In the last few decades, medicine and the life sciences have become the locus for some of society’s most extravagant hopes and acute anxieties. History of Modern Medicine is aimed at students who would like to uncover the history behind the headlines and take the ‘longer view’ of some of these questions. We will investigate the origins of aspects of contemporary life familiar to us all, from the vitamins we swallow down with breakfast to giving birth in hospital, bringing a historical perspective to bear on topics such as American health care reform, the politics of the pharmaceutical industry, and the new genetic and neurological determinism.

The textbook for the course is Roy Porter’s *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: a medical history of humanity*. There is no need to buy this book, as all the required chapters will be uploaded to the TritonEd site, along with additional primary sources readings, but you may wish to invest in the text, which has much in it not covered in the course.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course students should demonstrate:

1. Mastery of the broad outlines of the history of scientific medicine;
2. Historical understanding of contemporary issues;
3. Improvement in their powers of written expression;
4. An understanding of the difference between primary and secondary sources;
5. The capacity to analyze primary sources in their written work;
6. A grasp of scholarly research methods;
7. An ability to use scholarly citation technique.
What your grade will be based on

Your task in this class is to learn to write the history of medicine using a combination of primary and secondary sources. There will be three assignments, all of them take-home. First will be a take-home midterm in which you will incorporate analysis of three primary sources into an essay about medicine in the nineteenth century. This will be 1,500 to 2,500 words, and will count towards 40% of the final grade. It will be due on Tuesday of sixth week.

On Tuesday of ninth week, you will come to class with a contemporary primary source of your own choosing, accompanied by a paragraph of explanation of its historical significance, to be turned in. This assignment will be graded pass/no-pass.

There will be a take-home final, in which you will be asked to incorporate the rest of the primary sources from the class readings, plus your chosen primary source, into a narrative about medicine in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Alternatively, students may write a research paper, in consultation with me. This will be 3,500 to 5,000 words, same format as the midterm, and will count towards the remaining 60% of the grade. This will be due on Wednesday of finals week.

Students are required to comply with the academic integrity rules of this university, and will be required to turn in an electronic copy of their take-home exams to turn-it-in.com, the plagiarism software on the TED site. Anyone found to be in violation will be reported to the academic integrity office, with no exceptions.
Course Outline and Readings

The class is organized chronologically: first week will be devoted to early modern medicine; week two to the eighteenth century; weeks three, four and five to the nineteenth century; weeks six, seven, eight and nine to the twentieth century. The last few decades, covering the period of your lifetimes, is yours to define. You will decide what constitutes the most historically significant development in medicine since the mid-1990s, and will identify a contemporary primary source to furnish you with the ending of your final essay.

**Early modern medicine**

**FIRST WEEK**

*Greatest Benefit*, Ch. 8, Renaissance, Ch. 9, ‘The New Science’

1. **Early modern disease and the theory of the humors**

2. **The Islamic Hospital and the Renaissance Anatomy Theatre**

**SECOND WEEK**

*Greatest Benefit*, Ch. 10, ‘Enlightenment’


3. **Enlightenment medicine**

4. **The Paris Hospital and the French Revolution**

**THIRD WEEK**

*Greatest Benefit*, Ch. 11, ‘Scientific Medicine in the 19th Century’


5. **Clinical Trials, Epidemiology, and the Sanitary Police**

6. **Medical Education**
FOURTH WEEK

*Greatest Benefit*, Ch. 12. ‘Nineteenth-Century Medical Care’


7. Anaesthesia

8. Ghastly kitchens

FIFTH WEEK

*Greatest Benefit*, Ch. 19, ‘Surgery’


9. Microbes

10. Surgery and Asepsis

**The twentieth century**

SIXTH WEEK


11. The industrial roots of drug production

**[MIDTERM DUE]**

12. Imperial Medicine and WWI
SEVENTH WEEK


13. Medicalization
14. Racial hygiene

EIGHTH WEEK

Bush, Vannevar. 1945. ‘Science, the Endless Frontier: a report to the President’ pp. 10-16.


15. WWII and the war on disease

Thanksgiving, no lecture

NINTH WEEK


16. AIDS
**|PARAGRAPH DUE|**

17. Human Genome Project

*Contemporary Issues*

TENTH WEEK

18. Frontiers of Neuroscience

19. Our Transhuman Future?

**|FINAL ESSAY DUE WEDNESDAY OF FINALS WEEK|**