

Epidemics in Global Perspective (HSHM 007): Seminar (two 90 minute session per week) for first-year students.

The syllabus changed from year to year, based on student feedback, my interests, and current events. This syllabus is a time-average of what we did for about 30 years. Smallpox, malaria, yellow fever, and polio have been rotated into the course from time to time, trying for a similar mix of science, literature, and popular culture in the sources. I have tried to provide some “global south” focus by emphasizing the religious aspect of smallpox in India (David Arnold), dengue in SE Asia, AIDS and EBOLA in Africa, and plague in HK and Manchuria. I have tried to avoid having much material from historians of medicine, because I aim to have them evaluate evidence on their own, rather than have “professional” evaluations fed to them before they struggle with things on their own.

Week 1: Intro to Plagues and Peoples (McNeill). Discussion of the language of epidemics (epi-, end-, pan-; disease, illness, infection, contagion, etc.

Week 2: Plague: Read: Boccaccio, *The Decameron*: Introduction; classroom dramas acting out assigned stories (groups of 3-4; build class cohesion; and introduce freshmen to each other). Also read plague tract of Bengt Knutsson (fl 1460): "Litol Boke of the Bisshop of Arusiens"

Week 3: Read: Defoe, *Journal of Plague Year*, and Sydenham, *Medical Observations Book 1*, selection on the same plague.

Week 4: Read Camus, *The Plague* (epidemics as topic for fiction)

Week 5: Cholera: Read Rosenberg, *Cholera Years*; discuss history of medicine as a way to structure broader histories; also, the evolution of public health in America.

[About this time, we take a Saturday trip to NYC to visit the Tenement Museum, where almost every inhabitant died of some infectious disease at one time or another. Supported by a small grant from Tom Steyer for Yale freshman projects]

Week 6: Tuberculosis: Read Gide, *The Immoralist* (contemporary account of two cases of TB, lots of blood spitting...) and selections from Codell Carter's translation of Koch's work on identification of the TB bacterium. Discuss TB as a “literary disease”

Week 7: Read Barry, on *The Great Influenza*; for the premeds in the class, this is a good introduction to the history of medical education and research in the US.

Week 8: Modeling: Discuss what a “model” is. Read: Lessler, Justin, Derek AT Cummings, Steven Fishman, Amit Vora, and Donald S. Burke. "Transmissibility of swine flu at Fort Dix, 1976." *Journal of the Royal Society Interface* 4, no. 15 (2007): 755-762. (Good for engaging the “math types” in the class)

Week 9: AIDS: Read: Shilts: *And the Band Played On*, *View: The Age of AIDS* (NOVA)
Movie Night: *And the Band Played On*.

Week 10: Dengue Fever: Read; D. J. Gubler, Dengue and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever *Clin. Microbiol. Rev.* 1998, 11(3):480; also, WHO Dengue Bulletin, #34 Dec 2010. Usually, I have students from SE Asia who offer vivid accounts of having had dengue, or at least experiencing the control measures used there.

Week 11: Pandemic planning: Read and review WHO, CDC and Connecticut Influenza pandemic plans; current versions available online.

Week 12: Epidemic of the day: Newspaper, current medical journal accounts, etc. of a “late breaking epidemic... nearly always one in the news (have used SARS, EBOLA, H1N1 flu, meningitis, and Nipah virus)

Week 13: Preparedness Exercise (aka design an epidemic): Class is divided in half; each group meeting separately for 30-40 minutes; one is assigned to imagine the worse-case scenario for a pandemic, and the other group is assigned to devise the best preparedness plan to counteract the worse-case scenario. Then the two groups compare their results for the remainder of the class period (about 40-50 min).