

Course Description: History of Health and Disease

Course Director:

Rebecca Kaplan, Ph.D.

Faculty Sponsor (if non-faculty course director):

James Wagner, M.D.

Department:

Internal Medicine

Student Liaison:

Anu Asokan and Tabarak Mian

Requirements:

- Minimum participants for course to be conducted: 4
- Maximum number of students: 20

Rationale:

This course examines the history of health, disease, illness and the practice of medicine in the United States. We will explore the development of the concepts of health and disease and their intersection with institutions such as the state, nongovernmental agencies, economies, religion, science, and technology. We will also investigate how disease, illness, sickness, health, and medical practices are framed by societal, cultural, political, and scientific factors including race, gender, sexuality, and class. Through lecture and discussion, students will gain insight into these relationships. While the course focuses on the history of American medicine, it acknowledges that this history is part of the global history of medicine.

Objectives:

- Identify how and why the concepts of health, illness, and medicine arise in the United States.
- Examine the development of medicine and the relationship between medicine, disease control, and health.
- Understand how health and diseases are framed, how health policies develop, and what social, economic, political, ecological, scientific, and technological factors impact the development of these policies.

Format:

12 1-hour sessions led by Dr. Kaplan on Thursday 12 – 1 pm

Student Evaluation

Grades will be pass / fail. Attendance is required to receive credit for the course.

Course Evaluation

Grading will be pass/fail. To receive transcript acknowledgment, students must:

- attend 10 of 12 participant hours
- complete the online course evaluation form

Schedule:

September 10: Introduction/The Medical Marketplace

Students will learn about how and why people study the history of medicine and some basics about the medical marketplace and the role of physicians from the ancient to the modern.

September 17: History of Medical Education

Students will learn about what factors impacted the development of medical education in the United States. This will include discussion about diversity and inclusion at medical schools.

September 24: Framing Disease and Illness

Students will learn about how understanding of disease and those who have it was shaped and changed by cultural and social influences along with medical, scientific, and technological factors.

October 1: Pandemics and Stigma

Students will learn about how and why groups are falsely blamed for outbreaks based on race, religion, and nationality. This will include discussion of COVID-19 and anti-Asian, anti-Asian American, and anti-immigrant rhetoric in traditional and social media, politics, and the medical community.

October 8: Health and War

Students will learn about the relationship between war and medicine in the United States including the creation of the modern military medical system during the Civil War, trench warfare and health during WWI, and the development of biological weapons and penicillin during WWII.

October 15: Colonialism and Health

Students will learn about the role of health in colonial regimes including issues such as how medicine was used in the development of colonial states, how local populations impacted and influenced these practices, and how they were impacted by them.

October 22: Eugenics

Students will learn about the development of eugenics in the United States, its relationship with the medical profession, and how it impacted medical education and practice, society, and policy. This will include discussion about race and gender including how race is constructed and understood by medical professionals and policy makers.

October 29: Birth Control in the United States

Students will learn about the relationship of gender and health through the history of birth control policy in the United States from the colonial period to the present.

November 5: Vaccination

Students will learn about the history of vaccination and vaccine resistance movements in the United States from the 18th century to the present. This will include discussion about gender, religion, and class and their impact on vaccine use and resistance.

November 12: Drugs and Addiction

Students will learn about the relationship between illicit and licit drug use, the evolution of national drug policy and agencies, and how culture and society impacted drug policies and the understanding of

addiction. This will include discussion about the role of gender and race in the creation of drug policy and the treatment of addiction.

November 19: Health Campaigns and Charities

Students will learn about the development and impact of health campaigns and health charities. This will include discussion of both government and nonprofit efforts to control or eliminate sexually transmitted infections, cancer, and tuberculosis.

December 3: Health and Social Movements

Students will learn about the relationship between health movements and social movements in the United States and the intersection of gender, race, class, and health. This will include discussion of the environmental justice movement, the Black Power movement and health activism, gay rights and HIV/AIDS, and disability activism.