National Endowment for the Humanities
Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers
June 24-July 28, 2012

HEALTH AND DISEASE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Draft Syllabus
revised: 11/19/2011

Texts (to be purchased); all except Horrox should be read in their entirety before the beginning of the Seminar:
Peter Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith, Medieval Islamic Medicine (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2007), ISBN 0748620672

Additional Readings: the books listed above will be supplemented each week by readings posted on our Blackboard® site and by books put on Reserve for us in the Wellcome Library. In addition, reproductions of primary sources may be distributed in the seminar so that they can be examined in close detail. For the optional methods sessions, recommended readings are not itemized here but are posted on Blackboard under the “Seminar Readings” button.

Meeting Times and Location: all sessions will be held at the Wellcome Library, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, except for the fieldtrips and the session at the British Library, as noted below. On the first day (Monday, June 25) we will meet at the front of the Wellcome Building at 10:00am sharp. Morning sessions from then on will begin promptly at 10:00am in the seminar room, continuing until 12:30pm. (We will have a mid-morning break every day.) The four optional methods sections will run from 2:30-4:00pm on the days indicated below. Monica and Rachel will also have office hours at least once a week at a location to be determined.

Research Reports: time will be allocated for in-class reports of on-going research projects by Seminar participants. The schedule will be determined once we are assembled and can decide which topics fit best with our weekly themes.

Arrival – Sunday, June 24: participants arrive in London; check into rooms. To allow everyone some time to get over jet lag, no formal events are scheduled that day though Monica and Rachel will be available if questions arise or you just want to meet up.
Week 1 (June 25-29): Disease, Disability, and Their Histories

Guest Lecturer: Florence Eliza Glaze, Coastal Carolina University

Topics for Discussion:
• what is “disease”? what is “disability”?
• historiography of medieval medicine
• bioarcheology, paleopathology, new DNA technologies, and the problems of retrospective diagnosis

Day 1 (Monday, June 25): Introductions & Orientation (meet at front of Wellcome Trust Building, 183 Euston Road, at 10:00am sharp)

Day 2 (Tuesday, June 26): Overview of Medieval Medicine, Disease, and Disability

Monica H. Green, “Integrative Medicine: Incorporating Medicine and Health into the Canon of Medieval European History,” History Compass 7, no. 4 (June 2009), 1218-45
Elma Brenner, “Recent Perspectives on Leprosy in Medieval Western Europe,” History Compass 8, no. 5 (2010), 388–406
Irina Metzler, “Disability in the Middle Ages: Impairment at the Intersection of Historical Inquiry and Disability Studies,” History Compass 9, no. 1 (January 2011), 45–60
Jon Arrizabalaga, “Problematizing Retrospective Diagnosis in the History of Disease,” Asclepio 54, no. 1 (2002), 51-70

Day 3 (Wednesday, June 27): The Biological Basis of Disease: Data and Methods

Anne L. Grauer, “Where were the Women?,” in Human Biologists in the Archives, ed. A. Herring and A. Swedlund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 266-87

Wednesday, June 27, 2:00pm: Special session on Online Resources for the History of Medicine

Day 4 (Thursday, June 28): Fieldtrip to Bath, England (http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/), meet at Paddington Station at 9:30am (train departs at 10:00am)

Topic: health seeking and the culture of balneology in the Roman and medieval Islamic, Jewish, and Christian worlds

Baths reader (selection of ancient and medieval texts) – this will be distributed upon your arrival in London; electronic copies can be found on Blackboard

Florence Eliza Glaze, “The Politics of Bathing: Medicinal Baths and Competition in High Medieval Southern Italy” (forthcoming)

Day 5 (Friday, June 29): free day for individual research
Week 2 (July 2-6): Categorizing Disease/Crafting Therapy: Medieval Medical Theory

Topics for Discussion:
- translation and the transmission of cultural traditions
- the drug trade
- did ancient/medieval physicians have a chemical understanding of drug efficacy?
- knowledge of anatomy and the practices of human dissection

Day 1 (Monday, July 2):
Ancient Medicine and Its Islamic Legacy
review Pormann and Savage-Smith, Medieval Islamic Medicine
Emilie Savage-Smith, “The Great Systematizers,” an extract from E. Savage-Smith
Hunayn ibn Ishaq, excerpts from The Book of Ten Treatises on the Eye (The Fifth Treatise on
the Causes of the Affections occurring in the Eye; Cataract, from Sixth Treatise), in Max
Meyerhof, Book of the Ten Treatises on the Eye Ascribed to Hunain ibn Is-haq (809-
977 A.D.). The earliest existing systematic text-book of ophthalmology (Cairo: Government
Removal,” in Casey A. Wood, Memorandum Book of a Tenth-Century Oculist for the Use of
940-1010 A.D.), the most complete, practical and original of all the early textbooks on the
Eye and its Diseases (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1936), pp. 176-87
Emilie Savage-Smith, “Ibn al-Nafis’s Perfected Book on Ophthalmology and His Treatment of
Emilie Savage-Smith, “The Practice of Surgery in Islamic Lands: Myth and Reality,” Social
History of Medicine 13 (2000), 307-21
Susan B. Edgington, “Oriental and Occidental Medicine in the Crusader States,” in The
Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories, ed. Conor Kostick (London: Routledge,
2011), pp. 189-215
Jason R. Zaborowski, “Arab Christian Physicians as Interreligious Mediators: Abu Shakir as a

Monday, July 2, 2:00pm: Medical Paleography – a special presentation at the British Library
Manuscripts Room

Day 2 (Tuesday, July 3): (morning) How Drugs Work: Plant Lore and Pharmaceutical
Empiricism
Buckley, The Book of the Islamic Market Inspector (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1999), pp. 65-69
Leigh N. B. Chipman, “How Effective Were Cough Remedies Known to Medieval
Egyptians?,” Korot (The Israel Journal of the History of Science and Medicine) 16 (2002),
135-57
Selma Tibi, “Early Islamic Knowledge of Graeco-Roman Use of Opium” and “Conclusions,”
from Selma Tibi, The Medicinal Use of Opium in Ninth-Century Baghdad, Sir Henry

(afternoon) Fieldtrip to the Chelsea Physic Garden (http://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/garden/), meet at 2:00pm at entrance at Swan Walk, London SW3 4HS

Mattheus Platearius (attributed), Circa instans (excerpts)
Henry Daniel, Aaron Danielis (excerpts)
Alexandra Livarda, “Spicing Up Life in Northwestern Europe: Exotic Food Plant Imports in the Roman and Medieval World,” Vegetation History and Archaeobotany 20, no. 2 (March 2011), 143-64

Day 3 (Wednesday, July 4): A European Proclivity? The Beginnings of Anatomical Investigation


Day 4 (Thursday, July 5): free day for individual research

Day 5 (Friday, July 6): free day for individual research

Week 3 (July 9-13): History and Paleopathology: The Case of Leprosy

Guest Lecturer: Luke Demaitre, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

Topics for Discussion:
• paleopathology: its potential for identifying disease and ill health
• social containment: legal pronouncements and the role of leprosaria
• the increased role of the medical profession in diagnosis and management of leprosy
• temporal and regional variation in the response to leprosy

Day 1 (Monday, July 9): When Did Leprosy Begin? Origins and Evidence


Day 2 (Tuesday, July 10): The “Medieval” Disease: Medical and Social Responses

Barbara Sagers, “These are the symptoms that we use here for diagnosing leprosy,” in Orlanda Lie, “Recording Practical Experience for Posterity: Barbere Sagers, working in Ghent, 1477-1484” (text trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz), in Women’s Writing in the Low Countries 1200-1875. A Bilingual Anthology, ed. L. van Gemert et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 130-37


official records of urban responses; certificates of medical examination

**Tuesday, July 10, 2:00pm:** Special session on Medical Images

**Day 3 (Wednesday, July 11):** Cultural, Chronological, and Global Responses


Michael W. Dols, “Leprosy in Medieval Arabic Medicine,” Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences 34, no. 3 (July 1979), 314-33


Guglielmo de Saliceto, Leprosy and Esthetics in Italy


**Day 4 (Thursday, July 12):** free day for individual research

**Day 5 (Friday, July 13):** free day for individual research

**Week 4 (July 16-20): Can History and the ‘Historicist Sciences’ Work Together? The Case of Plague**

**Guest Lecturer:** Dr. Ann Carmichael, Indiana University

Topics for Discussion:

- what was the disease? The new microbiology of plague
- why does it matter how we answer “what was the disease”? 
- who died? documentary sources vs. paleoepidemiology
- assessing catastrophe in social, economic, and political terms

**Day 1 (Monday, July 16):** The Problems with Plague


Michel Drancourt and Didier Raoult, “Molecular Insights into the History of Plague,” Microbes and Infection 4, no. 1 (January 2002), 105-109 [other articles from the “Marseilles school” can be found on Blackboard]

Giovanna Morelli, et al., “Yersinia pestis Genome Sequencing Identifies Patterns of Global Phylogenetic Diversity,” Nature Genetics 42, no. 12 (December 2010), 1140-1145


Sharon N. DeWitte and James W. Wood, “Selectivity of Black Death Mortality with Respect to Preexisting Health,” PNAS 105, no. 5 (February 5, 2008), 1436–1441


Tuesday, July 17, 2:00pm: Special session on Human Skeletal Data

Day 2 (Tuesday, July 17): Documenting Catastrophe
Sharon N. DeWitte and James W. Wood, “Selectivity of Black Death Mortality with Respect to Preexisting Health,” PNAS 105, no. 5 (February 5, 2008), 1436–1441


Horrox, Black Death (pages to be assigned)

Tuesday, July 17, 2:00pm: Special session on Human Skeletal Data

Day 3 (Wednesday, July 18): Plague’s Aftermath


Justin K. Stearns, Infectious Ideas: Contagion in Premodern Islamic and Christian Thought in the Western Mediterranean (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), chaps. 3-4


Day 4 (Thursday, July 19): Fieldtrip to Human Bioarchaeology Centre, Museum of London (http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Collections/OnlineResources/CHB/), meet at 10:00am at 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN


Day 5 (Friday, July 20): free day for individual research

Week 5 (July 23-27): The Limits of Physical Cure: Hierarchies of Resort
Topics for Discussion:
• what could learned medicine actually provide? and what could empirical medicine provide?
• regimens, “self-help”, and the lay medical reader
• social safety nets: the institutions of charity and the role of hospitals
• saintly healing; coping with disability

**Day 1 (Monday, July 23):** The Learned Practitioner’s Art and the Learned Patient’s Practice

- review McVaugh, *Before the Plague*

**Day 2 (Tuesday, July 24):** The Empiricist’s Craft

- Monica H. Green and Daniel Lord Smail, “The Trial of Floreta d’Ays (1403): Jews, Christians, and Obstetrics in Later Medieval Marseille,” *Journal of Medieval History* 34, no. 2 (June 2008), 185-211

**Day 3 (Wednesday, July 25):** Turning to the Saints

- canonization records of saints Louis of Toulouse and Chiara da Montefalco

**Day 4 (Thursday, July 26):** free day for individual research

**Day 5 (Friday, July 27):** free day for individual research

**Friday, July 27, 2012, evening:** End of Seminar Fête

**Saturday, July 28, 2012:** departure from London

**Optional Methods Sessions:** These sessions (approximately 1½ hours each) will be run one afternoon a week during the first four weeks. The first three sessions are intended to give participants with advanced research skills but without any prior training in the History of Medicine “inside tips” to some of the more challenging aspects of doing work in this technical field. The final session will focus on ways non-paleopathologists can incorporate already published human
skeletal data and analyses into their work. Recommended background readings can be found under the “Seminar Readings” button on Blackboard.

Week 1 (Wednesday, June 27): Online Resources for the History of Medicine
Week 2 (Monday, July 2): Medical Paleography (for participants already trained in basic paleography) – a special presentation at the British Library Manuscripts Room
Week 3 (Tuesday, July 10): Medical Images
Week 4 (Tuesday, July 17): Human Skeletal Data

General Bibliography on Medieval Medicine:
Amasuno Sárraga, Marcelino V. Medicina ante la ley: La “licencia practicandi” y el ejercicio de la medicina en la Castilla bajomedieval (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2002), ISBN 8497180712
Benedictow, Ole J. What Disease was Plague? On the Controversy over the Microbiological Identity of Plague Epidemics of the Past (Leiden: Brill, 2011), ISBN 9789004180024
Biller, Peter, and Joseph Ziegler, eds. Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages, York Studies in Medieval Theology, 3 (York: York Medieval Press, 2001), ISBN 1903153077


Ferragud, Carmel. *Medicina i promoció social a la baixa edat mitjana* (Madrid: CSIC, 2005), ISBN 9788498244458


——, and Emilie Savage-Smith, eds. *The Year 1000: Medical Practice at the End of the First Millennium*, special issue of *Social History of Medicine*, 13.2 (August 2000), ISSN 1477-4666


Vela i Aulesa, Carles. *L’obrador d’un apotecari medieval segons el llibre de comptes de Francesc ses Canes (Barcelona, 1378–1381)* (Barcelona: CSIC, 2003), ISBN 9788400081829


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