Roger Cooter

‘The Historiography of Medicine and Science: Epistemology, Methodology, Practice’

History is the study of the present at the remove of the past. Historiography is the history of how it has done so – the ways in which it has changed its make-up over time. This course moves from the birth of the footnote – arguably history’s only lasting contribution to scholarship – to ‘the death of history’, by way of science, medicine and the body. Designed to stimulate, provoke, confront, and engage, its ultimate purpose is to lead students to the overwhelming question. Along the way, it will lead to an understanding of the history of medicine as an object of study in itself, with histories, philosophies, epistemologies, and politics. Students will come to understand and evaluate medical historical scholarship and writing. They will learn to read critically, understanding how this technique differs from ‘criticizing’. Through team-work and presentations, the course is also intended to hone practical job-getting skills.

The course is **compulsory for all MA students**. It meets fortnightly (4pm-6pm) for in-depth discussion and debate of the assigned readings.

**Session 1: Introduction (8 Oct)**

**Session 2: What is Historiography? (22 Oct)**

**Session 3: The Historiography of Medicine (5 Nov)**

**Session 4: The Historiography of Science (19 Nov)**

**Session 5: The Social History of Medicine (3 Dec)**

**Session 6: The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge [ES] (17 Dec)**

**Session 7: The Sociology of Medicine & the Concept of ‘Medicalisation’ [RC] (14 Jan)**

**Session 8: Science and Gender [ES] (28 Jan)**

**Session 9: The Body [ES] (11 Feb)**

**Session 10: The Cultural History of Medicine [RC] (25 Feb)**

**Session 11: The Performance of Surgical Knowledge [ES] (11 Mar)**

**Session 12: Material and Visual Culture in the History of Medicine [RC] (25 Mar)**

**Session 13: Postmodernity and beyond [RC] (29 April)**
Session 1: Introduction

Session 2: What is Historiography?

**Required Reading:**

**Further Reading and Background Sources:**


If you think that writing history has always been much the same, have a look at what it was like in the 18th century, and the forces that shaped it, via Roy Porter, *Gibbon: Making History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988; reprinted 1995), chapters 1 and 2.

Session 3: The Historiography of Medicine

**Required Reading:**

**Further Reading and Background Sources:**


Session 4: The Historiography of Science

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:


Session 5: The Social History of Medicine

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:


Session 6: The Sociology of Scientific Knowledge

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:


Session 7: The Sociology of Medicine & the Concept of ‘Medicalisation’

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:


Peter Wright and Andy Treacher (eds), The Problem of Medical Knowledge: Examining the Social Construction of Medicine (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1982).

Andy Pickering, The Mangle of Practice: Time Agency and Science (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), chapter 1. [reviews how ‘science’ used to be considered just a ‘body of knowledge’]

Session 8: Science and Gender

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:


**Session 9: The Body**

**Required Reading:**


**Further Reading and Background Sources:**


Mirian Fraser and Monica Greco (eds), *The Body: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2005). [contains a useful Introduction and excerpts from major contributors to the subject]


**Session 10: The Cultural History of Medicine**

**Required Reading:**

**Further Reading and Background Sources:**
Karen Halttunen, ‘Cultural History and the Challenge of Narrativity’ in Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (eds), Beyond the Cultural Turn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp.165-81.


Session 11: The Performance of Surgical Knowledge

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:

Katharine Young, Presence in the Flesh: The Body in Medicine (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), Chapter 3


Session 12: Material and Visual Culture in the History of Medicine

Required Reading:

Further Reading and Background Sources:
José Van Dijck, ‘Bodyworlds: The Art of Plastinated Cadavers’ in Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar (eds), Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the anthropology of material life (Durham, NC and London, 2007), pp.640-57.


Lisa Cartwright, Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine’s Visual Culture, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).


Session 13: Postmodernity and Beyond

Required Reading:
Roger Cooter, ‘After Death/After-“life”': The Social History of Medicine in Post-Postmodernity’ Social History of Medicine, 20 (2007), 441-64.

Further Reading and Background Sources:


