

HEALTH, HEALING, and SCIENCE in AFRICA

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Spring 2022



Welcome to History 283. This honors seminar will examine the reach, effect, and historical lineages of global health interventions in Africa. Drawing on both historical and anthropological studies, we will explore the history of medical and scientific research in Africa, raising questions about the shifting intellectual and ethical underpinnings of various undertakings in the twentieth and twenty-first century. We will also examine the ways in which different historical perspectives inform and transform our understanding of more contemporary developments, such as the emergence of medical humanitarianism and the flourishing of health-related non-governmental organizations in the Global South. such as the emergence of medical humanitarianism and the flourishing of health-related non-governmental organizations in the Global South.

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5115 Humanities

Office Hours (in person and virtual via Zoom)
Monday and Wednesday 1:30-2:30 PM
Appointment required via [Calendly](#)

The course meets in person on Monday from 8:50-10:45 in Humanities 5257

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Become familiar with some of the major themes in the history and anthropology of health, medicine, and healing in Africa
- Use historical thinking to address contemporary issues with nuance
- Learn to read difficult works of scholarship with an eye for identifying the argument
- Deepen abilities in the analysis of primary sources
- Develop writing and public presentation skills

Required Readings and Learning Materials

All required readings and learning materials are available on Canvas

Communication

The Announcements section of the Course Home page is used to make important announcements.

Have a question? Consider posting it on the “General Course Questions” discussion board instead of sending an email. Chances are your classmates have similar queries and we are all here to support each other! Any questions posted by 11:59 PM will be answered by noon the following day. If posting the question would make you uncomfortable, feel free to email Professor Kodesh directly.

Course Design, Requirements, and Expectations

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus. The course meets in person on Monday from 8:50-10:45 in Humanities 5257.

Course Design

The course is divided into four parts:

Part 1 (weeks 1-3): Global Health in Historical Perspective

Part 2 (weeks 4-7): Case Studies of Health and Disease in Africa

Part 3 (weeks 8-12): Research and Writing

Part 4 (weeks 13-14): Final Project Presentations

Information about course schedule, logistics, technology, and student support can be found on Canvas in the “Course Orientation” page located in the Modules section.

Weekly Classroom Discussion

Weekly discussions of the assigned readings and other learning materials are a crucial component of the seminar. You should come to class each week prepared to share your thoughts on the readings and to actively participate in discussion. All required learning materials are available on Canvas.

In addition to discussing the assigned readings, we will also devote the last twenty minutes of each week’s discussion to exploring how the ideas and main themes raised in these materials relate to contemporary issues. Between weeks 1 and 5, each of you will be responsible for leading one of these discussions along with one or two other class members. The co-discussion leaders will work together in the week leading up to the class to identify a contemporary issue(s) related to the themes in the week’s readings, and to develop a plan for weaving that issue(s) into our classroom discussion. I will provide further instructions about leading these discussions during our first meeting.

Weekly Writing Assignments

You will be responsible for a short (sometimes very short) written assignment each week that we meet to discuss readings and other learning materials. You will find instructions for these assignments in the weekly module on Canvas. You must post these assignments by 8 pm on the Sunday before class. These short assignments will help build toward the more substantial final assignment. Each weekly assignment will receive a grade out of 10 points. The weekly assignments will receive a grade of complete/incomplete and will be taken into consideration as part of the participation portion of your grade.

Final Project

You have four choices for your final project:

1. 12-14-page research paper on a topic developed in consultation with Professor Kodesh. The paper will be based on research in secondary literature.
2. 12-14-page research paper on the history of scientific and medical research on yellow fever in western Uganda. The paper will be based on research in primary sources provided by Professor Kodesh
3. 12-14-page historically-informed funding proposal for a foundation or non-governmental organization (CARE, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, the Wellcome Trust, etc.) on a topic developed in consultation with me.
4. Do you have something else in mind? A podcast? A website? Pitch an idea for a project to me!

I will provide more detailed instructions about the final project over the course of the first part of the semester. However, I encourage you to begin thinking about the topic for your final project as soon as possible. In order to facilitate your research and the development of your project, I have divided the process into several steps:

1. During our class session for week 8 (March 21), I will lead a workshop on research strategies and techniques. The workshop will both introduce you to basic historical research skills and focus on strategies and resources directly related to the themes of our course. I will also in this class introduce you to the topic and sources for the second option for your final project and the history of scientific and medical research on yellow fever in western Uganda.
2. I will also set up individual meetings during week 8 to discuss your preliminary ideas for research topics.
3. Each of you will submit a research prospectus for your final project. I will provide further instructions about this assignment. The prospectus will be due by 5 PM on March 30.
4. I will also set up individual meetings the week of April 4 to discuss your prospectus.
5. Each of you will turn in a draft of at least 6 pages of your final project by April 13. We will devote our class session on April 18 to peer review of these drafts. I will provide further instructions about this process.

Final projects will be due by 11:59 PM on Monday, May 9

Final Project Presentations

Will devote weeks 13 and 14 to oral presentations of your final projects. Each of you will be responsible for a 15-minute in-class presentation. I will provide additional instructions for the preparation of in-class presentations.

Course Schedule

Week 1: January 31	Foundations: what is health? what is healing?
Week 2: February 7	Missionaries, medicine, and colonialism
Week 3: February 14	What changes—and doesn't—in the age of global health?
Week 4: February 21	HIV/AIDS and its aftermath
Week 5: February 28	Cancer and global oncology
Week 6: March 7	Africa and the epidemiological imagination
Week 7: March 14	Spring break
Week 8: March 21	Medical and Scientific Research in Africa/Research workshop
Week 9: March 28	Identify final project topic and begin research
Week 10: April 4	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 11: April 11	Optional meetings with Professor Kodesh/continue working on final projects
Week 12: April 18	Peer review of final project drafts
Week 13: April 25	Final project presentations
Week 14: May 2	Final project presentations

See “Course Orientation” in the Modules section on Canvas for a detailed course schedule

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Active Class Participation (including weekly writing assignments, discussion of readings, discussion leadership, and peer review exercises)	40
Research Prospectus	10
Final Project	40
Final Project Presentation	10

Grading Scale

A	AB	B	BC	C	D	F
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Academic Support

[The History Lab](#) is a resource where expert PhD students work with you on your projects 1-on-1. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff will help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Visit our website early and often to schedule an appointment with a Lab TA or to find writing tips, guides, and resources.

Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.