

# **RACE, CULTURE & MEDICINE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

History 656: Topics in the History of Health

**FALL 2015 SYLLABUS**

**Stephen Pemberton, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, Federated Department of History  
New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University, Newark

---

## **Class Meetings**

Cullimore Hall 307, NJIT Campus  
Mondays 5:30-8:10 p.m.

## **Office & Contact**

Cullimore Hall 329, NJIT Campus  
Phone: 973-596-5716  
Email: [stephen.pemberton@njit.edu](mailto:stephen.pemberton@njit.edu)

## **Office Hours**

Mondays 2:30-4 p.m. and Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays by appointment

---

*“Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”*  
Martin Luther King, Jr., 1966

Even as medicine and public health have witnessed unprecedented advances in the management of disease and health over the past hundred years, there remains a persistent gap between those who benefit from such “progress” and those who do not. This gap is not sufficiently explained by socio-economic factors alone, but requires recognition of racial and ethnic disparities that are deeply ingrained in the history and cultures of modernizing societies.

This graduate seminar in comparative medical and health history examines how race, culture, and science have figured prominently in the management of disease and health in the past century. The course readings and assignments will focus on the health status of “non-white” peoples during the twentieth century, with particular attention to the persistent disparities that people of color have experienced in health outcomes in the United States and other parts of the world. Of critical concern in this course is the contested question of organized medicine’s status as form of “social control” in modernizing societies. Another interpretive focus is the ways that the organization of medical care has confronted, or failed to confront, social justice in medical treatment and research as well as public health. The recognition of health disparities is itself

historically constituted, and represents certain cultural as well as socio-economic investment in seeing the gaps between “rich and poor,” “white and black,” as either malleable or intractable.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

*Describe and interpret* how race/ethnicity – and to a lesser extent class and gender – have factored for better and worse into medicine and healthcare in the twentieth century.

*Identify and correlate* key historical actors and events during the twentieth century, and understand how they have shaped and been influenced by developments in medicine and public health across the globe (the United States and Africa in particular).

*Identify and describe* various controversies as well as events in medicine and public health of the last century, and *explain* how historians approach the issues.

*Write* effective essays that *describe* and critically *evaluate* the merits of various historiographical approaches to key events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century histories of medicine and health.

*Demonstrate* information literacy consistent with being a graduate student including (1) locating, retrieving and evaluating information relevant to the writing of an argumentative essay; (2) organizing, synthesizing and communicating that information in clear, persuasive prose; and (3) producing a finished essay that employs principles consistent with the ethical and legal uses of information.

### **Course Requirements**

In addition to regular attendance and doing the weekly reading assignments, each student will help lead one class discussion, write two short essay, and one longer paper that incorporates their understanding of the course readings and discussions.

***Readings*** There are nine books to read over the course of the semester with a selection of additional articles or book chapters/selections. The books are regarded, in most cases, as an exemplary work on their subject. Before coming to class, you should familiarize yourself with the factual content of the work as well as the author’s argument and his or her use of sources. In class, I will encourage you to think critically about issues raised in the readings. This goal will only be attainable if you come prepared.

Full citations for the assigned books appear in the attached bibliography at the end of this syllabus. These books for the course can be purchased through the NJIT bookstore in the Campus Center. Their contact information: Phone: (973) 596-3200; Fax: (973) 596-2821; Email: [njit@bkstr.com](mailto:njit@bkstr.com). Online booksellers also sell these books.

Copies of the assigned articles and book chapters will be available online through our course web page.

### ***Course Webpage***

There is a Moodle webpage for this course that the professor and class will utilize throughout the semester. Please consult the website at your first opportunity, and familiarize yourself with its contents. It contains the syllabus, assignments, readings, discussion forums, and other features that will enhance your learning experience this semester. As I post new material, I will alert you. You will need to obtain a UCID number from NJIT to get access to this secure web page. Login to the following web address using your UCID number: <http://moodle.njit.edu/>

### ***Assignments and Grading***

The primary goal of this course is to promote critical thinking about modern medicine and society, both past and present. All students will be evaluated on their written and oral communication over the course of the semester. In addition to in-class participation, the student will write two short essays and complete a longer historiographical paper for the final grade.

### **Attendance and Class Participation**

Class participation should involve active listening and engagement. Attendance is both expected and required.

### **Discussion Responsibility**

Each student will help lead a book discussion during the semester. During the first or second class, I will assign responsibilities for leading book discussions to each student based on his or her stated preferences. The goal of the discussion is to facilitate critical interpretation of the reading and topic. In preparing talking points for the discussion, students should strive for more than a restatement of the reading material. A series of questions or a provocative argument are often conversation starters. Areas on which the student should focus class discussion include: the author's argument/s, the author's use of sources, his or her methodology, the organization of the book and whether or not it works successfully, and how the readings for that week relate to the other material we have examined during the semester.

It is a requirement of the discussion leader for the week to identify at least four book reviews or historiographical essays discussing the work. At least, two of the book reviews should come from an academic history journal. The professor will collect these book reviews and make them available to everyone via the course webpage.

### **Two Short Essays**

Each student will write two short essays focused on one or more of the readings assigned in the preceding weeks. The essay should discuss a key matter in the reading that you feel

compelled to identify and discuss. You should consult with the professor on your topic. The basic idea is for you to engage with a critical issue at stake in the scholarly work rather than merely summarize the reading material. Beyond that, the basic requirements follow. The essay need be no longer than 5-8 pages. Less than five is not recommended, more than six pages is subject to the task you set for yourself – the point you are trying to make. Try to keep it under eight pages. These short essays are due on **October 5th** and **November 2nd**. No later papers will be accepted except under extraordinary circumstances.

### **Final Essay**

Each student will write a final historiographical paper of 15-25 pages in length, and will craft her or his paper in consultation with the professor. Details about this assignment will be provided over the course of the semester, well in advance of the due date. The due date is **Wednesday, December 16 by noon**.

### **Grading**

10% for attendance & participation

10% for leading discussion of reading

20% for first essay

20% for second essay

40% for final essay

Consistent effort and improvement will favorably impact your grade.

### **Grading Scale for Assignments and Participation**

A = 89.5 to 100

B+ = 86.5 to 89.4

B = 79.5 to 86.4

C+ = 76.5 to 79.4

C = 69.5 to 76.4

D = 59.5 to 69.4

F = 59.4 to 0

### **Respect for Persons and the Learning Environment**

In the interest of an open exchange of ideas and collegiality, everyone participating in the class should strive to respect their classmates as persons. The professor will make every effort to facilitate a respectful environment for learning, but students should keep in mind their own responsibilities in the classroom.

### **Academic Integrity**

The honor code and academic integrity are enforced in this course. All instructors and students are responsible for upholding the integrity of NJIT and Rutgers. NJIT's policy on academic integrity is available on the Dean of Student's website

(<http://www.njit.edu/doss/policies/index.php>).

**Weekly Schedule** (MONDAYS, except Sept. 8)

**Week 1. Sep. 8.**

Introductions.

Outline of the subject matter and aims of the course.

**Week 2. Sep. 14.**

Discussion of Reading: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

**Week 3. Sep. 21.**

Discussion of Reading: Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*

**Week 4. Sep. 28.**

Discussion of Reading: Susan Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy*

**Week 5. Oct. 5.**

**First Essay Assignment Due**

In Class Viewing and Discussion of 2003 PBS/American Experience Documentary: *Partners of the Heart: A Black Genius, A White Surgeon, A Blue Baby and a Miracle*

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/partners/>

**Week 6. Oct 12.**

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

**Week 7. Oct 19.**

Discussion of Reading: Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*

**Week 8. Oct. 26.**

Discussion of Reading: Jonathan Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*

**Week 9. Nov 2.**

**Second Essay Assignment Due**

Discussion of Final Paper Assignment

Lecture on Michel Foucault and his relevance for historians of medicine, health and society.

Recommended Reading, especially pages in bold:

Michel Foucault, Preface from *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Vintage Books, 1973): pp. **ix-xix**.

Michel Foucault, Selections from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage Books, 1979): pp. **3-31**, 135-141, 167-194, **195-228**, **306-308**.

Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in Colin Gordon, ed. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. **146-165**.

**Week 10. Nov 9.**

Jean Comaroff, "Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body," in John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Westview Press, 1992), pp. 215-234.

Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*

**Week 11. Nov 16.**

Please read the following articles closely, particularly that by Fanon:

Franz Fanon, "Medicine and Colonialism" in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 121-145.

Richard Keller, "Clinician and Revolutionary: Frantz Fanon, Biography, and the History of Colonial Medicine." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 81 (2007): 823-841.

Matthew Heaton, "Aliens in the Asylum: Immigration and Madness in Gold Coast." *Journal of African History* 53 (2013): 373-91.

Warwick Anderson, "The Third-World Body," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 235-245.

These historiographical articles are also recommended:

Michael Worboys, "Colonial Medicine," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 967-80.

Randall Packard, "Post-Colonial Medicine," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 97-112

Warwick Anderson, "Postcolonial Histories of Medicine," in Frank Huisman and John Harley Warner, ed. *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meanings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 285-306.

**Week 12. Nov 23.**

Julie Livingston, *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*

**Week 13. Nov. 30.**

Keith Wailoo, *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line*

**Week 14. Dec. 7.**

Discussion of Course Themes / Short Presentations of Paper Projects

**Final Course Paper Due, Wednesday Dec. 16 by Noon**

## Course Bibliography

### **Books:**

- Julie Livingston, *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic* (Duke University Press 2011) ISBN: 978-0822353423
- Jonathan Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (Beacon Press, 2009) 272 pages. ISBN: 978-0807001271
- Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011) ISBN: 978-0816676491
- Susan Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009) 424 pages. ISBN: 978-0807833100
- Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Broadway, 2010) 400 pages ISBN: 978-1400052189
- Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford University Press, 1991) ISBN: 978-0804719711
- Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000) 352 pages. ISBN: 978-0807848968
- Keith Wailoo, *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line* (Oxford, 2011) 264 pages. ISBN: 978-0195170177
- Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (Anchor, 2008) 528 pages. ISBN: 978-0767915472

### **Articles, Chapters, and/or Book Selections:**

- Warwick Anderson, "Postcolonial Histories of Medicine," in Frank Huisman and John Harley Warner, ed. *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meanings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 285-306.
- Warwick Anderson, "The Third-World Body," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 235- 245.
- Jean Comaroff, "Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body," in John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Westview Press, 1992), pp. 215-234.
- Franz Fanon, "Medicine and Colonialism" in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), pp. 121-145.
- Michel Foucault, Preface from *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Vintage Books, 1973): pp. ix-xix.
- Michel Foucault, Selections from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage Books, 1979): pp. 3-31, 135-141, 167-194, 195-228, 306-308.
- Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," in Colin Gordon, ed. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 146-165.

- Matthew Heaton, "Aliens in the Asylum: Immigration and Madness in Gold Coast." *Journal of African History* 53 (2013): 373-91.
- Richard Keller, "Clinician and Revolutionary: Frantz Fanon, Biography, and the History of Colonial Medicine." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 81 (2007): 823-841.
- Randall Packard, "Post-Colonial Medicine," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 97-112
- Michael Worboys, "Colonial Medicine," in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone, ed. *Companion to Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 967-80.