

Anthropology 2U03 Plagues and People

Fall 2017

Monday/Wednesday 10:30 - 11:20pm



Death Beckons (Jay Nelson, 1983)

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We live in an era obsessed with killer germs, epidemics and pandemics. There is a mounting sense of vulnerability as a growing list of pathogens becomes visible. Epidemics and plagues, however, are not new; they have influenced the course of human history for thousands of years.

This course considers the origins, antiquity, and impact of plagues on human societies from an anthropological, biological and biosocial perspective. It is structured around two, one-hour lectures and a one-hour tutorial.

Tutorials begin the week of September 11, 2017.

The lectures begin with an exploration of definitions, models and general principles of infectious disease to establish frameworks for understanding plagues. We then discuss specific plagues, historic and contemporary, with a view to understanding why they emerge, how they are intimately linked to human behaviour, and how they transform societies. Dorothy Crawford's (2007) book, *Deadly Companions: How Microbes Shaped our History* discusses how humans influence, and have been influenced by, some of the smallest forms of life on earth. Peter Washer's (2010) book, *Emerging Infectious Diseases and Society*, takes up the problem of "plague" today. Paul Slacks (2012) book, *Plague: A Very Short Introduction*, talks specifically about the Black Death and the ramifications on medieval society. By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the relationship between human behavior, environment and epidemics.
- Understand the aetiology of major pandemics of the past and present.
- Appreciate the importance of studying historic plagues for understanding current and future epidemics.
- Understand the anthropological framework for interpreting the biosocial origins and consequences of epidemics.
- improve your critical thinking skills

Required texts

Crawford, Dorothy H. (2007) *Deadly Companions: How Microbes Shaped our History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Washer, Peter (2014) *Emerging Infectious Diseases and Society*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Slack, Paul, (2012) *Plague: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Learning Assessments

In-class assessments/exams (2, worth 20% each)	40%
Tutorial participation	10%
Guided reading questions	10%
Final exam	40%

LECTURE, READING AND TUTORIAL SCHEDULE

Week (#)	Lecture Topic	Reading	Tutorial
Sept 6 (1)	Plagues and People Intro		No tutorials
Sept 11 (2)	What is a Plague?	Crawford, ch 1, 2 Slack, P ch 1	Plague family feud!
Sept 18 (2)	Plagues in History The Black Death	Crawford, ch 3 pp 75-81 Crawford pp 82-106 Slack, P ch 2	Will the Black Death rise again? Yes? No? Fight for your side!
Sept 25 (4)	Emerging Disease	Crawford pp 184-204 Washer, ch 1, 2	Fiction and Disease
Oct 2 (5)	War and plague <i>Exam #1 Oct 4th</i>	Crawford, ch 6 pp 151-157 Slack, P ch 3	Synergy or causation networks
October 9	NO CLASSES	Fall recess	NO TUTORIALS
Oct 16 (6)	The Speckled Monster	Crawford pp 106-124;161-179 Washer, ch 7 pp 143-147	Bioterrorism
Oct 30(7)	The Forgotten Plague	Crawford pp 204-210 Washer pp 78-85, 98-107	Blame
Nov 6 (8)	The Secret Plague	Crawford pp 124-130; 189-191 Washer, ch 3 pp 45-61	HIV/AIDS
Nov 13 (9)	The White Plague <i>Exam #2 Nov 15th</i>	Crawford pp 157-160, ch 8 Washer pp 25-26,57,162-68	Public health and media
Nov 20 (10)	The Fever Plague	Crawford pp 35-47 Washer, ch 5 (page 93!)	Mad cows, modern plagues and superbugs
Nov 27 (11)	The Hot Plague	Crawford pp 130-138, Washer pp 26-27	Malaria Wars
Dec 4 (12)	Anthropology of Plague	Crawford, Conclusion Washer, ch pp 159-168	Dirt, germs and the immune system
	Q & A		Q & A wrap-up

Learning Assessments

1. **Two (2) in-class exams (50 minutes each)**

Wednesday, October 4th: material from previous 4 weeks up to and including Monday the 2nd

Wednesday, November 15th: material from October 16th to and including November 13th.

The in-class assessments evaluate your understanding of the course material. They will consist of varying combinations of multiple choice, short-answers (e.g. definitions, short explanations, comparisons, etc.) and essay questions on material from lectures, tutorials, films and readings.

2. **Tutorial participation**

Your TA will evaluate your contributions to the weekly tutorial sessions. It is not sufficient to attend; you must contribute to discussions and demonstrate that you have done the assigned reading.

3. **Guided Reading Questions (GRQ)**

Questions on the reading assigned for your tutorial will be posted each week on our Avenue website Friday night or Saturday morning. This will begin the week of September 18th. You are required to submit a 500-word answer (work alone) to **all three** of the posted questions (500 words **TOTAL** for all three – **NOT** 500 words per question!). To be eligible for the pass, you must submit the 500-word discussion each week in your tutorial at the beginning of class. **There are no makeups for GRQ.** Please print out your answers label them with your name, ID#, tutorial section (Friday 1-2) and the instructor's name (i.e. Tyler Murchie). Hand them in at the start of tutorial – not the end (they aren't valid then). They are PASS/FAIL. We look for the major points/themes in your answers but DO NOT grade your Shakespearean English. THEY CANNOT BE EMAILED, OR ELECTRONICALLY SUBMIT, PAPER ONLY!

4. **Final exam during examination period (2 hours)**

The final exam covers all the course material. It will consist of multiple choice, short-answers (e.g. definitions, short explanations, comparisons, etc.) and essay questions on material from lectures, tutorials, films and readings.

The Learning Environment

Avenue

Lectures are presented using Keynote. Abbreviated pdf versions will be made available from our Avenue website (avenue.mcmaster.ca) after lecture on that given day. You must be registered in the course to have access to the website, and you can only access it using your MAC ID and password.

Films

Films are an integral part of the learning process in Plagues and Peoples. They provide additional information and perspectives. They will be shown during class time or tutorials and you are expected to view them then. There are no makeup film showings. Perhaps you can find them online.

Active Learning

This course is large, but I encourage you to enliven the experience by asking questions, seeking clarification, providing comments and offering alternative points of view. Keep up with the required reading on a weekly basis so you can participate more fully in the course.

INSTRUCTORS ARE REQUIRED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ON COURSE OUTLINES

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by Apreption or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (Insert specific course information)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

(If applicable) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective January, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link (Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010).