508:328 History of Health and Medicine in Africa
Fall 2010
Professor Barbara Cooper
M/Th 9:15 – 10:35 Hickman 205

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CAC: Van Dyck Hall  Room 003 (basement)
Office Hours: M/Th 10:45-11:45 in the Douglass student center or by appointment in my History Department office.

Scheduled exam time Dec 17, 8:00-11:00

This course will examine the impact of 19th and 20th century history on health and health care in sub-Saharan Africa. It will focus on African responses to changing medical technologies and cultures; it will also explore emerging patterns of disease. Readings and discussions focus on a range of topics related to health and medicine. The issues we will discuss provide a unique perspective on cultural flows, the spread of Islam and Christianity, the day to day experience of colonization, predicaments of post-colonial “development,” African images of the west, and western images of Africa.

Africa is huge and diverse, and has a deep and rich history. We will not attempt to cover every possible facet of its medical history here. Instead we will explore series of key themes in the history of therapeutic systems in Africa to develop a sense for the kinds of issues that shape health in Africa. Class will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. It is essential that you do the readings so that you can participate fully in discussion.

Course Requirements

Class attendance and participation: 25%
Quizzes: These are periodic in class writing exercises (roughly one each week); you may drop the lowest scores for a total of 10 quizzes worth 5 points each: 50%
Take home examination: 25%

Class participation involves showing up prepared and contributing meaningfully to the discussion. Attendance is important, but not adequate in and of itself. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences no questions asked. Other than that you are expected to notify me BEFORE class if an emergency arises and you are unable to attend. Unexcused absences after the initial two will be reflected in a lowering of your grade. Those who are habitually late for class will receive a similar reduction in their grade.

This is a 300 level class, and it requires a fair amount of reading and writing. Please plan accordingly. You will read an average of 80-100 pages per week. If you feel this is too much reading for you to handle, then you should consider taking a different class. You are expected to complete the assigned reading BEFORE class. Much of class discussion
will be based on the readings. Those who are habitually unprepared for class (regardless of their attendance record) will find this fact reflected in the class participation portion of their grade.

**Plagiarism** (theft, borrowing, or purchase of another’s words and ideas without attribution) is serious business and will not be tolerated in this class. Students caught plagiarizing will at minimum receive an F for that project without exception. Repeat or major offenders will fail the course and be forwarded to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Ignorance will not be accepted at an excuse in cases of violation. If you are at all confused as to what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to take up your questions with me before you hand in your paper.

If you need more information you should consult The Writing Program’s excellent student-friendly explanation of plagiarism at [http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/](http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/201/plagiarism_policy/)

**Disability Accommodation:**
Students requesting accommodation must first contact the Office of Disability Services [http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html) who will determine eligibility. Please bring any Letters of Accommodation to my attention.

**Sources:** All course readings, assignments, and announcements will posted on the course website at [http://sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)

You are responsible for any communications or assignments posted for the class on Sakai. [http://sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu) To access the site you enter your user id and password—these are the same as those for your eden account. The automated electronic listserv for the course uses whatever email address you have registered with the Rutgers Directory.
Class Schedule:

Sept. 2: Course Introduction: syllabus and requirements

Sept. 8 [“Monday”] Disease Ecology and African History

Sept 9 African Medicine/Biomedicine: What is a therapeutic system?


Sept 13 Understanding African Therapeutic Systems
Required reading: E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (selections)

Sept 16 Agency and spirits

[In class movie] Sept nuits et sept jours (1992) 2-2127
Abstract: This film documents a healing ceremony in Senegal. The ceremony, called the Ndepp, is organized by the Lebou people to honor their ancestral spirits and to ask them to allow a cure to take place of one of their members, in this case a mother who refuses to care for her newborn. Performed over seven days and nights, it is a complicated ceremony with a precise set of rules and involves the whole community.
Director: Maurice Dorès Distributor:Filmakers Library 48 min.

Sept 20 Quandaries and Promise of Medical Pluralism


[In class movie] Sangoma (1997) 2-3939
Abstract: In South Africa, one of the legacies of apartheid is a two-tiered health system that heavily favours the white population. Inyangas and sangomas, the traditional healers, have always been regarded with suspicion by practitioners of Western medicine. Dubbed "witch-doctors," their methods have been dismissed as mumbo-jumbo. New efforts to integrate traditional healers into primary health care, nutritional education, and AIDS work holds some promise for a public health system under siege. Homeopathy and holistic healing are gaining acceptance as therapeutic concepts which make no distinction between mind and body, individual and society.
Director: Peter Davis Distributor: Villon Films 54 min.

Sept 23 Scientific Racism

[In class movie] The life and times of Sara Baartman: "The Hottentot Venus" (1998) 2-5019
Abstract: A documentary film on the life of a Khoi Khoi woman who was taken from South Africa in 1810 and exhibited as a freak across Britain. The image and ideas for "The Hottentot Venus" (particularly the interest in her sexual anatomy) swept through British popular culture. A court battle waged by abolitionists to free her from her exhibitors failed. In 1814, a year before her death, she was taken to France and became the object of scientific research that formed the bedrock of European ideas about black female sexuality.
Director: Zola Maseko; Distributor: First Run/Icarus Films 52 mins.

Sept 27 Scientific Racism – discussion


Sept 30 Colonial Medicine and the “Civilizing Mission”


October 4 Colonial Labor and African Health: Red Rubber and Sleeping Sickness in the Belgian Congo
Oct. 7 Colonial Labor and African Health: Red Rubber and Sleeping Sickness in the Belgian Congo

Oct. 11 Industrialization and Migrant Labor: The Health Costs

Oct 14 Urbanization

Oct. 18 Sexuality, Gender, and Colonial Control

Oct. 21 Fertility Worries – Labor Needs
Oct. 25 Mental Health

Oct. 28 Hunger and Nutrition

Cooper article [draft]

November 1 African Critiques of Bio-power

Nov. 4 Family Planning versus Population Control


Nov. 8 War and Trauma
   Required reading: Victor Igreja, Wim Kleijn, and Annemiek Richters, “When the War Was Over, Little Changed: Women’s Posttraumatic Suffering after the War

Nov. 11 Biomedicine in “Resource-Limited” Settings


Nov. 15 Structural Adjustment and African Health -- I


Nov. 18 [ASA] : Structural Adjustment II

[begin reading Webb, Humanity’s Burden]

View Film in Class: Donka—X-Ray of an African Hospital (Conakry, Guinea)

[We will have no class Monday Nov. 22; it is a “Wednesday.” You will want to use this extra time to read the Webb book—we will discuss the whole book on Nov. 29]

Nov. 29 Malaria

December 2 AIDS -- I


Dec. 6 AIDS II


Dec. 9 Ethical Issues in Resource Poor Contexts: Research


Dec. 13 Concluding discussion

Final take home essay will be due at the close of our scheduled exam time Dec 17, 8:00-11:00. You must upload your paper to the Assignments tab by 11am.