History 430: Topics in Medical History

History of AIDS, T 1:35-4:25

Leacock 832

Professor Jason Szabo

Contact:
Jason.szabo@mcgill.ca
liaison librarian:
christopher.lyons@mcgill.ca

Department of History-McGill University
Immunodeficiency Treatment Centre- Room A5-140 Montreal General Hospital
(514) 934-8070
Office Hours: Thursday 4:00-5:00 (Ferrier 329)

Course Organization

This seminar explores the history of AIDS through an in-depth analysis of selected topics including patient experience, the cultural and biological construction of illness, somatic therapies, local and global political-economies

Readings combine books and articles, including groundbreaking works that initially framed the AIDS pandemic and newer interpretations. The focus includes both the United States and the global South. Articles have been combined in a coursepack that may be purchased at the McGill Bookstore. Books may be purchased on-line or at Paragraphe Bookstore on 2220 McGill College Avenue (514- 845-5811).

Evaluation – for undergraduate students

Seminar participation (including pre-submitted questions): 30%
Final paper: 50%
One response paper: 20%

**Evaluation – for graduate students**

Seminar participation (including pre-submitted questions): 30%

Two response papers: 20%

Final paper: 50%

*Please note that in accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*

*Also note that in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.*

**Explanation**

**Seminar participation.** Because the success of this class depends in good measure on our collective ability to sustain a semester-long conversation about the history of AIDS, students should come to each class on time, prepared to participate fully in a discussion informed by careful and critical reading of assignments. Attendance in this seminar is mandatory; please note that this includes the first day. If you miss class or do not participate in discussion, your participation grade will be adversely affected. There are no “make-up” assignments. Students who have valid reasons (serious illness, for instance) for missing class are encouraged to go through proper university channels to get an excused absence. Please shut off your cell phones in class.

**Seminar framing:** On the first day of the course, each student will be assigned a set of readings they will be responsible for introducing to the class. The purpose of this student-generated framing is not to summarize the readings but, rather, to raise important and salient questions to begin an informed discussion.

**Student questions:** All students should send by e-mail to the professor before 5 p.m. the Monday before seminar two or at most three questions they believe would be useful for framing the next day’s seminar discussion. Not every question will be read in class but some will. Please limit each question to
fewer than three sentences. Note that, as time permits, the professor will forward these questions by e-mail to the students assigned to launch the discussion of those readings (as per above).

**Response paper:** Undergraduate students are required to write one response paper, grad students two. You choose which week's readings you'd like to respond to. (Respond to all of them in your paper please.) The response paper is a three-to-four page, double-spaced, analysis of the assignment for that week. Do not review the argument. Rather, summarize it briefly and analyze it critically. How persuasive is it? How important is the author's contribution? How does s/he upend or challenge other scholarship? I mark only those papers submitted at the beginning of class, before discussion has commenced. There are no exceptions. (If you have an excused absence, you must respond to a different set of readings.) Written assignments must be submitted as hard copies. I do not accept materials sent as e-mail attachments. Undergraduate students only may submit two papers and I will record the higher of the two grades.

**Final paper.** The final paper, between fifteen and eighteen double-spaced pages in length excluding endnotes, may be on any topic that pertains to the history of AIDS. Students will share their finalized topics with the class in late October.

**Academic Integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures. For more information, consult [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity)

**Reading Schedule**

**Week 1 (Sept 4th) Introduction. Imagine a world without AIDS?**

MMWR, 30(21): 1-3 (June 5, 1981)


Michel Callen, Richard Berkowitz, “We know who we are. Two gay men declare war on promiscuity”, *New York Native*, Nov 8-21, 1982, pp. 23; 25; 27; 29 (http://richardberkowitz.net/5.html)

International Aids Vaccine Initiative- "Imagine a world without AIDS" (Video, 2007)
Week 2 (Sept 11th) Dispatches from Ground Zero.


Tom Joslin, "Silverlake Life: The View From Here" (Documentary Film, 1991)

Week 3 (Sept. 18th) This thing known as AIDS.


Paul Treichler, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic*, pp. 1-41

Week 4 (Sept 25th) Why here/ Why Now?


Week 5 (Oct 2) Containing the Threat- Balancing Public Health and Individual Freedoms.


Week 6 (Oct 9th) Cultural Conflict and New Forms of Social Action


Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, pp.211-331

**Week 7 (Oct 16th)** The pursuit of the cure and the transformation of biomedicine.


**Week 8 (Oct 23rd ) African-Americans and the “Ownership” of AIDS**


David Sanford, "Back to a Future. One Man’s AIDS Tale Shows How Quickly Epidemic has Turned", *The Oncologist*, 1997, 2: 115-120


**Week 10 (Nov. 6th)** AIDS in Africa.


Week 11 (March 29th)- Case studies in globalization: discourses and structures (1)


Week 11 (March 22nd) Case studies in globalization (2)- therapy, identity, and experience.


Week 13- The Legacy of Illness in the Twenty First Century: There can be no world without AIDS


Andriote. Victory Deferred, pp.331-421