What is disease? How has our understanding of disease – and experiences of disease – changed over time? Why did most people turn to priests, rather than doctors, during the Black Death? Why did an erroneous theory of cholera transmission inspire the most sweeping socio-political revolution in London’s history? How did malaria – a disease common throughout Europe in the Middle Ages – become the emblematic tropical disease in the nineteenth century? Why has cancer proved so intractable in the face of a multi-billion-pound research onslaught?

Many have argued that the answers to these questions can be found in the powerful knowledge claims of twenty-first-century biomedical science. Simply subject historical cases to the authoritative modern clinical gaze, they say, and you will learn everything about them you might possibly want to know. But why should we be so confident that this kind of ‘retrospective diagnosis’ offers the last word on the complex landscape of health and disease? Can modern biomedicine really help us to understand the experiences of practitioners and patients who thought about illness and the body in very different ways? Should we concentrate on the impressive achievements of doctors, scientists and surgeons, tracing a line from ancient ignorance to modern knowledge? Or should we try to write medical history from below, highlighting patients’ perspectives and setting older ideas of disease in their wider cultural context?

This course will give you new and challenging ways to think about these questions, drawing on insights and material from cultural history, sociology and modern biomedicine.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module students should be able to think critically and historically about the history of disease. We will consider both specific diseases – cholera, malaria, AIDS – and broader shifts in Western medical discourse, examining their cultural and medical impact on Western life over the last few centuries. In doing so, we will trace the interplay of scientific, clinical, social, religious and moral judgements invested in ‘framing’ a disease, and how these ‘frames’ have developed in different times and places. We’ll also consider the ways in which race, gender and sexuality have each been framed in pathological terms, and how these framings have been challenged.

Students will also have the opportunity to develop a range of skills:

- Close reading and critical interpretation of primary and secondary sources
- Historical reasoning and comparative analysis
- Discussion and debate with colleagues and the lecturer
- Constructing a clear, well-reasoned argument
- Writing engaging, well-structured prose

During contact hours this course is taught by lectures and in-class discussions. The course also includes a schedule of independent reading and research.
## SYLLABUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc">www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc</a></td>
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## COURSE INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>800-word mid-term essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-requisites</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required texts</td>
<td>See lecture list &amp; ‘Further Reading’ below</td>
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## COURSE TUTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course tutor:</th>
<th>Dr Richard Barnett</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ucarba@googlemail.com">ucarba@googlemail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web:</td>
<td>richardbarnettwriter.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office location:</td>
<td>[TBC]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office hours:</td>
<td>[TBC]</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCL Week</td>
<td>Session and required readings</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>1. INTRODUCTION: HOW TO DO THE HISTORY OF DISEASE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2. FRAMING DISEASE IN ACTION: THE BLACK DEATH AND THE GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. BODIES AND ORGANS: DISEASE IN THE HOSPITAL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. MICROSCOPES AND CELLS: DISEASE IN THE LABORATORY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. DISCUSSION 1: THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SICK-MAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6. DISEASE AND PUBLIC HEALTH 1: CHOLERA</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>7. VICTORIAN ANXIETIES 1: VENEREAL DISEASES</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>8. VICTORIAN ANXIETIES 2: SMALLPOX</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nadja Durbach, ‘‘They might as well brand us’: working-class resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England’, <em>Social History of Medicine</em> 13, 2000, pp 45-62.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>MEDICINE AND IMPERIALISM: MALARIA</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 6 Feb</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>FRAMING FAILURE: INFLUENZA</strong></td>
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<td>Essay 1 deadline: 5pm, Friday 10 Feb.</td>
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<td>Fri 10 Feb</td>
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<td><strong>UCL READING WEEK 13-17 FEB</strong></td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td><strong>DISEASE AND PUBLIC HEALTH 2: THE NHS</strong></td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td><strong>MOLECULARISING RACE: SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA</strong></td>
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<td>Fri 24 Feb</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>BODIES AND BEHAVIOURS 1: HOMOSEXUALITY</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 27 Feb</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td><strong>BODIES AND BEHAVIOURS 2: ANOREXIA NERVOSA</strong></td>
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<td>Fri 3 Mar</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td><strong>DISCUSSION 2: MEDICINE AND THE BODY</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 6 Mar</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td><strong>THE ENDS OF LIFE 1: BIRTH</strong></td>
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<td>17. THE ENDS OF LIFE 2: DEATH</td>
<td>Mon 13 Mar</td>
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<td>18. POSTMODERN ANXIETIES 1: AIDS</td>
<td>Fri 17 Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. POSTMODERN ANXIETIES 2: CANCER</td>
<td>Mon 20 Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Clow, ‘Who’s afraid of Susan Sontag? or, the myths and metaphors of cancer reconsidered’, <em>Social History of Medicine</em> 14, 2001, pp 293-312.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. DISCUSSION 3: OVERVIEW AND REFLECTIONS</td>
<td>Fri 24 Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2 deadline: 5pm, Fri 24 Mar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No readings, but come prepared to discuss the main themes of the course and the questions it has raised about disease in the present and future.</td>
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ESSAY 1

Please answer one of these questions:

• Why might it be inadequate to frame the Black Death only in terms of the elite medical thought of fourteenth-century Europe? (Start with the readings for Lectures 1 & 2)
• ‘The social and political power of scientific medicine as an idea greatly exceeded its practical impact on the treatment of disease, at least until the twentieth century’. Do you agree? (Start with the readings for Lectures 3 & 4)

This short mid-term essay provides two important opportunities: to receive feedback on your progress in the course so far, and to develop skills in writing historical essays. For this reason, I am not expecting you to do an enormous quantity of wider reading. Rather, I want you to show me that you have a good strong grasp of the perspectives provided in the lectures, the lecture readings, and in general texts like The Western Medical Tradition.

Bear in mind that a good essay is typically concise and closely-argued, based on analysis and critique of the available sources. Merely repeating material from my lectures, or writing an extended statement of your personal opinion unsupported by facts, will not score highly. Take this essay as an opportunity to display (or develop) your skills in constructing a historical argument. And make sure you answer the question – failing to do this is the single most common mistake students make.

THE RULES:

Your first essay essay carries 20% of your overall mark for this course. You must submit it via Moodle by 5pm on Fri 10 Feb 2017. Essays submitted any later than this, without strong evidence of exceptional circumstances, will be marked down.

Your essay must be no longer than 800 words, excluding bibliography and footnotes / endnotes (if you use them). It should be written in prose: no bullet points or unfinished notes. Plain presentation is encouraged: elaborate typography or layout suggests that you are trying to distract the reader from weaknesses in your writing.

If you use another author’s words, arguments or ideas (including mine, as presented in the lectures) you must acknowledge them with a reference, and at the end of your essay provide a full bibliography of your sources. If you do not do this, you open yourself to an accusation of plagiarism. Use any referencing style you’re familiar with, so long as it is clear and consistent.

The departmental marking guidelines for individual items of assessment can be found in the STS Student Handbook.
The case-studies in Rosenberg & Golden (1992) illustrate some of the ways in which historians have chosen to frame diseases. Following their example, I want you to write an essay in which you frame a disease in its particular historical context.

We will see many times in this course that the framing of a disease can shift radically over time, in response to intellectual, cultural, economic and political factors. Trying to sum up hundreds (even thousands) of years of global history in a three-thousand-word essay is a recipe for failure. Instead, I want you to write about a particular disease in a particular time and place. You might look at a case-study, or the work or ideas of a particular doctor or scientist, or the tension between patients’ and practitioners’ views of a disease, or the impact of a particular theme or context (like imperialism, changing attitudes to sexuality, or the impact of a new technology) on the framing of a disease. The narrower your focus and the greater attention you pay to context, the better your essay will be.

You are free to write about any disease, including those on which I lecture. Bear in mind, however, that simply regurgitating the observations I make in class will not score highly. At the very least, you must choose a different angle and a different historical period. I expect you to ground your essay in primary sources, and in the enormous range of well-argued books and articles written by recognised scholars in this field. Do not rely on whatever dubious and unprovenanced material you can find on Google or Wikipedia; you will be marked down for this. The UCL libraries and (especially) the Wellcome Library have excellent collections of books on the history of science and medicine, and three of the most important academic journals on the history of medicine are available online:

Medical History: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/journals/228/
Social History of Medicine: http://shm.oxfordjournals.org/content/by/year
Bulletin of the History of Medicine: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/bhm/

You must come and discuss your initial ideas with me before the end of the second week of the course, and then let me know how you’re getting on.

THE RULES:

Your second essay carries 80% of your final mark for this course. You must submit it via Moodle by 5pm on Fri 24 Mar. Essays submitted any later than this, without strong evidence of exceptional circumstances, will be marked down.

Your essay must be no longer than 3,000 words, excluding bibliography and footnotes (if you use them). It must be written in prose: no bullet points or unfinished notes. Plain presentation is encouraged: elaborate typography or layout tends to suggest that you are trying to distract the reader from weaknesses in your writing.

If you use another author’s words, arguments or ideas (including mine, as presented in the lectures) you must acknowledge them with a reference, and at the end of your essay provide a full bibliography of your sources. If you do not do this, you open yourself to an accusation of plagiarism. Use any referencing style you’re familiar with, so long as it is clear and consistent.

The departmental marking guidelines for individual items of assessment can be found in the STS Student Handbook.
FURTHER READING

You are not expected to read everything on this list: it is intended to provide general background for the course, specific background for each lecture, and a place to start thinking about your essays. Hard copies of all sources are available in the Wellcome Library, and most of the journal articles are also available online.

OVERVIEWS

Christopher Lawrence, Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain, Routledge, 1994.

THE BLACK DEATH & THE GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON

Samuel K Cohn, Black Death and Plague: The Disease and Medical Thought, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Hospital Medicine

Christopher Lawrence, Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain, Routledge, 1994, chaps 1 & 2.

Laboratory Medicine

WF Bynum, Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press, 1994, chap 4, 'Medicine in the laboratory'.
Andrew Cunningham & Perry Williams (eds), The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
Christopher Lawrence, Medicine in the Making of Modern Britain, Routledge, 1994, chaps 4 & 5.
Stewart Richards, 'Anaesthetics, ethics and aesthetics: vivisection in the late nineteenth-century British laboratory', in Andrew Cunningham & Perry Williams (eds), The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp 142-169.
CHOLERA


VENereal DISEASES


SMALLPOX


MALARIA


Stavros Litsios, ‘Malaria control, the Cold War and the postwar reorganisation of international assistance’, *Medical Anthropology* 17, 1997, pp 255-278.


Mick Worboys, ‘Germs, malaria and the invention of Mansonian medicine: from ‘Diseases in the Tropics’ to ‘Tropical Diseases’’, in David Arnold (ed.), *Warm Climates and Western Medicine: The Emergence of Tropical Medicine, 1500-1900*, Rodopi, 1996, pp 181-207.

**Influenza**


**The NHS**


**Sickle Cell Anaemia**


HOMOSEXUALITY


Kenneth Borris & George Rousseau (eds), The Sciences of Homosexuality in Early Modern Europe, Routledge, 2008.


Lesley A Hall (ed), Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.


ANOREXIA NERVOSA


BIRTH


DEATH


**AIDS**


**CANCER**


