History 461/561: **American Medical History**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 – 13:20 in 185 Lil

- **Professor:** James C. Mohr
- **Office:** 383 McKenzie Hall
- **Hours:** T, R 13:30 to 14:30, and **by appointment**
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Required texts (all are available in paperback at the Bookstore):

1. Leavitt and Numbers, eds., *Sickness and Health in America* (LN below)
3. Mohr, *Licensed to Practice*

This course is designed to offer a fundamental knowledge of American medical history and a chance to think about the role and the place of medicine and health in our society. The course presupposes no prior knowledge of medicine or medical history and does not involve hard science. The course does presuppose a basic prior knowledge of American history in general, and does presuppose a willingness to read thoroughly in areas that might not be immediately familiar. Students will be expected to do the assigned reading in advance and come to class prepared to discuss that day’s reading.

In addition to a mid-term exam and a final exam, the course will also require a research paper of 6-8 pages. The paper assignment will be discussed in class during the first week of the quarter.

For graduate students enrolled in this course as History 561: You will fulfill all of the undergraduate requirements (including the exams and research paper), and in addition you will turn in one other paper. That other paper will address a medical history subject related to your larger interests, and it will be discussed individually with Professor Mohr.

**Grading:**

For undergraduates: Mid-term exam 33%; research paper 33%; final exam 34%.

For graduate students: Mid-term exam 25%; research paper 25%; additional graduate paper 25%; final exam 25%.

A syllabus with lecture topics and reading assignments follows.
Week I.
Jan. 07: Introduction, ground rules, and discussion of research paper

Jan. 09: Lecture: The European Heritage
Reading: WT, 1-25; LN, 3-10

Week II.
Jan. 14: Lecture: Colonial Medicine and the Boston Inoculation Debate
Reading: WT, 28-54, 451-457; LN, 45-71, 407-417

Jan. 16: No Class: read ahead for future assignments and start research paper

Week III:
Jan. 21: Lecture: Medicine in the Early Republic
Reading: WT, 55-71, 93-124; LN, 72-83

Jan. 23: Lecture: Regulars and Irregulars in the Nineteenth Century
Reading: WT, 71-72, 125-149

Week IV.
Jan. 28: Lecture and Discussion: Regulating Medical Practice
Reading: LN, 225-236; and Mohr, Licensed to Practice

Jan. 30: Lecture and Video: The Triumph of Scientific Medicine, Part 1: Surgery
Reading: WT, 168-178

Week V.
Feb. 04: Lecture: The Triumph of Scientific Medicine, Part 2: General Practice
Reading: WT, 199-233; LN, 87-101, 115-142

Feb. 06: Lecture: The Triumph of Scientific Medicine, Part 3: The Rise of New Problems
Reading: WT, 264-274, 327-329, 379-386, 409-417; LN, 309-333, 543-554

Week VI.
Feb. 11: Lecture and Discussion: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study
Reading: WT, 388-408, 416-423; LN, 351-368, 392-404

Feb. 13: Mid-Quarter Exam
Week VII.
Feb. 18: Lecture: Epidemics and US History
Reading: WT, 489-498; LN, 418-433
Feb. 20: Lecture and Video: The Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918
Reading: No additional assignment; work on your paper

Week VIII.
Feb. 25: Lecture: Women and American Medicine
Reading: WT, 149-157, 339-347, 372-379; LN, 237-265
Feb. 27: Lecture: Medicine and the State: The Evolution of Public Health
Reading: LN, 437-542

Week IX.
Mar. 04: Lecture and Video: The Problem of Mental Health
Reading: LN, 334-348

Research Papers Due
Mar. 06: Lecture: Historical Origins of the Current Crisis, Part 1, Funding
Reading: WT, 435-441, 485-489; LN, 269-283

Week X.
Mar 11: Lecture: Historical Origins of the Current Crisis, Part 2, Organizational Problems
Reading: WT, 461-484, 532-539; LN, 284-294
Mar. 13: Overview, Review, and Discussion

Week XI.
Mar 19: FINAL EXAM (note: this is at 8:00AM on a Wednesday – and please make any travel plans accordingly)

Paper assignment:

You are to read at least 250 consecutive pages from (a) any medical journal published any time between 1835 and 1935, or (b) any of the annual Transactions of any state medical society published between 1835 and 1935, or (c) any medically related reports from the US Serials Set. After reading those pages thoroughly, write a 7-page paper about some aspect of the material you found in the 250 pages you chose to read.
Your paper may take many different forms. There is no right or wrong approach. Here are some of the many possible questions you might ask yourselves to get started: What were American medical people writing about in your selection? What seemed to concern them? In your selections, were writers focusing on particular diseases; on general problems; on themselves? Why and toward what end? What was the state of medicine or medical practice reflected in those pages? What surprised you? What disappointed, shocked, or embarrassed you in there? What did the articles or case studies reveal about physician attitudes toward patients; toward the public; toward racial minorities; or toward one another? Do politics enter their discussions, either directly or subtly? How did medical societies conduct their business? What public health issues got raised in federal government reports? How were various diseases or conditions dealt with?

You would be wise to do some preliminary scanning of various possible choices before committing to the 250 pages you want to look at in detail. That way you are more likely to find material of interest to you than you would with an arbitrary choice, though an arbitrary choice is also perfectly acceptable for this assignment. Once you have identified something to write about from your 250 pages, you may read beyond your chosen selection if you wish to add to the material, but you are not required to do so.

Both the Journal of the American Medical Association [1883-1935] (Sci desk, shelved by title) and The American Journal of the Medical Sciences [1835-1933] (Sci Storage, shelved by title, are available in “hard” copy, so you could deal with the originals themselves right here on campus. So also are scattered issues of several other journals (consult the catalogue). Scores of other journals and all of the many Transactions of state medical societies are available in electronic form on the web (for Transactions, use Google Books and search using such keywords as “Transactions” and “Medical” and “society” and limit the years to our period). The US Serials Set, a compilation of every Congressional hearing and federal report, is now accessible by OU students through Lexus/Nexus Congressional. Consult a reference librarian for additional instructions about how to use this rich source.