**Disease, Death, and Society**

**in the Modern History of the Americas**

*(****Hist0971p)***

Monday 3-5:30

Wilson Hall 204

Prof. Daniel A. Rodriguez

Peter Green

**Course Description**

This seminar explores how disease has shaped the modern history of the Americas. From the epidemics of nineteenth-century New York and Buenos Aires that fed nativist anti-immigrant sentiment, to the imperial politics of yellow fever control under U.S.-occupied Cuba, to state responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Haiti and the U.S., disease has played a powerful role in shaping the history of our hemisphere. Together, we will explore ways of thinking about disease and public health as topics of historical inquiry, and examine how health politics have been shaped by processes of imperialism, sexuality, and racial and ethnic inequality. Other topics we will explore include how gender and sexuality have shaped disease control efforts and medical research, how fear of disease has shaped foreign policy throughout the region, and how new ideas about the origin and spread of disease were disseminated and contested.

**Assignments and Grading**

- Midterm paper, 5-7 pages, worth 20% of the final grade.

- Final paper 8-10 pages, worth 30% of the final grade.

- Primary source analysis, 4-6 pages, worth 15% of the final grade.

- Eight response papers, 1-2 pages, each worth 2% of the final grade. Response papers are due by 10PM the night before class.

- Class Participation—worth 19% of the final grade (includes attendance, active participation in class discussion and in-class writing assignments.)

**Course Requirements:**

This is a small discussion-focused class, which depends on our coming to class ready to engage respectfully with each other. I expect everyone to attend class, complete readings, participate in discussion, and turn in papers/responses on time. Unexcused late work will be docked one letter grade per day. Since this seminar meets only once per week, any unexcused absence will affect the participation grade. Students are expected to comply with the Brown University guidelines regarding academic integrity.

**Disability Guidelines:**

Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need academic accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible.

**Goals of the Course:**

The fundamental goal of this course is to learn to think historically about issues of medicine and disease, and to explore the relationships between culture and medical knowledge both in the past and today. The other main goal is to improve your analytic writing skills, through regular writing assignments, short reflection essays, and longer midterm and final papers.

**REQUIRED BOOKS, available at the Bookstore, and one copy of each is on reserve at the Library:**

1) Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*

2) Howard Markel, *Quarantine*! *East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892*

3) Myron Echenberg, *Plague Ports: The Global Impact of Bubonic Plague, 1894-1901*

4) Allan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet. A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880*

5) Ann Zulawski, *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*

**PART I: Introduction and Concepts**

**September 8: Introductions and Overview**

**September 15: Concepts and Debates in the History of Medicine and Disease**

1) Roy Porter, “What is Disease,” in Roy Porter, ed. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine*

2) Charles Rosenberg, “Framing Disease: Illness, Society and History” in Charles Rosenberg, *Explaining Epidemics and Other Essays in the History of Medicine*

3) Susan M. Reverby and David Rosner, “Beyond “The Great Doctors,’” in *Health Care in America: Essays in Social History* [Moodle]

4) Diego Armus, “Disease in the Historiography of Modern Latin America” in Diego Armus, ed., *From Malaria to AIDS. Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*

**PART II: The Bacteriological Revolution and the “Gospel of Germs”**

**September 22: The Emergence of the Gospel of Germs**

1) Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs* (Introduction, Chapters 1, 4-7)

IN CLASS:

Primary Source:

1) Cyrus Edson, “The Microbe as a Social Leveler” (1895)

2) Short WWII-era films on health and hygiene:

**September 29: Race, Gender, and the Germ**

1) Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*, (Chapter 9)

2) Ann Zulawski, “Hygiene and ‘the Indian problem’” in *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*

3) Ann Zulawski, “Women and Public Health” in *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*

IN CLASS:

Primary Souces:

1) Gender and the “Gospel of Germs” in 1920s issues of *Ladies Home Journal*,

2) “Soapy the Germ Fighter” short film

**PART III: Immigration, Disease, and Excusion:**

**October 6: Disease and Antisemitism in 1890s New York City**

1)Howard Markel, *Quarantine*! (Introduction, Chapters 1-4, 6-8, and Epilogue)

2) **“**The Mexican 'germ invasion' is just the right's latest anti-immigration myth” http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/02/border-patrol-diseases-anti-immigration-myth?CMP=fb\_us

**October 20: Race and Immigration in Cuba, Argentina, and the US/Mexico Border**

1) Alexandra Minna Stern, “Buildings, Boundaries and Blood: Medicalization and Nation-Building on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1910-1930*” Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 1, 1999

2) Diego Armus, “Immigration, Race and Tuberculosis” in *The Ailing City. Health, Culture and Tuberculosis in Buenos Aires 1870-1950* [Blackboard]

3) Marc Mcleod, “We Cubans are Obligated Like Cats to Have a Clean Face: Malaria, Quarantine, and Race in Neocolonial Cuba, 1898-1940” *The Americas,* Vol. 67, No.1, 2010

**PART IV: Disease and EMPIRE**

**October 27: Imperial Medicine and Public Health**

1) Readings on “Imperial Medicine and Public Health” (pps 273-326 in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State)*

2) Ann Zulawski, “The Rockefeller Foundation in Bolivia, 1932-1952” in *Unequal Cures: Public Health and Political Change in Bolivia, 1900-1950*

3) Susan Reverby, “Ethical Failures and History Lessons: The U.S. Public Health Service Research Studies in Tuskegee and Guatemala” *Public Health Reviews, Vol.34, No1*

IN CLASS:

Primary Sources: Selection of primary sources on U.S. perspectives on disease in Cuba from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

***MIDTERM PAPER DUE.***

**November 3: Bubonic Plague comes to the Americas**

1) Myron Echenberg, *Plague Ports: The Global Urban Impact of Bubonic Plague*

Pages 1-46, 131-241, 303-311)

2) Daniel Rodriguez, “Public Health Between Two Empires: Spanish Immigration, U.S. Power, and the 1914 Bubonic Plague Outbreak in Havana”

**PART V: VACCINATION, CULTURE, and the state**

**November 10:**

1) Teresa Meade, "Civilizing Rio de Janeiro: The Public Health Campaign and the Riot of 1904," Journal of Social History 20, no. 2 (1986):301-22;

2) Amy Wallace, “An Epidemic of Fear: How Panicked Parents Skipping Shots Endangers Us All” in *Wired Magazine,* http://www.wired.com/magazine/2009/10/ff\_waronscience/all/1

3) James Colgrove, “Science in a Democracy”: The Contested Status of Vaccination in the Progressive Era and the 1920s” *Isis*, Vol. 96, No. 2 (June 2005),

IN CLASS:

-Screening of Frontline documentary, *The Vaccine Wars*

**PART VI: Mental Health and the State: A Comparative History of the Asylum**

**November 17:**

1) Jennifer Lambe, “A Century of Work: Reconstructing Mazorra (1857-1959)”

2) Peter McCandless, “Curative Asylum, Custodial Hospital: the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and State Hospital, 1828-1920” in Roy Porter and David Wright (ed.) *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965*

3)Roy Porter *“*Introduction*”* Roy Porter and David Wright (ed.) *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965*

4) Christina Rivera-Garza*, “Becoming Mad in Revolutionary Mexico: Mentally Ill Patients at the General Insane Asylum, Mexico, 1910-1930* in Roy Porter and David Wright (ed.) *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965*

**PART VI: Venereal Disease, Prostitution and State Control of Sexuality**

**November 24:** 1) Allan Brandt, *No Magic Bullet. A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880* (pages Introduction, and Chapters 1, 4 and 5)

2)Katherine Elaine Bliss “Between Risk and Confession: State and Popular Perspectives on Syphillis Infection in Revolutionary Mexico” in *From Malaria to AIDS. Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*

IN CLASS:

Film as a Primary Source: Screening of selections from *Sex Madness*, a 1938 exploitation film about the dangers of venereal disease.

***Primary source analysis Due***

**PART VII: HIV/AIDS in Cuba, Haiti and Brazil**

**December 1:**

1) Marvin Leiner, *Sexual Politics in Cuba: Machismo, Homosexuality, and AIDS*, Chapter 5

2) “A Regime’s Tight Grip on AIDS”, *New York Times* (May 7, 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/08/health/a-regimes-tight-grip-lessons-from-cuba-in-aids-control.html?smid=fb-share&pagewanted=all

3) Patrick Larvie, “Nation, Science, and Sex: AIDS and the New Brazilian Sexuality” in *From Malaria to AIDS. Disease in the History of Modern Latin America*

4) Paul Farmer, “Sending Sickness: Sorcery, Politics, and Changing Concepts of AIDS in Rural Haiti” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 1, Culture and Behavior in the AIDS Epidemic (Mar., 1990)

IN CLASS:

1) “Denying Sex Workers HIV Funds,” *Mother Jones* July 23, 2010

2) “New Federal Regulations on HIV/AIDS Funds Restrict Free Speech” Press Release, Open Society Foundation, May 13, 2010

http://www.soros.org/press-releases/new-federal-regulations-hivaids-funds-restrict-free-speech

3)“Prostitutes Are Scapegoated as HIV Panic Grips Athens” *Daily Beast, June 17, 2012* <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/06/17/prostitutes-are-scapegoated-as-hiv-panic-grips-athens.html>

***FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBA…***