Jews and Medicine
563:228

Instructor: Hilit Surowitz-Israel
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Course Description: This course will thematically explore the engagement of Jews with medicine, public health, and bioethics. Over the course of the semester we will look at the ways that Jews imagined health, illness, and the body, as well as the way that non-Jews imagined the Jewish body and health. Of particular interest are those moments and places where ideas of Jewishness, and Judaism are relevant to the question of medicine, conceptualizations of health and wellness, nutrition, and the idea of the Jewish body. Some of the topics to be explored are Jewish folkmedicine, Jewish involvement in tenement reform, race science, and Jewish responses to bioethics questions such as abortion and euthanasia.

If university funding is awarded, we will visit the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia, which is America’s premier museum of medical history.

Objectives: By the conclusion of the course participants should be able to:
- Analyze key texts and ideas about the role of Jews and medicine,
- Demonstrate familiarity with major themes in the development of the field of medicine, and questions regarding the intersection of Jews, Judaism, and medicine,
- Demonstrate familiarity with the transformation of the field of medicine and ideas of the body,
- Analyze the role and impact of the Jewish physician in various societies and periods.

The Required Text for the course:
- All course material is available on SAKAI.
- Other readings or media may be assigned during the course of the semester.

Student Assessment:
Attendance & Participation
Students are expected to attend each class on time. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. You are permitted three unexcused absences. Following the third unexcused absence 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical or family emergencies, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.
Short quizzes may be given on a regular basis. There will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or exams.

Student participation is an integral component for the success of this class. Course participants will be expected to arrive to class on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Please bring assigned readings to class as we will frequently consult the text, particularly the primary sources. Participation not only means asking questions and involving oneself in the classroom discussion, it also means actively listening to others.

Requirements:
All course components must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

- Participation, in-class assignments, pop quizzes (10%)
- In-class midterm exam (25%)
- Essay 1 (20%)
- Essay 2 (20%)
- Final exam (25%)
- All students must come to office hours at least once during the semester.

Written work will be graded on the basis of content, clarity of argument, quality of writing, and how well it analyzes the material and answers the questions. Written work, except for that which is a classroom assignment, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font), and spell-checked. One letter grade per day will be deducted for late papers unless you have a written medical excuse.

Classroom Policies:
- Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized according to the full extent of University policy. Please consult Rutgers University’s Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students:
  http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism

- Students with disabilities who require accommodations should provide me with their “accommodation letter” from the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please consult the website of the Office of Disability Services for further information:
  http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117
Not for Circulation
Tentative Syllabus

- Note that I do not accept assignments submitted by email. All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy on the day that they are due.
- Evaluations will cover all course material, even if it is not specifically covered in class.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Introduction to Jews and Medicine (Weeks 1 & 2)

Week 1:
This week will provide an overview of the course and an introduction to the relationship between Jews and the medicine.


Week 2:
An introduction to the body in popular western tradition, and the transition from the divine to human body.

- Primary source: excerpts from Paracelsus, Volumen Medicinae Paramirum, pgs. 23-32, from MWC

Jewish folklore about medicine (Weeks 3-5)
Weeks 3-5 will explore Jewish folklore about medicine and Jewish folkmedicine globally. By looking at both rabbinic response and case studies from the 18th-20th centuries we will see the intersection of religion, and conceptualizations of illness, the body and healing.

Week 3:
Not for Circulation
Tentative Syllabus


Week 4:


Week 5:


Jews and public health (Weeks 6-8)
Weeks 6-9 will focus on Jewish engagement with public health in both Europe and the United States. We will explore Jewish engagement in Lower East Side tenement Reform, Jewish concerns about nutrition, and the development of Muscular Judaism. A primary source packet will be available of SAKAI. Please print and bring to class.

Week 6 (Tenement Reform and Public Health):
Riis, Jacob A. 1901. How the other half lives: studies among the tenements of New York. New York: C. Scribner's Sons. (excerpts on SAKAI)


Week 7 (Diet, Nutrition, and Jewish Law):


**Week 8 (Muscular Judaism):**

Primary source: Jewish Pride Through Sport. Remarks by Max Nordau at the 1900 World Zionist Congress.

**Pathologizing the Jew (Weeks 9-11)**
Weeks 9-11 will focus on the development of race science, Eugenics and the Jews, and the pathologizing of Jews and Jewishness.

**Weeks 9 & 10:**
Czech, Herwig. From welfare to selection : Vienna's public health office and the implementation of racial hygiene policies under the Nazi regime.. In: "Blood and Homeland", (2007) 317-333


**Week 11:**
Bioethics (Weeks 12-14)
During the final weeks of the course, we will focus on Jewish bioethics. We will specifically look at abortion and euthanasia, and explore both traditional Jewish texts, and modern engagements with these subjects by various Jewish denominations.

Weeks 12 & 13: Jewish Ethics and Halakhah:


Eugene B. Borowitz, Exploring Jewish Ethics, 17-25

Abortion:
Primary Sources:
Exodus 21:22
Mishnah Oholot 7:6
Talmud Arakhin 7a (Mishnah and following)
Talmud Sanhedrin 72b (amar Rav Huna ...), Rashi
Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hil. Rotzeach 1:9


Balfour Brickner, "Judaism and Abortion," in Contemporary Jewish Ethics, ed. Menachem Marc Kellner, 279-83

Bleich and Brickner in Sh'ma, 5, no. 85 (1975): 194-200


**Week 14: Euthanasia and End of Life Decisions:**

Talmud, Yoma 82a-85b  
Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh Deah 339:1-2


Bleich, "The Quinlan Case: A Torah Perspective," in Jewish Bioethics, 266-76