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Office Hours:
Tuesday, 2:30-3:30
Thursday, 3:00-4:00
and by appointment

HONORS 182-12: The Cultural History of Disease (Spring 2007)

Disease is more than a pathological phenomenon. How diseases are understood and defined by physician and patient alike also reflect and shape cultural values.

This course explores this claim by studying diseases in the past. Studying the cultural history of disease serves two purposes: it deepens our understanding of the past while shedding light on the present. In the end I hope we will all better understand how cultural assumptions – in the past and today – shape the experience and outcome of disease as much as the knowledge produced in the laboratory.

Readings

The following books are available at the Vanderbilt Bookstore.

Ann Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

Janet Golden, *Message in a Bottle*

Lynn Payer, *Medicine and Culture*

Sheila Rothman, *In the Shadow of Death*

See bibliography at end of syllabus for sources of additional readings.

Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments:

- 1/11: Introduction to course
- 1/16: Defining culture
1. Bernard, Spencer, *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (1998), pp.136-142.
2. Geertz, "Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture."
- 1/18: What does culture have to do with disease?
Payer, *Medicine and Culture*, forwards and pp.15-34
- 1/23: International comparisons
Payer, pp.35-100
- 1/25: International comparisons, cont'd
Payer, pp.101-155
- 1/30: Nineteenth-century dis-eases: primary sources
1. Lehman, "History of a Case of Death from Onanism (1810-11)."
2. Bigelow, "An Aggravated Instance of Masturbation in the Female (1882)."
3. McClanahan, "An Investigation into the Effects of Masturbation (1897)."
4. "Chlorosis (1847)."
5. Thomas, "Clinical Lecture on Chlorosis (1880)."
- 2/1: Nineteenth-century diseases: secondary sources
1. Engelhardt, Jr., "The Disease of Masturbation (1974)," pp.234-248.
2. Brumberg, "Chlorotic Girls (1982)," pp.186-195.
- 2/6: Central Library
- 2/8: Eskind Medical Library. **Short paper due (15%)**
- 2/13: Nineteenth-century diseases. **Meet with me this week to discuss paper topics.**

1. Medical Dissertation
 2. Hurd, "Consumption in New England (1883)," pp.481-485.
 3. N.W., "The causation of pulmonary consumption (1886)," pp.86-88.
 4. T. Mitchell Pruden, "The cause of consumption (1886)," pp.515-516.
- 2/15: Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, pp.1-44
- 2/20: Gendering disease
Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, pp.45-74
- 2/22: Gendering disease
Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, pp.75-127
- 2/27: Experiencing disease
Rothman, pp.179-252
- 3/1: Film. **Hand in annotated bibliography of 5 sources (10%)**

SPRING BREAK

- 3/13: Disease and ethnicity
1. Jacobs, Fishberg, "Diabetes Mellitus (1901-1906)
 2. Tuchman, "Diabetes: A Cultural History"
- 3/15: The making of disease in the twentieth century
Golden, *Message in a Bottle*, pp.1-51
- 3/20: Gendering disease
Golden, pp.52-94
- 3/22: Disease and the media
Golden, pp.95-119
- 3/27: Disease and the law
Golden, pp.120-171

Class Presentations (15%)

The next five classes will be dedicated to student presentations. Each of you will have 25 minutes to lead the class through an analysis of one of the documents you will be analyzing in your research paper. The document, or excerpt of a document, should be no longer than 5 pages. As part of this assignment, you will need to submit either an annotated outline of your presentation or a power-point presentation. You will be evaluated on the quality of the document, the depth of your analysis, and the strength of your presentation.

During this three week period, I would also like you to begin reading Ann Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. We will discuss this book when we are done with the student presentations.

Be sure, finally, to use this time to make progress on your research papers.

- 3/29: Student presentations (3)
- 4/3: Student presentations (3)
- 4/5: Student presentations (3)
- 4/10: Student presentations (3)
- 4/12: Student presentations (3)
- 4/17: Disease and Culture

Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
4/19: Cultural competency
Finish Fadiman

4/24: Conclusion **Final research papers due (30%)**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

There will be no examinations in this course. Your final grade will be based upon the following:

1. Class participation (30%)

You should always finish each day's reading before coming to class. Since this is a seminar, I will not lecture. Class meetings will consist almost entirely of your analysis of the assigned readings.

2. Short paper (15%). Due Tuesday, February 8.

Choose any disease of interest to you. Read about it in newspapers, magazines, medical journals, online, etc. Use at least four sources. Then, drawing on Bernard/Spencer, Geertz, and/or Payer, write a 4-5 page paper exploring the way cultural assumptions shape our understanding of this disease.

4. Annotated bibliography (10%). Due Thursday, March 1.

Identify five sources for your research paper. Write a paragraph on each source, describing its contents and its potential relevance for your paper.

5. Class presentation (15%)

Each student will have 25 minutes to lead the class through an analysis of one of the documents you will be analyzing in your research paper. The document should be no longer than 5 pages. As part of this assignment, you will need to submit either an outline of your presentation or a power-point presentation. You will be evaluated on the quality of the document, the depth of your analysis, and the strength of your presentation.

6. Research paper (30%). Due Tuesday, April 24.

Each student will write a research paper (12 pages) based on primary sources. This is to be a piece of analytical research, not a simple review of the literature. I am looking for your ability to deal critically with a topic of your choice.

Vanderbilt's Honor Code governs all work in this course. If you have any questions, please ask one of us--not another student--for clarification.

Bibliography

Alan Bernard, Jonathan Spencer, eds. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.136-142. **E-BOOK. AVAILABLE THROUGH ACORN**

Clifford Geertz, "Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture." **ON-LINE**

URL: http://www.iwp.uni-linz.ac.at/lxe/sektktf/gg/GeertzTexts/Thick_Description.htm

George F. Lehman, "History of a Case of Death from Onanism," *Philadelphia Medical Museum*, 1810-11, vol.1 (new series): 152-154. **HANDOUT**

Horatio R. Bigelow, "An Aggravated Instance of Masturbation in the Female," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women*, 1882, 15: 436-441. **HANDOUT**

A.C. McClanahan, "An Investigation into the Effects of Masturbation," *New York Medical Journal*, 1897, 66: 499-502. **HANDOUT**

Claudian, "Chlorosis," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1847, 37: 53-56. **HANDOUT**

T. Gaillard Thomas, "Clinical Lecture on Chlorosis," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1880, 103: 389-390. **HANDOUT**

Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "The Disease of Masturbation," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1974, 48: 234-248. **HANDOUT**

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, "Chlorotic Girls, 1870-1920: A Historical Perspective on Female Adolescence," in Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Women and Health in America*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984: pp.186-195. **HANDOUT**

Medical Dissertation. **WORD DOCUMENT**

E.P. Hurd, "Consumption in New England," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1883, 108: 481-485. **HANDOUT**

N.W., "The causation of pulmonary consumption," *Science*, 1886, 7: 86-88. **ON-LINE. URL:**

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/view/00368075/ap005001/00a00200/0?currentResult=00368075%2bap005001%2b00a00200%2b0%2c02&searchUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jstor.org%2Fsearch%2FAdvancedResults%3Fhp%3D25%26so%3DOldestFirst%26si%3D26%26All%3Dtuberculosis%26Exact%3D%26One%3D%26None%3D%26sd%3D%26ed%3D%26jt%3D%26ic%3D00368075%26ic%3D00368075%26node.Biological+Sciences%3D1%26node.General+Science%3D1>

T. Mitchell Pruden, "The cause of consumption," *Science*, 1886, 9: 515-516. **ON-LINE. URL:**

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/view/00368075/ap005071/00a00080/1?searchUrl=http%3a/www.jstor.org/search/AdvancedResults%3fhp%3d25%26so%3dOldestFirst%26si%3d26%26All%3dtuberculosis%26Exact%3d%26One%3d%26None%3d%26sd%3d%26ed%3d%26jt%3d%26ic%3d00368075%26ic%3d00368075%26node.Biological%20Sciences%3d1%26node.General%20Science%3d1&frame=noframe¤tResult=00368075%2bap005071%2b00a00080%2b0%2c06&userID=813b01b2@vanderbilt.edu/01cce4405e600610fcc4654f3&dpi=3&config=jstor>

Joseph Jacobs, Maurice Fishberg, "Diabetes Mellitus." *JewishEncyclopedia.com*. **ON-LINE. URL:**

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=321&letter=D&search=diabetes%20mellitus>

Arleen Marcia Tuchman, "Diabetes: A Cultural History." (unpublished mss) **WORD DOCUMENT**