HIST 120D: THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN MEDICINE

In Workflow

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Approval Path

1. 2026-08-20T12:09:36Z
   Khal Schneider (schneider): Approved for HIST Committee Chair
2. 2026-08-20T14:57:09Z
   Jeffrey Wilson (jkwilson): Approved for HIST Chair
3. 2026-10-07T18:23:13Z
   Rebekkah Mulholland (rebekkah.mulholland): Approved for ALS College Committee Chair
4. 2026-10-07T19:45:24Z
   Gladys Francis (gladys.francis): Approved for ALS Dean

New Course Proposal

Date Submitted: 2026-08-17T19:00:31Z

Viewing: HIST 120D : The Emergence of Modern Medicine

Last edit: 2026-08-17T19:00:29Z

Changes proposed by: Jeffrey Wilson (212375398)

Contact(s):

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Catalog Title:
The Emergence of Modern Medicine

Class Schedule Title:
Emergence of Modern Medicine

Academic Group: (College)
ALS - Arts & Letters

Academic Organization: (Department)
History

Will this course be offered through the College of Continuing Education (CCE)?
No

Catalog Year Effective:
Fall 2027 (2027/2028 Catalog)

Subject Area: (prefix)
HIST - History

Catalog Number: (course number)
120D

Course ID: (For administrative use only.)
TBD

Units:
3

Is the ONLY purpose of this change to update the term typically offered or the enforcement of existing requisites at registration?
No

In what term(s) will this course typically be offered?
Fall, Spring

Does this course require a room for its final exam?
Yes, final exam requires a room

Does this course replace an existing experimental course?
No

This course complies with the credit hour policy:
Yes

Justification for course proposal:
This course strengthens the History curriculum by offering majors an interdisciplinary elective in the history of science and medicine while providing a broadly accessible GE Humanities option for students in other fields. Spanning 1500–1900, it examines how medical knowledge, institutions, and practices developed in relation to religion, empire, race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality. Through comparative study of Western and non-Western healing traditions and close analysis of diverse primary sources, students learn core humanities methods of contextualization, interpretation, and evidence-based argumentation. The course therefore expands departmental coverage, supports students interested in medicine, science, public health, and related professions, and demonstrates how cultural values and relations of power have shaped understandings of the body, health, disease, and human difference.

Course Description: (Not to exceed 90 words and language should conform to catalog copy.)
Examines the history of medicine in Europe, 1500-1900.

Are one or more field trips required with this course?
No

Fee Course?
No

Is this course designated as Service Learning?
No

Is this course designated as Curricular Community Engaged Learning?
No

Does this course require safety training?
No

Does this course require personal protective equipment (PPE)?
No

Does this course have prerequisites?
No

Does this course have corequisites?
No

Graded:
Letter

Approval required for enrollment?
No Approval Required

Course Component(s) and Classification(s):

Lecture

Lecture Classification

CS#02 - Lecture/Discussion (K-factor=1WTU per unit)

Lecture Units

3

Is this a paired course?

No

Is this course crosslisted?

No

Can this course be repeated for credit?

No

Can the course be taken for credit more than once during the same term?

No

Description of the Expected Learning Outcomes and Assessment Strategies:

List the Expected Learning Outcomes and their accompanying Assessment Strategies (e.g., portfolios, examinations, performances, pre-and post-tests, conferences with students, student papers). Click the plus sign to add a new row.

	Expected Learning Outcome	Assessment Strategies
1	Recognize the distinctive constructions of body, health, and disease in various socio-political contexts and how those constructions transform history, culture, and relations of power.	Quizzes
2	Apply frameworks of class, race, gender, and (dis)ability to various medical contexts.	Primary & secondary source seminars
3	Critically analyze primary and secondary sources, especially those that involve the recovery of voices not visible in mainstream documents or history.	Primary & secondary source seminars
4	Produce clear, concise, and potent arguments based on evidence.	Mid-term and final exams

For whom is this course being developed?

Majors in the Dept
Minors in the Dept
General Education

Is this course required in a degree program (major, minor, graduate degree, certificate?)

No

Does the proposed change or addition cause a significant increase in the use of College or University resources (lab room, computer)?

No

Will there be any departments affected by this proposed course?

No

I/we as the author(s) of this course proposal agree to provide a new or updated accessibility checklist to the Dean's office prior to the semester when this course is taught utilizing the changes proposed here.

I/we agree

University Learning Goals

Undergraduate Learning Goals:

Competence in the disciplines
Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
Intellectual and practical skills
Personal and social responsibility
Integrative learning

Is this course required as part of a teaching credential program, a single subject, or multiple subject waiver program (e.g., Liberal Studies, Biology) or other school personnel preparation program (e.g., School of Nursing)?

No

Is this a General Education (GE) or Graduation Requirement (GR) course or is it being considered for GE/GR?

Is this a General Education (GE) course or is it being considered for GE?

Yes

In which GE area(s) does this apply?

3B. Humanities

Which GE objective(s) does this course satisfy?

Read, write, and understand relatively complex and sophisticated English prose.
Construct a non-fallacious verbal argument, recognize fallacious arguments, and follow the verbal arguments of others.
Find and use common information resources, engage in specialized library research, use computers and seek out appropriate expert opinion and advice.
Develop an acquaintance and understanding of cultures and major dynamic social institutions which affect one's life.
Possess a significant and useful understanding of peoples from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds, including women and ethnic and other minority groups who have been the objects of prejudice and adverse discrimination within our society.

Attach Course Syllabus with Detailed Outline of Weekly Topics:

HIST 120D History of Medicine to 1900.docx

Syllabi must include: GE area outcomes listed verbatim; catalog description of the course; prerequisites, if any; student learning objectives; assignments; texts; reading lists; materials; grading system; exams and other methods of evaluation.

Will more than one section of this course be offered?

No

General Education - Area 3B: Humanities

Section 1.

Indicate in written statements how the course meets the following criteria for Area 3B. Relate the statements to the course syllabus and outline. Be as succinct as possible.

Is broad in scope or survey in nature.

The course follows a chronological order and spans four centuries (1500–1900). It covers major transformations in Western medicine: Renaissance anatomy, Enlightenment reforms, colonial encounters, clinical medicine, anesthesia, germ theory, and professionalization. It engages a wide range of themes from anatomy and plague to psychiatry, obstetrics, surgery, and bacteriology, with weekly topics moving across intellectual, social, cultural, and technological developments.

Develops an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of the human community.

The syllabus includes diverse historical actors, perspectives, and events. It aims to cultivate an appreciation for the plurality of human experience and expose students to voices beyond those of university-educated physicians: women midwives, patients, Indigenous writers, colonial subjects, and critics of medical authority.
• Global exchanges (Week 2–3) highlight Indigenous healing systems, botanical knowledge from the Americas and Asia, and cross cultural medical encounters.
• Colonial medicine (Week 7–8) foregrounds power, race, and exploitation, showing how European expansion reshaped health and knowledge.
• Women and midwifery (Week 8) centers gendered labor, authority, and medicalization.
• Mental health, vaccination debates, and public resistance (Weeks 9–10) discuss various social responses across class, religion, and community.

Develops a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the heritage being studied and transmits a knowledge of the Western and Non-Western cultural heritage in the humanities. Students should be able to:

Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.

Students learn important methods in the humanities through engagement with diverse primary sources, interpretive reading, and historical argumentation. The primary source seminars train students to analyze texts and images such as medieval anatomical plates, plague ordinances, midwifery manuals, asylum records, and laboratory notebooks using close reading and contextualization. Writing and exam assignments require students to construct arguments that are grounded in evidence and demonstrate their skills in historical reasoning, textual analysis and critical thinking.

Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.

The course shows how medical ideas both shaped and were shaped by cultural values, religious beliefs, political systems, and social hierarchies. Lectures and seminars on plague governance, colonial medicine, gender and midwifery, mental illness, and vaccination controversies reveal how societies interpreted disease through cultural frameworks and how public health policies transformed social order. Students will also analyze how medical knowledge influences identity and everyday life.

Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.

Across the syllabus, students encounter competing ideas about the human body, human difference, and human nature. Renaissance anatomy presents the body as a mechanical structure; humoralism frames humans as governed by balance and imbalance; Enlightenment classification organizes humans into racialized and gendered categories; Romantic vitalism imagines life as animated by non material forces; nineteenth century laboratory medicine redefines humans through physiology, pathology, and bodily fragmentation. Students compare these frameworks and analyze how different eras constructed "the human" through science, religion, philosophy, and culture.

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

The course traces the development of Western medical thought from its foundations in ancient Greek and Roman humoralism and medieval Christian scholastic logic, showing how these frameworks shaped early modern understandings of the body and disease. It then follows the major intellectual transformations of the Scientific Revolution (empiricism, rationalism), the Enlightenment (classification, natural history), and the nineteenth century (experimental medicine, laboratory science, germ theory). Across these periods, students see how cultural values such as reason, observation, religious belief, imperial ambition, and technological progress influenced medical knowledge and practice.
The course also examines colonial encounters, which introduce students to non Western medical traditions, including Indigenous botanical knowledge and local healing systems. These themes show how cross cultural exchange, appropriation, and conflict shaped Western science, giving students a fuller understanding of both Western heritage and non Western contributions to the history of medicine.

In presenting the contribution and perspectives of people, the coursework addresses at least two of the following:
- **Women**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Socio-economic status**
- **Religious affiliation**
- **Disabilities**
- **Gays & lesbians**

Women
The course examines women's roles as healers, midwives, caregivers, and patients, especially in sessions on midwifery manuals, obstetrics, and the medicalization of childbirth in the 18th and 19th centuries. Readings and primary sources highlight how women's authority in healing was challenged by emerging male dominated medical professions, allowing students to analyze gender, expertise, and power.

Ethnicity
Discussions of colonial medicine, global pharmacology, and Indigenous healing traditions show how medical knowledge circulated across cultures and how European physicians interpreted (and often appropriated) non Western practices. Students analyze how racialized thinking shaped medical theories, public health policies, and scientific classification from the earliest encounters with other cultures and ethnicities.

Socio economic status
Sessions on hospital reform, urban poverty, and public health, particularly during industrialization in the 19th century, show how class shaped access to care, exposure to disease, and medical outcomes. Primary sources such as hospital casebooks and poorhouse medical records allow students to examine how poverty influenced medical treatment and social attitudes toward illness.

Religious affiliation
The course examines how diverse religious frameworks shaped medical theory and practice across cultures. Students explore Indigenous religious belief systems in the Americas and Africa, where healing traditions were closely tied to notions of ancestral power and community ritual, and how these perspectives often conflicted with European Christian approaches to disease and healing. The course also highlights differences between Catholic and Protestant regions, showing how each tradition developed distinct beliefs about the body, health, and divine intervention. Students analyze how religious values influenced attitudes toward practices such as anatomical dissection and vaccination, and how different communities interpreted illness, assigned moral meaning, and organized collective responses to epidemics.

Disabilities
The course discusses how industrial accidents, war injuries, and long term impairment (e.g., post smallpox blindness or amputated limbs) shaped how disability was understood and managed in early modern and modern societies. Students examine how medical institutions, charity systems, and rehabilitation practices shaped social attitudes toward disability.

Gays & lesbians
The course addresses 19th century medical and legal conceptions of sexuality, including the emergence of medicalized categories of "sexual deviance." Students analyze how medical discourse contributed to later frameworks of sexual identity, pathology, and social regulation.

Includes a writing component described on course syllabus

I) If course is lower division, formal and/or informal writing assignments encouraging students to think through course concepts using at least one of the following: periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, periodic formal writing assignments, periodic journals, reading logs, other. Writing in lower division courses need not be graded, but must, at a minimum, be evaluated for clarity and proper handling of terms, phrases, and concepts related to the course.

2) If course is upper division, a minimum of 1500 words of formal, graded writing. [Preferably there should be more than one formal writing assignment and each writing assignment (e.g. periodic lab reports, exams which include essay questions, a research/term paper etc.) should be due in stages throughout the semester to allow the writer to revise after receiving feedback from the instructor. Include an indication of how writing is to be evaluated and entered into course grade determination.]

How feedback is provided on the midterm (essay + short answer questions)

For the essay question, students receive margin comments and an end note explaining strengths and weaknesses in argumentation, clarity, and historical interpretation. Short-answer questions on the midterm are returned with brief comments on accuracy and precision. Since the same skills are required for the final exam, these comments help students sharpen what they know and write more clearly and persuasively so they're better prepared for the final exam.

Both essay and short answer responses are graded using a rubric that highlights expectations for argument and clarity. Students see exactly where they met or fell short of criteria.

After the midterm, an in-class review will be held, where students are provided collective feedback on strengths and weaknesses. This feedback should help students understand how to revise their writing strategies for the final exam.

Section 2.

If you would like, you may provide further information that might help the G.E. Course Review Committee understand how this course meets these criteria and/or the G.E. Program Objectives found in the CSUS Policy Manual, General Education Program, Section I.B.
n/a

Key: 15585