

ANTHROP 2U03E *Plagues and People* Spring 2016

Emily Cowall, PhD, Instructor

Department of Anthropology, McMaster University

CNH 515

cowallee@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours:

Monday & Wednesday 4:30-6:00 pm and by appointment

Class Schedule:

Monday & Wednesday 6:30-9:00 pm

Classroom: TSH B105

Course Description

ANTHROP 2U03 *Plagues and People* is a consideration of the role played by infectious disease in human evolution. The social and biological outcomes of major epidemics and pandemics, past and present, will be explored using the Anthropology of Infections Disease theoretical framework. Further, the course will examine the intersection of bioscience aspects of disease and pathogens; social determinants of health historically and currently; big events such as environment catastrophes and war; and listen to the voice of the lived experience of plagues.

We live in an era obsessed with killer germs, epidemics and pandemics. There is a growing sense of vulnerability as a growing list of pathogens becomes visible to investigators. 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, biosocial perspective.

The class sessions begin with an exploration of models and general principles of infectious disease to establish a framework for understanding plagues. The focus then shifts to a discussion of specific plagues. We will consider historic, contemporary, and newly-identified plagues with a view to understanding why they emerge, how their occurrence is intimately linked to human behaviour, and how they transform societies.

Our goal is to understand the relationship between human behaviour and the emergence of epidemics; appreciate the importance of studying historic plagues for understanding current and future plagues; and have an anthropological framework for interpreting the biosocial origins and consequences of plagues.

Format: Lectures, readings, films with discussion groups to actively engage with the topics.

Grading:

This course will be graded using a mid-term and a final exam, all conducted in-class.

Mid-Term Exam: Multiple Choice Questions, TF/mix-match (Class content 1-6) **40 %**

Final Exam: 100 Multiple Choice Questions (cumulative content) **60%**

Course Text:

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

See additional readings in class outline.

Important Notes about the Course:

Avenue to Learn will be used to serve as the method of communication for this course.

Summarized Lecture Materials will be posted on our course Avenue **AFTER** each class: PowerPoint presentations will not be posted for use during classes.

This course encourages you to develop your note taking skills.

Class cancellations

In the unlikely event of a class cancellation, students will be notified on Avenue to Learn, please check before leaving for class.

Class attendance and preparedness:

Uneven class attendance is *very* likely to have a profound impact on your ability to thrive in the course. Make every possible arrangement to ensure that you are able to attend classes. Ensure that you come fully prepared for class by engaging with the assigned materials.

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.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Effective September 1, 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)

Courtesy in Communications:

All e-mails to your instructor and TAs must be written in full sentences (i.e. no point form, no text-messaging short form), and must contain a subject line that includes the course designation 2U03.

Be professional, courteous, and respectful in all communications. Your instructor will respond to your e-mail in a timely manner.

Do not assume that you will hear back immediately, or at any time of day or night, especially if you send an e-mail outside of regular business hours. Please provide your full name.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception 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, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

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.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Accommodation Students

Please come to office hours prepared to discuss accommodation requirements prior to the second class to ensure your needs are fully understood.

Missed Academic Term work

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”. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015.

To All Undergraduate Course Students: This message is to inform students of changes made to the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) policy beginning in the Spring/Summer 2015 term, most notably:

- The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
- The upper limit for which an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from ‘less than 30%’ to ‘less than 25%’ of the course weight.

The entire MSAF policy is available in the Undergraduate Calendar 2014-15 (Spring/Summer) <General Academic Regulations> Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term work.

Please review the entire policy prior to submitting any requests.

http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_f_or_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean’s office.

Courtesy in the classroom:

Our demanding course schedule requires your attention, note taking and participation. Please turn off your cell phones, and refrain from non class related web-surfing during lecture.

Class Schedule, Topics and Readings:

Day	Topic	Materials and topical focus
Monday May 2	Plagues as milestones in the human experience	Defining the Anthropology of Infectious Disease Biocultural/Biosocial Understanding Chapter 1. Singer, Merrill. 2015. <i>The Anthropology of Infectious Disease</i> . Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press
Wednesday May 4	What is a Plague? Terms of reference and theories from an anthropological perspective	Omran, Abdel-Rahmin. 1971. The epidemiologic transition : a theory of the epidemiology of population change http://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/58102 Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 1. Plague, What is in a name?
Monday May 9	Epidemics, Endemic and Pandemic	The overview of disease, terminology and conceptual frameworks Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 2. Pandemics and Epidemics
Wednesday May 11	The Black Death: the historic/social/cultural context	Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 4. Private Horrors
Monday May 16	Black Death in Art: How Plagues have changed cultural discourse through images and symbols	Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 6. Enduring Images
Wednesday May 18	The Black Death: the modern implications	Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 3. Big Impacts "The Black Death Decoded" http://www.nature.com/news/2011/111025/full/478444a.html
Monday May 23		Victoria Day NO classes
Wednesday May 26		Mid Term In-Class exam: Multiple Choice Questions, TF/mix match (Class content 1-6)
Monday May 30	White Plague: Droplet Transmission and the lungs	David M. Morens. "At the Deathbed of Consumptive Art." Emerg Infect Dis. 8 (2002)
Wednesday June 1	Secret Plague: Horizontal and vertical transmission and the politics of human sexuality	Brandt, Allan M. 1978 <i>Racism and Research</i> Axis Sally https://vimeo.com/40177310
Monday June 6	Speckled Plague: Eradication programs as a global endeavour	Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 5. Public Health
Wednesday June 8	The Blue Death: Water, toxicity and the cultural biosphere	http://globalhydration.com/resources/waterbone-disease

Monday June 13	Plagues Among us: Viral Panic in the new millennium: Factors that underlie the modern plague lived experience and continue to capture our attention, such as Zika and Ebola.	Slack, Paul. 2012. Chapter 7. The lessons of histories
Wednesday June 15		In-Class Final Exam 100 Multiple Choice questions (cumulative course content)