Epidemics and the Early Modern Body

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Zoom Seminar

Fall 2020
Th 1:30-3:20

Course Description

What can we learn from the early modern period about the pandemic we find ourselves in? Students in this seminar will be reading classic and new scholarly works on early modern epidemics and human responses to them. We will devote particular attention to conceptions of the body that emerged from epidemics, or that affected responses to them. We will also engage with the notions of the collective body, the body of the state, and the body of knowledge as they relate to early modern epidemics. The readings vary broadly in methodology, geographical scope, and historiographical scale.
**Assignments**

1. Participation in zoom discussions is welcome and expected.
2. Every week, starting week 2, a student will present a book on the reading list.
3. Contributions to the Epidemic Histories website. The extent of this contribution can be decided during the semester.
4. Participation in round-table on a selection of primary sources on week 7.
5. Presentation of final project on week 13.
6. Final paper (ca. 5000 wds). This can be a review essay or a paper based on primary sources. This assignment can be replaced by contributions to Epidemic Histories. Either option needs to be approved by the end of November. The final paper/project is due December 10.

**Calendar of Readings**

1. Introduction. Please browse Epidemic Histories. A few days before class please post on canvas a link to one or more articles about the current pandemic that you would like to discuss.

   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15004125](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15004125)


   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/14593780](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/14593780)

   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15314881](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15314881)

   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15365599](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/15365599)


   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/13940643](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/13940643)

   [http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/14593813](http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/14593813)

13. Students’ presentations

**Final projects due December 10.**