

Anthropology 2U03 Plagues and People

Winter 2023



Instructor: Hendrik Poinar

Email: poinarh@mcmaster.ca

Lecture: Monday/Wednesday 8:30-9:30
ABB 102

Tutorials: M, T, Th, Fri @various times

Office: CNH 537

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-2pm or
by appointment*

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Course Description

We’re currently living through the third year of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Before the emergence of CoV2, we lived and still live in an era obsessed with killer germs, epidemics and pandemics. There is a mounting sense of vulnerability as a growing list of pathogens become ‘visible’, emerge or re-emerge. Epidemics and plagues, however, are not new; they have influenced the course of human history for thousands of years and will continue to do so (are doing so) in the immediate and long term.

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

Course Objectives

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 and evolve, how they are intimately linked to human behaviour, and how they transform individuals, genomes and 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. Christian McMillens short introduction provides some of the basic history of prior, pathogen specific pandemics of the recent past. By the end of this course, you will:

- Understand the relationship between human behavior, environment and epidemics.
- Understand the etiology 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.
- Understand the basic evolutionary relationships of pathogens
- improve your critical thinking skills

Required Materials and Texts

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

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

McMillen CW. 2016. *Pandemics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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

Additional readings (PDF) or links to articles will be posted on A2L.

Class Format

Two one-hour lectures and one, one-hour Tutorial.

Course Evaluation – Overview

Two (2) in-class exams (50 minutes each)

Wednesday, February 15th: material up to and including February 15th.

Wednesday, March 22nd: material from February 15th up to and including Monday March the 21st.

These in-class exams 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.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS. YOU CAN MISS ONE (without penalty) – THE WEIGHT OF WHICH WILL FALL TO YOUR FINAL...

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 based on the lectures and reading assigned for your tutorial will be posted each week on our A2L website Friday night or Saturday morning. This will begin the week of January 16th. You are required to submit a 500-word answer (work alone) to **all** of the posted questions -usually between two and four -(500 words **TOTAL** for all three – **NOT** 500 words per question!).

To be eligible for the pass, (it is only P/F), you must submit the 500-word discussion each week in your tutorial at the beginning of class. **THERE ARE NO MAKEUPS FOR GRQs**. Please **print out** your answers label them with **your name, ID#, tutorial section (Friday 1-2) and the instructor's name**. 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. We DO NOT grade your Shakespearean English. **THEY CANNOT BE EMAILED, OR ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED, PAPER ONLY PLEASE.**

4. Final exam during examination period (3 hours)

The final exam is **CUMULATIVE** -that is, it 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 (possibly) and readings. During your final tutorial, you'll be appraised of the actual format – so this may change.

Course Evaluation – Details

Exam 1 (20%),

This first midterm will test you on the material covered in both lecture and tutorial up to that point. This exam will take place in class, **Wednesday, February 15th** Exam 2 (20%),

This second midterm will **ONLY** cover the material covered in both lecture and tutorial taught *post* the first midterm and up to the last lecture prior to the second midterm. This exam will take place in class, **Wednesday, March 22nd**:

Guided Reading Questions (Tutorial) (10%), each week you'll be responsible for answering a set of questions based on the readings in preparation for the tutorials.

Participation (Tutorial) (10%). Tutorial participation is mandatory, there are NO makeup tutorials. All material presented during tutorials are usable on all exams.

Final Exam (40%). The final will cover the **ENTIRE COURSE** material from both lecture and tutorials, however the bulk of the final will be based on the last portion of the course, post the second midterm. I will give you three hours to complete it, but it is designed to be a 2-hour test. **Remember, if you have missed one exam the weight of your final will represent 60% of your grade.**

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

LECTURE, READING AND TUTORIAL SCHEDULE

Week Date (#)	Lecture Topic	Reading	Tutorial
Jan 9 (1)	Introduction to Plagues What is a plague?	Crawford, Chp 1, 2 McMillen, Chp 1	No tutorials
Jan 16 (2)	How do plagues spread? Plagues throughout history	Slack, P Chp 1 Crawford, Chp 1, 2	Plague family feud! (2)
Jan 23 (3)	The mother of all plagues	Crawford, Chp 3 pp 75-81 Crawford pp 82-106 Slack, P Chp 2	Crowds, filth and Poverty and the Black Death! (3)
Jan 30 (4)	Emerging Infectious Disease (EID)	Crawford pp 184-204 Washer, Chp 1, 2	Superbugs, AMRS the new threat (4)
Feb 6 (5)	War and Plagues I	Crawford, Chp 6 pp 151-157 Slack, P Chp 3 Newfield 2022 (A2L)	Syndemics or causation networks (5)
Feb 13 (6)	War and Plagues II The Forgotten Plague <i>Exam #1 Wednesday Feb 15th!</i>	Crawford pp 204-21 McMillen Chp 5 Washer pp 78-85, 98-107	Blame (6)
Feb 20-26	NO CLASSES	Winter Recess	NO CLASSES/TUTORIALS
Feb 27 (7)	The Poor and Plagues I The White Plague	Crawford pp 157-160, ch 8 Washer pp 25-26,57,162-68	"Let them eat dirt" and the human microbiome (7)
Mar 6 (8)	The Poor and Plagues II The Fever Plague	Crawford pp 35-47 McMillen Chp 3 Washer, ch 5 (page 93!)	Malaria Wars (8)
Mar 13 (9)	Secret Plagues I and II	Crawford pp 124-130; 189-191 McMillen Chp 7 Washer, ch 3 pp 45-61 Mackay – PDF (A2L)	HIV/AIDS (9)
Mar 20 (10)	Plagues and Vaccination I The Speckled Monster <i>Exam #2 Wednesday, March 22nd!</i>	Crawford, pp 106-124; 161-17 McMillen, chp 2 Washer, ch 7 pp 143-147	Bioterrorism, Fiction and Disease (10)
Mar 27 (11)	Plagues and Vaccination II Measles, COVID and antivaxxers	Crawford pp 62-65, 108, 114-148 Washer, pp 16-35 (various), 121-123, 151, 156, <i>Additional readings</i>	Public health, vaccination and the media (11)
Apr 3 (12)	The coming plagues Idol of origins When do plagues end?	Crawford pp 130-138, Crawford, Conclusion	Modern plagues (AMR etc) and public health (12)

		Additional readings on A2L	
Apr 10 (13)	An anthropology of plagues	Final review	No Tutorials

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

SEE GRQ policy above.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted. Period. The GRQ's are important preparation for each week's tutorial and given the percentage of their worth, it isn't economical to use your MSAF to 'save' you. Think wisely.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

There are no make-up exams. Period.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”: <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=9020#requests-for-relief-for-missed-academic-term-work>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.