History 201: The Historian's Craft
Plagues and Pestilence in the Pre-Modern World

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UW-Madison, Fall 2024
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Office location: Mosse 5269
Office Hours: Monday 1-3pm

Course Description
Mondays 3:30-5:25PM Humanities 2231

In 1349, the word *pestilenciam* entered the legal records of the English court of King's Bench for the first time. The pestilence, as they called it in England, had finally reached their shores causing panic and the closing of the courts. By the time the Black Death finally ebbed in 1350, its catastrophic ravaging of the landscape was plain: towns lay abandoned, churches lost priests, fields fell fallow, and English society had fundamentally changed. Plague and illness, however, were not new in pre-modern Europe; the Byzantines in the sixth century previously experienced cataclysmic pandemics. In this course, we will explore how major instances of plague and ongoing illnesses like leprosy structured and transformed the societies of Europe in the pre-modern period. By the end of this course, you will have a firm grasp of the history of plague in pre-modern Europe. Both together and individually, we will be reading and analyzing primary documents and secondary texts to improve analytical skills. We will be working to expand students' capacity for critical thinking, encourage students to question what they read, and teach them the skills to begin to discover their own answers. Students will learn to write about and present their ideas to their peers, review and edit the work of others, and produce research papers that answer key questions about the effects of plague and pandemic on society.

Course Objectives
In this course students will:

- Cultivate an understanding of plagues in the pre-modern world and the lasting effects such disasters had on the societies in which the occurred;
- Develop their ability to critically analyze secondary and primary source materials, including identifying the purposes, limitations, authorities, and biases of given sources;
- Expand their capacity for critical thinking and for developing historical and ethical questions based on their engagement with historical sources;
- Build on their skills as historians by using these sources to craft original, evidence-based historical arguments;
- Communicate effectively these arguments both orally and in writing;
- Engage in peer review by critically assessing classmates' work thoughtfully and constructively.

Credit Hours
The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor:student meeting times [insert meeting time expectations], reading, writing, problem sets, studio time, labs, field trips, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Course Designation
Gen Ed - Communication Part B
Breadth - Humanities
Level - Intermediate
L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Books
There are no books to buy for this class. All reading assignments will be provided for you in the form of PDF files on the UW Canvas Course page.

Assignments
Your grade will be based on a combination of factors, including the completion of weekly reading assignments, primary and secondary source analyses, the components of a research paper and the final completed project. Please see the percentage breakdown below.

I. Attendance and Participation: 30%
II. Primary Source Analysis: 5%
III. Secondary Source Review:5%
IV. Writing Preparation: 30%
    a. Research Question: 5%
    b. Annotated Bibliography: 10%
    c. Thesis and Outline: 5%
    d. Peer Review: 10%
V. Final Research Project: 30%
    a. Rough Draft: 10%

b. Presentation: 5%
c. Final Paper: 15%

Attendance and participation: 30%
Each week in which there are readings you will have both secondary source materials and primary source documents to prepare. You should plan to read these documents before the first class meeting of the week, and be prepared to discuss the primary source materials in the context of the assigned readings. Attendance and participation are mandatory, but you will have one free absence. If you experience severe illness or emergency, please get in touch to discuss your options.

Primary Source Analysis: 5%
Choose any one of the primary sources provided in the source materials provided on Canvas and evaluate it based on the following criteria: Who wrote it? Why? Who is the audience? What can this document tell us about the moment in which it was written? This analysis should be about 1 page, or roughly 300 words. **Due 9/23 at 11:59pm.**

Secondary Source Review (500 words): 5%
In the secondary source review, you will choose one of the articles listed below, read it in its entirety, evaluate it, and write a 500-word (~2 pages) article analysis. The review should consist of a brief summary of the author's thesis and argument, examine the author's sources and how they used them, and finally evaluate, based on your examination, whether you believe the claim that the author is making. Be sure to use specific examples from the text to back up your arguments. These assignments are meant to encourage you to begin to critically analyze primary and secondary source materials. This has many uses, from building arguments to developing research questions. More importantly, they will deepen your abilities to question arguments, not because you disagree with them, but based on the research and evidence on which they are built. **Due 10/14 @ 11:59pm.**

Writing Preparation: 30%

Research Question: 5%
These assignments represent the first steps of beginning a historical research project. First you will need to choose a topic that you are interested in pursuing for your research project. As we move through the first weeks of class, be thinking about the topic and what kinds of questions interest you. **Due September 30 in class**

Annotated Bibliography: 10%
An annotated bibliography will help you to compile and understand the sources you are collecting for your research project. For this assignment, choose 3 primary sources and 5 secondary sources from the materials you have collected. For each primary source, be sure that you have a correct citation, followed by 100-150 words that analyze the source and its relevance to your research. For each secondary source, write out the correct citation, followed by 100-150 words evaluating the argument and documentary support of the article or chapter, and summarize how it is contributing to your project. For citations we will be using the Chicago Manual of Style; if you have questions regarding how to cite specific

items, please feel free to use my copy of the manual during office hours. **Due 10/21, bring with you to meeting with Prof. Whatley**

Thesis and Outline: 5%
Now that you have your research questions and have analyzed your source collection, you are ready to start scaffolding the paper. Write an outline of your essay, beginning with your thesis statement (i.e., your argument). You should think of your thesis as the answer to your research question, and the outline should include at least five sections (exluding the introduction and conclusion) each of which includes a sub-thesis and the corresponding source materials that will serve as evidence for the section. **Due 11/4 @ in class.**

Peer Review: 10%
You will exchange your paper with another assigned classmate. Using peer review skills we will learn in class, you will attempt to help your writing partner improve their paper by providing thoughtful, constructive criticism.

Final Research Project: 30%

Rough Draft: 10%
The final project of this class will be a research paper that consists of 7-8 pages (approx. 2000 words double-spaced), that uses at least eight sources (4 primary, 4 secondary) to support a strong, engaging, and original thesis. The paper should be organized, with a logical structure, clear argument, and a historically accurate narrative that is supported by your primary source evidence.
Due in class 11/25.

Presentation: 5%
Part of your research project will be a 10-minute oral presentation, including PowerPoint (or a similar program) slides. In it, you should explain your thesis and evidence, and discuss your research process and the decisions you made regarding your thesis and how you used your evidence. Be sure to include any appropriate photos, graphs, or charts.
We will have sign-ups for presentation slots in the first week of class, and presentations will occur in the last two class meetings.

Final Research Paper: 15%
The final research paper should be a carefully revised and refined final iteration of your project that includes edits and suggestions made during the peer review process. All citations should be correct, the prose clean of errors, and quotations/paraphrasing appropriately handled. You will be graded on the depth of your research, the clarity of your narrative argument, your ability to integrate constructive criticism, and the overall execution of the paper.
Due 12/13 @ 11:59pm.

Grading scale: A 94-100 AB 88-93 B 84-87 BC 78-83 C 70-77 D 60-69 F 0-59

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES
See: https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT
Instructors should discuss academic integrity with students early and often. For suggested ways to engage students in these discussions, see the College of Letters and Science Remote Teaching Toolkit.

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.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT
The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform Professor Shoemaker of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Professor Shoemaker will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT
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.

Week 1
Sept 9: Introduction to course – What is history?

Week 2
Sept 16: Justinianic Plague (541-549) in Byzantium
Readings:
Eisenberg, Merle and Mordechai, Lee. "The Justinianic plague and global pandemics: the making of the plague concept." *American Historical Review* 125, no. 5 (2020): 1632-1667.

Mordechai, Lee and Eisenberg, Merle. "Rejecting catastrophe: the case of the Justinianic plague." *Past and Present* 244 (2019): 3-50.

Procopius, The History of the Wars, Chapter 22-23
Procopius, The Secret History, Chapter 18

Workshop – Analyzing Primary and Secondary Sources

Week 3
Sept 23: Justinianic Plague: Waves in Western Europe
Readings:
Solheim, Steinar and Iversen, Frode. "The mid-6th century crises and their impacts on human activity and settlements in south-eastern Norway." In *Ruralia XII: Settlement Change across Medieval Europe: Old Paradigms and New Vistas*, Edited by Brady, Niall and Theune, Claudia. Ruralia; 12, 423-434. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2019

McCormick, Michael. "Gregory of Tours on sixth-century plague and other epidemics." *Speculum* 96, no. 1 (2021): 38-96.

Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks, IV.31; IX.21-22.

Workshop – Writing Research Questions
Assignment due 9/23: Primary Source Analysis

Week 4
Sept 30: Leprosy Before and After the Plague
Readings:
Peterson, Anna M.. "Connotation and denotation: the construction of the leper in Narbonne and Siena before the plague." In *Leprosy and Identity in the Middle Ages: From England to the Mediterranean*, Edited by Brenner, Elma and Touati, François-Olivier., 323-344. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021.

Demaitre, Luke. "The Description and Diagnosis of Leprosy by Fourteenth-Century Physicians." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 59, no. 3 (1985): 327–44.

Leviticus 13:1-14:57
Third Lateran Council, Canon 23, 1179
SC 8/296/14783 – Dispute with Hospital of St Giles at Boughton, 1330
SC 8/324/E617B – Dispute between lepers and Hospital of St Giles at Holborn, 1400
KB 145/6/24 – Sheriff is called to prove the health of John Hedon and his wife Alice, 1446
C 54/320 – Joanna Nightengale proves her health, 1468
Writ de Leproso amovendo, 16th century

Workshop – Building a Source Base: what is an archive?
Assignment due 9/30: Research Question

Week 6
Oct 7: The Coming of the Black Death
Readings:
Theilman, John and Frances Cate. "A Plague of Plagues: The Problem of Plague Diagnosis in Medieval England." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 37, no 3 (2007): 371-393

The Report of the Paris Medical Faculty, October 1348
Bocaccio: The Decameron, "Day the First," 1348
Jean de Venette, The Chronical, 1359
The Florentine Chronicle, 1370

Workshop – Thesis Statements

Week 7
Oct 14: After the Black Death
Readings:
Stone, David. "The Black Death and its Immediate Aftermath: Crisis and Change in the Fenland Economy, 1346-1353." In *Town and Countryside in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in Honour of John Hatcher*, edited by Mark Bailey and Stephen Rigby. Brepols, 2012.

Palmer, Robert. *English Law in the Age of the Black Death, 1348-1351: A Transformation of Governance and Law*. Chappell Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993; 9-61.

De gestis mirabilibus regis Edwardi Tertii, 1349
City Council of Siena, Ordinance, May 1349
Bishops of Rochester and Ely, Post-Plague Parish Poverty, 1349
The Cortez of Castile, Ordinance, 1351
Wiltshire Assize Roll of Labor Offenders, 1352

Workshop – Quotes, Paraphrasing, Citation
Assignment Due 10/14: Secondary Source Analysis

Week 8
Oct 21: 15-minute check-in conferences with Prof. Whatley

Assignment due 10/21: Annotated Bibliography

Week 9
Oct 28: The Fifteenth Century: The Age of Plague
Readings:
Crawshaw, Jane Stevens, J. L. Bolton, Elma Brenner, Samuel Cohn, John Henderson, Neil Murphy, Elizabeth Rutledge, et al. "The Renaissance Invention of Quarantine." In *The Fifteenth Century XII: Society in an Age of Plague*, edited by Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe, 161–74. Boydell & Brewer, 2013.

John Lydgate, The Dance of Death, 1430
A Provision or Advise Against Ye Plague in London, 1563

Workshop – Introductions

Week 10
Nov 4: Plagues in the New World
Readings:
Alchon, Suzanne Austin. "Colonialism, Disease and the Spanish Conquest of the Caribbean, Mesoamerica, and the Central Andes," in *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective*. University of New Mexico Press, 2003. 60-83.

Annals of the Cakchiquels, 1520
Treatise against the Serpentine Disease, 1510
Writings of an author in Tlatelolco, 1528

Workshop – Outlining
Assignment due 11/4: Thesis Statement and Outline

Week 11
Nov 11: London Plague of 1666
Readings:
Slack, Paul. *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Siena, Kevin. "Reframing Plague after 1666." In *Rotten Bodies: Class and Contagion in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 49–70. Yale University Press, 2019.

Selections from the Diary of Samuel Pepys, 1665-1666
Letter from a Civil Servant, 1665
Court Case at Whitehall, 1665
Letter of Henry Muddiman, 1666

Orders for Prevention of the Plague, 1666

Workshop -- What's in a paragraph?

Week 12
Nov 18: Independent writing week: work on rough drafts

Week 13
Nov 25: *Workshop – Peer Review Week*

Assignment due 11/25: Rough Draft of Research Paper (in class)

Nov 28: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14
Dec 2:
Presentations

Week 15
Dec 9:
Presentations

Final Paper Due December 13, 2024 @ 11:59PM