RHODES COLLEGE
FALL 2011
DISEASE AND EPIDEMICS IN HISTORY
HIST 105-04

Prof. Tait Keller
kellert@rhodes.edu
Office: Buckman Hall 211
Office Hours: MW 10:30-12 Noon and by appointment

Class Days: MWF 1:00 PM
Classroom: Palmer Hall 205

Course Description
This course analyzes the influence of infectious disease on human history. Epidemics are causative (often caustic) agents in shaping society. Society’s responses to disease reveal cultural values, social processes, political agendas, and evolving medical practices. Biological invasions of the body politic carry significant consequences on both a local and global scale. We will explore the interactions between humans and parasites, bugs, bacteria and viruses by focusing on a select group of diseases and epidemics, including the bubonic plague, small pox, cholera, influenza, and HIV/AIDS.

Course Requirements and Grading
Grades in the course will be based on several components. The first is spirited participation in the discussions, as well as leading one of them. The second component will be three analytical papers. The last component is a research paper on any disease or epidemic that may interest you.

I. Attendance and Participation
The success of the course depends on your active participation, which also happens to make up a big part of your grade. I expect you to come to class prepared, having done the assigned reading and eager to participate in the discussion. Constructive and informed contributions to discussion are essential for satisfactory performance in this course. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade.

You will also be responsible for leading one of the Friday discussions. I ask that you meet with me at some point during the week before the Friday discussion to go over your ideas and the questions you intend to ask.

II. Analytical Papers
The three analytical papers will be based solely on the assigned readings and themes raised in class; no outside research is necessary. I will provide the topics and questions for each paper. The papers will be 1000 words in length, double spaced, and use Chicago-style citations as outlined in Turabian’s A Manual for Writers. In no event should your essay be longer than 1250 words; I look for cogency, not length.

A writing style guide is available on Moodle to assist you. Be sure to follow the style guide and make note of typical mistakes undergraduates often make in their papers. Your grade will suffer if you commit these mistakes. No, this is not an English course, but you cannot do good history without writing competently.

As part of our focus on writing, the first two papers will go through a blind peer review. I will pair you up for each paper. It will be your responsibility to submit the paper to your reader well ahead to the deadline. At the bare minimum you should give your reader 72 hours to review your paper. And as a reader, you must return the paper to its author in time for her or him to make the revisions. You will then submit to me the draft with your reader’s comments together with your revised version. Your grade will be based on your final version, along with the comments you made as a reader. If you do not submit the paper to your reader, you will receive an ‘F’ on the paper. Likewise, you do not fulfill your responsibility as a reader you will fail the assignment. The due dates for the three papers are Friday: September 16, October 14, and November 11.
III. Research Paper
You will write a concise, literate, well-organized research paper on any aspect of any disease or epidemic that interests you. The papers will be 2500-3000 words in length, double spaced, and use Chicago-style citations as outlined in Turabian’s A Manual for Writers. Additional guidelines for the paper will be posted on Moodle. If you are unsure of a topic, come talk to me and check out The Cambridge World History of Human Disease, which will be on reserve in the library. I ask that you meet with me by the week after Fall Break to discuss your ideas. I also ask that you submit an abstract and bibliography to me by Friday, November 18. The bibliography should contain at least ten sources, including at least three primary sources. As part of this assignment, you will give a fifteen minute presentation on your research at the end of the semester.

The paper will be due Monday, December 12.

The final grade for the class will be established as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical Papers</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:
- A Outstanding
- B Above Average/Very Good
- C Average/Good/Satisfactory
- D Below Average/Poor
- F Fail

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72) and so on.

Any number below 60 will be marked as an F

*NOTE: All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Failure to complete any of the course requirements by Monday, December 12 may result in a final course grade of F.

Required Texts (in order texts are read)

- David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*
- Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*
- Alan Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace*
- Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*
- Paul Farmer, *Infections and Inequalities*

All of these titles are on sale at the bookstore and on reserve in the library. You can also find all these books used (read: much, much cheaper) at online bookstores, including addall.com, alibris.com, amazon.com, and half.com. You are welcome to read these books in any edition, condition, or language.
Course Policies – read these all carefully

Special Needs and Accommodations: I am strongly committed to accommodating students with disabilities, and ask your cooperation in making sure that I am aware of any such accommodation you might need. All accommodation requests are the responsibility of the student. For more information, please contact Student Disability Services (SDS) to alert them of any needs you may have.

Food, Drink, Tobacco: Drink is permitted in my classroom, but food and tobacco products of all kinds are prohibited.

Moodle: All students in the class are automatically registered for this course on Moodle. When you log on to Moodle and access the site for this course, you will find all course materials, including this syllabus, readings, and guidelines for assignments.

Email: All email correspondence will be sent to your Rhodes email account. It is your responsibility to check this account regularly. Emails are not text messages. When writing me, I expect your emails to be professional.

Cell phones, Blackberries, ipods, and other such devices: Turn them off!

Laptops: The use of laptop computers or other screen-based devices is not permitted during our discussions. If you have a medical reason for needing to use a laptop or other screen-based device, please let me know.

Sleeping in class is not permitted. Those who fall asleep will be subject to a rude awakening.

Honor Code: I believe in the College’s standards of academic honesty, and I enforce them vigorously and to the letter. Be aware of those standards, and observe them. Plagiarism and cheating are easy to detect; so are papers pulled off the internet. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized another’s work, I will discuss this matter with you. If I am not satisfied, I will report your case to the Honor Council for due process. I always recommend failure for the course when I submit a file. The bottom line is this: do your own work. You are spending your time and money to be here and learn. Don’t waste either by plagiarizing or cheating.

A Word on Grading:
Papers will be evaluated on four main criteria: thesis, organization, evidence, and style. In general, a paper that does a very good job in each category is a ‘B’. A paper that almost does is a ‘B-’, and a paper that performs well in each category and goes beyond in one category is a ‘B+’. A paper that is satisfactory but weak in one or two categories is a ‘C’. A ‘D’ paper is weak in three or more categories, or omits one criterion completely. Papers without notes crediting sources and location quotations, paraphrases, and allusions will receive, at best, a grade of ‘D’. An ‘A’ range paper performs outstandingly well in each category, and achieves something extraordinary in two or more categories.

Remember that a grade does not reflect process (it does not measure whether you worked hard) and it certainly does not reflect a value judgment about you as a person. A grade constitutes an evaluation of the quality and analytical rigor of the thesis, organization, evidence, and style of a single piece of work.

I will be delighted to discuss your papers with you. Be advised however that grades, once assigned, are not subject to change. I also will not communicate grades over email or the telephone. The most important part of the grading process is not the grade, but the comments you will find on your papers when you pick them up.

I do not give “I” (incomplete) grades. Late work, except in documented cases of bereavement, major injury, or catastrophic illness, will suffer a substantial and progressive reduction in grade. Therefore, please plan ahead and do your work on time.
## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

(subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Theme</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures, Discussions, Readings, and Papers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1: Introductions</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Welcome!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Approaching Disease in History</td>
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<td>WEEK 2: Parasites and Civilization</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>The Evolution of Humans and Microbes</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>The Disease Pool</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>The Loathing of Lepers</td>
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<td>- <em>Leviticus chapters 13-15</em></td>
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<td>WEEK 3: The Great Mortality</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Sept 5</td>
<td>No Class: Labor Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Sept 7</td>
<td>Europe’s Black Death</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Disease and Deadlocks</td>
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<td>- Herlihy (all)</td>
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<td>WEEK 4: The Plague and Modernity</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Sept 12</td>
<td>The Return of Yersinia Pestis?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>The Sick and the State</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Plague and Science</td>
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<td>- Video: <em>Secrets of the Dead: Mystery of the Black Death</em> (in-class)</td>
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<td>- Carol Benedict “Policing the Sick,” <em>Late Imperial China</em> 14 (1993): 60-77</td>
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<td>First analytical paper – due Friday, September 16 – reading secondary sources against the grain</td>
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<td>Imagine that you survived one of the plague pandemics. You decide to record your thoughts for posterity, commenting on the disease and its effect on society, culture, and the state. You argue (contrary to Herlihy and others) that the plague was not so beneficial, that it did not bring about progress to that great of a degree. Basing your account largely on the plague readings, but on anything else you may have learned from this course, what arguments would you make?</td>
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<td>WEEK 5: The Pox of Conquest</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Sept 19</td>
<td>Transoceanic Exchanges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Microbes and the Military</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Class cancelled</td>
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<td>- <em>Writing discussion: making revisions</em></td>
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<td>- Fenn, pp. 3-43</td>
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<td>- Fenn, pp. 44-134; 259-277</td>
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WEEK 6: **Tropical Maladies**  
**Mon Sept 26**  
Yellow Jack and Geopolitics  

**Wed Sept 28**  
Southern Fevers  
☐ Margaret Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South*, selections  

**Fri Sept 30**  
Tour of Elmwood Cemetery

WEEK 7: **Cities and Cholera**  
**Mon Oct 3**  
Disease and Social Darwinism  
☐ Johnson, 1-55

**Wed Oct 5**  
The Miasma Paradigm  
☐ Johnson, 57-156  
☐ Film: *The Painted Veil* (in-class)

**Fri Oct 7**  
Pathogens and Progress  
☐ Johnson, 159-256

WEEK 8: **Contagions and Migrations**  
**Mon Oct 10**  
Protecting the Healthy?  

**Wed Oct 12**  
The Wretched Refuse  
☐ Kraut, pp. 1-9; 31-77

**Fri Oct 14**  
Nationalism and Nativism  
☐ Kraut, pp. 78-165

**Second analytical paper – due Friday, October 14** – comparative analysis (pick one)

**Choice #1**  
Elizabeth Fenn and John McNeill discuss the impact of transoceanic disease exchanges and revolutionary movements in the New World. In what ways did smallpox and mosquito borne illnesses shape these conflicts? Did the diseases have the same impact, or did different diseases shape the wars in different ways? Did particular characteristics make some diseases better suited to war than others?

**Choice #2**  
Steven Johnson and Alan Kraut explore the ways that particular groups had been slandered for spreading disease. What relationship does social class have to disease? In what ways does class shape how people view a disease like cholera or tuberculosis? In other words, what is the relationship between disease and discrimination?

**Fall Recess Oct 14-18**

WEEK 9: **Epidemics and Empires**  
**Wed Oct 19**  
The Imperial and the Malarial  
*Writing discussion: the research paper*  
☐ Film: *Killer Number One* (in-class)  

**Fri Oct 21**  
Race, Gender, and Germs  
☐ Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics*, selections
Several of our readings from the past four weeks have explored how disease has shaped gender and race issues. For your final analytical paper, you will write on one or both of these topics using at least two readings from weeks 9 through 12. You may shape the paper anyway that you see fit. I would encourage you to first discuss your ideas with me.

Third analytical paper – due Friday, November 11 – design your own question

Research abstract (250 words) and bibliography due by Friday, November 18
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>2x 15 min presentations w/ 10 min discussion each</td>
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<td>Wed</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Nov 28</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>2x 15 min presentations w/ 10 min discussion each</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Dec 7</td>
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**Research Paper**
**Due**
**Monday, December 12**
**1 PM**