

HOS/HOM 284
THE PHYSICIAN IN HISTORY (HONORS)
Spring, 2008

Theme: "Plague" in History and Culture

List of books for this course:

Carlo Cipolla, *Faith, Reason and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany*
Daniel Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year*
Connie Willis, *Doomsday Book*
Albert Camus, *The Plague*
Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On*
Laurie Garrett, *The Coming Plague*

Requirements: This course requires 1) weekly attendance and participation in discussion, both on-line and in class, and 2) an essay of about 750 words, which will be posted (on the course web site at Learn@UW) as a think piece to introduce the discussion on the following Tuesday. The essay has to be posted by 8:00 p.m. on Sunday night preceding the discussion, and between then and Tuesday I expect everyone to contribute to a discussion of the issues arising from the essay.

The primary (and really the only) specification for the essay is that it be about the reading, set out a couple of issues for discussion and state the author's position on these issues. It often happens that students read something like Defoe or Cipolla and then use it as the occasion to talk about public health today or the dangers of ebola in the Congo. This is not good, and your job is to make sure that the essay you produce keeps everyone oriented toward the reading.

Schedule of weekly discussion topics

Part I – Historical Orientations

January 22

Organizational meeting & Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*,
2.47 – 2.53

January 29

First-Person Accounts of the Black Death: De Mussis and Boccaccio (These are pdf files & will be posted on the 284 course web site)

February 5

NO MEETING

February 12

The Reporter of Plague: Defoe, *Journal of the Plague Year*, pp. 1–153. (Note: The reading continues up through the discussion of shutting the sick up in their houses. It ends at the paragraph that begins, "I had about this time a little Hardship put upon me, which I was at first greatly afflicted at; . . .")

February 19

The Conflict Between Secular and Religious Authority: Cipolla, *Faith Reason and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany* (all)

Part II – Plague in Literature

February 26

Camus, *The Plague*, parts 1 & 2

March 4

Camus, *The Plague*, parts 3, 4, & 5

March 11

NO MEETING

March 18

SPRING BREAK

March 25

Willis, *Doomsday Book*, all

Part III – Contemporary Resonances of the Plague

April 1

NO MEETING

April 8

AIDS as a modern form of plague: Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, parts I-V

April 15

NO MEETING

April 22

Shilts, *And the Band Played On*, remainder

April 29

May 6

The future of plague: Garrett, *The Coming Plague*, pp. 1–152 and two other chapters of your choice