How reliable do you think the film is as a portrayal of healing practices in the medieval European countryside? Of the gendering of healing in medieval Christian Europe?

Week 6 (3/4-3/8) The Black Death

PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS MONDAY 3/4.

Primary sources:

Grant, Source Book, no. 107/pp. 773-74 (Guy de Chauliac, Art of Surgery). In Readings.

Rosemary Horrox, ed. and trans., The Black Death (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), no. 56/158-63 (Paris Medical Faculty); no. 61/pp. 182-84 (physician of Montpellier); no. 62/pp. 184-93 (John of Burgundy); no. 64/194-203 (Pistoia city ordinances of 1348). In Readings.

- Read the plague tractates of Guy de Chauliac, the Paris Medical Faculty, the physician of Montpellier, and John of Burgundy *in chronological order*. (To do this, you will have to ascertain their dates.) What differences and similarities do you see between the texts, and how would you account for them, thinking particularly of their evolution over time?
- How does the model of plague, its causes, and its prevention implicit in the Pistoia ordinances of 1348 relate to that in the medical treatises?
- How did European Christians see the relationship between plague and sin? How did their attitudes toward leprosy differ in this regard and why? How did Muslim and Christian responses to plague differ, and why?

Other required reading:

Michael Dols, "The Comparative Communal Responses to the Black Death in Muslim and Christian Societies," Viator 5 (1974): 269-87. On reserve.

-AND/OR-

Richard Palmer, "The Church, Leprosy and Plague in Medieval and Early Modern

Europe,” Studies in Church History 19 (1982): 79-99. On reserve.

Part 2: MEDICINE AND HEALING IN RENAISSANCE EUROPE, 1490-1630

Please note: The textbook for the second half of the course, Mary Lindemann, Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe, covers the period from 1500 to 1800. Because this course ends in 1630, you should feel free to skim or omit material assigned in Lindemann that relates *exclusively* to the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; this will concern particular individuals and institutions. But you should keep in mind that most of the material relating to social and material conditions of illness and healing, both medical and non-medical, does not change greatly over the period covered by the book, so that much of the discussion of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conditions is valid also for the period covered by the course.

Week 7 (3/11-15) Medical bodies I: The obstructed body

MIDTERM IN CLASS, MONDAY, 3/11.

Primary source:

Antonio Benivieni, De abditis nonnullis ac mirandis morborum causis (On the Hidden and Marvelous Causes of Disease and Healing), trans. Charles Singer (Springfield IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1954). In Readings.

Benivieni was a university-educated physician who practiced in Florence (an important city in northern Italy) in the second half of the fifteenth century. He jotted down these entries over the course of his career, so that they resemble in some respects Rhazes' clinical observations. His brother selected the longest and best developed entries from Benivieni's notes and published them in 1507, after Benivieni's death.

- What can you tell about Benivieni's view of the body? How does he think the body functions? What are the principles that govern it? How does he conceive of the differences between the male and the female bodies? How does he conceive of internal illness and how do the kinds of healing techniques he applies, as a physician, reflect that model of illness?
- How does his view of the body relate to that described by Pomata?

Other required reading:

Gianna Pomata, Contracting a Cure: Patients, Healers, and the Law in Early Modern Bologna, trans. Gianna Pomata et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 129-39. On reserve. ALTER: 121-39 AND ADD NOTES

Mary Lindemann, Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), ch. 1.

Week 8 (3/18-22) Varieties of religious healing

PLEASE SEE UNDER REQUIRED VIEWING FOR WEEK 9.

Primary sources:

Katharine Park and John Henderson, “‘The First Hospital among Christians’: The

Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence,” Medical History 35 (1991): 164-88. In Readings.

The Miracles of King Henry VI, ed. and trans. Ronald Knox and Shane Leslie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), nos. 1-39 and 45-59/pp. 34-88 and 106-20. In Readings.

- How does the approach to religious healing in The Miracles relate to that of the hospitals? Do they treat the same conditions? The same clientele? How do these differ, and why?
- What are the various types of miracles contained in this source? Roughly what proportion involve healing? What general kinds of illnesses are represented? Which kinds are represented most frequently?
- What other types of healing had been tried first, if any? In what order? Does the pattern vary according to different kinds of illness? What is the attitude of the compiler toward other kinds of healing?
- Where and when did the cures take place? How did they happen, i.e., what actions triggered the cure? What was the nature of the cure (gradual or sudden, full or partial), and how was it documented?
- What types of people are represented in this document? Male vs. female? Age? Class? Are any groups disproportionately represented?
- Do you see differences between the world of healing represented in this text and the one described by Stephen of Bourbon 250 years earlier (see Week 4).

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SPRING VACATION

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Week 9 (4/1-5) The “French disease”

NO CLASS MONDAY, 4/1. IN LIEU OF THE CLASS MEETING, PLEASE SEE REQUIRED VIEWING BELOW.

Primary source:

Ulrich von Hutten, De morbo gallico [On the French Disease], trans. Thomas Paynel (London: Berthelet, 1539). In Readings.

- How does Hutten’s discussion of the French disease reflect the varied world of practice described by Lindemann in ch. 7?
- How does Hutten’s model of the sick body and healing relate to that in Benivieni and/or that described by Pomata (see Week 7)?
- How do the social responses to the “new” disease of syphilis compare to the social responses to the “new” disease of plague in the mid-fourteenth century? To leprosy in the earlier period? How would you compare them to late twentieth-century responses to AIDS?

Other required reading:

Lindemann, Medicine and Society, chs. 2 and 7.

Anna Foa, "The New and the Old: The Spread of Syphilis (1494-1530)," trans. Carole C. Gallucci, in Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 26-45. On reserve.

Required viewing: *On or before Wednesday, 4/3* (when it closes), please make arrangements to visit the exhibit of early printed books on medicine, "The Fifteneers," in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Countway Library of Medicine, 10 Shattuck Street, Boston MA 02115. For directions to Countway, see the Rare Books website (URL: www.countway.harvard.edu/rarebooks/); for a catalogue of the exhibit, see (URL: www.countway.harvard.edu/rarebooks/fifteeners). A free shuttle bus between the Yard and the Medical School, where Countway is located, leaves frequently from outside Lamont. Schedules available from the bus driver or the Harvard information office.

Week 10 (4/8-12) Medical bodies II: Cosmic bodies

Primary sources:

Marsilio Ficino, The Book of Life, trans. Charles Boer (Irving TX: Spring Publications, 1980), pp. 1-2, 83-100, and 177-83. In Readings.

Paracelsus, On the Miners' Sickness and Other Miners' Diseases, Book I, trans.

George Rosen, in Paracelsus, Four Treatises, ed. Henry E. Sigerist (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 55-80. In Readings.

- Figure out as precisely as you can the etiology of the Miners' Sickness. (This will take some careful reading; making a diagram may be useful.) How does it differ from disease mechanisms in the Galenic tradition?
- How does the view of body and illness in Paracelsus compare with that in Ficino? To that in Benivieni? To that in Hutten?
- How are these differences reflected in Paracelsus's recommendations for treatment of the Miners' Disease?
- How do Paracelsus's assumptions and values concerning medical practice and the medical profession compare with those in Benivieni, Ficino, and Hutten?

Other required reading:

Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine, Epilogue.

Lindemann, Medicine and Society, pp. 66-77.

Allen G. Debus, "Paracelsus and the Medical Revolution of the Renaissance"
[online: web], last updated 27 April 1998. Visit in entirety. URL:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/paracelsus/paracelsus_2.html.

Week 11 (4/15-19) Medical bodies III: Anatomical bodies

Primary sources:

Andreas Vesalius, Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels (Dover, 1950), Introduction and study illustrations to all six books of the Fabrica.

Vesalius, Preface to On the Fabric of the Human Body, in Charles D. O'Malley,

Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, 1514-64 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 316-24. In Readings.

- How does the body as represented in the Fabrica relate to the imagined body described by Kuriyama?
- How does the body as represented in the Fabrica compare to the models of the bodies we have discussed earlier in the course?
- How does the male body differ from the female body in Vesalius' work, and what are some of the implications of these differences?

Other required reading:

Lindemann, Medicine and Society, pp. 66-77 (as for previous week, only focus on anatomy this time).

Shigehisa Kuriyama, The Expressiveness of the Body (New York: Zone Books, 1999), pp. 7-14 and ch. 3. Recommended: ch. 4. On reserve.

Katharine Park, "The Criminal and the Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy," The Renaissance Quarterly 47 (1994): 1-33. On reserve.

Week 12 (4/22-26) Midwifery, magic, and witchcraft SECOND PAPER DUE MONDAY 4/22.

Primary source:

Eucharius Rösslin, When Midwifery became the Male Physician's Province: The Sixteenth Century Handbook: The Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 1994), pp. 28-93. On reserve.

Public record of the labour of Isabel de la Cavalleria, January 10, 1490, Zaragoza, trans. Montserrat Cabré. <http://orb.rhodes.edu/birthrecord.html>

Other required reading:

Ruth Martin, Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 124-47. On reserve.

Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany," in her Oedipus and the Devil (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), ch. 9. On reserve.

-AND/OR-

John Harley, "Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch," Social History of Medicine 3 (1990): 1-26. On reserve.

Week 13 (4/29-5/3) Public health

Required reading:

Carlo M. Cipolla, Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany, trans. Muriel Kittel (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).

Giulia Calvi, "A Metaphor for Social Exchange: The Florentine Plague of 1630," Representations 13 (1986): 9-33. On reserve.

- Compare the nature of plague controls as described by Cipolla and Calvi. How are they similar? How different? How would you account for the differences? How do the approaches of the two historians to their subjects differ?
- How have public health measures in response to plague changed since the Pistoia regulations of 1348?

Lindemann, Medicine and Society, chs. 5-6.