

AMST/SISP 353Z: HEALTH, ILLNESS & POWER

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Winter 2023 | Weekdays, January 10-January 23, 12pm-4pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 801 897 3547 | Passcode: 2aQvSK

Course Overview

In this class, we will explore the interlocking histories of health, illness, and power in the United States. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which discourses of disease, disability, and contagion have been imagined through the lenses of social difference, including race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability. We will address civil institutions designed to manage individual and population health, and we will consider theories of political power in the making of the “modern” body.

Sample topics covered will include immigration policies and contagious disease scares; the political meanings of public health campaigns; physical fitness and the value of bodily labor under capitalism; the management of diseases that are symptomatic, and those that are not; race- and gender-based approaches to medicine and medical difference; clinical trials and the ethics of human experimentation; regulations surrounding tissue and organ donation; changing rituals of bodily hygiene; preventative medicine and the call to personal responsibility; mental health policies and institutions; and pride movements surrounding the “unhealthy” body.

Course Materials

- Articles provided on Moodle
- Books:
 - o Metzl and Kirkland eds., *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*
 - o Clarke et al., *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.*
 - o Cooper and Waldby, *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy*

Each book is available as an eBook through the library. Tip: when accessing eBooks, always choose the option that is not “eBook Central,” which has more restrictive downloading policies than other services for the books listed above.

Grading Breakdown

Participation: 35%

Attendance is required given the short length of the term and will be factored into the participation grade. Reading/viewing assignments must be completed ahead of time, and students must come prepared to discuss the material at hand. Students will also be required to engage in small group work. Students should plan to join class zoom meetings with a device that has access to a word processing program (i.e., you may be asked to write and submit material in real time during class). If this presents an issue for you, please let me know in advance, and we will devise another solution. The first reading assignments must be completed prior to the first day of class; see the schedule below. Thus, students’ participation begins on day 1.

Show and Tell Assignments: 15%

Students will share 9 “show and tell” items that connect to the daily theme (described throughout the course schedule). These items can include articles, images, clips, and/or objects. Students will be asked to share their item and explain its significance. These assignments will not be given a letter grade, but will receive “credit” if completed or “no credit” if not. The first show and tell assignment is due the first day of class; see the schedule below. It is recommended that you complete the reading each week before deciding upon your item.

Short Response Essays/Discussion Questions: 25%

Students will write 9 short response essays, approximately 300 words in length. The essays should respond to at least one of the readings from that day. Any of the readings not covered in the essay should be addressed in a list of subsequent questions provided on the same document. (E.g., for the first week, if you write a response essay to the Anderson article, you would need to include a discussion question for each of the remaining readings. The point of this format is to demonstrate that you have completed and

considered all of the readings, while allowing you to delve more deeply into the piece(s) that you find most interesting.) These essays will not be assigned a letter grade, but will be given credit upon submission. The first short response essay/discussion question assignment is due before the first class at 11:59pm, Monday Jan. 9, submitted via Moodle.

Final Paper: 25%

Students will be asked to write approximately 1000-1200 words on a topic of their choice that connects to class themes. Students are required to bring in at least one outside primary source. We will practice the type of primary source analysis required in the final paper through the daily “show and tell” assignments. The final paper includes a presentation by each student on the final day of class. The final paper is due at 11:59, Wednesday Jan. 25, submitted via Moodle.

Wesleyan Statement on Accessibility

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible. If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/218, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-2332).

Course Schedule

Please note: The readings are listed by the date on which they will be discussed. Each “Short Response Essay/Discussion Question” assignment is due by midnight the night before we meet. This may require that you stay ahead of the reading by more than one day.

Day 1. Tuesday 1/10. Health, Illness, and Empire

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #1 uploaded by 11:59pm, Monday, 1/9.
- “Show and Tell” Assignment #1: a representation of a “community health standard” (any “community,” any source)
- Moodle:
 - o Anderson, “Leprosy and Citizenship”
 - o Shah, “Public Health and the Mapping of Chinatown”
- *Against Health*:
 - o Introduction, Metzl, “Why Against Health?”
 - o Ch. 4, Adams, “Against Global Health: Arbitrating Science, Non-Science, and Nonsense through Health”

Day 2. Wednesday 1/11. Biomedicalization and the Production of Difference

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #2 uploaded by 11:59pm, Tuesday, 1/10.
- “Show and Tell” Assignment #2: an advertisement for a medication targeted to a particular population
- Moodle:
 - o Lederer, from *Flesh and Blood: Organ Transplantation and Blood Transfusion in 20th Century America*:
 - Ch. 6, “Medicalizing Miscegenation: Transplantation and Race”
- *Biomedicalization*:
 - o Ch. 1, Clarke et al., “Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine”
 - o Ch. 7, Shim, “The Stratified Biomedicalization of Heart Disease: Expert and Lay Perspectives on Racial and Class Inequality”
 - o Ch. 9, Kahn, “Surrogate Markers and Surrogate Marketing in Biomedicine: The Regulatory Etiology and Commercial Progression of ‘Ethnic’ Drug Development”

Day 3. Thursday 1/12. Reproductive Politics

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #3 uploaded by 11:59pm, Wednesday 1/11.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #3: a statement about maternal mortality from the ProPublica series, ["Lost Mothers: Maternal Care and Preventable Deaths"](#)
- Moodle:
 - o Roberts, from *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*:
 - Ch. 2, "The Dark Side of Birth Control"
- *Clinical Labor*:
 - o Ch. 1, "A Clinical Labor Theory of Value"
 - o Ch. 3, "Fertility Outsourcing: Contract, Risk, and Assisted Reproductive Technology"
- *Against Health*:
 - o Ch. 7, Wolf, "Against Breastfeeding (Sometimes)"

Day 4. Friday 1/13. Constructing Bodily Norms

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #4 uploaded by 11:59pm, Thursday 1/12.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #4: a statement about gender and/or sexuality identity in relation to people categorized as "adolescent" or "geriatric" from a popular news source (e.g., "the youth of today...")
- Moodle:
 - o Gill-Peterson, from *Histories of the Transgender Child*:
 - "Introduction: Toward a Trans of Color Critique of Medicine"
 - "The Racial Plasticity of Gender and the Child"
 - o Malatino, from *Queer Embodiment: Monstrosity, Medical Violence, and Intersex Experience*:
 - "State Science: Biopolitics and the Medicalization of Gender Nonconformance"
- *Biomedicalization*:
 - o Ch. 10, Fishman, "The Making of Viagra"

Day 5. Monday 1/16. Beauty as Health / Health as Morality

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #5 uploaded by 11:59pm, Sunday 1/15.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #5: a quotation or image from a religiously based weight loss program website
- *Against Health*:
 - o Ch. 3, Berlant, "Risky Bigness: On Obesity, Eating, and the Ambiguity of 'Health'"
 - o Ch. 6, Lebesco, "Fat Panic and the New Morality"
- *Biomedicalization*:
 - o Ch. 11, Boero, "Bypassing Blame: Bariatric Surgery and the Case of Biomedical Failure"
- Moodle:
 - o From Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*:
 - Ch. 1, "Judging by Appearances"
 - Ch. 3, "The Racial Nose"

Day 6. Tuesday 1/17. Debility and Mortality

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #6 uploaded by 11:59pm, Monday 1/16.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #6: something related to selective abortion
- *Against Health*:
 - o Ch. 14, Siebers, "In the Name of Pain"
- Moodle:
 - o Puar, "Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility, and Capacity"
 - o Chen, "Masked States and the Screen between Security and Disability"
- Online:
 - o Zhang, ["The Last Children of Down Syndrome"](#)

Day 7. Wednesday 1/18. Bodily Labor and Capital

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #7 uploaded by 11:59pm, Tuesday 1/17.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #7: a video clip or a still visual image that represents pain

- Moodle:
 - o Wailoo, from *Pain a Political History*:
 - Ch. 3, "The Conservative Case against Learned Helplessness"
 - Ch. 4, "Divided States of Analgesia"
- *Clinical Labor*:
 - o Ch. 6, "The American Experiment: From Prison-Academic-Industrial Complex to the Outsourced Clinic"
 - o Ch. 8, "The Labor of Distributed Experiment: User-Generated Drug Innovation"

Day 8. Thursday 1/19. Mind/Body Schisms

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #8 uploaded by 11:59pm, Wednesday 1/18.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #8: an advertisement for a mental health service or medication *Against Health*:
 - o Ch. 10, Davis, "Obsession: Against Mental Health"
- *Biomedicalization*:
 - o Orr, "Biopsychiatry and the Informatics of Diagnosis: Governing Mentalities"
- Moodle:
 - o Silverman, from *Understanding Autism: Parents, Doctors, and the History of a Disorder*:
 - Ch. 1, "Research Programs, 'Autistic Disturbances,' and Human Difference"
 - o Dumit, "Objective Brains, Prejudicial Images"
- Video: [Metzl, "The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease"](#)

Day 9. Friday 1/20. Risk and Consent

- Short Response Essay/Discussion Questions Assignment #9 uploaded by 11:59pm, Thursday 1/19.
- "Show and Tell" Assignment #9: student choice
- Moodle:
 - o Loeb, "Cutting it Off: Bodily Integrity, Identity Disorders, and the Sovereign Stakes of Corporeal Desire in US Law"
 - o Reich, "Neoliberal Mothering and Vaccine Refusal: Imagined Gated Communities and the Privilege of Choice"
 - o Darby, from: *A Surgical Temptation: The Demonization of the Foreskin and the Rise of Circumcision*:
 - Introduction
- *Biomedicalization*:
 - o Ch. 12, Fosket, "Breast Cancer Risk as Disease: Biomedicalizing Risk"

Day 10. Monday 1/23. Final Paper Presentations

- Documents related to the final paper should be uploaded by 11:59pm, Sunday 1/22.
- Students will be asked to share their primary documents, as well as the major themes and ideas that they are exploring in their final paper.

Reading Day. Tuesday 1/24.

Finals Day. Wednesday 1/25.

- Final paper due via Moodle upload at 11:59pm.