



HISTORY 2195A (670)
Epidemics in North America
Summer 2026

Instructor: Dr. Dorotea Gucciardo
Email: dguccia@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

The course will examine the social and economic impact of epidemic disease in North America by discussing outbreaks of yellow fever, cholera, diphtheria, smallpox, Spanish influenza, polio and encephalitis. Also analyzed will be the evolution of public health services, medical theories and governmental regulations in response to such epidemics.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: History

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

HISTORY 2195A 650

Epidemics in North America

This course explores manifestations of epidemic disease in North American history. Beginning with pre-contact Indigenous groups and concluding with the Covid-19 pandemic, course lectures trace the myriad cultural, political, economic, and environmental impacts of infectious illnesses. Far beyond mere harbingers of doom (although they did function in that capacity as well!), epidemics shaped and were shaped by the historical contexts in which they occurred, from the Revolutionary War to migration panics in late 1800s to the suburban imperatives of post-WW2 societies. Topics include smallpox, yellow fever, cholera, syphilis, tuberculosis, influenza, HIV/AIDS, and Covid-19.

Instructor: Dr. Dorotea Gucciardo

Email: dguccia@uwo.ca

Office hours: By appointment via Zoom

Online, Asynchronous Instruction

4 May to 12 June 2024

Owl Brightspace

Prerequisite: None

Antirequisite: None

Readings:

There are no required textbook purchases for this course. However, students are expected to read assigned articles, which are available on the OWL course website. You will be tested on these readings.

Evaluation:

Mid-term: Assigned: 19 May at 9:00am; due 20 May at 9:00am (50%)

Final Exam: TBA (50%)

Note: All tests will involve written responses. Potential formats include: short answer, reading responses, identification questions, essay questions. All materials from the course (lecture, videos, tutorial readings) are relevant to tests. The final exam will be held during the official exam period, as provided by Enrolment Services.

The midterm will be made available at 09:00am on 19 May, and must be uploaded to Brightspace in PDF format by 09:00 on 20 May. Failure to follow these instructions will result in points deduction (see Assignments tab for full instructions). **I will not accept, nor will I respond to, emailed submissions.** Accommodation for a missed test will take the form of reweighing course components; for example, if you miss your midterm for an approved reason from the Academic Dean's Office, your final exam will be valued at 100%. Any evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in a zero and academic sanctions.

Class Schedule

Note: All lectures will be recorded and uploaded to Brightspace. Each week will typically include one lecture topic with associated readings and/or supplementary materials. I am available by appointment via Zoom to discuss any course-related questions.

Week of:	Lesson:
4 May	<p>Introduction + Disease in Pre-Contact North America</p> <p>Smallpox : From Arrival to Red Plague Paul Kelton, "Avoiding the Smallpox Spirits: Colonial Epidemics and Southeastern Indian Survival." <i>Ethnohistory</i> 51, 1 (Winter 2004): 45-71.</p>
11 May	<p>Yellow Fever Jan Golinski, "Debating the Atmospheric Constitution: Yellow Fever and the American Climate." <i>Eighteenth-Century Studies</i> 49, 2 (Winter 2016): 149-165.</p> <p>Cholera John B. Osborne, "Preparing for the Pandemic: City Boards of Health and the Arrival of Cholera in Montreal, New York, and Philadelphia in 1832." <i>Urban History Review</i> (Spring 2008): 29-42.</p>
19 May	Midterm – Assigned 19 May at 09:00am; Due 20 May at 09:00am
25 May	<p>1918 Flu Ryan M. Alexander, "The Spanish Flu and the Sanitary Dictatorship: Mexico's Response to the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," <i>The Americas</i> 76, 3 (July 2019): 443-465.</p> <p>Germ Theory Nancy Tomes, "The Private Side of Public Health: Sanitary Science, Domestic Hygiene, and Germ Theory, 1870-1900." <i>Bulletin of the History of Medicine</i> (Winter 1990), Vol. 64, No. 4: 509-539.</p>
1 June	<p>STIs Karin Zipf, "In Defence of the Nation: Syphilis, North Carolina's "Girl Problem," and World War I," <i>The North Carolina Historical Review</i> July 2012</p> <p>HIV/AIDS Richard A. McKay, "'Patient Zero': The Absence of a Patient's View of the Early North American AIDS Epidemic," <i>Bulletin of the History of Medicine</i> 88, 1 (January 2014): 161-194.</p>
8 June	<p>The Opioid Epidemic Gabor Maté, "What is Addiction?" Chapter 11, <i>In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction</i> (California: North Atlantic Books), 2010.</p> <p>COVID-19 Aslan, Marcella et al., "The Great Equalizer: Initial Health Effects of Covid-19 in the United States," <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, Summer 2021, Vol. 35, No. 3: 25-46.</p>
TBA	Final Exam: See Brightspace

King's University College

General Course Policies

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.