

Disease Project**Worth 25% of final grade**

Now that we're at midterm, and you've got some experience under your belt looking at sickness and health in the American past, using primary sources, and understanding scholarly articles, you're ready for a bigger task. This project is in three phases:

- Your independent research on a disease of your choice
- Creation of a poster (at least 11x17" or larger) and presentation of your findings in a mini-academic "conference" on November 3 (10% of final grade)
- Submission of a written report (paper) on November 8 (15% of final grade)

This project is quite open and I can give you as much or as little guidance as you need. I've written these guidelines rather loosely but I am happy to talk about details in office hours or by email if this isn't enough structure to get you started working.

Choosing and researching a disease:

Select a disease (or disorder, syndrome, illness, epidemic) which presented in the past (i.e. not something recently discovered). There's a list on the reverse. Don't feel confined to this list, but it might help get you started. The **only one off-limits is polio**, since we are reading Oshinsky's book on that one. Everyone needs a DIFFERENT disease so there's no overlap. Let me know your choice so I can keep track of who's doing what.

Research it using reliable scholarly sources (library databases, books, medical history journals, health sciences reference resources). **You cannot adequately research this project using only web resources.** Information from the CDC, medical diagnosis websites, etc is not sufficient.

How many sources? No magic number – probably 3-5 GOOD ones for most of you will be sufficient; Honors students should obtain 5-8 sources or more. Wikipedia is NOT a source! (Although the "Further Reading" or "External Links" at the foot of a Wikipedia entry might take you to real sources. Then again, they might not). It's acceptable to use all secondary sources, although if you can find primary sources too that's even better.

What are you looking for? Scholarly research into the history of this disease & its presentation in the past and/or historical evidence of this disease in primary sources. How the *concept* of this disease changed over time; any milestones in understanding the disease's etiology or course; treatment for this disease in the past v. now (is it even still considered a disease today?); public health statistics on infection or death rates; in what time periods or places or populations this disease was found; its significance in American history or medical history. Again, this list is not exhaustive but should help guide your investigation.

The Mini-Conference

We will have a “poster session” on November 3 during our class time. Everyone will have the chance to present and discuss their findings, and to evaluate and consider their peers’ research. I am hoping to schedule a different room other than our small seminar room, so stay tuned about that.

Poster format can be up to you, but should convey information in a scholarly and/or scientific manner. In other words, this is not an advertising poster or a public health information poster. It should be 11x17 (legal paper sized) or larger. If you want to use the campus’s poster printer, see me. For most of you, the project can be completed with simple posterboard or by attaching sheets of paper together. While neatness, spelling, and visual design/organization are all important on a poster, this is not an art project and you are not being graded on your artistic ability or your drawing skill.

The Report

Write your findings in a well-sourced and well-organized paper of 5-6 pages (Honors: it can be longer, up to 10 if you need). This is due on November 8, giving you time to incorporate feedback or ideas from the mini-conference into your final product.

The structure and organization of the final report can be up to you; take your cues from the best of the scholarly articles you have read for this class. It can read more like a nonfiction story (e.g. Oshinsky’s book on polio) or more like a scientific paper, whichever suits your subject better. Just make sure that your paper...

- covers the scope and breadth of your research and your findings
- makes useful and relevant conclusions about how this disease has changed over time
- contains proper & complete citations to all the quotations and sources you reference

Ideas

Any disease discussed in an article in the Leavitt reader

Smallpox

Yellow fever

Malaria

Tuberculosis/ consumption

Black Lung

Diabetes

Gout

Schizophrenia

Neurasthenia

Puerperal fever

Whooping cough

Tetanus

Cholera

Pellagra

Syphilis

Diphtheria

Typhoid Fever

Bubonic Plague

Alcoholism