
HI 290: HEALTH AND HEALING IN AMERICA

Disease Project Guidelines

Oral Presentation & Poster due March 15 (10%)
Written Report due March 29 (15%)



Now that we're at midterm, and you've got some experience under your belt looking at sickness and health in the American past, using primary sources, and understanding scholarly articles, you're ready for a bigger task. This project is in three phases:

- Your independent research on a disease of your choice
- Creation of a poster (at least 11x17" or larger) and presentation of your findings in a mini-academic "conference" on March 15 (10% of final grade)
- Submission of a written report (paper) on March 29 (15% of final grade)

This project is quite open and I can give you as much or as little guidance as you need. I've written these guidelines rather loosely but I am happy to talk about details in office hours or by email if this isn't enough structure to get you started working.

Choosing and researching a disease:

Choose a disease from our class list and research that disease using reliable scholarly sources (articles obtained from library databases, books, medical history journals, health sciences reference resources).

You cannot adequately research this project using only open-web resources. Information from the CDC, WebMD, and medical diagnosis websites, etc is not sufficient and will not earn full credit.

How many sources? No magic number – probably 4-6 at least. Wikipedia is NOT a source! (Although the "Further Reading" or "External Links" at the foot of a Wikipedia entry might take you to real sources. Then again, they might not). It's acceptable to use all secondary sources, although if you can find primary sources too that's even better.

What are you looking for? Scholarly research into the history of this disease & its presentation in the past and/or historical evidence of this disease in primary sources. How the *concept* of this disease has changed over time; any milestones in understanding the disease's etiology or course; treatment for this disease in the past v. now (is it even still considered a disease today?); public health statistics on infection or death rates; in what time periods or places or populations this disease was found; its significance in American history or medical history. Again, this list is not exhaustive and you may not be able to address all of those points, but the list should help guide your investigation and presentation.

HI 290: HEALTH AND HEALING IN AMERICA

The Mini-Conference (10%)

We will have a “poster session” on March 15 during our class time. Everyone will have the chance to present and discuss their findings, and to evaluate and consider their peers’ research. We will make a gallery displaying the posters around the walls of our classroom.

Poster format can be up to you, but should convey information in a scholarly, historical and/or scientific manner. In other words, this is not an advertising poster or a public health information poster. It should be 11x17 (legal paper sized) or larger. If you want to use the campus’s poster printer, see me. While neatness, spelling, and visual design/organization are always important on a poster, this is not an art project and you are not being graded on your artistic ability or your drawing skill.

The Report (15%)

Write your findings in a well-sourced and well-organized paper of 5-7 pages. This is due on March 29, giving you time to incorporate feedback or ideas from the mini-conference into your final product.

The structure and organization of the final report can be up to you. It can read more like a nonfiction magazine article or more like a scientific paper, whichever suits your subject better. Just make sure that your paper...

- covers the scope and breadth of your research and your findings
- makes useful and relevant conclusions about how this disease has changed over time
- contains proper & complete citations in a standard academic reference style, including all the quotations and sources you referenced