DISEASE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Tentative Schedule & Syllabus

Latest update: 26 November 2008

Texts (to be purchased); all except Horrox should be read in their entirety before the beginning of the seminar:


Additional Readings: the books listed above will be supplemented each week by readings posted on our Blackboard® site. We will also put several other books on a Reserve shelf in the Wellcome Library. Reproductions of primary sources will be distributed in the seminar so that they can be examined in close detail. At least one or two sessions will be held in the Rare Book Room of the Wellcome Library to examine the historical materials *in situ*.

Meeting Times and Location: all sessions will be held at the Wellcome Trust Centre, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, except for the fieldtrips as noted below. The Wellcome Building opens at 9:45am and our sessions will start at 10:00am, continuing until 12:30pm. The three optional methods sections (including the one at the British Library) will run from 2:30-4:00pm on the days indicated below.

Research Reports: time will 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.

SCHEDULE

Sunday, 5 July: participants arrive in London; check into rooms [arrival date may be moved up to Saturday, 4 July, depending on when first field trip is scheduled]

Week 1 (6-10 July): Disease, Disability, and Their Histories

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

**Day 1 (Monday, 6 July):** Introductions & Orientation

**Day 2 (Tuesday, 7 July):** Overview of Medieval Medicine: Intellectual and Social Traditions

Catherine J. Kudlick, “Disability History: Why We Need Another ‘Other’,” *American Historical Review*, 108 (2003), 763-93

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**Day 3 (Wednesday, 8 July):** The Biological Basis of Disease: Data and Methods


Anne L. Grauer, “Where were the Women?,” in A. Herring and A. Swedlund, eds., *Human Biologists in the Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 266-287

Michael McCormick, “Rats, Communications, and Plague: Toward an Ancient and Medieval Ecological History,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2003), 1-25

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**Day 4 (Thursday, 9 July):** Fieldtrip to Bath, England ([http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/](http://www.romanbaths.co.uk/)) – meet at Paddington Station at 9:00am

**Topics:** health seeking and the culture of bathing

Martial, *Epigrams* (selections)

Anonymous, *Balnea puteolana (The Baths of Pozzuoli)*

Peter of Eboli, *De balneis terre laboris (The Baths of Terra Laboris)*, excerpts

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

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**Day 5 (Friday, 10 July):** free day for research

International Medieval Congress, Leeds, England – 13-16 July 2009: note that we will change the Seminar meeting days to Wednesday to Friday in Week 2 to allow people to attend the Leeds meeting, if they desire.

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**Week 2 (13-17 July):** Categorizing Disease/Crafting Therapy: Medieval Medical Theory

**Guest Lecturer:** Emilie Savage-Smith, Oxford University

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

**Day 1 (Wednesday, 15 July):** Ancient Medicine and Its Islamic Legacy


review Pormann and Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine*

excerpts from Galen, al-Razi

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**Day 2 (Thursday, 16 July):** (morning) How Drugs Work: Plant Lore and Pharmaceutical Empiricism

Mattheus Platearius (attributed), *Circa instans* (excerpts)
Henry Daniel, *Aaron Danielis* (an herbal by a 14th cent. English gardener)

(afternoon) **Fieldtrip to the Chelsea Physic Garden**
(http://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/garden/), meet at 2pm at entrance at 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS

**Day 3 (Friday, 17 July):** A European Proclivity: The Beginnings of Anatomical Investigation

**Friday, 17 July, 2pm:** Medical Paleography – a special presentation at the British Library Manuscripts Room, led by librarian Laura Nuvoloni

**Week 3 (20-24 July): Diagnosing Disease, Then and Now: The Case of Plague**

**Guest Lecturer:** Dr. Anne Grauer, Loyola University of Chicago

**Topics for Discussion:**
- growth of prestige of medical profession (testimony in courts, autopsies)
- public health regulations
- notions of contagion and quarantine

**Day 1 (Monday, 20 July):** Medieval Diagnostic Methods (pulses, urines, autopsy) and Professional Authority
review McVaugh, *Before the Plague*

**Day 2 (Tuesday, 21 July):** Modern Diagnostic Methods

**Day 3 (Wednesday, 22 July):** The Consequences of Diagnosis
Horrox, *Black Death* (pages to be assigned)

**Day 4 (Thursday, 23 July):** Fieldtrip to Human Bioarchaeology Centre, Museum of London
(http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Collections/OnlineResources/CHB/), meet at 10am at 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN


**Day 5 (Friday, 24 July):** free day for research

**Week 4 (27-31 July): Managing Disease and Disability: The Case of Leprosy**

**Guest Lecturer:** Michael McVaugh, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

**Topics for Discussion:**
- modern biomedical understandings of leprosy (Hansen’s disease)
- how prevalent was leprosy really?
- surgical practices, pain, and the responsibilities of the practitioner
- social containment: legal pronouncements and the role of leprosaria
- why did leprosy disappear?

**Day 1 (Monday, 27 July):** Weighing Risks – The Pain of Surgery vs. Living with Disability


**Day 2 (Tuesday, 28 July):** The Uncertainty of Diagnosis: Who “Names” Leprosy?


*Vita* of Alice Schaerbeek

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


**Day 3 (Wednesday, 29 July):** Containing Disease: Hospitals and Leprosaria


**Day 4 (Thursday, 30 July):** free day for individual research

**Day 5 (Friday, 31 July):** free day for individual research

**Week 5 (3-7 August): Alternative Cures**

**Topics for Discussion:**
- saintly healing; coping with disability
- regimens, “self-help”, and the lay medical reader
- social safety nets: the institutions of charity and the role of hospitals

**Day 1 (Monday, 3 August):** The Limits of Physical Cure: Hierarchies of Resort


**Day 2 (Tuesday, 4 August):** Turning to the Saints

Excerpts from the canonization proceedings of St. Louis of Toulouse (d. 1297) and Clare of Montefalco (d. 1318)


**Day 3 (Wednesday, 5 August): Poverty, Disease, and Disability**


**Day 4 (Thursday, 6 August):** free day for individual research

**Day 5 (Friday, 7 August):** free day for individual research

**Friday, 7 August, evening:** End of Seminar Fête

**Saturday, 8 August:** departure from London

**Optional Methods Sessions:** These sessions (approximately 1½ hours each) will be run one afternoon a week during the first three weeks. They 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.

- **Week 1 (Tuesday, 7 July):** Online Resources for the History of Medicine
- **Week 2 (Friday, 17 July):** Medical Paleography (for participants already trained in basic paleography) – a special presentation at the British Library Manuscripts Room, led by librarian Laura Nuvoloni
- **Week 3 (Tuesday, 21 July):** Medical Images

**General Bibliography on Medieval Medicine:**


