

# HPSC0002 Disease in History

## Course Syllabus

2024-25 session | Dr Cristiano Turbil |  
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### Course Information

What is a disease? How has our understanding of disease – and experiences of disease – changed over time? 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 – Small pox, Spanish flu, 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. In addition, we will 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.

## Basic course information

Course website:	n/a
Moodle Web site:	
Assessment:	There are two primary forms of assessment: a blog post (800 words) due TBC and a 3000 words essay due TBC.
Timetable:	<a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc">www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc</a>
Prerequisites:	no prerequisites
Required texts:	See below
Course tutor(s):	Dr Cristiano Turbil
Contact:	<a href="mailto:c.turbil@ucl.ac.uk">c.turbil@ucl.ac.uk</a>
Web:	
Office location:	Turbil: 22 Gordon Square, Room 4.3

## Schedule

Note: There will be brief supplementary readings from primary sources each week, in addition to the items mentioned in the Readings lists below.

UCL Week	Topic	Lecture:	Readings:
Session 1- UCL WEEK 20 – 14/1	How to frame the history of Disease?	<b>Introduction to the course: Mapping cholera in Victorian London.</b>	Charles E Rosenberg & Janet Golden, 'Framing disease: illness, society and history', in Framing Disease: Studies in Cultural History, Rutgers University Press, 1992, xiii-xxvi.  N. D. Jewson, 'The Disappearance of the Sick-Man from Medical Cosmology, 1770-1870', Sociology, 10 (1976), 225-244

<p>Session 2- UCL WEEK 21 – 21/1</p>	<p><b>Small pox – from inoculation to vaccination</b></p>	<p><b>The rise of public health and compulsory vaccination in Victorian England.</b></p>	<p>Vaccination Inquirer 1879. Read 'To our readers', pp1-2. This is a new publication dedicated to fighting the enforcement of compulsory smallpox vaccination. Available here: <a href="https://archive.org/details/vaccinationinqu00unkngoog">https://archive.org/details/vaccinationinqu00unkngoog</a></p> <p>And</p> <p>Nadja Durbach, "They might as well brand us': working-class resistance to compulsory vaccination in Victorian England", <i>Social History of Medicine</i>, 13, (2000), 45-62.</p>
<p>S3- W22 – 28/1</p>	<p><b>Venereal diseases</b></p>	<p><b>Prostitution, Lock-hospitals and VD in England</b></p>	<p>Cox, P. (2007) 'Compulsion, Voluntarism, and Venereal Disease: Governing Sexual Health in England after the Contagious Diseases Acts', <i>The Journal of British Studies</i>, 46(01), pp. 91–115. doi: 10.1086/508400.</p> <p>And:</p> <p>Contagious Diseases Act Repeal Bill: SECOND READING. (Hansard, 23 June 1875) <a href="https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1875/jun/23/second-reading">https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1875/jun/23/second-reading</a></p>
<p>S4 – W23 – 4/2</p>	<p><b>'Hereditary diseases'</b></p>	<p><b>Eugenics and its discontent</b> Read:</p>	<p>Galton, Francis, July, 1904. 'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims'. <i>The American Journal of Sociology</i>. X (1): 82 <a href="https://archive.org/details/jstor-2762125">https://archive.org/details/jstor-2762125</a></p> <p>Marilyn M. Singleton, 'The 'Science' of Eugenics: America's Moral Detour'. <i>Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons</i> Volume 19 Number 4 Winter 2014 <a href="http://www.jpands.org/vol19no4/singleton.pdf">http://www.jpands.org/vol19no4/singleton.pdf</a></p> <p>Margaret Sanger, <i>The Eugenic Value of Birth Control Propaganda</i> (1921), Available: <a href="http://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/webedition/app/documents/show.php?sangerDoc=238946.xml">http://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/webedition/app/documents/show.php?sangerDoc=238946.xml</a> ↓</p> <p>Watch: <i>Tomorrow's Children</i> (1934) - Eugenics in America. Available: <a href="https://archive.org/details/TomorrowsChildren1934-EugenicsInAmerica">https://archive.org/details/TomorrowsChildren1934-EugenicsInAmerica</a></p>

S5 – W24 – 11/2	<b>Diseases of the mind:</b>	<b>WWI, modernity, and shellshock</b>	Myers, C.S. "A contribution to the study of shell shock". <i>Lancet</i> , 1', 1915, pp. 316–320  And  P. Lerner, <i>Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930</i> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Ch. 1 'Pathological Modernity', 15-39.
W25 – 18/2	Reading Week		
S6 – W26 – 25/2	<b>Spanish Flu</b>	<b>Epidemics or Pandemic? Nation and World in a Time of War</b>	Mark Honigsbaum, 'Regulating the 1918-1919 Pandemic: Flu, Stoicism and the Northcliffe Press', <i>Medical History</i> , 57 (2013), 165-185  Activity: press coverage, comparing nations and nationalisms
S7 -W27- 4/3	<b>Chronic diseases</b>	<b>The emergence of "lifestyle:" distributions and discriminations of responsibility</b>	Tuchman, Arleen Marcia. "Whiteness, Self-Restraint, and Citizenship." In <i>Diabetes: A History of Race and Disease</i> , 32–68. Yale University Press, 2020. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv14rmqdm.5">https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv14rmqdm.5</a> <a href="https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fshib-idp.ucl.ac.uk%2Fshibboleth&amp;dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv14rmqdm.5&amp;site=jstor">https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fshib-idp.ucl.ac.uk%2Fshibboleth&amp;dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv14rmqdm.5&amp;site=jstor</a>  Rivers Solomon, "I have diabetes. Am I to blame?" 12 Oct. 2016, <i>The New York Times</i> , <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/opinion/diabetes-diet-and-shame.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/opinion/diabetes-diet-and-shame.html</a>  Activity: analyzing "healthy lifestyle" messages

S8 – 11/3	<b>Malaria</b>	<b>Colonialism and Tropical Medicine</b>	<p>Hirsch, Lioba A; Martin, Rebecca; (2022) <i>LSHTM and Colonialism: A report on the Colonial History of the London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine (1899– c.1960)</i>. Project Report. London School of Hygiene &amp; Tropical Medicine, London.  DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.17037/PUBS.04666958">https://doi.org/10.17037/PUBS.04666958</a>  (Open access: available to download)  Read chapter 4 “The Colonial Origins of LSHTM”</p> <p><b>Activity: field trip to the LSHTM archives.</b></p> <p>Watch: “DDT versus malaria” in the Wellcome Collection (online):  <a href="https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nys67rq6">https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nys67rq6</a></p>
S9 – 18/3	<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>Activist reframings of disease</b>	<p>Mandisa Mbali, <i>South African AIDS Activism and Global Health Politics</i>, Palgrave Macmillan (2013):  Read chapter 3, “Women, Science and Sexism in AIDS Activism in the 1990s,”  <a href="https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucl/reade.r.action?docID=1161412&amp;ppg=89">https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucl/reade.r.action?docID=1161412&amp;ppg=89</a></p> <p>Activity: group presentations on historical films</p>

S10 – 25/3	<b>How a epidemics end</b>	<b>Class activity: Group discussion</b>	<p>Charters E, Heitman K. How epidemics end. <i>Centaurus</i>. 2021 Feb;63(1):210-224. doi: 10.1111/1600-0498.12370. Epub 2021 Feb 22. PMID: 33821019; PMCID: PMC8014506.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Charters, E, McKay, RA. The history of science and medicine in the context of COVID-19. <i>Centaurus</i>. 2020; 62: 223– 233. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/1600-0498.12311">https://doi.org/10.1111/1600-0498.12311</a></p>
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## Assessments

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### Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit	Deadline for Tutors to provide Feedback
	Blog Post	Week 6	800	TBC
	Research essay	Week 10	3000	TBC

### Assignments

#### Blog Post (800 words)

For your first assignment, I want you to write a blog post based on an analysis of one or more sources pertaining to disease in history. In the source pack below you will find a list of sources to choose from. However, you are also free to select your own source that deals with one of the topics covered in the lectures, or you may opt to look beyond and follow your own interests. As well as scientific and medical tracts, treatises, and journal articles, you might like to look at letters, magazine, newspaper articles, advertisements, diaries, fiction, poetry, etc. You also need not confine yourself to textual sources. Drawings, paintings, photographs, albums, and objects can all form the basis of an effective source analysis. You might also like to look at physical texts or objects. There are many places, local to UCL, that can provide access to such source material (see list below). It might be prudent to choose a disease that you want to write your longer essay on (see below). However, that is by no means a requirement and if you want to do your two assignments on two different things that is completely fine. You must, however, discuss your chosen source with us well in advance of the submission deadline.

This piece of writing will have much in common with a conventional historical essay and must contain evidence, analysis, and argument.

You may want to consider the following questions:

- What can you learn from the physical nature of the source?
- What is the purpose of the source?
- How does the author try to achieve that purpose?
- What do you know about the author? Race, sex, class, occupation, religion, age, region, political beliefs? Does any of this matter?
- Who was the intended audience?
- What are the important metaphors or symbols?
- What can the author's choice of words tell you?
- What about the silence? What does the author choose not to talk about?
- Is the source prescriptive or descriptive?
- Does it describe ideology or behaviour?
- What historical questions can you answer using this source?
- What historical questions does this source prompt?
- What question can this source not help you answer?
- Does your analysis of this source fit with other historians' interpretations?
- Does this source challenge or support the historiography?

Not every question will be relevant to your chosen source[s], and you will not be able to answer them all effectively in 800 words.

However, I also want you to be aware of context. A blog post is **not** a history essay – it is its own genre with its own style.

This assignment must be **concise and approachable**. 800 words is not that many words! Aim to tell one story well, make your argument clear from the beginning, and do not try and do too much (be selective with your evidence). Imagine you are writing for a broad readership from a range of backgrounds. Try to make your writing accessible as though you are writing for your peers, or for interested and educated people who might not have done a history degree or know much about medical science.

Please cite print sources like books and articles – like you would in a normal essay – either inline or using footnotes or endnotes. For digital content such as online news articles or websites, use hyperlinks instead of footnotes (this is easy to do in MS Word – highlight the word or phrase you want to link, right-click 'insert hyperlink' – however, if you're struggling please just copy+paste the link in brackets next to the word or phrase you want to reference. Like this (<http://gph.is/1Z8bw8m>)).

**Please include one image (or more, if you want) to accompany your blog.** That might be an image of the source itself (or one page from it, if you're looking at a book or chapter), or it might be another relevant photograph or illustrations (for example, if you are looking at a book or chapter, you might include an image of the author). Please also include a short description of the image, and a citation.

Source Pack

Harriet Martineau, [\*Life in the Sick-Room\*](#), (London, 1844)  
William Munk, [\*Euthanasia, Or, Medical Treatment in Aid of an Easy Death\*](#), (London, 1887)  
[John Bull Defending Britain Against the Invasion of Cholera](#), (c. 1832)  
[Cholera Map of the Metropolis](#), (1849)  
Edward Jenner, [\*An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae, or Cow-Pox\*](#), (1798)  
[Vaccination of Babies Against Smallpox](#), (c.1950)  
Richard von Krafft-Ebing, [\*Psychopathia Sexualis, with Especial Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct, a Medico-Forensic Study\*](#), (1886)  
Havelock Ellis, [\*Sexual Inversion\*](#), (Philadelphia, 1915)  
Isaac Baker Brown, [\*On the Curability of Certain Forms of Insanity, Epilepsy, Catalepsy, and Hysteria in Females\*](#), (London, 1966)  
Maurice Henry Collis, [\*On the Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer and the Tumours Analogous to it\*](#), (London, 1864)  
[A Common Cold Germ Asking the Father of a Neurasthenia Bacillus if he Can Marry Her](#), (Pen Drawing by C. Harrison, 1913)  
[Advertisement for Western Electric Hearing Aid](#), (*Hearing News*, 1936)  
[Printed Tactile Map](#), (1894)  
[War Neuroses: Netley Hospital](#), (1917) - film  
[Living Stories: 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic](#) – oral history interviews  
[The New National Health Service Leaflet](#), (1948)  
Ruth Wheeler, 'No Such Thing as Pain', *Spare Rib*, (1982) – for the rest of *Spare Rib* see [here](#)  
Front Cover of [The Black Panther](#) newspaper, (1971)  
[Cancer Poster](#), (1941)  
[Dying for a Smoke](#), (1967) - film  
[The Traitor Within](#), (American Cancer Society, 1946) – animation  
[HIV Poster](#), (1991) – see others [here](#)

#### History of Medicine Blogs

<https://nursingclio.org/>  
<http://notchesblog.com/>  
<https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/>  
<http://www.thomas-morris.uk/>  
<http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/>  
<http://www.wondersandmarvels.com/>  
<http://lewiscar.sites.grinnell.edu/HistoryofMedicine/>  
<https://history295.wordpress.com/>  
<https://diseasesofmodernlife.org/category/news-blog/>

#### History of Medicine Archives and Museums

- The Old Operating Theatre
- The British Library
- The Wellcome Library
- The Wellcome Collection
- The Science Museum
- The London Metropolitan Archives
- Anaesthesia Heritage Centre
- Natural History Museum at Tring
- British Dental Association Museum



- Florence Nightingale Museum

#### Selection of Digitised Primary Source Material

- Archive.org
- JSTOR.org
- WellcomeLibrary.org
- British Periodicals (ProQuest)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century UK Periodicals (Gale/Cengage)
- ProQuest Historical Newspapers
- Victorian Popular Culture (UCL Library Database)
- Collected Works of Florence Nightingale
- The Francis Galton Papers (Wellcome Library)
- <http://www.nineteenthcenturydisability.org/>

### Essay (3000 words):

The case-studies in Rosenberg & Golden (1992) illustrate some of the ways in which historians have chosen to frame diseases. Following their example, you will 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.

Effective essays will be realistic about how much ground you can cover in 2000 words. You are unlikely to write a convincing, in-depth essay that addresses the five-hundred-year history of syphilis in Britain, for example. Instead, we want you to write about a particular disease in a particular time and place. You might look at the work or ideas of a specific doctor or scientist, or the experience of a particular patient, or the impact of a theme or context (like war, imperialism, a cultural movement, or a new piece of legislation or 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 we discuss in class. There is no inherent advantage or disadvantage associated with choosing your own or selecting one that I lecture on (cholera, for example). However, simply rewriting your lecture notes into prose will not score highly. We expect you to read far beyond the single set text, and to ground your essay in primary sources. There is plenty of relevant scholarship that you will find useful, some of which is listed below. However, the UCL libraries and the Wellcome Library also have excellent collections of books and academic journals on the history of science and medicine, and you might find searching through their catalogues useful. Most of the relevant 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/>

For primary source material, you might find it helpful to look through the digitized issues of the British

Medical Journal and The Lancet:

<https://www.jstor.org/journal/britmedj>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/the-lancet>

**You must come and discuss your initial ideas with us after the reading week, and then let us know how you're getting on.**

### **Course expectations**

The objectives of this module are to train the student to think historically and contextualise past practices and theories of medicine.

### **Reading list**

See the Moodle page. For each week, you will find a list of required and additional readings.