

AS.100.291 | Fall 2019  
TTh 9:00–10:15am, Gilman 377  
Professor: Zachary Dorner ([zdorner@jhu.edu](mailto:zdorner@jhu.edu))  
Office hours: T 1:00-3:00pm (and by appt.), Gilman 330D

## Medicine in an Age of Empires, 1500-1800

### Description

This seminar examines the broad shifts in European medicine of the long seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a period that saw changing views of the body alongside new ways of understanding the natural world. This period also saw the extension of overseas empires based on state-sponsored violence and resource extraction using enslaved labor. Such imperial projects shaped and were shaped by medical developments. How, then, did medicine emerge as a distinctive body of knowledge and as a profession? And, how did a particular kind of medicine sharpen emergent ideas of difference, hierarchy, and superiority that would come to define the modern world? The answers lie in the intertwined experiences of disease, empire, and global commerce. Europeans' suffering at the hands of the plague influenced medical practice, but so too did fears of hot climates far from home. The medical regimes instituted in trading posts, military camps, plantations, and naval hospitals reshaped expectations of what medicine could or should do, for whom, and at what cost. In short, the world would have looked a lot different without the empires of the early modern period. Without them we would not have the same paradigms of medicine we do today.

### Learning Goals

Our focus is situating the history of early modern medicine into its broader contexts. We will blend scholarship on practices and ideas to trace the broad transition from medicines based on the Galenic humors and individualized advice to medicines suitable for a wider range of people across empires. By applying the lenses of race, class, gender, and religion to this history we will uncover the diversity of healthways present in the early modern period, as well as the power dynamics that sustained or thwarted them. In so doing, the course emphasizes the importance of pillars of the early modern world (empire, global commerce, plantation slavery, war) to narratives of medical progress. Seeing these topics as central to the changes occurring in medicine at this time is crucial to better understanding the origins of “modern” medicine.

By the end of the quarter, students will be able to make connections between assigned readings and the broader themes of the course. We will work on how to ask analytical questions about the past and the ways historians have considered it. In other words, we will become comfortable exploring how we know what we know. Students will use primary and secondary sources to interrogate social structures and historical events. They will also be able to use historical context to evaluate social institutions, change over time, and power relationships within social, racial, gendered, and cultural contexts. Assignments and discussion will focus on building comfort with communicating arguments and marshaling evidence in writing and speech.

## Requirements

Participation: 30% (includes activity in weekly discussions)

First paper: 15% (2-3 pages)

Mid-term exam: 15%

Second paper: 20% (4-5 pages)

Final exam: 20%

Class meetings will typically include content from the instructor, source analysis, and group discussion. As a seminar, this class relies on discussion. Active, informed participation is expected each week. Be sure to complete the readings before class, noting things you find interesting or about which you have questions. Each student will contribute a question, observation, or idea to a thread on Blackboard in advance of class meetings to help set the course of our discussions. Your participation grade does not depend on mastery of the material, but on consistent and honest engagement with the readings and your peers. It is also important that together we create a respectful community of inquiry where all feel comfortable thinking out loud, trading ideas, and venturing thoughts that may not be fully formed. Respect and courtesy are essential at all times.

Discussion-based classes are successful to the extent that students can organize a sustained productive conversation that delves deeply into the reading. Students who find it challenging to articulate their best thoughts in class are welcome to use other means—emails to the class, for example—to compensate. Here is a rubric for assessing participation:

*Outstanding:* Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

*Good:* Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not present, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

*Adequate:* Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

*Non-Participant:* This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not present, the quality of discussion would be unchanged.

*Unsatisfactory:* Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.

In addition to participation, grades for the class depend on two written assignments and two exams (one mid-term and a final). The two papers take the form of a focused analysis of an historical source (could be a text, image, object, map, or something else). For the first, students will have a choice of several provided by the instructor, and students will identify a source of

their choosing for the second. We will discuss expectations, strategies, and ideas for these assignments in class. For both of these papers a small amount of extra credit will be awarded for documented evidence of visiting the writing center to improve the quality of the writing. This will also likely result in a higher grade on the paper. These papers must be emailed to the instructor by the deadline as Microsoft Word documents (or equivalent non-pdf format). They must be double-spaced with 1-inch margins and a consistent citation style. The grades of late papers will be lowered one level for each day they are late if prior arrangements have not been made with the instructor.

The mid-term and final exams will comprise a series of identification, short answer, and essay questions covering the first and second halves of the course respectively. The final exam will also offer a chance to reflect on the course as a whole through several questions. Students are expected to demonstrate recognition of central terms and themes from readings and discussion, as well as to respond to prompts with creative answers that incorporate ideas and specific examples from course material and discussion.

### Policies

Students should attend class unless they have a valid medical excuse and notify the instructor before class. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade and multiple absences may result in a failing grade. Please contact the instructor with as much notice as possible if you foresee a conflict with your schedule or are concerned you may not be able to complete an assignment satisfactorily by a given deadline. Please bring the readings and your notes to class either printed or digitally. Laptops are permitted in class for this purpose (and often encouraged for looking at primary sources), but all non-pertinent browsers and programs must be closed. Texting in class is not permitted.

Outside of class, students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours. Office hours are a time to ask particular questions, discuss general topics, or simply check in with the instructor. This time each week is set aside for you, so take advantage of it if you are able. I look forward to continuing our discussions outside the classroom.

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with Johns Hopkins's ethics standards. In this course, you are expected to be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board Web site (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information.

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, [studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu).

## Readings

The following books are available at the bookstore and on reserve at the library. Other readings will be posted electronically or distributed via email, and are marked with an asterisk (\*) on the schedule. I prefer hard copies of books, but several used in the course are available for free online. Please follow the links provided to find the assigned articles.

Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* **(available online)**

Barbara Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin*

Pratik Chakrabarti, *Medicine and Empire 1600-1960*

Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire* **(available online)**

J. R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires* **(available online)**

## Schedule (subject to change)

### Week 1. Introduction: Medicine in Motion

T, Sep 3

Chakrabarti, Pratik. *Medicine and Empire 1600-1960*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. [chap. 1]

Th, Sep 5

Siraisi, Nancy G. *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. [physiological and anatomical knowledge]

Cook, Harold J. "Markets and Cultures: Medical Specifics and the Reconfiguration of the Body in Early Modern Europe." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 21 (2011): 123–145. [\[link\]](#)

### Weeks 2-4. Defining the Body in Europe

T, Sep 10

Park, Katherine. "The Criminal and the Sainly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy." *Renaissance Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 1-33. [\[link\]](#)

Linebaugh, Peter. "The Tyburn Riot against the Surgeons." In *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Douglas Hay et al. (London, 1975): 65-117.\*

Th, Sep 12

Siraisi, Nancy G. *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. [disease and treatment]

Henry, Wanda S. "Women Searchers of the Dead in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century London." *Social History of Medicine* 29, no. 3 (Aug. 2016): 445-466. [\[link\]](#)

T, Sep 17

Duden, Barbara. *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991. [chap. 4]

Weisser, Olivia. "Boils, Pushes and Wheals: Reading Bumps on the Body in Early Modern England." *Social History of Medicine* 22, no. 2 (2009): 321-339. [\[link\]](#)

Th, Sep 19

Schiebinger, Londa. *The Mind has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989. [chaps. 7-8]\*

T, Sep 24

Kuriyama, Shigehisa. *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*. New York: Zone Books, 1999. [chaps. 3-4]\*

Beukers, H. et al., eds. *Red-Hair Medicine: Dutch-Japanese Medical Relations*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991. ["Anatomy as Underlying Principle" and "Introduction of Acupuncture"]\*

Th, Sep 26

Visit to Special Collections

—First paper due Friday (Sep 27) by midnight via email—

Week 5. Plague at Home

T, Oct 1

Defoe, Daniel. *A Journal of the Plague Year* (London, 1722). [[link](#) or [link](#)]

Th, Oct 3

Wallis, Patrick. "Plagues, Morality and the Place of Medicine in Early Modern England." *English Historical Review* 121, no. 490 (2006): 1-24. [[link](#)]

Selections from 1665 plague tracts\*

Weeks 6-7. The Medical Marketplace

T, Oct 8

Chakrabarti, Pratik. *Medicine and Empire 1600-1960*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. [chap. 2]

Monahan, Erika. "Locating Rhubarb: Early Modernity's Relevant Obscurity." In *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York, 2013): 227-251.\*

Winterbottom, Anna. "Of the China Root: A Case Study of the Early Modern Circulation of *Materia Medica*." *Social History of Medicine* 28, no. 1 (2015): 22-44. [[link](#)]

Cook, Harold J. "Testing the effects of Jesuit's bark in the Chinese Emperor's court." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 107, no. 8 (2014): 326-327. [[link](#)]

Th, Oct 10

Cook, Harold J. "Good Advice and Little Medicine: The Professional Authority of Early Modern English Physicians." *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 1 (Jan. 1994): 1-31. [[link](#)]

Porter, Roy and Dorothy Porter. "The Rise of the English Drugs Industry: The Role of Thomas Corbyn." *Medical History* 33, no. 3 (1989): 277-295. [[link](#)]

Brandt, Susan. "'Getting Into a Little Business': Margaret Hill Morris and Women's Medical Entrepreneurship During the American Revolution." *Early American Studies* 13, no. 4 (2015): 774-807. [[link](#)]

T, Oct 15

Leong, Elaine. "Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 145-168. [\[link\]](#)  
Recipe selections\*

Th, Oct 17

—Mid-term exam in class Th (Oct 17)—

Weeks 8-9. Defining the Imperial Body

T, Oct 22

Harrison, Mark. *Climates & Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. [chap. 1]\*

Kupperman, Karen Ordahl. "Fear of Hot Climates in the Anglo-American Colonial Experience." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (April 1984): 213-240. [\[link\]](#)

Th, Oct 24

Gomez, Pablo F. "Incommensurable Epistemologies?: The Atlantic Geography of Healing in the Early Modern Caribbean." *Small Axe* 18, no. 2 (July 2014): 95-107. [\[link\]](#)

Voeks, Robert. "African Medicine and Magic in the Americas." *Geographical Review* 83, no. 1 (Jan. 1993): 66-78. [\[link\]](#)

T, Oct 29

Smith, Billy G. *Ship of Death: A Voyage That Changed the Atlantic World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. [chaps. 7-9]\*

Th, Oct 31

Kelton, Paul. *Cherokee Medicine, Colonial Germs: An Indigenous Nation's Fight against Smallpox, 1518-1824*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. [chaps. 1-2]\*

Duffy, John. *Epidemics in Colonial America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953. [chap. 2, pp. 69-103]

Weeks 10-11. Military & Plantation Medicine

T, Nov 5

Chakrabarti, Pratik. *Medicine and Empire 1600-1960*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. [chaps. 3-4]

Chakrabarti, Pratik. "'Neither of Meate Nor Drinke, But What the Doctor Alloweth': Medicine Amidst War and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century Madras." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 80, no. 1 (2006): 1-38. [\[link\]](#)

Th, Nov 7

McNeill, J. R. *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. [chaps. 2, 3, 5]

T, Nov 12

Hogarth, Rana. *Medicalizing Blackness: Making Racial Difference in the Atlantic World, 1780-1840*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. [chap. 3]\*

Fett, Sharla M. *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002. [chaps. 6-7]\*

Th, Nov 14

Churchill, Wendy D. “Bodily Differences?: Gender, Race, and Class in Hans Sloane’s Jamaican Medical Practice, 1687-1688.” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 60, no. 4 (Oct. 2005): 391-444. [\[link\]](#)

[Dr. Collins], *Practical rules for the management and medical treatment of Negro slaves in the sugar colonies* (London, 1803). [\[link\]](#)

### Week 13. Reproduction

T, Nov 19

Morgan, Jennifer L. *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. [chap. 4]\*

Turner, Sasha. *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. [chap. 4]\*

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. “‘The Living Mother of a Living Child’: Midwifery and Mortality in Post-Revolutionary New England.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (Jan. 1989): 27-48. [\[link\]](#)

Th, Nov 21

Dayton, Cornelia Hughes. “Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (Jan. 1991): 19-49. [\[link\]](#)

Schiebinger, Londa. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. [chaps. 3-4]

—Source for second paper due Friday (Nov 22) by midnight via email—

**No class Week 13 (Nov 26, 28) for Thanksgiving Recess**

### Week 14. Conclusion

T, Dec 3

Presentation/discussion of primary sources from student papers

Th, Dec 5

Wrap-up and review, no reading

—Second paper due Friday (Dec 6) by midnight via email—

—Final exam during exam week—