Course Syllabus: SOSC P8716, Fall 2006

The History of Medicine and Public Health
Changing Concepts of Health and Disease

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This course will be developed to examining key conceptual categories in the history of public health and medicine. It will focus on how changing definitions of health and disease, gender and the body and race and ethnicity have shaped our understanding of the health of individuals, specific populations and the public.

**Evaluation**

**Oral Presentations and Class Participation: 50% of the grade**

The class will be conducted in a seminar format. Students will be expected to participate fully in the discussions. Each week, individual students will prepare brief oral presentations on one of the readings, to be delivered at the beginning of the class.

The final two sessions of the class will be devoted to a discussion of an important evolving issue in public health policy. The group will divided into two sections, each presenting a distinct perspective on the issue and addressing a specific set of questions.

**Written Assignments: 50% of the grade**

The course is divided into three sections. Students will be expected to write one five page paper for each of the three sections. Each paper is to be based on the student’s’ analysis of the readings of that section. It should discuss the implications of the readings for current public health policy. The first paper will be due October 16, 2006. The second paper will be due November 13, 2006. The third paper will be due December 11, 2006.
I. CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE

September 11  The Social, Genetic, and Behavioral Determinants of Health and Disease


September 18  Framing Disease


September 25  The Case of Tuberculosis

October 9  The Reality and Meaning of Plagues


II.  CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF BODY

October 16  Monitoring the Body


October 23  Reconstructing the Body


October 30  Enhancing the Body


November 6  Diabetes and Obesity


Other readings TBA
III. CONSTRUCTING AND DECONSTRUCTING RACE AND ETHNICITY

November 13 Scientific Racism: Its Origins and Challenges


November 20 Changing Definitions of Race


*Supplemental Reading:*

November 29 Health Disparities: Nature or Nurture?


IV. LINKING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT: TWO HEALTH POLICY CHALLENGES

December 4  The Case of BIDIL: The First Race-based Drug


December 11  The Challenge of Live Organ Donation

