

HISTORY OF UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH

Syracuse University – Fall, 2007

HST 600.M002 - #21982

PSC 600.M002 - #21925

Monday

6:00-9:00

Weiskotten Hall

766 Irving Avenue

Syracuse, New York

Dr. Gwen Kay, Assistant Professor

SUNY – Oswego

History Department

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The goal of graduate seminars is to explore new fields, and apply historical tools of analysis. Everything has history and can be considered from a multitude of perspectives including (but not limited to) geography, race, ethnicity, class, historical time period, gender, various social analytical frameworks (Marxism, socialism, etc.) This semester, we will explore public health (care, systems, lack thereof) in the United States. How much of our health care, vis a vis public health, is culturally determined? Geographically determined? Health determined? What factors determine what, when, where and how we perceive public health? Over the past 100 years, Americans have grown taller and are living longer than ever before. While changes in public health are not the sole reason for this, they do contribute significantly.

Public health is, at its heart, an examination of health care at the intersection of public policy, historical legacy, technology and safety. Many decisions regarding public health are a fine balance between the rights of the individual and the health of the (larger) population.

In this course we will examine some of the many aspects of public health in the United States in the twentieth century. Disease, we will discover, does not simply appear or disappear, but rather has cultural, social, racial and health implications in how it is perceived, diagnosed, treated, and regarded by others. One of the more peculiar aspects of medicine and public health policy in the century just passed is that the same problems reoccur, albeit in slightly different guises. How different was the sentiment towards immigrants and the diseases they brought into this country at the beginning and end of the century? How can diseases such as polio compare with long-term health threats such as heart disease? Has there been gender or racial discrimination in how drugs are tested or prescribed? Hopefully we will start to reach conclusions to some of these questions.

The goal of graduate research seminars is research. Towards that end, this course is designed to

expose you to many different ways to think about health, disease and public responsibility; much of the grade is dependent on various projects related to the final paper, based on original research. You will read, write and discuss a great deal. To facilitate class discussion, you will email me (or post online) by Monday noon reflecting on the week's reading. Each of you will lead one class discussion; meet with me individually to discuss rough drafts of your final paper; and critique each other's rough drafts. Your grade will be calculated as follows: attendance & participation 20%; preliminary paper 20%; peer review 10%; class presentation 10%; final paper 40%.

The following books are required for class.

Thomas Abraham, *Twenty-first century Plague: The Story of SARS*

Jacalyn Duffin, *History of Medicine: A Scandalously Short Introduction*

Jonathan Engel, *Poor People's Medicine: Medicaid and American Charity Care since 1965*

Kirsten Gardner, *Early Detection: Women, Cancer, and Awareness Campaigns in the Twentieth-Century United States*

Beatrix Hoffman, *The Wages of Sickness: The Politics of Health Insurance in Progressive America*

Gina Kolata, *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused It*

Howard Markel, *Quarantine! East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892*

David Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story*

Charles Rosenberg, *Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849 and 1866*

Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic*

Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*

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Aug. 27:	Introduction
Sept. 10:	Getting up to speed – Duffin
Sept. 17:	Cholera – Rosenberg
Sept. 24:	Immigrant health – Markel
Oct. 1:	Influenza – Kolata Preliminary paper due
Oct. 15:	Health insurance? – Hoffman
Oct. 22:	Cancer – Gardner
Oct. 29:	Polio – Oshinsky
Nov. 5:	Race – Wailoo
Nov. 12:	Different kind of health insurance? – Engel
Nov. 19:	AIDS – Shilts
Nov. 26:	SARS – Abraham
Dec. 3:	Oral presentations
Dec. 10:	Oral presentations Final paper due