

Women and Medicine in Premodern Europe: Body, Gender, Practice
Fall 2014
TR: 12:30-1:45

Professor Sara Ritchey
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Office Hours: TR: 8-12:30; 3:15-5

This course examines medical theory and practice as it developed in premodern western Europe, and offers possibilities for considering the significance of medieval medical history for historicizing contemporary discussions of health care. While providing a basic introduction to the medieval foundations of medicine, we will focus closely on medical theory about the unique anatomy, diseases, and fertility of women, as well as on women's roles as practitioners. In doing so, we will explore such questions as: *How was the healthy body conceived and promoted? How were male and female bodies differently constructed? What was the role of society, the Church, and local government in regulating health? How did regulation influence women's healthcare practices?* In exploring these questions over the course of the semester, we will be careful to consider the multiplicity of the medical marketplace, emphasizing the range of health options provided by physicians, surgeons, academics, empiricists, midwives, apothecaries, nurses, saints, and beguines. The final weeks of the course will allow us to view examples of contemporary medical debates—coverage for women's reproductive health, the role of female practitioners, and "alternative" healing—from the deep historical perspective provided by medieval medicine.

Course Policies:

This course requires detailed reading and intense discussion of medical, gender, and religious matters. Due to the nature of our discussions it is absolutely imperative that our classroom is considered by all persons as a safe space. A culture of mutual, scholarly respect is of the utmost importance. In order to ensure that we are at all times cultivating a safe, respectful environment, I insist on a few policies:

- You are expected to be in class on time, at 2:00. I lock the door after I begin lecturing. If you must leave the class early or arrive late for any reason, discuss the matter with me 24-hours prior, and we will make accommodations. Entering the classroom late or leaving early, including shuffling papers and putting away books prior to dismissal, demonstrates a lack of interest and creates a disruption.
- Absolutely **no cell-phone use** during class. I do not want to **see** a cellphone. That means that you should place your cellphone out of sight—not under a leg or under a

notebook, but inside a bag of some sort that is then zipped and tucked away under a seat. I understand that some of you may, on occasion, need to be alerted to the well-being of sick children or parents, etc. On these rare occasions during the semester I would be more than happy to make accommodation *if you notify me before the beginning of class*.

- In order to participate *in an informed manner* in discussion, **you must complete the reading assignment** in an active fashion. **Active reading** means understanding the arguments that the author is making, and how the author supports her/his arguments. It means reading with a writing utensil and underlining passages that are of interest, are confusing, or are important. During discussion, I will often ask you for textual support for your statements, meaning that you can go back to the assignment and show us (the class) what sparked a certain idea that you may have had about the reading. If you find something about the reading difficult or confusing, you should share that with the class—be sure to mark the section that is difficult and be able to explain what you think the author is trying to say, and what about it is difficult (terminology, style, medical specificity, theoretical complexity, etc). One of the most helpful tips for active reading is, after you've completed the assignment, answer for yourself: *What was this reading about? Why did the author write it? What was s/he trying to demonstrate? What was novel about what s/he was trying to demonstrate?* You won't always be able to answer all of these questions but it will get you in the habit of reading actively and thinking deeply about the assignments.
- The University requires that I take attendance, and therefore I will do so. Attending class is your choice, however. I will not deduct points from your final grade as a penalty for missing class. With this policy in mind, you should note that I will not provide notes or handouts, or review missed material to students who missed class without an official university excuse. You may ask your peers to share notes and hand-outs with you. I also give weekly, **unscheduled reading quizzes** that factor significantly into your final grade.
- Any signs of disrespect for the comments and opinions of your peers will not be tolerated. Before responding or interrupting, listen closely and carefully to the thoughts your fellow students and professor are trying to make.
- Any form of plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the course, and reporting to the office of student life and conduct. Under plagiarism I include *any* submitted material (test, essay, book review, quiz, opinion piece, etc.) in which you have represented ideas or writing as your own that were in fact derived from other sources.

Campus resources:

The Writing Center is located on the first floor of Griffin. It is an extremely useful resource for getting started with papers, for creating outlines, generating ideas, drafting,

and editing essays. I strongly recommend that you meet with a writing tutor to review your essays before submitting them to me for a grade. I guarantee that it will improve your grade.

The Office of Disability Services provides helpful accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. I am happy to work with you and the ODS to ensure the most successful outcome for your learning in this course.

Assignments:

I strive to include several different kinds of assignments that play to strengths of a variety of students and study habits. Studying history requires reading, writing, and critical thinking. These are the skills that I will assess most often, and that we will attempt to strengthen and cultivate throughout the course.

Weekly (unscheduled) Reading Quizzes (15% of final grade)

Sept. 16 Test (15% of final grade)

Oct. 21 Essay (20% of final grade)

Nov. 13 Book Review (20% of final grade)

Nov. 20 Opinion Piece (10% of final grade)

Dec. 11 Final (20% of final grade)

Late papers: For each 24-hour period *after* the deadline that you submit a paper, I will deduct one third of a letter grade (i.e. a B paper will become a B- if it is submit 24-hours late; a C+ if it is submitted 48-hours late, and a C if it is submitted 72-hours late, etc.). Additionally, I will not prioritize the grading of papers that are submitted late. If you submit a paper after the deadline, you may not receive a grade for several weeks.

Format: All papers should be word-processed in 12-point Times New Roman with one-inch margins on all sides. I require hard copies of all assignments.

Required Books:

Medieval Medicine: A Reader, ed. Faith Wallis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010)

Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997).

Jean Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children since the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Note that several of the readings are only available as PDFs on Moodle.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments:

WEEK ONE: August 26-28: Introduction

- Peter Brown, "Belief and Ethnomedical Systems: Conceptual Tools" *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology* **ON MOODLE**
- Peter Brown, "The Social Construction of Illness and the Social Production of Health: Conceptual Tools" in *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology* **ON MOODLE**

WEEK TWO: Sept 2-4: Foundations: Late Antique and Islamicate Medicine

- Isidore of Seville, "The Canon of Medicine" in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 5-9
- Agnelus of Ravenna, "Commentary on Galen's *On Sects*" in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 14-16
- *The Wisdom of the Art of Medicine*, in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 17-22
- Alexander of Tralles, in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 23-25
- Variations on Hippocratic Themes, in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 432-435
- Emilie Savage Smith, "Medical Theory," in *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, **ON MOODLE**

WEEK THREE: Sept. 9-11: Diversity in the Medical Marketplace

- "Monastic Medicine in the Early Medieval West," *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 91-109
- Michael McVaugh, "Medieval Health Manpower" from *Medicine Before the Plague* **ON MOODLE**

WEEK FOUR: Sept. 16-18: TEST (Tuesday, Sept. 16) & Physica at Salerno (Thursday, Sept. 18)

- Commentaries on Constantine the African's translations, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 135-139
- The *Isagoge* of Joannitius, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 139-155
- Bartholomeus of Salerno on the *Isagoge*, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 156-158
- Salernitan Anatomy, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 159-173
- The practice of pharmacy rationalized, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 176-178
- Urso of Salerno's *Aphorisms and Commentary*, **ON MOODLE**

WEEK FIVE: Sept 23-25: The Rationalization of Medicine

- Alexander of Nequam's reading list, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, p. 193
- The curriculum of the Paris medical faculty, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* p. 194
- Montpellier and the New Galen, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* pp 195-196
- Arnau of Vilanova, "Is Medicine a Science?" *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* pp. 211-219

WEEK SIX: Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Lady Parts: Anatomy and Reproduction

- Constantine the African, "On Sexual Intercourse," *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 511-523
- Katherine Park, "Medicine and Natural Philosophy," **ON MOODLE**
- Medical illustrations in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* pp. 238-247

- Excerpts from *The Trotula*, in *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* pp. 185-190

WEEK SEVEN: Reproductive Health (Cont.)

Oct. 7:

- Monica H. Green, "Caring for Gendered Bodies," **ON MOODLE**
- The Regime of Aldobrandino of Siena, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 493-500
- The Scholastic *quaestio* on the generation of the embryo, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 222-231
- Hildegard of Bingen on abortion and contraception, from *de simplicis medicinae* **ON MOODLE**
- Wolfgang Mueller, excerpts from *The Criminalization of Abortion in the West* **ON MOODLE**
- Reproductive *Materia medica*, **ON MOODLE**

WEEK EIGHT: Oct. 14-16: The Social Implications of Sex (Paper Due on Oct. 21)

- Excerpts from *The Viaticum* **ON MOODLE**
- Joan Cadden, "Just Like a Woman:" Passivity, Defect and Insatiability **ON MOODLE**
- Leah Devun, "The Jesus Hermaphrodite" **ON MOODLE**

WEEK NINE: Oct. 21-23: Regulating Health: Effects on Female Practitioners & Empirics

- "The Difficult Case of Cancer," *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 344-347
- "The Case for Medical Astrology" *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp 318-325
- "The Faculty of Medicine vs. Jacobo Felicie," *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, 366-369
- "The Faculty of Medicine vs. Jean Domr mi" *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 369-379
- "Medical *Experimenta* by Arnau of Vilanova," *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, pp. 401-404
- Jean Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children*, pp.9-88

WEEK TEN: Oct 28-30: Medicine versus Religion

- Screening: *The Sorceress*
- Continue Reading: Jean Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children*, pp. 89-178

WEEK ELEVEN: Nov. 4-6: Against Rational Medicine

- Nicholas of Prague, *Antipocras* **ON MOODLE**
- Medical Charms, Prayers, Blessings, and Curses **ON MOODLE**

EXAMINING SOCIAL MEDICINE THROUGH A MEDIEVAL LENS:

WEEK TWELVE: Nov. 11-13: Local Healthcare

- **Schmitt Book Review Due (Nov. 13)**
- Katherine Boo, "Swamp Nurse" *The New Yorker* **ON MOODLE**

- “The Life of a Healer” and “French Louisiana *Traiteurs*” in *Folklife in Louisiana* **ON MOODLE**
- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, pp. 1-37
- **Class visit with Traiteur**

WEEK THIRTEEN: Nov. 18-20: Women’s Reproductive Health in the 20th-Century US

- Supreme Court Opinion, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* **ON MOODLE**
- **Class visit from Professor Karissa Haugeberg, Tulane University, Dept. of History**
- **TBA readings suggested by Professor Haugeberg**
- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, pp. 38-105

WEEK FOURTEEN: Nov. 25: Medicine and Gendered Bodies in US Practice

- **Due: Opinion Piece on *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* Due (Nov. 20)**
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Bare Bones of Sex” **ON MOODLE**
- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, pp. 106-180

WEEK FIFTEEN: Dec. 2-5: Premodern Medicine & Contemporary Practice

- *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, pp. 181-290
- Atul Gawande, “The Hot Spotters” *The New Yorker* **ON MOODLE**
- **Visit from the Chief Medical Officer of EQHealth Solutions, a community coordinated care organization.** EQ Health Solutions coordinates care between patients, doctors, hospitals, and ACOs/Medicaid/health plans.

Final Essay due December 11th at noon.

As professor, I reserve the right to alter this syllabus as necessary throughout the semester.