

HIS 293
Disease in American History

Satisfies: STAS

Thematic Categories: "Empires, Violence & Global Connections,"
"Health, Science & Environmental Change"

M/W, 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Instructor Erin Chavez

In this course we will explore, analyze, and interrogate the ways disease, and responses to it, have both reflected and determined the course of American history from the late 19th C. to the present. From the “Age of Epidemics” to the revolution in genetics, to the AIDS epidemic, and the current COVID-19 pandemic, we will examine how our understanding of disease changed over time, how different diseases were seen and approached differently (hereditary, communicable) and how those changes related (or contradicted) the science and why. We will explore the public communication of science and the growth of government concern and involvement in all aspects of public health and how these programs were shaped in relation to questions of citizenship, race, class, and gender. In this course we will consult a variety of primary and secondary sources, including books, journal, news, and magazine articles, images, as well as documentary films.