

Health, Healing, and Medicine in Africa

A Freshman Seminar

AS 100.205, Spring 2019

Professor

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Class Meeting Time & Place

Mondays 1:30-3:50, Gilman 413

Scope and Purpose

This is a freshmen seminar focused on select topics in health, healing, and medicine in Africa, primarily but not exclusively from an historical perspective. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to a range of subjects in this broad field and to foster appreciation for the complexity and interrelatedness of health, healing, and medicine in Africa. We will read half a book each week and spend class time discussing the reading from a variety of perspectives. The six books treat the following topics: historical forms of African healing (aka “traditional medicine”) and their relationship with biomedicine, the history of malaria in Africa together with the variety of campaigns deployed against it and the thinking behind those campaigns, the training and experiences of African medical students, transformations in Nigerian psychiatry in the period of decolonization, and the challenges of pharmacological discoveries and patenting in Africa. No prior courses on Africa are required to successfully pursue this course. Written work includes weekly short journal uploads on the readings, a midterm exam essay, a group project, and a final exam essay.

Required Books (Available in hard copy or electronically)

*You may purchase hard copies of the six books in the JHU bookstore or from any vendor, if you desire. MSEL also has free electronic versions of all of these books (except Wendland’s A Heart for the Work), via the library catalog. Hard copies of the books are also available on print reserve in MSEL and may be checked out for short periods of time for reading or photocopying. You may also be able to borrow library hard copies via “Borrow Direct” using the library’s online catalog (order ahead to make sure the books arrive on time). Finally, you may purchase electronic copies of the books from various internet vendors, rather than using hard copies or the library’s electronic copy. **A combination of the above strategies will help you to minimize book costs.***

- Karen E. Flint, *Healing Traditions: African Medicine, Cultural Exchange, and Competition in South Africa, 1820-1948* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008). [MSEL electronic book]
- James Webb, *The Long Struggle Against Malaria in Tropical Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). [MSEL electronic book]
- Claire L. Wendland, *A Heart for the Work: Journeys through an African Medical School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).
- Matthew M. Heaton, *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization, and the Globalization of Psychiatry* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013). [MSEL electronic book]
- Julie Livingston, *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). [MSEL electronic book]
- Abena Dove Osseo-Asare, *Bitter Roots: The Search for Healing Plants in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). [MSEL electronic book]

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation. I expect you to attend every class and to participate in the discussions. Any absence from class should be explained before class, not after it. I do not require doctors' or other notes for absences—just responsible adult behavior by informing me before your absence. Participation grades assigned by the professor will be based on your record of attending class and on your verbal participation in it.

2. Weekly Journal Posts. Each week, students will upload short responses to the assigned reading. Short means no more than one page of text (single-spaced), generally 2-3 paragraphs. Your journal should take the following form. The first paragraph answers the question: What was the main argument of the assigned reading? The rest of the journal should address any or all of the following questions: What do you think about the argument, and why? What did you find interesting, enlightening, difficult, problematic, or surprising about the reading? How does the reading relate to other works we have read? What questions do you have for in-class discussion? Journal posts are due before the beginning of each class (you will be unable to post your comments after class has begun). You may wish to bring a hard or soft copy of your journal comments to class and use them as a basis for your verbal participation.

3. Midterm Essay. A take-home midterm examination essay covering the first three books. This will consist of one 5-page essay answer to a general question relating to the required readings and course discussions. The midterm question will be available on March 1 and must be uploaded at Blackboard by March 16 at 11:59 pm.

4. Group Project. The professor will assign class groups of 3-4 people each in about the third week of class. You will work with your group throughout the semester. The group will select and research a topic together. The group will write a project report (whose total length will be 5 pages per group member: a group of 3 will write a 15-page report, a group of 4 will write a 20-page report). Instructions for the group project will be found on Blackboard. The project report is due by April 20 at 11:59 pm.

5. Final Essay. A take-home final examination essay covering the last three books. This will consist of one 5-page essay answer to a general question relating to the required readings and course discussions. The exam question will be made available on April 26 and is due before or by May 10, at 11:59 pm.

Grading	Points
attendance & participation (instructor-assigned)	100
weekly journal posts (20 points/week)	250
midterm exam essay	175
group project	200
group peer evaluation (peer-assigned)	100
final exam essay	175
total points	1000

Important Dates and Deadlines

March 1	Midterm exam essay question available
March 16	Midterm exam due by 11:59 pm
April 20	Group project report is due by 11:59 pm
April 26	Final exam essay question available
May 10	Final exam due by 11:59 pm.

Meeting Dates & Reading Schedule:

January 28: Introduction. There will be no in-class meeting. Please watch the introductory video at the Blackboard site for the class.

Historical & Biomedical Healing in Africa: Separate or Entangled?

February 4: Flint: *Healing Traditions*, Introduction – Chapter 2.

February 11: Flint: *Healing Traditions*, Chapter 3 – Epilogue

Malaria: Battling an Infectious Disease

February 18: Webb: *The Long Struggle*, Preface/Introduction – Chapter 2.

February 25: Webb: *The Long Struggle*, Chapter 3 – Chapter 7.

Medical Schools and Hospitals: Becoming Biomedical Doctors

March 4: Wendland: *A Heart for the Work*, Prologue – Chapter 4

March 11: Mar 12: Wendland: *A Heart for the Work*, Chapter 5 – Epilogue

Struggling with the Mind: A Psychiatry for Africa

March 25: Heaton: *Black Skin, White Coats*, Introduction – Chapter 3.

April 1: Heaton: *Black Skin, White Coats*, Chapter 4 – Conclusion.

The Current Cancer Epidemic: A Case Study from Botswana

April 8: Livingston, *Improvising Medicine*, Preface – Chapter 3.

April 15: Livingston, *Improvising Medicine*, Chapter 4 - Epilogue

Biomedical Prospecting: Studying & Patenting African Medicines

April 22: Osseo-Asare: *Bitter Roots*, Introduction – Chapter 2 (no journal required for this date; but you must read the assigned chapters of the book)

April 29: Osseo-Asare: *Bitter Roots*, Chapter 3 – Conclusion.