The History of Hysteria as a Medical Concept
Spring 2017

Basic Course Information

Course Title: The History of Hysteria as a Medical Concept – Spring 2017
Course Information: Medicine: Extracurricular Elective (formerly known as “Bluebook Credit”)
Course Director: Alina Bennett, MPH, PhD (alina.bennett@uth.tmc.edu)
Prerequisites: None
Semester Hours: Medicine = Extracurricular Elective (formerly known as “Bluebook Credit”)
Method of Instruction: Discussion
Target Audience: Graduate Level Medical Students

Course Description

This course traces the historical rise of hysteria as a medical category. In contrast to a traditional linear study of seventeenth and eighteenth European medical century texts, this class focuses on the rhetorical depictions of patients as narrated by physicians. The political backdrop of the royal courts frame how medical people sought to establish intellectual authority over the body thereby demonstrating not only their utility to a single patient but to the health of the public, specifically to the members of the aristocracy. The case study of hysteria provides a lens through which we can assess how medicine understood itself as an enterprise for the creation and dissemination of knowledge related to the moral, physical, and environmental determinants of this vexing condition. The techniques invented to accomplish this goal will be of particular importance with regards to the potentially infectious nature of the condition and the publicly available cures. The course is reading-intensive and includes both primary source material from 1600-1850 and secondary sources by contemporary historians. We are privileged to have access to the rare books collections housed within the TMC library. As such, all course sessions will be held in the rare books room on the 1st floor of the library. The class will be run as a discussion section where students will each select a day to serve as a facilitator.

Course Learning Objectives

After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. define, in class discussions, the condition of hysteria as described by physicians writings from 1600-1830;
2. learn and apply archival methods utilizing primary sources; and
3. identify, in class discussions, the techniques used by physicians to discover, diagnose and treat the condition of hysteria.

Evaluation and Requirements

Participation 100% (minimum of 4 sessions)

Participation. Participation in four of the five sessions is required for credit. Make-up papers (a 1-page/500 words, single-spaced summary and analysis of the assigned reading) will be required for any missed sessions. The assessment rubric for class participation is listed in the appendix of this syllabus.
Course Limit

Enrollment will be limited to:

- 7 Medical Students;
- 7 Public Health Students

Course Day and Time
Thursdays 12pm-12:50pm

Course Location
Jesse Jones Library Building (TMC Library)
Rare books room, 1st floor.

Course Dates
January 12th
January 19th
January 26th
February 2nd
February 9th

Course Texts
All course materials will be provided.
Course Schedule

1. **JANUARY 19TH, 12PM-12:50PM**

   **Creating a Medical Category through Naming and Classifying**

   **Reading**
   


   **Rare Books to Review**
   
   3) William Cullen, *First Lines of the Practice of Physic, for the Use of Students in the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, SCT: 1783), selections.


2. **JANUARY 26TH, 12PM-12:50PM**

   **Metaphors of Hysteria as Used in Political and Religious Approaches to the Condition**

   **Reading**
   


   **Rare Books to Review**
   

   4) Anne Finch, “A Pindaric Ode on the Spleen,” in W. Stukeley, *Of the Spleen, its Description and History, Uses and Disease... To Which is Added Some Anatomical Observations in the Dissection of an Elephant*, (Londres, UK: 1732), 1-2.


3. **FEBRUARY 2ND, 12PM-12:50PM**

*Narrating Illness and Approaching Patients from a Court Physician’s Perspective*

**Reading**


**Rare Books to Review**


6) George Cheyne, “The Case of the Honourable Colonel Townshend,” and “The Case of the Learned and Ingenious Dr. Cranstoun in a Letter to the Author at His Desire, in Dr. Cranstoun’s Own Words,” in *The English Malady or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds as Spleen, Vapors, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Distempers & in Three Parts*, (London, UK: S. Powell, 1733), selections.

4. **FEBRUARY 9TH, 12PM-12:50PM**

**Constructing Sexual Difference**

*Reading*


*Rare Books to Review*


5. **FEBRUARY 16TH, 12PM-12:50PM**

**The Roles of Imagination, Magnetism and Somnambulism as Sources of Illness**

*Reading*


*Rare Books to Review*


7) Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomy: or the Corresponding Analogy Between the Conformation of the Features and the Ruling Passions of the Mind*, xxvi (p. 135)-xxviii (p. 145).

Class Performance Assessment Rubric

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<th>Components of Class Participation</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Marginal Pass</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>High Pass</th>
<th>Honors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepared for class (on time, has course materials)</td>
<td>The student demonstrates none of the components of class participation.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates 1-2 of the components of class participation.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates 3-4 of the components of class participation.</td>
<td>The student demonstrates all the components of class participation, but one or two elements are not on a distinguished level.</td>
<td>The student always or very nearly always demonstrates all the components of class participation on a distinguished level—a model for other students.</td>
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<td>Completes and consistently demonstrates understanding of reading assignments</td>
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<td>Contributes to class discussion</td>
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<td>Positive attitude toward the class</td>
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<td>Supportive attitude toward class members</td>
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