

HST 304
Spring 2017
(SLN 20064)
MW 12:15-1:30
ART246

THE BLACK DEATH: PANDEMIC DISEASE IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

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Instructor:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The 2013-2015 epidemic of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa reminded the world forcefully of a premodern reality many in the modern West had forgot. Until vaccines, public health interventions, and then antibiotics helped us gain control over the major global infectious diseases, epidemics and pandemics were a fact of life. The most severe pandemic in human history was the Black Death, which struck Afroeurasia towards the end of the Middle Ages. Although total (absolute) mortality would be higher from the 1918-19 flu or the current HIV/AIDS pandemics, as a percentage of population the mortality from the Black Death (estimated between 40 and 60% in many areas) is the highest of any large-scale catastrophe known to humankind. Which makes it disconcerting that we still know so little about it. For example, while its demographic impact in western Europe and parts of the Middle East and North Africa is well known, we still know virtually nothing about its impact in Central Eurasia (where the microorganism, *Yersinia pestis*, evolved around 20,000 or more years ago) or other parts of the Eurasian landmass; it may have even affected parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Genomics studies have now confirmed that *Y. pestis* was present in people who died during the Black Death, yet we are still unclear why the course of the disease (rate of spread, level of mortality) was so very different from plague epidemics in other periods.

This course will address many of these questions, looking at the scientific work (in genetics and bioarcheology) that has helped reconstruct the pandemic as a biological event. But we will also look at traditional historical sources to reconstruct the pandemic as a social, cultural, and political event. For this was a *pandemic*, a single disease suddenly affecting societies as different as the Mongol Kipchak Khanate in central Eurasia, Christian Ireland, and Muslim Tunisia. How did the disease emerge out of its likely original home in the highlands of western China? What were its effects in Song- and Yuan-dynasty China, and why have they been invisible to historians for so long? What common practices of trade or animal husbandry facilitated spread of the disease outside of East and Central Asia? Why were the responses to the massive mortality so different in Christian and Muslim areas? How did minority populations fare in times of great fear and panic? What long-term effects did the massive mortality have? And how did all of these regions cope with the late medieval shift to a colder climate where plague became a recurrent threat, present (it seems) in the landscape itself?

Let's be clear: there are not yet answers to all these questions! As you'll soon learn, many dozens of books have been written on the Black Death. Yet none adequately captures all of these issues. Because plague remains endemic in four of the five inhabited continents today (we have it right here in Arizona!), there is need to also assess this lethal pathogen from a present-day perspective. This course will therefore

be a multidisciplinary endeavor, making use of whatever methods (genetics, linguistic analysis, mathematical modeling, good old *reading* of historical sources) seem to best lead us to our goal of understanding this moment in history and this powerful pathogen. We will work in groups in order to pool our collective talents. Each group will have specific assignments in addition to those listed below, which will form the basis of their in-class teaching activity and term assignments.

REQUIREMENTS: This is an advanced course, designed to give you sustained immersion in a single major topic in world history. Because we are working as a team to create a synthetic understanding of this massive and prolonged phenomenon, regular attendance, conscientious preparation of the weekly readings, and active participation in class discussions are all essential for success. In addition to weekly contributions to discussion, each Study Group will be asked to **prepare a teaching activity and assessment** for one class session; preparation for this involves extra readings and planning sessions. Written assignments will consist of: **1)** Several short (1-2 page) assignments or quizzes to be taken in class or online. **2)** A journal, maintained over the course of the semester, summarizing your reading and research; this will also involve peer critique within your Study Group. **3)** A major research paper (12-15 pages) or equivalent research project on a topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. The overall grade will be assessed approximately as follows:

Class Participation:	20%
Contribution to Group Project:	20%
In-Class Quizzes (x10):	2% (total: 20%)
Journal (including peer assessments):	20%
Research Paper/Project:	20%

POLICIES:

Attendance – Regular attendance is crucial to the success of the course. Because we only meet twice a week, absences and tardiness are especially consequential. Missed assignments must be made up by the next class period; thereafter, the grade will drop one full grade for *each day* late. **In fairness to other members of the class, extensions cannot be granted.**

Classroom Etiquette – Because we are gathered as a group to engage both in lectures and class discussion, it is vital that we maintain an atmosphere conducive to total participation. Therefore, the following rules will be observed in class:

- 1) Computers, notepads, and **smart phones** are allowed only for active note-taking or accessing the readings. Persons using their Internet devices for other purposes will be asked to turn them off.
- 2) Private conversation disturbs other students' ability to concentrate on the lectures and discussion; **disruptive talkers will be asked to leave the room.**
- 3) Bathroom trips and early departures are equally disruptive. Please notify the instructor in advance if you will have to leave early.

E-mail Etiquette – E-mails to the instructor should not be used in lieu of asking questions in class. Any question that can be asked in class *should* be asked in class. We always spend a few minutes at the beginning of class taking care of “business” issues. Questions about assignments, etc., should be asked then. (If you're late to class, ask one of your fellow students what you missed.) This syllabus and the fuller information on our Blackboard have been designed precisely to give you as much information about the structure and expectations of the course as possible. So, before you zap off an e-mail to the instructor, ask yourself: (1) Did I check the syllabus first? (2) Did I check Blackboard? (3) Have I asked a fellow classmate? (4) Can this wait to be asked in the next class meeting? By not overloading the instructor with excessive e-mails, you help insure that I'll have time to answer urgent or personal matters when I need to. **A final point: remember that all e-mails to the Instructor should be considered “professional correspondence.” Monitor your language, check your spelling and grammar, and strive to conform to all standards of professional discourse and courtesy.**

Written Work – All papers should conform to basic guidelines of neatness, orthography, standardized formatting (including numbered pages), etc. **I do not accept submission of papers via e-mail; all work should be submitted via the “Assignments” function on Blackboard unless otherwise requested. ALWAYS keep a copy as backup.**

Academic Honesty – No ethic is more important to the historian’s integrity than scrupulous use of, and **documentation of, sources used. Improper use of others’ work (whether obtained from printed, electronic, or oral sources) is a violation of academic standards and will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.** We will spend class time discussing the nature of **plagiarism** and proper methods of citation. Additional information can be found on Blackboard under “Academic Honesty.” Students are encouraged to bring their questions about this matter to the instructor.¹

Late Papers – See under “Attendance” above.

Student Support and Disability Accommodations – ASU offers support services through Counseling (<http://students.asu.edu/counseling>), the Learning Resources Center (www.asu.edu/lrc), and the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>). If you are a student in need of special arrangements we will do all we can to help, based on the recommendations of these services. For the sake of equity for all students, we cannot make any accommodations without formal guidance from these services.

TEXTS:

Required

Monica H. Green, ed., *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, special inaugural issue of *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014); this is available OPEN ACCESS at this link: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_globe/1/ (you can download either the whole volume or individual essays). It is also available as a hardcover volume, same title but with a 2015 publication date, ISBN 978-1-942401-00-1.

Rosemary Horrox, trans., *The Black Death* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1994), ISBN 0-7190-3498-1

Bruce Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ISBN 9780521144438

Optional

Ole Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), ISBN 978-1843832140. As an epidemiological overview of the Black Death, this has been superseded by other materials we will be reading this semester. But as a compendium of data on mortality, there is much here that is still of value.

Ruifu Yang and Andrey Anisimov, eds., *Yersinia pestis: Retrospective and Perspective* (Berlin: Springer, 2016), ISBN: 978-94-024-0888-1 (Print) 978-94-024-0890-4 (Online). Note: this is recommended only if you’re planning to go into plague science; a copy is available at the library.

All other readings will be available via the “Weekly Readings” button on our course Blackboard.

BLACKBOARD: This course has a Blackboard site that functions as a supplement (but not a substitute!) to the work we do in class. All materials handed out or shown in class—syllabus, hand-outs, PowerPoint slides—will, when possible, be posted on Blackboard within 24 hours of class meetings, if not before. In addition, I’ve posted on Blackboard all the readings beyond the required textbooks. That includes both the common readings we will be doing together, and the special group assignments. Blackboard also has links to numerous websites, dictionaries, and other resources that can help you out when you’re doing your class preparation or independent research projects.

¹ See also Charles Lipson, *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

IMPORTANT DATES:**Week 1: syllabus quiz on Wed., 1/11****Week 2:** No class on Monday, 1/16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**Week 7:** Feb. 21, 1st academic status report**March 5-12 – NO CLASS THIS WEEK: SPRING BREAK!!!****Week 11: Monday, March 30: outline and annotated bibliography of Summation Project due; exception: people in Groups 8 and 9 have until Monday, April 10****Week 12:** April 2, 2017: Course Withdrawal deadline**Final paper/project due by 5pm, Monday, May 1****WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

NB: In addition to the COMMON READINGS we will do together every week, there will also be GROUP READINGS for your specific research group. Those are all posted on Blackboard and are accessible to everyone in the course. For the first several weeks, I have also listed SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS. These are monographic studies that provide fuller background; they are **not required**. For subsequent weeks, the GROUP READINGS lists can be consulted for additional bibliography. **Please consult your Study Group folder on Blackboard as soon as Group assignments are made, both to get to know your other Group members and to familiarize yourself with the special readings and questions you'll be asked to engage with.**

WEEK 1 (1/9 and 1/11): Introduction: An Elephant in the Deserts of Arizona
TOPICS:

- the world's greatest pandemic (and why we still know so little about it)
- the world's newest (almost) pandemic: grounds for comparison with Ebola?
- viewing of movie *Contagion* (2010, Steven Soderbergh, 106 minutes)

Note: we will have a quiz on the syllabus on Wednesday to make sure everyone's on-board with the agenda for the semester.

COMMON READINGS:

Matt Ridley, "[Beat Ebola or Face a Pandemic as Bad as the Black Death](#)," *The Australian*, October 14, 2014

Thomas Butler, "Plague Gives Surprises in the First Decade of the 21st Century in the United States and Worldwide," *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 89 (2013), 788-93

Nils C. Stenseth, *et al.*, "Plague: Past, Present, and Future," *PLoS Medicine* 5, no. 1 (2008): e3

Kiersten J. Kugeler, *et al.*, "Epidemiology of Human Plague in the United States, 1900–2012," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 21, 1 (January 2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2101.140564>

also: do a Google News search for the keywords "Oregon – plague – cat" *or* "Colorado – plague – Girl Scout" *or* "Peru – plague – La Libertad" *or* "Madagascar – plague – El Nino" *or* "China – plague – Gansu – quarantine" (*or* if you can read French, search for "peste – Vietnam") *or* "BBC – plague pits – London Underground"

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Frank M. Snowden, "Emerging and Reemerging Diseases: A Historical Perspective," *Immunological Reviews* 225 (2008), 9–26

Laurie Garrett, *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World out of Balance* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994)

Rachel C. Abbott and Tonie E. Rocke, *Plague*, National Wildlife Health Center, Circular 1372 (Reston, VA: USGS, 2012)

World Health Organization, *Plague Manual: Epidemiology, Distribution, Surveillance and Control* WHO/CDS/CSR/EDC/99.2 (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1999)

- Laura E. Ellison and Megan K. Eberhardt Frank, eds., *Bibliography of Literature Pertaining to Plague (Yersinia pestis)*, USGS Open File Report 2011-1293 (Reston, VA: USGS, 2011)
- William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor Press, 1976; rev. ed. 1998)
- Joseph P. Byrne, *Encyclopedia of the Black Death* (New York: ABC-CLIO, 2012)
- John Aberth, *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350: A Brief History with Documents*, The Bedford Series in History and Culture (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005)
- Tony Hillerman, *The First Eagle* (New York: HarperTorch, 1999)

WEEK 2 (1/16 and 1/18): The New Science of Plague (or, Why Does It Matter What Disease It *Really* Was?)

No class on Monday, 1/16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

TOPICS:

- 19th-century plague hunters and the beginnings of the “three pandemics” theory
- breakdown of consensus in the 1970s: plague deniers
- the new microbiological consensus (and why historians need to learn some genetics)

COMMON READINGS:

- Monica H. Green, “Editor’s Introduction to *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*,” *The Medieval Globe* 1 (Fall 2014), 9-26
- Lester K. Little, “Plague Historians in Lab Coats,” *Past and Present* 213 (2011), 267-90
- Andrew Cunningham, “Transforming Plague: The Laboratory and the Identification of Infectious Disease,” in *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine*, ed. A. Cunningham and P. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 209-44

Of all the hundreds of scientific publications on plague that have been produced in the past two decades, four are seminal for the approach we will be taking this semester.² We will discuss these in detail in the coming weeks, but you should begin to familiarize yourself with them now:

- **Morelli et al. 2010** = G. Morelli, Y. Song, C. J. Mazzoni, M. Eppinger, et al., “*Yersinia pestis* Genome Sequencing Identifies Patterns of Global Phylogenetic Diversity,” *Nature Genetics* 42, no. 12 (2010): 1140–45
- **Bos et al. 2011** = K. I. Bos, V. J. Schuenemann, G. B. Golding, H. A. Burbano, et al., “A Draft Genome of *Yersinia pestis* from Victims of the Black Death,” *Nature* 478, no. 7370 (2011): 506–10
- **Cui et al. 2013** = Y. Cui, C. Yu, Y. Yan, D. Li, et al. “Historical Variations in Mutation Rate in an Epidemic Pathogen, *Yersinia pestis*,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 110, no. 2 (2013): 577–82
- **Spyrou et al. 2016** = M. A. Spyrou, R. I. Tukhbatova, M. Feldman, J. Drath, S. Kacki, et al. “Historical *Y. pestis* Genomes Reveal the European Black Death as the Source of Ancient and Modern Plague Pandemics,” *Cell Host and Microbe* (2016) [19, no. 6](#) (8 June 2016), 874–81

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

- Sharon DeWitte, “Bioarchaeology and the Ethics of Research Using Human Skeletal Remains,” *History Compass* 13, no. 1 (2015), 10–19, DOI: 10.1111/hic3.12213
- see “Plague Studies” on Blackboard for collections of the main scientific studies from the past decade; note, too, that Rachel C. Abbott and Tonie E. Roche, *Plague*, USGS Circular 1372 (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, 2012), has a comprehensive **Glossary**

[Black Death monographs and collected essays – see list on Blackboard]

WEEK 3 (1/23 and 1/25): The Science of Plague (cont.); Plague’s Origins

² For a general summary of how genetics has been transforming understandings of pathogen histories, see Kelly M. Harkins and Anne C. Stone, “Ancient Pathogen Genomics: Insights into Timing and Adaptation,” *Journal of Human Evolution* (2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhevol.2014.11.002>

SPECIAL GUEST, Wednesday, Jan. 25: Dr. Melissa Wilson-Sayres, School of Life Sciences

TOPICS:

- continued problem of “fit” between the disease as modern scientists describe it and what was seen in premodern times (rate of spread, mortality levels, etc.)
- does it matter what *we* think the disease is if people in the past experienced something very different?
- has our mapping been all wrong? what are we trying to map?

COMMON READINGS:

[make sure you’ve reviewed our science readings from last week]

Katherine Royer, “The Blind Men and the Elephant: Imperial Medicine, Medieval Historians, and the Role of Rats in the Historiography of Plague,” in *Medicine and Colonialism: Historical Perspectives in India and South Africa*, ed. Poonam Bala (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. 99–110

David Mengel, “A Plague on Bohemia? Mapping the Black Death,” *Past and Present* no. 211 (May 2011), 3–34 (you can **skip pp. 24–31**)

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

S. Rasmussen, *et al.* “Early Divergent Strains of *Yersinia pestis* in Eurasia 5,000 years ago,” *Cell* 163, no. 3 (2015), 571–582

Aida Andrades Valtueña, *et al.*, “The Stone Age Plague: 1000 years of Persistence in Eurasia,” *bioRxiv*, first posted online Dec. 15, 2016,

<http://www.biorxiv.org/content/biorxiv/early/2016/12/15/094243.full.pdf>

B. Joseph Hinnebusch, Iman Chouikha, and Yi-Cheng Sun, “Ecological Opportunity, Evolution, and the Emergence of Flea-borne Plague,” *Infection and Immunity* 2016, doi:10.1128/IAI.00188-16

“Report of the India Plague Commission,” *The British Medical Journal* Vol. 1, No. 2157 (May 3, 1902), pp. 1093–1098 (Chapters I–III); Vol. 1, No. 2158 (May 10, 1902), pp. 1155–1161 (Chapters III [cont.] and V),³ vol. 1, No. 2159 (May 17, 1902), pp. 1218–1220 (Chapters VI and Measures to Check Plague in Infected Places); and vol. 1, no. 2160 (May 24, 1902), pp. 1279–1281 (Measures to Prevent the Spread of Plague from Infected Places or Countries to Foreign Countries or Other Places in India)

WEEK 4 (1/30 and 2/1): Plague 1.0: The Justinianic Plague

TOPICS:

- plague’s first appearance in the Mediterranean
- Rome’s age of pandemics: the Antonine Plague and the Cyprianic Plague
- the Justinianic Plague and the end of the Roman world: documenting catastrophic silences

COMMON READINGS:

Rufus of Ephesus on plague in the 1st century

Tim Newfield, “[The Global Cooling Event of the Sixth Century. Mystery No Longer?](http://www.historicalclimatology.com/blog/something-cooled-the-world-in-the-sixth-century-what-was-it),” *HC Blog*, 05/02/2016, <http://www.historicalclimatology.com/blog/something-cooled-the-world-in-the-sixth-century-what-was-it>

Procopius on the plague in 542: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/542procopius-plague.asp>

³ Chapter IV of the India Plague Commission report was devoted to Haffkine’s attempt at producing a plague vaccine. It was issued separately from the main report, as “Report of the Indian Plague Commission on Haffkine’s Antiplague Inoculation,” *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2043 (Feb. 24, 1900), pp. 455–459. There was also a subsequent plague commission, called the “Plague Research Commission,” which reinvestigated plague in India in 1905. Its findings were released in 1906; see “Plague Research Commission,” *Journal of Hygiene*, 6:4 (September 1906).

Michael McCormick, “Tracking Mass Death During the Fall of Rome’s Empire (II): A First Inventory of Mass Graves,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 29 (2016), 1004-1007⁴

Ann Carmichael, “Universal and Particular: The Language of Plague, 1348–1500,” in Vivian Nutton, ed., *Pestilential Complexities: Understanding Medieval Plague* (London: The Wellcome Centre Trust for the History of Medicine, 2008) = *Medical History Supplement* 27, pp. 17-52

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

U. Büntgen et al, “Cooling and Societal Change during the Late Antique Little Ice Age from 536 to around 660AD,” *Nature Geoscience* 9 (2016), 231–236

Uli Schamiloglu, “The Plague in the Time of Justinian and Central Eurasian History: An Agenda for Research,” in: *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden*, ed. Osman Karatay and István Zimonyi, *Turcologica* 104 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 293-311.

David M. Wagner, et al., “*Yersinia pestis* and the Plague of Justinian 541–543 AD: A Genomic Analysis,” *Lancet Infectious Disease* 14 (2014): 319–26; cf. Michal Feldman, et al., “A High-Coverage *Yersinia pestis* Genome from a 6th-Century Justinianic Plague Victim,” *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 1st pub’d online August 30, 2016 doi:10.1093/molbev/msw170

Lester K. Little, ed., *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Stephen Mitchell, chapter 13 of *A History of the Later Roman Empire, AD 284-641*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014), pp. 466-96

Dionysios Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire. A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 9 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

J. N. Biraben and J. Le Goff, “Plague in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Biology of Man in History*, ed. R. Forster and C. Ranun (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 48-80⁵

Lawrence Conrad, “The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East,” PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1981

Mischa Meier, “The ‘Justinianic Plague’: The Economic Consequences of the Pandemic in the Eastern Roman Empire and Its Cultural and Religious Effects,” *Early Medieval Europe* 24, no. 3 (2016), 267–292

Michael McCormick, “Tracking Mass Death During the Fall of Rome’s Empire (I),” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 28 (2015), 325-57

WEEK 5 (2/6 and 2/8): The Invisible Origins of the Second Pandemic: The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (Group 1)

TOPICS:

- the “invisibility” of plague in historical sources
- the 13th-century polytomy: how genetics has changed our understanding of history
- the Mongol destruction of the Xia state and the arrival of plague (?) in Jin dynasty China

COMMON READINGS:

review Cui et al. 2013

Robert Hymes, “A Hypothesis on the East Asian Beginnings of the *Yersinia pestis* Polytomy,” *The Medieval Globe* 1 (Fall 2014), 285-308

⁴ This is the introduction to the actual inventory, which follows in the next piece: Michael McCormick, “Tracking Mass Death During the Fall of Rome’s Empire (II): A First Inventory,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 29 (2016), 1008-1046. Both form the sequel to McCormick’s first overview study, *JRA* 28 (2015) 325-57.

⁵ This originally appeared in French as “La Peste dans la Haut Moyen Age,” *Annales E.S.C.*, No. 6 (1969), 1484-1510.

Ruth Dunnell, “Xi Xia and the First Mongol Conquest in East Asia,” in *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire*, eds. William Fitzhugh, Morris Rossabi and William Honeychurch (Media, PA: Dino Don, Mongolian Preservation Foundation; Washington, D.C.: Arctic Studies Center, Smithsonian Institution, 2009), pp. 152-59

John Masson Smith, “Mongol Campaign Rations: Milk, Marmots, and Blood?,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 8 (1984), 223-28

WEEK 6 (2/13 and 2/15): Plague Lies in Wait: What Was the Mechanism of Spread into Central Eurasia? **(Group 2)**

TOPICS:

- plague at Lanbasar: tracking the Mongols into Persia and southern Russia
- thinking outside the rat box: other animal species involved in the chain of transmission
- thinking outside the flea box: what might the mechanisms of spread have been? (grain, furs, textiles)
- pouring oil on the fire: the shifting climate of the 1330s-1340s

COMMON READINGS:

Monica H. Green, “Taking ‘Pandemic’ Seriously: Making the Black Death Global,” in *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death, The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014), 27-61

Bruce Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chapters 3 and 4

Idir Bitam, *et al.*, “New Rural Focus of Plague, Algeria,” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 16, No. 10 (October 2010), 1639-40

A. B. Christie, T. H. Chen and Sanford S. Elberg, “Plague in Camels and Goats: Their Role in Human Epidemics,” *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 141, no. 6 (June 1980), 724-26

Renaud Piarroux, *et al.*, “Plague Epidemics and Lice, Democratic Republic of the Congo,” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 19, No. 3 (March 2013), 505-6

WEEK 7 (2/20 and 2/22): Plague Reaches the Islamic World **(Group 3)**

TOPICS:

- perceptions of the origin of plague
- speaking the unspeakable: how to describe the end of civilization
- Islam faces an old foe: plague and notions of contagion

COMMON READINGS:

Michael Dols, “The Transmission of the Black Death: Chronology and Geographical Distribution” [part 2], from *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 56-67

Michael Dols, trans., “Ibn al-Wardi’s *Risalah al-naba’ ‘an al-waba*. A Translation of a Major Source for the History of the Black Death in the Middle East,” in *Near Eastern Numismatics. Iconography, Epigraphy, and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles*, ed. D. K. Kouymjian (Beirut, 1974), pp. 443-55

Abu Ja‘far Ahmad Ibn Khatima, “Description and Remedy for Escaping the Plague,” from John Aberth, *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350. A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), pp. 55-62

Ibn Khaldun on plague

Justin Stearns, “New Directions in the Study of Religious Responses to the Black Death,” *History Compass* 7, no. 5 (2009), 1363-75

WEEK 8 (2/27 and 3/1): Plague in Southern Europe: Initial Impact **(Group 4)**

TOPICS:

- assessing the speed and severity of the initial onslaught (bubonic vs. pneumonic manifestations)
- coping with catastrophe: can social coherence be maintained?
- what did the doctors do?

COMMON READINGS:

- Michelle Ziegler, “A Synopsis of an Unusual Pneumonic Plague Outbreak in Madagascar, 2011,” <https://contagions.wordpress.com/2014/12/14/synopsis-of-an-unusual-pneumonic-plague-outbreak-in-madagascar-2011/>
- Pierre Galanaud, Anne Galanaud, and Patrick Giraudoux, “Historical Epidemics Cartography Generated by Spatial Analysis: Mapping the Heterogeneity of Three Medieval ‘Plagues’ in Dijon,” *PLoS ONE* 10(12): e0143866
- William D. Phillips, Jr., “*Peste Negra*: The Fourteenth-Century Plague Epidemics in Iberia,” in *On the Social Origins of Medieval Institutions: Essays in Honor of Joseph F. O’Callaghan*, ed. Donald J. Kagay and Theresa M. Vann, The Medieval Mediterranean 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 47-62
- Horrox, *Black Death*, docs. 1-6 (6a only), 64
- Jacme d’Agramont, *Regiment de preservacio a epidimia o pestilencia e mortaldats* [Regimen of Protections Against Epidemics or Pestilence and Mortality], trans. M. I. Duran-Reynals and C-E. A. Winslow, in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 23 (1949), 57-89
- Guy de Chauliac, “On the Black Death,” from Faith Wallis, ed., *Medieval Medicine: A Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. 419-21

March 6-10: NO CLASS THIS WEEK: SPRING BREAK!!!

WEEK 9 (3/13 and 3/15): Religion, Politics, and Catastrophe: The Black Death and the Jews (**Group 5**)

Note: there may be a slight change in meeting time this week; further details TBA

TOPICS:

- coping with catastrophe: can social coherence be maintained? (why target the Jews?)
- case study: the pogrom in Tàrrega
- politics and property: reconstituting Jewish-Christian relations

COMMON READINGS:

- Norman Cantor, “The Jewish Conspiracy,” chapter 7 of *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World that It Made* (New York: Free Press, 2001), pp. 147-167 (read only through p. 163)
- Horrox, *Black Death*, docs. 6b (li Muisis), 7 (Jean de Venette), 68 (Herman Gigas on well-poisoning), 69 (Heinrich Truchess on persecution of the Jews), 70 (confession of Bona Dies in Lausanne), 71 (confessions from Savoy), 72 (letter from Cologne to Strassburg), 73 (Clement’s letter), 74 and 75 (accusations of well-poisoning)
- Anna Colet, Josep Xavier Muntané i Santiveri, Jordi Ruíz Ventura, Oriol Saula, M. Eulàlia Subirà de Galdàcano, and Clara Jáuregui, “The Black Death and Its Consequences for the Jewish Community in Tàrrega: Lessons from History and Archeology,” *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014), 63-96
- Joseph ha-Kohen on the Black Death, excerpt from Joseph Ha-Kohen, *The Chronicles of Rabbi Joseph Ben Joshua Ben Meir the Sephardi*, trans. Christoph Heinrich Friedrich Bialloblotzky (London: Bentley, 1835), pp. 239-43

WEEK 10 (3/20 and 3/22): Plague in Northern Europe (**Group 6**)

TOPICS:

- did foreknowledge of what had happened elsewhere make any difference for those in northern Europe?
- the experience of plague in England
- the civic response: coping with mass mortality

COMMON READINGS:

- Review Bos et al. 2011**
- Horrox, *Black Death*, docs. 10-24, 62, 83-91
- Barbara Megson, “Mortality among London Citizens in the Black Death,” *Medieval Prosopography: History and Collective Biography* 19 (1998), 125-133

Duncan Hawkins, “The Black Death and the New London Cemeteries of 1348,” *Antiquity* 64 (1990), 637-42

Maria Kelly, “‘Unheard-of Mortality’: The Black Death in Ireland,” *History Ireland* 9:4 (2001) 12-17

WEEK 11 (3/27 and 3/29): Plague and the Great Transition: Living in a Cold, Diseased World (**Group 7**)

TOPICS:

- the long-term effects of massive mortality
- what kinds of public health interventions were developed? (the origins of quarantine)
- developing European iconographies of plague

COMMON READINGS:

[review Spyrou et al. 2016](#)

Campbell, *The Great Transition*, chap. 5

Horrox, *Black Death*, pp. 227-47; docs. 25-28, 65-67, 112-13

Sources on the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/voices/voices_reading_revolt.shtml

Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., “After the Black Death: Labour Legislation and Attitudes towards Labour in Late-Medieval Western Europe,” *Economic History Review* 60, no. 3 (August 2007), 457-85

Kristina Killgrove, “Medieval Cold Snap That Caused Famine and Death Reveals Danger of Climate Change,” *Forbes* 1 Dec 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinakillgrove/2016/12/01/medieval-cold-snap-that-caused-famine-and-death-reveals-danger-of-climate-change/#306bd9f645f7>⁶

James Belich, “The Black Death and the Spread of Europe,” in *The Prospect of Global History*, ed. James Belich, John Darwin, Margret Frenz, and Chris Wickham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 93-107

Lori Jones and Richard Nevell, “Plagued by Doubt and Viral Misinformation: The Need for Evidence-based Use of Historical Disease Images,” *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, pre-print online, 10 August 2016, DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(16\)30119-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(16)30119-0)

Jane Stephens Crawshaw, “The Renaissance Invention of Quarantine,” *The Fifteenth Century* 12 (2013), 161-74

WEEK 12 (4/3 and 4/5): Plague Shapes the Early Modern World (**Group 8**)

Monday, April 3: outline and annotated bibliography of Summation Project due; exception: people in Groups 8 and 9 have until Monday, April 10

TOPICS:

- plague persistence: how and where?
- the *pestis secunda*: a new strain of *Y. pestis* arrives
- plague invades sub-Saharan Africa
- major outbreaks in the 17th century (1630 northern Italy, 1647-52 Seville, 1665 London)

COMMON READINGS (**note**: because there’s so much to cover this week, we’ll be divvying up the readings; see Blackboard for your specific assignment):

[review Spyrou et al. 2016](#)

Monica H. Green and Boris Schmid, “Tiny Changes with Huge Implications: Counting SNPs in Plague’s History,” *Contagions* blog, ed. Michelle Ziegler, [part 1, 27 June 2016](#), and [part 2, 29 June 2016](#)

⁶ This science news announcement summarizes the following study: Chantal Camenisch, et al., “The 1430s: A Cold Period of Extraordinary Internal Climate Variability During the Early Spörer Minimum With Social and Economic Impacts in North-Western And Central Europe,” *Climate of the Past* 12, 2107–2126, 2016, www.clim-past.net/12/2107/2016/, doi:10.5194/cp-12-2107-2016. Students who would prefer to engage with the original study are welcome to do so.

- Monica H. Green, “Putting Africa on the Black Death Map: Narratives from Genetics, History, and Archaeology” (typescript)
- Ann G. Carmichael, “Plague Persistence in Western Europe: A Hypothesis,” *The Medieval Globe* 1 (Fall 2014), 157-92
- Stuart Borsch and Tarek Sabraa, “Plague Mortality in Late Medieval Cairo: Quantifying The Plague Outbreaks of 833/1430 and 864/1460,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 19 (2016), 57-90
- Jane Stevens Crawshaw, “The Beasts of Burial: *Pizzigamorti* and Public Health for the Plague in Early Modern Venice,” *Social History of Medicine* 24, no. 3 (2011), 570–87
- Lilith K. Whittles and Xavier Didelot, “Epidemiological Analysis of the Eyam Plague Outbreak of 1665–1666,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 283 (2016), Published 11 May 2016
- Glückel of Hameln, *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, trans. Marvin Lowenthal (New York: Schocken, 1987), excerpts

WEEK 13 (4/10 and 4/12): Controlling Plague: Quarantine and State Formation

Monday, April 10: outline and annotated bibliography of Summation Project due from folks in Groups 8 and 9

Monday, April 10: SPECIAL GUEST, Dr. Cindy Ermus, University of Lethbridge

TOPICS:

- plague’s role in the shaping of early modern states
- case study: the Ottoman Empire
- how did Europe eliminate plague?

COMMON READINGS:

- Jane Stevens Crawshaw, “The Places and Spaces of Early Modern Quarantine,” in *Quarantine: Local and Global Histories*, ed. Alison Bashford (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2016)
- Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), chap. 8 (pp. 248-91)
- Cindy Ermus, “The Spanish Plague That Never Was: Crisis and Exploitation in Cádiz During the Peste of Provence,” Special issue on Humans and the Environment in the Long Eighteenth Century, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 49, no. 2 (January 2016), 167-93

WEEK 14 (4/17 and 4/19): Plague Becomes a Global Disease: The Third Pandemic (**Group 9**)

TOPICS:

- the mid-19th-century re-emergence of plague in Yunnan province: what might have carried Branch 1 of the *Y. pestis* phylogeny “back” to East Asia? (counting SNPs again)
- plague in Hong Kong: germ theory and the new public health campaigns
- plague’s global reach: watching disease progress in new environments

COMMON READINGS:

[review Morelli et al. 2010](#)

Myron Echenberg, “Pestis Redux: The Initial Years of the Third Bubonic Plague Pandemic, 1894-1901,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 429-449

Christos Lynteris, “Skilled Natives, Inept Coolies: Marmot Hunting and the Great Manchurian Pneumonic Plague (1910–1911),” *History and Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (September 2013), 303-21

Wu Lien-Teh, “Views of Harbin (Fuchiatien) taken during the plague epidemic, December 1910 - March 1911,” available online [here](#) (Wellcome Library)

Jennifer A. Adjemian, et al., “Initiation and Spread of Traveling Waves of Plague, *Yersinia Pestis*, in the Western United States,” *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 76(2), 2007, pp. 365–375.

Álvaro A. Faccini-Martínez and Hugo A. Sotomayor, “Reseña histórica de la peste en Suramérica: una enfermedad poco conocida en Colombia,” *Biomédica* 33 no.1 (Jan./Mar. 2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.7705/biomedica.v33i1.814>

WEEK 15 (4/24 and 4/26): Final Reflections: Plagues Past, Present, and Yet to Come

3-minute Flash Talk Presentations

TOPICS:

- the world relearns the meaning of “pandemic”: SARS 2002-3, Ebola 2014-15, Zika 2016
- plague as continuing threat and “model pandemic”: bioterrorism and suburban creep
- using the past to prepare for the future: climate change, antibiotic resistance, and the inevitability of genetic change

COMMON READINGS:

Michelle Ziegler, “The Black Death and the Future of the Plague,” *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014), 259-84

Monica H. Green, “The Black Death and Ebola: On the Value of Comparison,” in *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, ed. Monica H. Green, TMG Occasional Publications 1 (Kalamazoo, MI, and Bradford, UK: Arc Medieval Press, 2015), pp. ix-xx

Maryn McKenna, “The Coming Cost of Superbugs: 10 Million Deaths Per Year,” *Superbug*, <http://www.wired.com/2014/12/oneill-rpt-amr/>

plus any two of the following:

Ron Barrett, “The 1994 Plague in Western India: Human Ecology and the Risks of Misattribution,” in *Terrorism, War, or Disease? Unraveling the Use of Biological Weapons*, ed. A.L. Clunan, P.B. Lavoy, and S. B. Martin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), pp. 49-71

T. J. Welch, *et al.* “Multiple Antimicrobial Resistance in Plague: An Emerging Public Health Risk,” *PLoS ONE* 2, no. 3 (2007): e309

T. V. Inglesby, D. T. Dennis, D. A. Henderson, *et al.*, “Plague as a Biological Weapon: Medical and Public Health Management. Working Group on Civilian Biodefense,” *JAMA* 283, no. 17 (May 2000), 2281-90

T. Ben Ari T, S. Neerinckx, K. L. Gage, K. Kreppel, A. Laudisoit, H. Leirs, N. C. Stenseth, “Plague and Climate: Scales Matter,” *PLoS Pathogens* 9, no. 7 (Sep. 2011), e1002160

Maria Cristina Schneider, *et al.* “Where Does Human Plague Still Persist in Latin America?,” *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases* 8, no. 2 (2014): e2680.

S. P. Maher, C. Ellis, K. L. Gage, R. E. Enscoe, A. T. Peterson, “Range-wide Determinants of Plague Distribution in North America,” *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 83, no. 4 (Oct. 2010), 736-42

Simon B Neerinckx, *et al.*, “Geographic Distribution and Ecological Niche of Plague in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *International Journal of Health Geographics* 2008, 7, no. 54 (2008), <http://www.ij-healthgeographics.com/content/7/1/54>

Joshua Teplitsky, “Jewish History’s Lesson for Handling Ebola,” *Jewish Daily Forward*, 10 Oct. 2014, <http://forward.com/articles/208157/jewish-historys-lesson-for-handling-ebola/>

Warren Cornwall, “A Plague of Rats,” *Science* 352, no. 6288 (20 May 2016), 912-15

Final paper/project due by 5pm, Monday, May 1

THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE!