

# HEALTH, MEDICINE, and SCIENCE in AFRICA

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of History  
Fall 2023



Welcome to History 600. This 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.

The course is divided into two parts. During the first part of the course, we will read and analyze the secondary literature on a range of topics related to the main themes of the course. We will also sample a variety of primary sources and students will be introduced to methodologies for conducting historical research. The second half of the course will focus on the major purpose of the seminar: researching and writing a paper based on primary and secondary sources on some aspect of health, medicine, and science in Africa.

The course meets in person on Monday from 1:20-3:15 in Humanities 5245

Neil Kodesh  
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**Office Hours (in person and virtual via Zoom)**  
Monday 11:30-1:00 and Tuesday 12:00-2:00  
Appointment required via [Calendly](#)

## Course Objectives

- Become familiar with some of the major themes in the history and anthropology of health, medicine, and science 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
- Write a research paper that demonstrates your ability to evaluate sources critically and provide a convincing historical interpretation your chosen topic

## Our Classroom

I firmly believe that the classroom should be a place of exploration that supports and respects a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. As your instructor, I am committed to creating a classroom environment that welcomes all students, regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, etc. We all have implicit biases, and I will try to continually examine my judgments, words, and actions to keep my biases in check and treat everyone fairly. I hope that you will do the same, and that you will let me know if there is anything I can do to make sure everyone is encouraged to succeed in this class.

## 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 me directly.

## Office Hours

I am here to help! Office hours let you work one-on-one with a professor on your specific course needs. They are also an opportunity to get to know your professor, discuss academic or professional pursuits, or work through any challenges you may be encountering. Attending office hours is a great way to connect with me.

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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.

## Accommodations

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the rights of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course accommodations.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Academic Honesty

ChatGPT and other AI programs are now available to help create text. These can be useful tools, but they are far from perfect. They often produce factually inaccurate and flawed material, some of which is effectively plagiarized from other sources. In addition, the use of these programs may stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences teach you how to conduct different kinds of research, organize ideas and data, and formulate structured arguments. Writing is where these skills all come together. The very process of writing develops your ability to analyze, argue, and present. Writing is a process, and we learn to think through problems and develop understanding and analysis as we write. It is an essential part of your education and intellectual development.

In this class you are welcome to use AI programs to help you brainstorm ideas or edit your own writing. However, you must then fact-check, edit, and rewrite to ensure that what you submit is accurate and your own work. **The representation of AI-generated responses as your own work is a violation of this course's expectations and will be addressed through UW–Madison's [academic misconduct policy](#).** If you are concerned that you might be unintentionally plagiarizing or are unclear on how to avoid it, please reach out to me or your TA to discuss citations and how to use sources appropriately.

# 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 1:20-3:15 in Humanities 5245.

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

If you need to miss class due to illness or a family emergency, please let me know in advance. In general, everybody will have one "free" excused absence. If further absences are necessary, you may be asked to complete additional assignments to make up for the missed classes.

## Weekly Classroom Discussion (30%)

Weekly discussions of the 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 other learning materials, and to actively participate in discussion. I have tried to select learning materials that will not only inform but also capture your curiosity and imagination. Please bring questions about the week's lectures and learning materials to discussion. If you are having trouble understanding something, other students probably are as well. So don't be shy about asking questions.

The most productive discussions happen when classmates engage respectfully and constructively with one another's ideas, and I will structure discussions to facilitate this dialogue. Remember that the quality of your contributions to discussions is as important as the quantity, and that asking a well-informed question counts as participation. I recognize that participation may come more easily to some than others, and am happy to meet if you would like to discuss strategies for speaking in class.

Discussion grades will be based on attendance and active participation in class, which includes group discussions and other activities. **You will be responsible for grading your own participation.** I want you to feel empowered about your participation grade, as we are aware that students have different participation styles. Keep track of your attendance, contributions to class discussions, responses, etc. At the end of the semester you will submit a self-assessment. As long as it squares with my assessment, then you'll receive the grade you submit.

## Short Weekly Assignments (10%)

You will be responsible for a short assignment each week that we meet to discuss readings. 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 guide our discussions and also build toward the more substantial final assignment.

Weekly posts will be graded on a scale of 1-3 points:

3 points: thoughtful engagement with the course material for the week

1-2 points: inadequate engagement with the course material for the week

0 points: no attempt made or off-topic response

## **Final Project (50%):** research proposal (5%), annotated bibliography (5%), final research paper (40%)

The culminating project is an original research paper of 13-15 double-spaced pages based on primary and secondary sources. You have three choices for the topic of your final project:

1. 13-15-page research paper on a topic developed in consultation with Professor Kodesh. The paper will be based on research in primary sources and secondary literature.
2. 13-15-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 and secondary literature.
3. 13-15-page research paper on the history of the Church Missionary Society's medical mission in Uganda. The paper will be based on research in primary sources provided by Professor Kodesh and secondary literature.

I will provide more detailed instructions about the final project over the course of the semester, and I will also incorporate discussions about the research process into our weekly meetings. 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. Draft of research question(s) accompanied by an explanation of why this is a good topic for historical inquiry and a provisional list of primary and secondary sources. **Due November 9.**
2. Research proposal and annotated bibliography. **Due November 16.**
3. Partial draft, at least 8 pp. total. **Due November 30.**
4. Final papers due **December 18.**

## **Final Project Presentations (10%)**

Will devote week 15 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.

## **Evaluation and Grading**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
Weekly Classroom Discussion	30
Weekly Assignments	10
Research Proposal	5
Annotated Bibliography	5
Final Research Paper	40
Final Project Presentation	10

## **Grading Scale**

<b>A</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>BC</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
93-100%	87-92.9%	82-86.9%	77-81.9%	72-76.9%	67-71.9%	0-66.9%

## Course Schedule

Week 1: September 11	Introducing “Global Health”
Week 2: September 18	Missionaries, medicine, and colonialism
Week 3: September 25	No class (Yom Kippur): Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 4: October 2	Cancer and Global Oncology
Week 5: October 9	What changes—and doesn’t—in the age of global health?
Week 6: October 16	HIV/AIDS
Week 7: October 23	Medical and scientific research in Africa
Week 8: October 30	Medical humanitarianism, academia, and global health experiences
Week 9: November 6	Work on research proposal and annotated bibliography
Week 10: November 13	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 11: November 20	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 12: November 27	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 13: December 4	Peer review of final project drafts
Week 14: December 11	Final project presentations

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