

HIST 641: Readings in American History

Fall 2022: **Focus—Disease and Medicine in the United States** (Online, Asynchronous)

Professor: Dr. Audra Jennings

Email: audra.jennings@wku.edu

Office: Cherry Hall 201

Office Phone: 745-3841

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

History 641 is a seminar course designed to provide a broad survey of readings with the aim of acquainting students with current historiographical trends in United States history. This seminar will focus on the history of disease and medicine in the United States. Americans' relationship with disease is, and has always been, evolving, defined variously by religious leaders, physicians, scientists, philanthropists, social workers, the state, and the sick themselves. In this course, we will examine historical scholarship that analyzes how Americans understood, experienced, and coped with disease, disability, and death and the changing role of organized medicine within that dynamic. The readings in this course tackle thorny question about how various relationships of power and social structures shaped access to care, the evaluation of bodies, and the identification, treatment, and interpretation of disease (and health). Beyond the historiography, we will also analyze and interpret a range of sources, texts, and artifacts produced throughout United States history.

This course will be taught asynchronously. There will be no mandatory Zoom meetings and no specific time when everyone is logged onto Blackboard. Instead, you will spend much of your time in this course reading and analyzing, critiquing, and discussing the readings. Mondays and Tuesdays will be focused on reading. On these days, I will post questions to help guide your analysis and engagement. On Wednesdays, students will post initial responses. Thursdays and Fridays will be focused on engaging with others' responses.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Evaluate current scholarly literature and recent trends within the field.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the changing role of medicine and interpretations of disease in United States history.
- Analyze major themes in the history and historiography of disease and medicine.
- Analyze and interpret a range of sources related to the history of medicine and disease.
- Develop sound historical arguments using primary and secondary sources.
- Develop and practice graduate-level written communications skills.
- Build capacities to teach history at the high school and college levels.

Required Texts

Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz, *Dr. Mütter's Marvels: A True Tale of Intrigue and Innovation at the Dawn of Modern Medicine* (New York: Avery, 2014).

Adria L. Imada, *An Archive of Skin, An Archive of Kin: Disability and Life-Making during Medical Incarceration* (Oakland: University of California, 2022).

David Oshinsky, *Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied*

Hospital (New York: Doubleday, 2016).
Leslie J. Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities, and Abortion in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). **Available as an e-book through the library.**
Samuel Kelton Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). **Available as an e-book through the library.**
Michael Willrich, *Pox: An American History* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

Additional reading as outlined in the reading schedule (available online through the WKU Library, Blackboard, or museum websites).

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Breakdown

40% Discussion Participation
15% Mütter Museum Artifact Analysis
20% Source and Methods Essay
25% Final Paper/Assignment

Paper Guidelines and Notes on Grading: The grade you earn on your written work in this course will be based on how well you have summarized, synthesized, contextualized, and analyzed the assigned historiography and historical sources. As I read your Blackboard discussions and papers and review your projects, I will have several standards in mind: clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth/complexity, and significance.

All assignments must be typed in a standard, 12-point font format. Papers should be double-spaced with one-inch margins. Citations must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style*'s guidelines for the "Notes and Bibliography" system (not the author-date system). Style and grammar matter, so plan to carefully proofread all of your papers. Finally, all assignments must be submitted via Blackboard.

Discussion Participation: This course centers discussion. As a result, discussion participation constitutes a significant part of your grade (40 percent). Each week you will be expected to participate in the course discussion board on Blackboard. The readings for this course highlight different periods, approaches, methodologies, sources, and questions in U.S. medical history. To earn full participation credit, you will need to respond meaningfully to the reading and engage in discussion with your peers on the course Blackboard Discussion board each week.

Each week, the class will focus on reading on Mondays and Tuesdays, during which time I will post some framing questions to help you to think critically about the assigned materials. On Wednesdays, you will submit a post of at least 500 words to the Blackboard discussion board (due by Wednesday at 11:59 PM). Your post does not have to respond to my questions, but you may frame your post in response to one or more of my questions if you choose. Your posts, however, **MUST** demonstrate your engagement with and understanding of the assigned readings.

You cannot critically engage with historical work without identifying main arguments or key points. Thursdays and Fridays will focus on engagement. On those days, you should submit at least three comments responding to fellow students' posts. Combined these comments should be another 500 words. Responses should be submitted by Friday at 11:59 PM each week. I expect graduate-level work in these discussions. I will be looking for careful analysis of the readings and thoughtful, constructive engagement with your peers' posts. Each week, you will earn up to 30 points on your initial post and 10 points on your comments. Forty percent of your final grade will be calculated based on an average of your discussion grades. This schedule of reading, analysis, and discussion will be altered for Fall and Thanksgiving breaks. See the schedule below for details.

Mütter Museum Artifact Analysis: Please select an artifact from the Memento Mütter exhibit (<http://memento.muttermuseum.org/>). Write an essay of 1,250-2,000 words analyzing this object in the context of your readings on Thomas Dent Mütter, nineteenth-century medicine, and/or nineteenth-century medical education. Your essay should identify and describe the artifact. What kind of object is it? Who produced or collected it? What was the context of its production? When and where was it produced? The majority of your paper should focus on your analysis. Here, it is important to think about why the object was produced (or collected), how it was produced, and its overall historical context. What does this object tell us about the experience and/or treatment of disease? What does it tell us about the development of the medical profession? What does it tell us about perception of disease? **This assignment should be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59 PM on September 19.**

Source and Methods Essay: Please select any three books assigned for this semester (you may substitute three assigned book chapters or journal articles for a book). As you read these works, pay careful attention to the text as well as the citations. In an essay of no more than 1500 words, discuss the kinds of sources the authors drew on in their work. How are the authors' interpretations shaped by the types of sources used? How does the selection of sources shape the credibility of the work? Discuss the ways that the authors do or do not make their research processes/decisions/challenges plain to readers. How does methodology shape the work that you have selected? When authors discussed challenges, did they also discuss how they met those challenges? Do these strategies seem to effectively meet the challenges posed by medical history? **This assignment should be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59 PM on October 31.**

Final Paper/Assignment: For this assignment, students may choose one of the following three options:

Option One: Write an essay of approximately 2,000-2,500 words that examines at least four of the assigned books (again, you may substitute three assigned book chapters or journal articles for a book). This paper should focus on the arguments advanced by the authors. Please identify one to three major themes or questions and discuss how the authors you have selected engage with these themes or questions. For example, you might wish to focus your paper on how historians have grappled with race in examining the history of medicine. You might consider how historians have examined changing ideas about the power relationship between physician and patient. My framing questions each week will point to some major questions and themes, many

of which we will revisit at various points in the semester; you may draw on these or identify other points of analysis based on your own interests.

Option Two: Develop a lesson for a U.S. history class that will incorporate some element of the history of medicine/disease studied in this class (you do not need to present a formal lesson plan but instead the items listed below). Lessons will include a framing essay of 1,750 to 2,000 words, one to two primary documents, at least five discussion questions, and a pedagogical note that describes the grade level and state standards (for K-12) or course objectives (for college) that the lesson addresses. The framing essay should discuss how you would situate the lesson. What historical context would you need to provide, highlight, or help students to learn? What key historical issues or debates would you want students to come to understand? How might this particular moment/change/element in medical history help students understand United States history more broadly? Think of the framing essay as part synthesis of core information and part pedagogical planning. All elements, including the primary document (scanned or typed) with citation, should be submitted as a single document.

Option Three: If you are interested in pursuing a thesis on the history of disease or medicine in the United States, you may draft a research proposal for your final paper. Research proposals should be approximately 2,000-2,500 words long. Your proposal should introduce your topic, present the central questions that will animate your research, describe your approach and sources, discuss the literature in the field, highlight your intended contribution, assert the significance of the research, and outline a rough plan for completing the project. If you want to pursue this option, I recommend that we meet and talk a few times along the way.

Final Papers/Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by **11:59 PM on Monday, December 5.**

READING & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Week 1—Week of August 22: Framing Disease

Read: H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., “The Disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 48: 2 (Summer 1974), 234-248. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44447545>.

David S. Jones, “Virgin Soils Revisited,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (October 2003), 703-742. Available online at <https://doi-org.libsrv.wku.edu/10.2307/3491697>.

Kim Nielsen, “Disability and Historical Thinking,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 28 (Summer 2008). Available online at <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v28i3.107>.

James Patterson, “How Do We Write the History of Disease?” *Health and History* 1 (1998): 8-28. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40111315>.

Nancy Tomes, “Bodies of Evidence,” *OAH Magazine of History* 19 (September 2005), 7-11. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25161970>.

Week 2—Week of August 29: Three Centuries of Medicine through Bellevue

Read: David Oshinsky, *Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital* (New York: Doubleday, 2016).

Week 3—Week of September 5: Dr. Mütter's Marvels

Read: Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz, *Dr. Mütter's Marvels: A True Tale of Intrigue and Innovation at the Dawn of Modern Medicine* (New York: Avery, 2014).

Week 4—Week of September 12: Medicine in Antebellum & Civil War America

Read: Shauna Devine, *Learning from the Wounded: The Civil War and the Rise of American Medical Science* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), Chapter Five. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=688328&site=ehost-live>.

Margaret Humphreys, *Marrow of Tragedy: The Health Crisis of the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), Chapter Two. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=601248&site=ehost-live>.

Deirdre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender and the Origins of American Gynecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), Chapter Two. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=2232509&site=ehost-live>.

Week 5—Week of September 19: Leprosy

Read: Adria L. Imada, *An Archive of Skin, An Archive of Kin: Disability and Life-Making During Medical Incarceration* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022).

Mütter Museum Artifact Analysis Due by 11:59 PM on September 19

Week 6—Week of September 26: Pox

Read: Michael Willrich, *Pox: An American History* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

Week 7—Week of October 3: Spanish Influenza

Read: Nancy K. Bristow, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Chapter Two. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=444752&site=ehost-live>.

G. R., “Experiences during the Influenza Epidemic,” *American Journal of Nursing* 19 (December 1918), 203-205. Available online at <https://doi-org.libsrv.wku.edu/10.2307/3406206>.

Alfred W. Crosby, *America’s Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918, New Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Available online at <https://hdl-handle-net.libsrv.wku.edu/2027/heb03212>.

Week 8—Week of October 10: Malaria and Polio (Fall Break—Thursday & Friday)

Read: Margaret Humphreys, *Malaria: Poverty, Race, and Public Health in the United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), Chapters Four and Five. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=75704&site=ehost-live>.

David M. Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Introduction & Chapters Five, Ten, and Twelve. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=146936&site=ehost-live>.

>>>PLEASE NOTE<<<

For the week of Fall Break, you will need to post your response to the reading by Wednesday but will not be required to respond to your peers on Thursday and Friday.

Week 9—Week of October 17: The Health Effects of Segregation

Read: Samuel Kelton Roberts Jr., *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

Week 10—Week of October 24: German Measles

Read: Leslie J. Reagan, *Dangerous Pregnancies: Mothers, Disabilities, and Abortion in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

Week 11—Week of October 31: Eugenic Sterilization

Read: Molly Ladd-Taylor, “Eugenic Sterilization as a Welfare Policy,” in *Intimate States: Gender, Sexuality, and Governance in Modern US History*, eds. Margot Canaday, Nancy F. Cott, and Robert O. Self (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 202), 149-170. Available on Blackboard.

Linda Villarosa, “The Long Shadow of Eugenics in America,” *The New York Times Magazine*, 8 June 2022. Available online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/08/magazine/eugenics-movement-america.html>.

Angela Davis, “Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights,” in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), Part 4.1. Available online at

<https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=548323&site=ehost-live>.

William Carlos Williams, *The Doctor Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1984), 61-77. Available on Blackboard.

Source and Methods Essay Due by 11:59 PM on October 31

Week 12—Week of November 7: Civil Rights and Health Activism

Read: Jennifer Nelson, *More Than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women's Health Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), Chapter One. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=942587&site=ehost-live>.

Naomi Rogers, "'Caution: The AMA May Be Dangerous to Your Health': The Student Health Organizations (SHO) and American Medicine, 1965-1970," *Radical History Review* 80 (Spring 2001), 5-34. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=7527803&site=ehost-live>.

Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 49-74, 223-233. Available on Blackboard.

Susan Schweik, "Lomax's Matrix: Disability, Solidarity, and the Black Power of 504," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2011). Available online at <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1371/1539>.

Week 13—Week of November 14: Feminist Health Activism

Read: Wendy Kline, "The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: Rethinking Women's Health and Second-Wave Feminism," in Stephanie Gilmore, ed., *Feminist Coalitions: Historical Perspectives on Second-Wave Feminism in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 63-83. Available on Blackboard.

"Boston Women's Health Book Collective," in Estelle B. Freedman, ed., *The Essential Feminist Reader* (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 295-299. Available on Blackboard.

Jennifer Nelson, *More Than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women's Health Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), Chapter Five. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=942587&site=ehost-live>.

Elena Conis, "A Mother's Responsibility: Women, Medicine, and the Rise of Contemporary Vaccine Skepticism in the United States," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87 (Fall 2013), 407-435. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26305937>.

Week 14—Week of November 21: *How to Survive a Plague*

View: *How to Survive a Plague*. Available to stream through the Kanopy. Access through the WKU Library at https://saalck-wku.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SAA_WESTKY/1f7ccha/alma9913042851402637.

Read: Abraham Verghese, *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 73-106.

>>>PLEASE NOTE<<<

We will not have a discussion this week. Instead, this film and primary source excerpt will be part of the discussion for next week.

Week 15—Week of November 28: The AIDS Crisis

Read: Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), Chapter One and Chapter Five. Available online at <https://login.libsrv.wku.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=295695&site=ehost-live>.

Allan M. Brandt, "The Syphilis Epidemic and its Relation to AIDS," *Science* 239, no. 4838 (January 1988), 375-380. Available online at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1700232>.

Finals Week

Final Papers/Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by **11:59 PM on Monday, December 5**.

COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Questions and Emails: Please feel free to email me or make appointments to talk in person or via Zoom (follow the link posted in Blackboard to schedule an appointment; email me if none of those times work for you). If you need to email me, please put “HIST 641” in the subject line.

Class Etiquette: For this class to be successful, we must all be prepared to discuss the assigned materials. Please be kind. These are hard times, but I hope that we can create sense of community, focused on learning and supporting each other. Give your peers the benefit of the doubt. So often virtual spaces lead us to behave in ways we would never dream of if we were sitting in a room with an individual. Remember, we are a community embarking on a shared project of learning. I expect that you will disagree with your classmates from time to time. In these cases, draw on the readings and be respectful. Disrespectful behavior and personal attacks will not be tolerated and will result in a loss of participation points.

Late Assignments: Even the most carefully crafted plans do not always produce the results we had imagined, and COVID adds another layer of difficulty to planning. If you need additional time to complete an assignment, please email me to request an extension. You should request an extension at least 24 hours **before** the deadline if at all possible. In cases of personal or medical emergency, please contact me as soon as possible.

Unless you have made arrangements with me in advance or have a documented medical or personal emergency, late assignments will be penalized 10 percent every 48 hours after the deadline. No assignments will be accepted after December 7 at 12:30 PM unless you have made arrangements with me in advance.

Please contact me to make alternate arrangements if health or personal emergency prevents your participation in class discussion.

Academic Misconduct: Cheating or representing other people’s writing or ideas as your own will NOT be tolerated. Engaging in any form of academic dishonesty will result in severe grade penalties. Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. Please note that student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software. Further, students who engage in cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Please review information provided by the Office of Student Conduct: <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php>.

Disability Policy: In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, room 1074 of the Student Success Center. The phone number is 270.745.5004. or email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from The Student Accessibility Resource Center. Once you have a letter of accommodation, you

should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format and work to implement accommodations.

Title IX, Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (#0.070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

COVID-19 Policy: All students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine. In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information. www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill

Regular and Substantive Interaction: The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- (1) Students will engage in weekly discussions via the Blackboard. On Monday or Tuesday of each week, I will post questions to help guide student reading and analysis. On Wednesdays, students will post their initial responses. On Thursdays and Fridays, students will respond to their peers. This schedule will be modified in accordance with the university Fall Break and the Thanksgiving holiday.
- (2) I will post weekly announcements that aim to highlight key insights from the previous week, contribute to the framing of the following week, and share events, opportunities, and resources.
- (3) Students will complete three major assignments during the semester. Students will receive constructive feedback on these assignments.

RESOURCES

Student Counseling and Testing Center: <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/>

Pride Center: <https://www.wku.edu/isec/pride/>

WKU Safe Spaces (also my office): <https://www.wku.edu/sga/2018-2019-general/safespaces.php>

Intercultural Student Engagement Center: <https://www.wku.edu/isec/>

All Gender Restrooms on Campus: <https://www.wku.edu/isec/pride/bathroomdirectory.php>

Food Security: <https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/food-security.php>

Student Code of Conduct: <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-code-of-conduct.php/>

Academic Integrity: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php/>

Student Academic Complaint Procedure: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php>

Student Grievance Procedure: https://www.wku.edu/sarc/student_grievance.php

Dean of Students (The Dean of Students can assist students with a diverse range of needs, from emergency funding to temporary housing and more):

<https://www.wku.edu/deanofstudents/students/newindex.php>

Not sure where to seek assistance? I am happy to help connect you with other resources.

***I reserve the right to change this syllabus during the semester.
All changes will be announced on Blackboard.***