

## HTS 6122 Syllabus

[History of Medicine, 94151]

[Fall 2026]

### Instructor Information

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### General Course Information

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#### Description

This graduate seminar examines the main themes and methods in the global history of biomedicine and the biomedical sciences. In this course, we will explore how a broad range of actors constructed, contested, and circulated knowledge about health, illness, and disability. We will examine how such knowledge moved between local, regional, and national contexts, including from North America to post-Soviet states to the Global South, and the perspectives of physicians, patients, activists, laboratory scientists, and public health officials, amongst others.

Though this course draws primarily from the history of medicine and science, we will also read in allied disciplines including critical medical anthropology, the anthropology of science, and sociology of medicine.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

With the successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize and synthesize the major arguments, methods, and theories underlying the global history of biomedicine and the biomedical sciences
- Analyze how various stakeholders have accelerated, produced, and/or contested the development of biomedical knowledge across time and space
- Critically evaluate the relationship between biomedicine, biomedical sciences, and major historical developments

- Demonstrate a skilled ability to read and synthesize complex historical monographs as evidenced through written summaries, leading seminar discussions, and engaging with peers in thoughtful conversation
- Complete historiography paper or project proposal related to the global history of biomedicine and the biomedical sciences that contributes to the historiography, identifies appropriate primary sources, and develops nuanced research questions.

### **Required Course Materials**

All these books are required reading for this course.

#### Historians

Courtney E. Thompson and Kylie M. Smith, eds. *Do Less Harm: Ethical Questions for Health Historians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2025).

#### Clinical Encounters

Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963, original, English translation published in 1973).

Annamarie Mol, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

Nana Osei Quarshie, *African Pharmakon: The Asylum as Shrine from Slavery to the Return* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2025).

#### Medicines

Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

Liz. P.Y. Chee, *Mao's Bestiary: Medicinal Animals in Modern China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

#### Genetics

M. Susan Lindee, *Moments of Truth in Genetic Medicine* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Rayna Rapp, *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

#### Samples

Warwick Anderson, *The Collectors of Lost Souls: Turning Kuru Scientists into Whitemen* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

Joanna Radin, *Life on Ice: A History of New Uses for Cold Blood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

### Stoppages

Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

### Circulations

Adriana Petryna, *When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Melinda Cooper and Catherine Waldby, *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

## **Grading Policy:**

### *Assignments*

- Syllabus Quiz (5%)
- Participation (20%)
- Discussion Leader and Class Presentation (25%)
- Book Review (15%)
- Final Proposal or Historiographic Paper (35%)

## **Grading Scale**

90 – 100% = A, superior performance

80 – 89% = B, high-quality performance

70 – 79% = C, average performance

60 – 69% = D, poor performance

0 – 59% = F, unacceptable performance

## **Description of Graded Components**

*Syllabus Quiz (5%)*

A short quiz administered in the first week to ensure students have read and understood the course policies, expectations, and required materials. This assignment is designed to set students up for success by familiarizing them with the structure of the seminar from the outset.

### *Participation (20%)*

Active, prepared engagement in weekly seminar discussions is central to this course, and students are expected to come having read the assigned text carefully and ready to introduce thoughtful questions, analyses, and debates that sustain and advance the conversation.

### *Discussion Leader and Class Presentation (25%)*

Once during the semester, each student will lead a seminar discussion for their assigned week. They will open with a 30-minute presentation that situates the book within the course's broader themes, and outlines the author's key arguments, contributions, and methods, and then guide the seminar with a series of discussion questions.

### *Book Review (15%)*

Students will write a book review of one monograph in the global history of medicine and the biomedical sciences that is important for their final paper. The review should summarize the book's argument, assess its contribution to the historiography, and identify its strengths and limitations in approximately 800 - 1000 words.

### *Final Proposal or Historiographic Paper (35%)*

Students will complete either a research project proposal or historiographic paper related to the global history of biomedicine and the biomedical sciences, demonstrating the ability to identify a significant research question, situate it within relevant scholarship, and develop a plan for an original project using appropriate sources. Full guidelines will be distributed separately, and students will workshop their drafts with peers before final submission.

## **Course Policies**

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### **Attendance and/or Participation**

Students can have a total of two unexcused absences over the course of the semester with no questions asked. More than two missed courses will result in a reduction of the final

participation grade. If you miss more than two class sessions, you must have formal documentation.

As discussed above, active participation is a significant part of this seminar.

### **Academic Integrity**

Scholarship is an intellectual, ethical, and social endeavor. It can be a great joy to discuss and debate assignments, ideas, theories, and readings with your peers. For this class, I encourage you to reflect on course materials, workshop ideas, and proofread drafts with your peers outside of our scheduled class time. However, you also have a responsibility to properly and clearly cite any ideas, language, or theories that you did not generate. It is a form of plagiarism to misrepresent another scholar's work as your own without proper attribution, even if such misrepresentation is unintentional. We will discuss the politics of citations in class.

Any instances of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action, which may include a required resubmission, a failing grade, or a report to the Office of the Dean of Students. Violations include cheating, plagiarizing, or the inappropriate use of online software, including AI.

If you have any questions or you're in doubt, please ask me. It is our shared responsibility to foster an environment where you can debate, discuss, take risks, make mistakes, improve, learn, and grow.

For more information, please see Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct.

<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code>

<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct>

### **Core IMPACTS**

This is not a Core IMPACTS course. For more on Core IMPACTS, see:

<https://www.usg.edu/curriculum/core-impacts/>

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me.

Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, and/or chronic medical conditions who believe that they need accommodations, are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Students must provide documentation of their disability to ODS by uploading the forms into the AIM portal.

### **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.