

ELECTIVE: COVID-19 Pandemic “History of the Present”

Course Facilitators: Joanna Radin (History of Medicine), Anna Reisman, MD (Humanities in Medicine/Internal Medicine) Marco Ramos, MD (Psychiatry/History of Medicine), Maya Sandler (History of Science and Medicine PhD Candidate), Max Tiako (YSM '20)

Length of Rotation: *6 weeks or as long as necessary beyond that*

Student's Class Level: *No priority preference*

Dates: *March 30, 2020-May 8, 2020*

Time Commitment: *minimum 2 hours per week*

Maximum number of students per enrollment: *No maximum*

Grade: *Pass/Fail based on weekly check-ins with course facilitators, on-line discussion of short reading assignments, and a final summary of work that can be archived.*

Overview

This elective offers students an opportunity to engage in a “history of the present” of the COVID-19 epidemic, while learning about previous epidemics and pandemics through a social science and humanistic lens. They will also receive training in specific methods and practices, such as oral history or ethnography, as appropriate. This elective will count towards medical students’ “advanced training period” credits but will also be open to students from nursing and public health.

The course will draw from history, anthropology, sociology, economics (including supply chain management), media studies, and literature to guide participants towards a final self-directed endeavor which can take a range of forms. Students may conduct oral histories with healthcare workers, community leaders, grocery store employees etc., in order to contribute to a broad view of public health during this pandemic, as well as the experiences of social distancing and isolation, quarantine, and loss of work on individuals. Such projects may generate knowledge about the social, cultural, political aspects of COVID, but also provide relief for front-line workers by creating spaces for them to reflect on their experiences or to provide sustaining forms of care and support. For students engaged in such COVID-19-related relief efforts such as volunteering, canvassing or crowdsourcing, final projects may stem from but not be limited to ethnographic work, journaling, vlogging, or podcasting. *The specific structure and duration of the course will be determined based on enrollment but will centered around several Zoom meetings led by course facilitators.*

Facilitators, in conjunction with Section of the History of Medicine faculty will connect students with appropriate mentors from across Yale University to supervise projects, or as appropriate, coordinate working groups to support students working collectively. They will also work with Medical Historical Library staff and PhD students in History of Science and Medicine to oversee the archiving of final projects as part of an effort to document this unprecedented moment.

Objectives:

- Students will engage with literature and media focusing on pandemics and epidemics that will inform their own approach to public health as future healthcare providers, in community with course organizers and other participants
- Students will receive an introduction to qualitative methods relevant to social science and public health research
- Students will engage in a creative capstone project in the media of their choice, developed in consultation with course directors and mentors, pertaining to activities they engage in during their time off from clinical rotations. Options will include but are not limited to written blog(s), podcast(s), video blogs, photo essays, personal essay(s), and opinion pieces, from ethnographic observations and oral histories.

Course Readings:

We will draw from the [COVID-19 open-source syllabus](#) to “teach the virus” which is being managed by medical sociologist, Alondra Nelson.

Resources for community action include, but will not be limited to, this growing [mutual aid database](#).