

# HISTORY 2819G

## Cholera to Covid: How Epidemics Change the Way We Live

### Winter 2022

**\* Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Although the intent was for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape has necessitated that at least the first part of the course be delivered online synchronously (that being, on Zoom at the times indicated in the timetable). Some course content will also be delivered asynchronously (that being, posted on OWL for students to view independently). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor. The course will return to an in-person mode of delivery when the University and local health authorities deem it safe to do so.

Weekly Lectures: **Tuesdays 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.**

Course delivery: Virtual meetings (synchronous & asynchronous components): **Starting Jan 11**

- Go to OWL course site at <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>  
Zoom details for Tuesday class meetings at 12:30 p.m. (synchronous)  
and for Weekly Materials (asynchronous)

Return to In-person meetings (in SSC 3022): To be determined

Instructor: **Professor Shelley McKellar**

Email: [smckell@uwo.ca](mailto:smckell@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: In-person -- Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Lawson Hall office 2227 (Dept of History)

*\*In-person office hours cancelled until further notice; replaced by Remote (Zoom) office hours below*

Remote (Zoom) -- Wednesdays from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.  
Zoom details posted on OWL course site

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### Course Description:

Focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries, this course investigates the disruption and changes arising from disease outbreaks. Disease can permanently alter society, with lives lost, community practices modified, and individual habits scrutinized. The role of government, society's expectations, science and medicine, power, class, race, and gender will be explored.

***Prerequisite(s):***

None

***Antirequisite(s):***

History 2812E

**Course Syllabus:**

***Content & Expectations***

The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted and changed the way we lived significantly. How have past epidemics changed the way we live, either temporarily or permanently? How have governments, scientists and society navigated past epidemics? When do disease outbreaks become public health crises, and who gets to decide? Is COVID-19 the most deadly or disruptive pandemic in history? Would you be surprised to learn that the COVID-19 pandemic measures of reporting disease cases and death numbers, imposing stay-at-home and travel restrictions, closing schools and businesses, practicing vigilant handwashing, wearing face masks, and promoting social distancing (the ‘gentler cousin’ to isolation and quarantine measures) are not new?

Epidemics and pandemics provide a lens through which to explore political, economic, and socio-cultural practices in different places and times. Disease outbreaks are stress tests, exposing cracks in the systems, such as problems with health care delivery and access, socio-economic inequities, political leadership challenges, medical uncertainties, and more. It is misleading to consider diseases as equal-opportunity threats since outbreaks can be catastrophic for marginalized and vulnerable populations. Fearmongering, blaming, and stigmatizing disease sufferers or suspected disease carriers occur at the same time as ‘hero’ narratives and valuable community mobilization emerge during pandemic times.

This course will examine different disease outbreaks in history, exploring how epidemics change the way we live. When a disease outbreak spreads rapidly to many people and over a large geographic area, it becomes an epidemic, as in the case of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014-16. An epidemic that spreads globally is a pandemic, with the most recent example being the COVID-19 pandemic. This course will make connections, identify themes, and tease out issues between various epidemics and pandemics in history. It will offer a narrative account of past disease events, encourage you to compare-and-contrast outbreaks, and entice you to explore interesting individuals and vignettes. This course will also ask you to consider changing historical interpretations, contrasting points of view, as well as new methods and theories used by historians to gather and evaluate historical evidence. How do historians know what they know about the past? Students will be exposed to a variety of primary and secondary sources throughout this course. Lecture attendance is expected.

***Who can take this course?***

This course is open to all students. History students, students planning to major in science or medicine, or other students in the social sciences, health sciences, or arts and humanities are welcome. Students do not need a background in science, medicine or even history to take this course. This course is open to all students.

### ***Course-Level Learning Outcomes:***

By the end of this course, students shall be able:

- To articulate the role played by disease in shaping the past, specifically the impact of epidemics and pandemics on political structures, the economy and society
- To differentiate the changes and continuities (historical shifts and patterns) in disease understanding, public health approaches, and community responses, and how this relates to human agency, government involvement, society's expectations, the role of science and medicine, issues of power and authority, class, race, gender, and sexuality
- To recognize that disease understanding and social responses are shaped by time and place;
- To apply various methodologies and approaches employed by scholars in the study of disease outbreaks
- To analyze critically various source materials – both primary and secondary sources – from which to understand epidemics and pandemics in history
- To formulate and communicate an effective argument, which demonstrates good research, writing and analytical skills
- To use (possibly) historical analysis to generate useful perspectives on the continuing challenges of epidemics and pandemics today, notably insight and relevancy to the COVID-19 pandemic

### **Course Materials:**

- Mitchell L. Hammond, *Epidemics and the Modern World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020)  
\* Available at [Western Libraries](https://utorontopress.com/9781487593735/epidemics-and-the-modern-world/) OR for purchase in paper and eBook at <https://utorontopress.com/9781487593735/epidemics-and-the-modern-world/>

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

Quizzes -- two quizzes; each worth 10% .....	20 %	Due dates: Feb 8 & Mar 8 (MCQs online; open book – <b>Note: there are specific opening/closing times</b> )
Library Exercise: Building a Preliminary Bibliography ...	10 %	Due date: Feb 15
Essay Assignment .....	40 %	Due date: Mar 15 (2000-2500 words – <b>Note: essay at 40% of grade is not eligible for Self-Reported Absence</b> )
Final Exam (during April exam period) .....	30 %	April Exam period

### ***Essay Assignment:***

A handout regarding the essay assignment will be posted on the OWL course site.

### ***Submitting Your Work for Evaluation ---***

You will submit your completed quizzes, library exercise and essay assignment online via the OWL course site. An **electronic copy** of all student work is required for grading in this course.

Please pay attention to the online format provided. For example, the quizzes and library exercise will prompt you to type in your responses using the **Tests & Quizzes tool** on OWL. Whereas the Essay Assignment requires you to submit (upload) your essay document—as a MS Word document—for grading using the **Assignments tool** on OWL.

***Late Penalties –***

Penalty for late assignments is 2% each day (including Saturday and Sunday) after the due date.

Extensions may be granted if legitimate circumstances are presented by the student to the professor well in advance of the due date. Poor work planning (such as “I have XX other papers due”) is not grounds for an extension. \* **Note that after 7 days (1 week past due date), the assignment will not be accepted** to ensure timely marking and the ability to return marked assignments to students who did respect the deadline.

**Accommodation for missed tests/assignments, including Self Reported Absences (SRA):**

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a make-up test. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Online courses will have online make-up tests.

In person classes have scheduled make-up tests scheduled at the following times in the **Winter Term:**

- Tests scheduled before February 19 – the make-up will take place February 28 at 9:30am.
- Tests scheduled between February 20 and April 7 – the make-up will take place April 8 at 9:30am.

IMPORTANT: In the event the University moves to online learning, make-up tests will take place online via OWL. The date for the make-up may differ from the date listed above.

No other make-up opportunities will be provided. Students who fail to write a make-up test in a designated time slot will receive a grade of zero. Course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the make-up test slots.

Students should be aware that when they have submitted an SRA for one test, they are not permitted to write a test or complete an assignment for another course during the period covered by the SRA. Failure to observe this regulation will result in the cancellation of the SRA and the possible application of late penalties.

**Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self-Reported Absence:**

If a student reports a SRA for an assignment, the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted.

# Course Lectures and Readings (Weekly Schedule):

Week	Lecture Topic	Assigned Reading	Spotlight Topic
#1 Jan 11	Introduction	None	None
#2 Jan 18	Cholera, John Snow and Sanitary Reform	Hammond, Chapter 5 (pp191-220)	Haiti's Cholera Outbreak: A Humanitarian Disaster?
#3 Jan 25	Tuberculosis, Class and ... Romanticism?	Hammond, Chapter 6 (pp233-264)	Understanding Tuberculosis: The Role of the Arts?
#4 Feb 1	Venereal Disease and Moralism <b>Online Quiz #1</b> Opens: 9:00 am. Wed Feb 2 Closes: 12:30 p.m. Tues Feb 8 (start of class)	Hammond, Chapter 2 (pp76-91)	Venereal Disease and Women: A Provocative Public Health Campaign?
#5 Feb 8	Killer Flu: The 1918 Flu Pandemic (Part 1)	Hammond, Chapter 8 (pp315-337)	Pale Horse, Pale Rider as a Survivor's Perspective: How Well Does It Convey the Suffering?
#6 Feb 15	Killer Flu: The 1918 Flu Pandemic (Part 2) <b>Library Exercise</b> <b>Due: Tues Feb 15</b> (end of day)	Hammond, Chapter 8 (pp315-337) <i>*same reading as preceding week</i>	The 1918 Flu and COVID-19 Pandemics: More Parallels or Differences?
Feb 21 to 25 --- Reading Week --- no class meeting			
#7 Mar 1	Influenza Pandemics since 1920: A never-ending threat? <b>Online Quiz #2</b> Opens: 9:00 am. Wed Mar 2 Closes: 12:30 p.m. Tues Mar 8 (start of class)	Mark Honigsbaum, "Revisiting the 1957 and 1968 influenza pandemics," <i>Lancet</i> 395 (June 13,2020): 1824-26.  "Swine flu of 1976: Lessons from the past," <i>Bull World Health Organ</i> 87 (2009): 414-415. <b>** PDF pages of both readings provided to students on OWL</b>	The 1976 Swine Flu and U.S. Public Service Announcements: Fear-mongering or Necessary?
#8 Mar 8	Poliomyelitis, Vaccines, and the Public Debate	Hammond, Chapter 10 (pp391-414)	The 1949 Canadian Arctic Polio Epidemic: Greater Challenges in Indigenous Communities?
#9 Mar 15	HIV-AIDS and Global Implications <b>Essay Assignment</b> <b>Due: Tues Mar 15</b> (end of day)	Hammond, Chapter 11 (pp427-452)	HIV-AIDS, 'Patient Zero,' and the Case of Gaetan Dugas: Is this Good Science or Hysteria and Scapegoating?
#10 Mar 22	SARS, 2003: Politics and Vulnerabilities	Hammond, Conclusion (pp463-467)	The 2003 SARS Outbreak in Canada: Health Care Workers as Key Difference Makers?
#11 Mar 29	Ebola and Zika: New Risks?	Frank Snowden, <i>Epidemics and Society</i> , Chapter 22 (page 474-505 Ebola discussion) <b>** PDF pages of this reading provided to students on OWL</b>	<i>Time Magazine's</i> 2014 Person of the Year—The Ebola Fighters: Any Value or Significance to be drawn?
#12 Apr 5	COVID-19 and History	None	None
April Exam	<b>Final Exam</b> <b>Check University Exam Schedule</b>		

**Additional Statements:**

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,  
<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,  
for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness