

HEALTH, MEDICINE, and SCIENCE in AFRICA

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Spring 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 Wednesday from 8:50-10:45 in Humanities 5255

Neil Kodesh
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Office Hours (in person and virtual via Zoom)
Monday 9:30-11:30 AM
Appointment required via [Calendly](#)

Learning Outcomes

- 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 lengthy research paper that demonstrates your ability to evaluate sources critically and provide a convincing historical interpretation your chosen topic

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 Wednesday from 8:50-10:45 in Humanities 5255.

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

Weekly discussions of the assigned readings 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. 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.

In addition to discussing the assigned readings, we will also devote fifteen minutes of each week's discussion to exploring how the ideas and main themes raised in these materials relate to contemporary issues. Between weeks 2 and 9, each of you will be responsible for leading one of these discussions twice along with one other class member. 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.

Weekly Assignments

You will be responsible for a short assignment each week that we meet. You will find instructions for these assignments in the weekly module on Canvas. You must post these assignments by 8 pm on the Tuesday before class. These short assignments will help build toward the more substantial final assignment. 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

The culminating project is an original research paper of 13-15 double-spaced pages based on primary and secondary sources. You have four 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. 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 6 (March 1), 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 and third options for your final project.
2. Draft of research question accompanied by a three-sentence explanation of why this is a good topic for historical inquiry. Due March 10.
3. Research proposal and annotated bibliography. Due April 3.
4. Partial draft, at least 8 pp. total. Due April 23.

Final Project Presentations

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.

Course Schedule	
Week 1: January 25	Introducing “Global Health”
Week 2: February 1	Missionaries, medicine, and colonialism
Week 3: February 8	What changes—and doesn’t—in the age of global health?
Week 4: February 15	HIV/AIDS, Part 1: origins and spread
Week 5: February 22	HIV/AIDS, Part 2: aftermath
Week 6: March 1	Medical and scientific research in Africa/Research workshop
Week 7: March 8	Cancer and global oncology
Week 8: March 15	Spring Break
Week 9: March 22	Medical humanitarianism, academia, and global health experiences
Week 10: March 29	No class: work on research projects
Week 11: April 5	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 12: April 12	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 13: April 19	Individual meetings with Professor Kodesh
Week 14: April 26	Peer review of final project drafts
Week 15: May 3	Final project presentations

Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Active Class Participation (including weekly writing assignments, discussion of readings, and peer review exercises)	40
Draft of Research Question, Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, and Draft of Research Paper	10
Final Project	40
Final Project Presentation	10

Grading Scale

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

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.