

The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Women & Gender Studies
Course Syllabus - WS 3373/21742 Plagues, Pandemics, & Power
(Online: asynchronous)
Spring 2025 (January 21st to May 11th) / Online Course

Instructor: Roshanak Jafari, MD.

Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours:

- Anytime via e-mail or Blackboard Course Discussion Board
- Virtual Meeting Room (by appointment):
<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/e99ce61775284f62b974750867304b65>
- e-mail: rjafari@utep.edu

Tech support can be reached at <https://www.utep.edu/irp/technologysupport/>

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the social, cultural, and demographic impact of several major pandemic diseases and outbreaks including Plague, Cholera, Flu, Polio, Toxic Shock syndrome and HIV/AIDS. Our work will begin with a look at the Black Death. We will learn how an epidemic that occurred on another continent over 600 years still affects our society socially and culturally. Our examination of the Black Death will also serve as a starting point for mastering the fundamentals of social epidemiology.

From there we will turn our attention to Cholera, which will allow us to explore how epidemiologists trace the causes of disease and how social inequalities shape epidemics and their outcomes. Our exploration of avian and swine flus will give us further insight into the biology of viruses as well as the patterns of xenophobia that often accompany flu pandemics. We will look at the mid-twentieth century campaign to eradicate polio in the United States and the elements of social control and propaganda that were essential to its success.

A brief examination of Toxic Shock Syndrome will allow us to discover how sexism and sexist notions of the female body fueled this public health problem. Our work will end with an exploration of the "plague" of our time: HIV/AIDS.

We will examine how intersections of poverty, gender, sexual orientation, race and global inequalities contribute to the persistence of this pandemic. Our exploration of each disease will center on five areas: 1) biological factors, 2) social epidemiology, 3) the role of social power in shaping societal responses to the disease, 4) the construction of social meanings attached to the disease, and 5) the role of social power in shaping public health/public policy responses.

Course Objectives & Outcomes:

- Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- Articulate the ways gender, race, class, ability, religion, age, nationality, and sexuality intersect to impact the construction of identity, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and privilege in contemporary societies (WGS Learning Objective);

- Learn how to work with primary sources as a means of enriching our understanding of historical and current epidemics/pandemics;
- Understand the basic biology and modes of transmission for each of the diseases we will be studying;
- Master fundamental social epidemiological measures of incidence, prevalence, morbidity and mortality and understand how these are used in tracking epidemic disease;
- Understand how race, class, gender, and nationality impact epidemic diseases and their outcomes;
- Learn about the public health measures used in epidemic disease control and the use of social power in their enforcement;
- Analyze how the social meanings we attach to an epidemic disease can shape the production of knowledge about the disease itself, including scientific knowledge;
- Address public policy and social justice issues affecting women, men, LGBTQIA+ populations in diverse arenas including education, healthcare, business, non-profit, and governmental organizations (WGS objective) responses to epidemic disease and the role that social power plays in shaping them, and
- Develop global awareness, teamwork, and critical thinking skills (UTEP Edge Advantages) through examining the outbreak of diseases and governmental/ community response in various parts of the world.

Course Reading and Materials:

You are expected to complete a series of readings each week; these will form the foundation for our online class discussions. I do not assign an exorbitant amount of reading because you are expected to read closely and carefully all assigned articles and chapters. You should be fully prepared each week to discuss the assigned reading on the Reading Response forums. Please note: There will not be enough time to discuss all the readings each week, but you are expected to use the ones we don't discuss to supplement your reading responses. If you have trouble with reading and/or the concepts contained in online lectures, please contact me directly for clarification.

Required Textbooks:

1. Plague: A Very Short Introduction. Paul Slack. Oxford Press. 2021.
2. Epidemiology: A Very Short Introduction. Rodolfo Saracci. Oxford Press. 2010.
3. Additional readings and media are posted on Blackboard and are noted on the course schedule at the end of this document

Structure of the Course:

While completely online and asynchronously taught, the structure of the course emphasizes active and participatory ways of learning based on interactive forums, online class discussions, student research, and writing projects. The course is designed to emphasize the importance of collaborative learning, writing and critical thinking skills, and the open exchange of ideas. We will attempt the difficult task of integrating theory and practice, analysis and experience.

Course Requirements and Grading:

The following components will comprise your semester grade:

Introductory Essay	50 points
Reading Responses & Reactions	600 points
Exam #1	100 points
Exam #2	100 points
Exam #3	100 points
Final Reflection Essay	50 points
Total	1000 points

Grading Scale:

1,000 - 900 points	A
899 – 800 points	B
799 – 700 points	C
699 – 600 points	D
599 points or below	F

Written Projects:

In addition to doing a lot of reading this semester, you will also be doing a lot of writing. All writing, whether done in class or for formal papers, should be in the form of polished, academic prose. Part of the challenge of all writing assignments will include learning to be selective about what you write, as well as learning to convey your ideas to your readers in an interesting, elucidating manner.

I expect all the writing you do for this course to show evidence of serious intellectual endeavor. Further, all writing should be carefully revised, edited, and polished--virtually free of grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors. Be sure to use spell check, grammar check, and take advantage of the Writing Center for your writing assignments. If you turn in excessively sloppy, unedited assignments, you will receive zero credit.

Assignments:

You will be responsible for writing an introductory essay, reading responses & reactions, three exams, and a final reflection essay. By knowing basic facts, understanding history and theory, and applying your knowledge sets to create dynamic insights to understand significant social problems, you will be prepared to think and act critically.

Introductory Essay (50 points)

After reading the course road map and syllabus, write a short, 2-paged (750-1000 word) essay introducing yourself to the students in class and answering the questions on the prompt.

Reading Responses & Reactions (600 points)

Your primary assignment is to write weekly reading responses, reactions, and critical thinking questions to be submitted to the online forums. These assignments are designed to help you develop good study habits and facilitate interaction with your peers. You will be required to write these short reading responses on a weekly basis AND respond to two of your classmates' reading response questions. Your reading responses should be relatively short (500-750 words) **due every Thursday by 11pm**. There is a uniform 4-paragraph format for your reading responses that you must follow.

The Reading Reaction portion of this assignment requires your active participation and engagement with others in the course by responding to TWO student questions online in a 200-250-word response. Your response should be an attempt to answer the question posed at the end of the student response. Participation in class is not only about how much you say, but how well you listen and respond to your classmates with insight and respect.






Each Reading Response is worth 50 points. These points will be divided between your initial post (40 points) and your two peer responses (10 points). There are a total of 13 opportunities to post reading responses each week, but you are only required to post 12. This means you can miss ONE assignment, no questions asked. My recommendation is to save this for an unforeseen circumstance as there will be NO make-ups or late work accepted for these assignments. You may submit reading responses early if you wish, but zero credit will be given for late assignments. Your reading reactions will be **due every Monday evening by 11pm**.

Exams (300 points)

You will complete three exams which will cover each Block (1, 2, and 3), with the Introduction to the course included in Block 1. These exams will contain multiple choice, fill in the blank, and T/F questions. The tests will be timed at 60 minutes and will remain available for students to take during a 24-hour period.

Final Reflection Essay (50 points)

This assignment is a short 2-paged reflection on what you have learned during the semester. Think about the readings and discussions we have had throughout the course and take this writing opportunity to reflect on your experiences. What difference does it make that you took this course, and has it given you a new or deeper understanding of the world around you? Which reading was the most insightful? What recommendations would you make to improve this course? Was the format useful for your learning and comprehension of difficult subject matter? How will this new knowledge impact your future studies, your relationships with others, or the kind of work you want to do?

Student Learning Objective	Outcome
Understand how an individual experience of a disease can reflect larger societal experience of epidemics and pandemics	 Social Responsibility
Demonstrate the ability to consider different points of view and work effectively with others. Develop cooperative learning and team-learning skills through course discussion forums. (CTQ)	 Teamwork Skills
Learn how to work with primary sources as a means of enriching our understanding of historical and current epidemics/pandemics.	 Critical Thinking Skills
Examine public policy responses to epidemic disease and the role that social power plays in shaping them.	 Critical Thinking Skills
Engage in critical thinking and writing skills.	 Communication Skills

Due Dates and Academic Honesty:

Academic life places all of us under demanding time constraints. Please mark your calendar with due dates for the assignments and begin working on these projects early in the semester. To get credit for your work, you must meet the due dates. If you find that you must turn in an assignment late due to an unforeseen circumstance, please contact me as soon as you recognize there is a problem.

I expect students to do their own work and to act with integrity. I take cheating very seriously and follow the university's policies on academic honesty, cheating, fabrication, helping others to cheat, or plagiarism (presenting the work of others as if it were your own, including material you find on the Internet). Any of these offenses will result in receiving a failing grade in the course and being reported to university authorities. Please note that, on written assignments, exact quotes must be placed in quotation marks, and the source of the quote must be cited in full. In addition, all ideas that come from another source—other than your own thoughts—must be cited in full. These include any ideas you have paraphrased or rephrased, but which originated in someone else's writing or expression.

According to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, "Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts."

The following are resources that students can use to stay academically honest:

1. [Avoiding Plagiarism \(PDF\)](#)
2. [Deterring Academic Dishonesty Student Resource \(PDF\)](#)

Policies and Expectations:

Late Work: No late work will be accepted during the semester. If you have a question about this policy please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your concern.

Work Load: This is an online course. I expect that you will commit at least 6-9 hours per week on the course assignments. As you prepare for the semester, please schedule your time accordingly so that you can be successful in this course.

Drop Policy: The instructor reserves the right to drop a student for lack of participation and/or lack of work submitted. If at any time a student decides to drop the course, it is the student's responsibility to do so. The deadline for dropping this course is **April 4th, 2025**. If you drop before the UTEP deadline, you will receive a "W". If you drop yourself or are dropped by the instructor after the deadline, you will receive an "F".

Class participation: Since our contact for this course is primarily online, I strongly recommend that you check the course page on Blackboard **daily**. Email messages are sent to your UTEP email address, so make sure you check your UTEP email several times a week. I will be sending at least two announcements weekly, and these will come to your email address. The class has been structured with individual tasks due on separate days, to allow you time to focus on one task at a time. Your reading responses should be relatively short (500-750 words) due **every Thursday by 11pm**. Your reading reactions will be **due every Monday evening by 11pm**.

Disabled Student Statement:

In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call 915.747.5148 for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the **student's** responsibility to contact the instructor and The Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso. For more information, contact the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/> or you can find them in Room 106 in the East Union Building.

Pregnant and Parenting Students:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

A Message from Women's & Gender Studies:

Women's and Gender Studies supports a learning environment in which individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our program must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability are contrary to the mission of our program. All our faculty and staff are responsible for promoting inclusive spaces for all, including students with children and breastfeeding mothers. While a Women's and Gender Studies student, you will be given an equitable opportunity to contribute and succeed. The lived experiences and knowledge that you bring to our courses are considered a resource, strength, and benefit. Thank you for the experiences that you bring to our program!

Policy on Children in Class: It is our belief that if we want to reach all students, that we should also expect parents and children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus a reflection of Women's and Gender Studies' commitment to student, staff and faculty parents. If you are breastfeeding or are the guardian of a child, feel free to bring them to class if there is a gap in childcare. You may sit near the door, and we understand if you must step out occasionally to meet their needs.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports your thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official UTEP records, please let me know.
- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Resources:

Academic Writing

For help with writing any assignments for this course, please visit the University Writing Center in person located in the UTEP library Room 227, or online at <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766> For further information on the writing centers services and hours please call (915) 747-5486.

Netiquette

In participating in an online course, it is important that you follow the use of proper online etiquette, also known as “netiquette.” At times, this course will present material on emotionally charged topics. Remember that while you can disagree with another’s viewpoint, you must do so respectfully. The online classroom is not the place for insulting comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior can be subject to disciplinary action. Here is an article that explores this idea a little more in-depth: <https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/blog/october-2017/10-rules-of-netiquette-for-students.html>

A link to this article will also be available on Blackboard for your week #1 assignments.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

AI prohibited

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is not allowed for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR)

WS 3373 Plagues, Pandemics, & Power - Weekly Schedule
The course is 15 weeks long, from January 21 to May 9, 2025

Course Schedule

BLOCK I – Pandemics & Epidemics: History of The Black Death

Week 1: Jan. 21-24, 2025

Introduction to Plagues, Pandemics & Power

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: Syllabus
Assignment: Introductory Essay Due: Thursday, Jan. 23, 11pm	<p>This first assignment is designed for us to get to know each other. After reading the course syllabus, perusing the course schedule, and watching the short introductory video, please write a short, 2-paged essay introducing yourself to the class. I'd also like you to write about your Social Location and what you are looking forward to learning in the course.</p> <p>Please make direct references to the syllabus and answer the following questions in a three-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is your social location (as described in the short video) and how has it shaped your experiences in the world in terms of oppression and/or privilege? 2) What areas of the course do you have real-life experience? Which topics seem foreign to you? (Cite specific topics from the weekly schedule.) 3) Have you taken a Women's and Gender Studies course before? If so, what did you learn? If not, what do you hope to learn? <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Social Location, Master Status, Women's Studies, Gender studies, Feminism, Interdisciplinarity, Oppression, Privilege

Week 2: Jan. 27- 31, 2025

Framing Histories of Disease: The Plague

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: Thucydides, "On the Plague" Blackboard: Kelaidis, Katherine. "What the Great Plague of Athens can Teach us now." March 23, 2020: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/great-plague-athens-has-erie-parallels-today/608545/ Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 1, "Plague: What's in a Name?" p. 1-15 Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 6, "Enduring Images" p. 94-112 Blackboard: Daily Art Magazine, "Plague in Art": https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/plague-in-art-10-paintings-coronavirus/
Additional Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeffries, Stuart. "Risky Business." <i>The Guardian</i>. Feb. 12, 2006. Andrews, Thomas. Burke, Flannery. "What does it mean to think Historically?" <i>Perspectives on History</i>. Jan. 1, 2007. Christensen, Joel. "Plagues Follow Bad Leadership in Ancient Greek Tales." <i>The Conversation</i>. March 12, 2020.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bass, Gary. "The Athenian Plague, a Cautionary Tale of Democracy's Fragility," <i>The New Yorker</i>, June 10, 2020.
Assignment: Reading Response #1 Due: Thursday, Jan. 30, 11pm Reading Reactions #1 Due: Monday, Feb. 3, 11pm	<p>Answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How does Thucydides' approach an understanding of the plague? (In other words, how does he assess the political impact of disease on a population? Use Kelaidis for support.) 2) According to Slack, how is a plague differentiated from other epidemic diseases such as Smallpox, Cholera, or the Spanish Flu? What motivated the early plague-deniers and what does it have to do with the exercise of power? 3) Which piece of plague artwork did you find most compelling/interesting from Daily Art Magazine and why? Use the Slack chapter for support. 4) Critical Thinking Question. <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Plague, <i>Yersinia Pestis</i> , Black Death, Pestilence, Epidemiology, Aetiology, Modes of Transmission (Individual/Environment), Disease as a "Social Construct"

Week 3: Feb. 3 – 7, 2025

Human Rights: Pandemics, Epidemics, Cholera, and Smallpox

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 2, "Pandemics and Epidemics" p. 16-34 Blackboard: "What were Women's Lives like during the 17th Century Plague?" Rebecca Rideal Blackboard: Hager, Thomas. "How one Daring Woman introduced the idea of a Smallpox Inoculation to England." <i>Time</i>. March 15, 2019: https://time.com/5542895/mary-montagu-smallpox/ Blackboard: Binwaber, Muneer. "How Water Shortages and lack of Sanitation Effect the future of Yemen." <i>International Policy Digest</i>. Nov. 13, 2019. https://intpolicydigest.org/how-water-shortages-and-lack-of-sanitation-affect-the-future-of-yemen/ Blackboard: NPR, "Healthcare Workers Struggle to Prevent Infectious Disease 'Disaster in Waiting' in Gaza.
Additional Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nightingale, Florence. "Rural Hygiene." https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Rural_Hygiene_-_Florence_Nightingale.pdf
Assignment: Reading Response #2 Due: Thursday, Feb. 6, 11pm Reading Reactions #2 Due: Monday, Feb. 10, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Slack, the history of the plague is divided into three long pandemics. Describe these three pandemics. What is the difference between a pandemic and an epidemic? And what theories explain the appearance and disappearance of disease over time and place? Also, what is the role of "human behavior" in the spread of disease and how does deliberate human intervention repel/prevent disease? 2) According to Rideal, what were women's lives like during the 17th century plagues? And according to Hager, what opposition did Lady Mary Montagu face when introducing the idea of a Smallpox vaccine? 3) According to Binwaber, what challenges do women in Yemen face regarding clean water and the spread of Cholera? What is happening in Gaza with regard to infectious disease? 4) Critical Thinking Question <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Plague of Justinian, Pandemic, Epidemic, Cholera, Effects of Climate Change on Disease, Women and Disease, Gendered Roles, Politics of Care

Week 4: Feb. 10 - 14, 2025

Black Death Economy (Class) and the Flu (Avian, Swine)

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 3, “Big Impacts: The Black Death” p. 35-52 Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 4, “Private Horrors” p. 53-73 Shah, Sonia. “Mass Consumption Is What Ails Us: To Avoid Pandemics, Our Whole Economy Needs to Change.” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>. April 17, 2020. Blackboard: Vidal, John. “Factory Farms of Disease.” <i>The Guardian</i>. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/18/factory-farms-of-disease-how-industrial-chicken-production-is-breeding-the-next-pandemic
Assignment: Reading Response #3 Due: Thursday, Feb. 13, 11pm Reading Reactions #3 Due: Monday, Feb. 17, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Slack, what were the economic effects of the plague? And what was the “mental shock” and “private horrors” of the plague on a population? Can the descriptions of the plague (and the responses to it) be compared to some of what we’ve seen with the spread of Covid-19? If so, how? 2) According to Shah, if it’s not population growth, what is it that is driving changes in land use and human exposure to animal microbes? 3) According to Vidal, what was unique about the Avian Flu outbreak in Astrakhan? And what kind of diseases are linked to intensive livestock farming? 4) Critical Thinking Question <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Economic Class, Pandemic effects on Agrarian Institutions, Serfdom, Feudal System, Scapegoat and Persecution of the Jews, “Flight,” H1N1, Zoonotic Disease, Zoonosis

Week 5: Feb. 17 - 21, 2025 **EXAM 1**

Public Health, Biosecurity, and Biocontainment

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 5, “Public Health” p. 74-93 Slack, Paul. <i>Pandemic</i>, Ch. 7, “The Lessons of Histories” p. 113-118 Blackboard: Weintraub, Karen. “As Covid Turns 3, experts worry where the next pandemic will come from – and if we’ll be ready” <i>USA Today</i>
Assignment: Reading Response #4 Due: Thursday, Feb. 20, 11pm Exam 1 Due: NLT Friday, Feb. 21, 11pm Reading Reactions #4 Due: Monday, Feb. 24, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Slack, how did the bureaucracy spring into action during the second pandemic? What specifically did they do to protect people? 2) According to Ch. 5, how did the people respond to quarantines and draconian measures during outbreaks? Was there resistance and activism? 3) According to the article written by Weintraub, what are the risks of bioterrorism? Have any of these dangers been substantiated with evidence? Lastly, what do the weakened international agreements between nations have to do with biosecurity? 4) Critical Thinking Question <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Biosecurity, Biocontainment, Bioterrorism, Quarantine, Methods of Surveillance, Segregation, Pesthouses, Ebola (Fruit Bats), Monkeypox, Smallpox

BLOCK II – Power, Epidemiology, & Disinformation

Week 6: Feb. 24 - 28, 2025

Introduction to Epidemiology: European Disease, Colonization, and Native Americans

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 1 “What is Epidemiology?” p. 1-11 Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 2 “Measuring Health and Disease” p. 12-23 Blackboard: Kiger, Patrick. “Did Colonists give Infected Blankets to Native Americans as Biological Warfare?” <i>History</i>. Nov. 15, 2018: https://www.history.com/news/colonists-native-americans-smallpox-blankets Blackboard: Mann, Charles. “1491.” <i>The Atlantic</i>. March 2002: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/03/1491/302445/
Assignment: Reading Response #5 Due: Thursday, Feb. 27, 11pm Reading Reactions #5 Due: Monday, Mar. 3, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Saracci, what is epidemiology and where does it come from and how is epidemiology today different from its origins? What are the five major areas within epidemiology? 2) According to Saracci, how is disease defined and measured? 3) Charles Mann writes about Anthropologists Henry F. Dobyns and Charles Hudson and the role of disease in colonization. What were their contributions to the field and what theories do they have about Native Americans and the arrival of epidemic diseases like smallpox, typhoid, and Bubonic Plague? 4) Critical Thinking Question <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Epidemiology, SARS, Population aspect of Epidemiology, Hippocrates, Descriptive Epidemiology, Aetiological Epidemiology, Evaluative Epidemiology, Health Services Epidemiology, Clinical Epidemiology, Disease, Diabetes, Prevalence Proportion, Probability and Risk, Incidence Rate, WHO

Week 7: Mar. 3 - 7, 2025

Disinformation, Censorship, and Fake News: The “Spanish” Flu

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 3 “Searching for the Causes of Disease” p. 24-36 Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 4 “Establishing the Causes of Disease” p. 37-51 Blackboard: Shafer, Ronald. “Spain Hated being Linked to the Deadly 1918 Flu Pandemic.” <i>The Washington Post</i>. March 23, 2020: https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/03/23/spanish-flu-chinese-virus-trump/ Blackboard: Gladwell, Malcolm. “The Deadliest Virus Ever Known.” <i>The New Yorker</i>. Sept. 29, 1997. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1997/09/29/the-dead-zone Blackboard: Podcast, Radiolab, “Dispatches from 1918.” https://radiolab.org/episodes/dispatches-1918
Assignment: Reading Response #6 Due: Thursday, Mar. 6, 11pm No Reading Reactions Due this week	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Shafer, why was the flu called the “Spanish” Flu even though it originated elsewhere? And what similarities can be found between the naming of the so-called “Spanish Flu” and the “China Virus” dubbed by former President Trump? 2) According to the Gladwell piece, how does the FDA work with vaccine manufacturers to come up with the flu vaccine each year? 3) According to Saracci, how do epidemiologists search for and then establish the cause of disease? And what interesting idea did you discover about the Spanish Flu by listening to the Radiolab podcast? 4) Critical Thinking Question. <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>

Key Concepts	“Cause” of Disease, Hypothesis, Null Hypothesis, Statistical Significance, Significance Tests, Confidence Limits, Confidence Interval, Parameters, Rate Ratio, Spanish Flu, DNA Virus, RNA Virus, “Viral Sex,” FDA, CDC, WHO
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<p>Spring Break, Mar. 10 - 14, 2025</p> <p>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</p>

<p>Week 8: Mar. 17 - 21, 2025</p> <p>Gender and Climate Change: Polio and Malaria</p>	
<p>Read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 5 “Testing how to Control a Disease” p. 52-63 • Blackboard: Video: Fathema Ismail: The Crusader Against Polio in India: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Q3RI6whcz0 • Blackboard: Daza, Vanessa. “Two Fights in One: Feminism and Environmentalism” Dejusticia. April 22, 2019. https://www.dejusticia.org/en/column/two-fights-in-one-feminism-and-environmentalism/ • Blackboard: Onyango, Esther and Maguire, Rowena. “Gendered Exposure, Vulnerability and Response: Malaria Risk in a Changing Climate in Western Kenya.” Nov. 16, 2022.
<p>Assignment: Reading Response #7 Due: Thursday, Mar. 20, 11pm</p> <p>Reading Reactions #6 Due: Monday, Mar. 24, 11pm</p>	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Saracci, how was the first vaccine against Polio developed? 2) According to the short video about Fathema, in what ways did she advocate better treatment for Polio patients? According to Daza, globally, what are the differences in women’s health outcomes when dealing with extreme climate events and disease when compared with men? 3) According to Onyango and Rowena, what are the specific gender dimensions when it comes to women’s exposure to disease, specifically Malaria? What are the barriers for treatment and prevention of infection? (You may use Saracci for support.) 4) Critical Thinking Question <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
<p>Key Concepts</p>	<p>Polio, Poliomyelitis, Vaccination, Randomized Control Trials, Disability, Malaria, Water Edge Farming, Maize Farming, Women as Caregivers, Occupational Exposure</p>

<p>Week 9: Mar. 24 - 28, 2025 EXAM 2</p> <p>Conspiracism: Pandemic Narratives through Film</p>	
<p>Read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard: Film: Contagion (2011) • Blackboard. Wilkinson, Alissa. “The 2011 film Contagion is even more relevant in 2020, and not just because of Coronavirus.” Vox. Feb. 4, 2020: https://www.vox.com/2020/2/4/21120178/contagion-movie-coronavirus-itunes-fake-news • Blackboard: Rasmussen, Angela. “Conspiracy Theories about COVID-19 Help Nobody” Foreign Policy. Sept. 15, 2022. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/15/conspiracy-theories-covid-19-commission/

Assignment: Reading Response #8 Due: Thursday, Mar. 27, 11pm Exam 2 Due: NLT Friday, Mar. 28, 11pm Reading Reactions #8 Due: Monday, Mar. 31, 11pm	Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format: 1) Describe the film <i>Contagion</i> . What were the origins of the virus and what was the role of the CDC in the film <i>Contagion</i> ? What does the film tell us about the role of “bad information” during a contagion? 2) According to Wilkinson, why is <i>Contagion</i> more relevant now? How has conspiracism posed a challenge when battling COVID-19? 3) What argument does Rasmussen make about the danger of conspiracy theories? 4) Critical Thinking Question. Your response should be 500-750 words.
Key Concepts	Contact Tracing, Conspiracism, QAnon, Misinformation, Disinformation, Information Warfare

BLOCK III – Environmental Justice, COVID-19, & New Pandemics

Week 10: Mar. 31 - Apr. 4, 2025	
Environmental Justice: The Jump from Human to Animals (Ebola, Lime, HIV/AIDS)	
Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quammen, David. “The Virus, the Bats, and Us.” <i>The New York Times</i>. Dec. 11, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/11/opinion/covid-bats.html Blackboard: Jabr, Ferris. “How Humanity Unleashed a Flood of New Diseases.” <i>The New York Times</i>. June 17, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/magazine/animal-disease-covid.html
Assignment: Reading Response #9 Due: Thursday, Apr. 3, 11pm Reading Reactions #9 Due: Monday, Apr. 7, 11pm	Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format: 1) According to Quammen, bats have long been associated with vampirism and have remained terrifying in the popular imagination, but he argues that the likely spread of COVID-19 from bats to humans has more to do with what some humans want from bats than what bats want from humans. How does he make this argument and is it convincing? 2) According to Quammen, from what original source did rabies get into dogs or raccoons and why doesn’t it make its host sick? 3) According to Jabr, what do COVID-19, Ebola, Lyme, and AIDS have in common? 4) Critical Thinking Question. Your response should be 500-750 words.
Key Concepts	Bat Extinction, Mariana Fruit Bat, Rabies, <i>Desmodus Rotundas</i> , lyssaviruses, Lyme, HIV/AIDS

Week 11: Apr. 7 - 11, 2025	
COVID-19: Exposure to Racism, Orientalism, and Discrimination	
Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: Short Film: Stockton, Alexander and King, Lucy. “Death through a Nurse’s Eyes.” <i>New York Times</i>. Blackboard: Leigh Brown, Patricia. “On Tribal Lands, a Time to make Art for Solace and Survival.” <i>The New York Times</i>. June 5, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/arts/design/native-americans-art-coronavirus.html Blackboard: Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. “Pandemics Incubate other Viruses like Racism” <i>TRT World</i>. June 5, 2020. Blackboard: Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. “Orientalism and the Geopolitics of the Coronavirus Outbreak,” <i>TRT World</i>. June 5, 2020.

	<p>https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/orientalism-and-the-geopolitics-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak-33791</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "After George Floyd" <i>TRT World</i>. June 1, 2021. https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/after-george-floyd-reflecting-on-vulnerable-communities-and-pandemics-47159
Additional Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkewitz, Julie. "The Coronavirus Unleashed Along the Amazon River," <i>New York Times</i>, July 25, 2020 (An account of racism, and the pandemic's effect on the Indigenous communities in Brazil) Al-Marashi, Ibrahim. "Pandemics and Pilgrimage: COVID -19 and the Mediterranean Necropolis," <i>Prologue Magazine</i>, February 2021 (Authors personal account of losing family in Iran due to sanctions imposed by the Trump administration. Helps to develop respect, empathy, and compassion for difference in a global context and appreciate how a country under sanctions could not access ventilators.)
Assignment: Reading Response #10 Due: Thursday, Apr. 10, 11pm Reading Reactions #10 Due: Monday, Apr. 14, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) After watching the short video, what did you learn about Ana Maria Aragon? What are the jobs of nurses compared with doctors and what does this have to do with the gendered division of labor? (You can also use space to compare what you see in the video to what you imagine caregivers experienced during the Black Death). 2) According to Leigh Brown, how has COVID-19 effected Native American Artists? 3) According to Al-Marashi, what is the connection between COVID-19, racism, and discrimination? And why are Black and Latino people 3x as likely to die from COVID when compared with their white counterparts? (Also, see data from Week 14 reading that shows in July of 2020, Hispanic people were 5x more likely to die of COVID-19 when compared with white people.) 4) Critical Thinking Question. <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	George Floyd, Racism, Discrimination, Heinrich Himmler, bacillus, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Colonialism, Neo-Colonial Racism, Precariousness, Orientalism, Geopolitics, Xenophobia

Week 12: Apr. 14 - 18, 2025

COVID-19's Shadow Pandemic: Disability and Sexism

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: "Covid-19 Brief: Impact on Women and Girls." U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. May 2022. https://www.usglc.org/coronavirus/women-and-girls/ Blackboard: Kimball, Spencer. "Long Covid is Affecting Women more than Men Federal Survey Finds." <i>CNBC</i>. Oct. 31, 2022. https://www.cNBC.com/2022/10/31/long-covid-is-affecting-women-more-than-men-federal-survey-finds.html Blackboard: Pratt, Elizabeth. "Why Women are more likely than men to Develop Long Covid." June 21, 2022. <i>Healthline</i>. https://www.healthline.com/health-news/why-women-are-more-likely-than-men-to-develop-long-covid Blackboard: Ladyzhets, Betsy. "People with Long COVID face Barriers to Government Disability Benefits." Nov. 9, 2022. https://khn.org/news/article/long-covid-barriers-government-disability-benefits/
Assignment: Reading Response #11 Due: Thursday, Apr. 17, 11pm Reading Reactions #11 Due: Monday, Apr. 21, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to the Global Leadership Coalition, what is COVID's impact on women and girls? What is the connection between school closures and child marriage risk? What is COVID-19's "shadow pandemic"? 2) According to articles written by Kimball and Pratt, why are women more likely than men to develop long Covid? 3) According to Ladyzhets, when did the Department of Health and Human Services officially recognize long COVID as a disability? And what barriers do people living with long COVID face when accessing disability benefits?

	4) Critical Thinking Question. Your response should be 500-750 words.
Key Concepts	Department of Health and Human Services, Long Covid, Child Marriage

Week 13: Apr. 21 - 25, 2025

Ideological Challenges and Neoliberal Pandemics

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard: “People protesting the Wearing of Masks during a Global Pandemic.” Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70RWD4dE_bI&t=169s Blackboard: Wendy Brown: Economics and Beyond. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyEZsvQUmgM Blackboard: “COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Race/Ethnicity: Current Data and Changes over Time.” https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/covid-19-cases-and-deaths-by-race-ethnicity-current-data-and-changes-over-time/
Assignment: Reading Response #12 Due: Thursday, Apr. 24, 11pm Reading Reactions #12 Due: Monday, Apr. 28, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to political scientist Wendy Brown, what are some of the issues we are facing with healthcare, the political system, economic order, and a “broken social contract” as we deal with a global pandemic? 2) What problems does Brown cite as leading to the U.S. as having one of highest COVID rates in the world? Brown also suggests that we are a “dis-integrated” and “undereducated” public who has been weaned on libertarian freedoms and rage against government. This has made a rebellion against restrictions and closures entirely predictable. What alternatives does she offer to navigate through a pandemic? (Think: New Zealand as her example.) 3) After watching the short compilation of videos of anti-maskers, how do they embody what Wendy Brown describes as the “freedom of social assault”? What’s her alternate definition of freedom? 4) Critical Thinking Question. <p>Your response should be 500-750 words.</p>
Key Concepts	Neoliberalism, Libertarianism, Corporate Media, Right Wing Propaganda, CARES Act (bailout for large industry and tax cut for the wealthy), Freedom cultivated through knowledge and education and the notion of a ‘Public Good’ v. Freedom as Social Assault, Democratic Freedom, Me v. We, Social Responsibility

Week 14: Apr. 28 - May 2, 2025

The Future: A New Pandemic Era?

Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 8 “Mapping Health and Disease” p. 84-96 Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 9 “From Epidemiology, Medicine, Prevention, and Public Health” p. 97-113 Saracci, Rodolfo. Epidemiology. Ch. 10 “Epidemiology Between Ethics and Politics” p. 114-126 Blackboard: Goodell, Jeff. “How Climate Change is Ushering in a New Pandemic Era.” Rollingstone. Dec. 7, 2020: https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/climate-change-risks-infectious-diseases-covid-19-ebola-dengue-1098923/
Assignment: Reading Response #13 Due: Thursday, May 1, 11pm	<p>Please answer the following questions in a four-paragraph format:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) According to Saracci, which infectious diseases require compulsory and rapid notification at the national level since the 19th century? And how has technology enabled early detection of disease?

Reading Reactions #13 Due: Monday, May 5, 11pm	2) According to Saracci, how can individuals be empowered to take part in their healthcare decisions? 3) According to Goodell, what is the connection between mosquito-borne diseases and climate change? 4) Critical Thinking Question. Your response should be 500-750 words.
Key Concepts	Mosquito-Borne Disease, <i>Aedes Aegypti</i> , Yellow Fever, Zika, Proboscis, <i>Dengue</i> Fever, Morbidity Statistics, Friendly Figures, Hidden Falacies, Ecological Association, Ecological Fallacy, “Correlation is not Causation,” Burden of Disease, DALYs, Evidence-based Medicine, Diagnostic Decision Tree, Prevention and Early Diagnosis, Public Health

Week 15: May 5 - 9, 2025 Final Reflection Essay & EXAM 3	
Final Reflection on the Course	
Assignment: Final Reflection Essay Due: Thursday, May 8, 11pm. Exam 3 Due: NLT Friday, May 9, 11pm	Final Reflection Essay: This assignment is a short 2-paged reflection on what you have learned during the semester. Think about the readings and discussions we have had throughout the course and take this writing opportunity to reflect on your experiences. What difference does it make that you took this course, and has it given you a new or deeper understanding of the world around you? Which reading was the most insightful? What recommendations would you make to improve this course? Was the format useful for your learning and comprehension of difficult subject matter? How will this new knowledge impact your future studies, your relationships with others, or the kind of work you want to do?

Format and reading suggestions obtained from syllabi developed by Cecili Chadwick.