
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, beginning with a scholarly monograph chosen from a class list
- 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:

Select a monograph in recent medical history from our class list. Read it thoroughly, including the bibliography/footnotes. Then, extend your research on 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.

How many sources? No magic number – probably 5-7 besides the monograph. 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.

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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 7-9 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
- addresses the historical contribution of your chosen monograph
- 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 reference

Recent Books in Medical History

- Barry, John M. *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History*. 2004.
- Bollett, Alfred Jay. *Plagues and Poxes: The Impact of Human History on Epidemic Disease*. 2004.
- Breslaw, Elaine G. *Lotions, Potions, Pills and Magic: Health Care in Early America*. 2012.
- Cayleff, Susan E. *Wash and be healed : the water-cure movement and women's health*. Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1987.
- Daniel, Thomas M. *Captain of Death: The Story of Tuberculosis*. 1997.
- Derickson, Alan. *Black Lung: Anatomy of a Public Health Disaster*. 2014.
- Finger, Simon. *The Contagious City: The Politics of Public Health in early Philadelphia*. 2012.
- Frankenburg, Frances Rachel. *Vitamin discoveries and disasters : history, science, and controversies*. Santa Barbara, Calif. : Praeger/ABC-CLIO, c2009.
- Gratzer, Walter. *Terrors of the Table: The Curious History of Nutrition*. 2005.
- Kolata, Gina. *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused it*. 1999.
- Kotar, S.L. and J.E. Gessler. *Cholera: A Worldwide History*. 2014.
- Oshinsky, David M. *Polio: An American Story*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Packard, Randall M. *The making of a tropical disease : a short history of malaria*. Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Parascandola, John. *Sex, sin, and science : a history of syphilis in America*. Westport, Conn. : Praeger, 2008.
- Peitzman, Steven J. *Dropsy, dialysis, transplant : a short history of failing kidneys*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007
- Pettit, Dorothy Ann. *A cruel wind : pandemic flu in America, 1918-1920*. Murfreesboro, Tenn. : Timberlane Books, 2008.
- Reverby, Susan. *Tuskegee's Truths: Rethinking the Tuskegee Syphilis Study*. 2000.
- Schuster, David G. *Neurasthenia nation : America's search for health, happiness, and comfort, 1869-1920*. New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, c2011.
- Warren, Christian. *Brush with death : a social history of lead poisoning*. Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.
- Whorton, James C. *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America*. 2002.
- Wolf, Jacqueline H. *Deliver me from pain : anesthesia and birth in America*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.
- Ziff, Katherine. *Asylum on the Hill: History of a Healing Landscape*. 2012.