Welcome to Ancient Medicine: The Classical Roots of the Medical Humanities, a course designed to introduce you to the main themes and ideas in the medical literature produced by the ancient Greeks and Romans. In this course, we will take a decidedly broad view of what constitutes “medical literature”, as we will analyze a diverse selection of readings from the Greek and Roman traditions, along with modern scholarship on ancient medicine; this approach will offer both depth and breadth in our explorations of the world of Graeco-Roman medicine. We will also examine perspectives on medicine in a handful of readings from outside of the Greek and Roman traditions. Our analysis of these texts is designed to promote critical thinking and to foster a better understanding of Greek and Roman medical ideologies and practices, and a deeper understanding of various other aspects of classical antiquity. Whilst keeping medicine at the fore of our inquiry, our investigations of the readings will employ a multidisciplinary lens, delving into issues also relevant to the history of science, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, gender studies, and literary studies. Our readings and discussions will also compare ancient and modern medical inquiry and application, and shed light upon how the Greek and Roman medical traditions have influenced (and continue to influence) modern medical, scientific, and intellectual traditions.

Textbooks & Readings

Textbooks are available at the Brooklyn College Bookstore. There are two required textbooks for this course, and you must bring the assigned textbook(s) with you to each class. Please purchase your textbooks in a timely manner, as you will be held responsible to complete the readings before they are discussed in class.


In addition to the required readings from the texts, there are some readings in a course packet, which I will distribute to all students in the course after the first week of classes (for your convenience, most of these readings will also be posted on Blackboard in PDF format). You must come to each class meeting with a copy of all of the readings to be discussed in class that day. You will not be able to effectively participate in class discussions without having the readings in front of you during class.
Learning Outcomes and Student Assessment

Students will acquire knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- the ability to read ancient primary sources (in translation) and critically interpret them from a variety of analytical perspectives with an awareness of the inherent problems and challenges these documents present to scholars of antiquity
- the ability to understand and analyze ancient medical texts within their historical context while gaining perspective on contemporary culture
- the ability to distinguish and analyze the variety of perspectives on medicine, healing practices, and the human body in Greco-Roman antiquity
- the ability to identify central themes in ancient texts and modern scholarship, and to engage these ideas critically and persuasively in written and oral communication
- the ability to distinguish between various kinds of evidence and argumentation in primary and secondary sources, and to understand the difference between reliable and unreliable (as well as valid and invalid) sources
- the ability to use information from ancient sources and to conduct research in an effective and ethical manner
- the ability to use the perspective of history to think critically about systems of medicine and health care in both ancient and modern contexts and, more broadly, to critically examine Western medical, scientific, and intellectual traditions
- the ability to examine literary information in light of artistic and material evidence
- the ability to discuss course topics and materials in an interactive classroom setting that will feature both organized lectures, group discussions, presentations, and interactive multimedia resources aimed at understanding the readings through a variety of analytical perspectives
- the ability to parse, comprehend, and apply the use of medical vocabulary in the English language
- the ability to analyze texts and interact in a classroom setting in a manner free from all forms of discrimination

Grading:

Your grade for the course will take into account progress towards the above-stated learning outcomes, and will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Attendance/Participation: 13%
- Presentation (with written annotations): 10%
- Midterm (October 17): 14%
- Critical Reaction Papers (2—due October 5 and November 30): 10% each, total 20%
- Final Paper: 25% (prospectus 25%—due November 16; final product 75%—due December 12)
- Final Examination (December 19): 18%

Letter grades will be applied in the following way:

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For course averages which are on the cusp between two grades (e.g. 89.95%), the instructor reserves the right either to round up or not round up on a case by case basis. In such situations, one’s participation and progress over the course of the semester may be taken into account at the instructor’s discretion.
Course Requirements and Assessment Details:

1). Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required, and you are expected to be in the classroom promptly each day. You will be required to sign an attendance sheet at the beginning of class. If you arrive late to class, you may not have an opportunity to sign the attendance sheet and may be considered absent for the day. Similarly, if you leave class for an extended period of time without returning, you may be considered absent for that class meeting. Absence from two or more classes without a valid excuse (written medical excuse, religious observance, or verification of emergency) may lower your final grade by one full letter grade. Missing more than four full classes without a valid excuse may lower it two full grades. Missing more than a quarter of our class meetings (7) will automatically result in a failing grade.

If you need to miss class for a legitimate reason (e.g. religious holiday, illness), it is your responsibility to contact me beforehand. If repeated unexcused absences occur, your overall attendance/participation grade will be adversely affected as described above. If anything occurs during the term (emergency, illness, etc.) that may impact your work for more than a few days, please let me know immediately.

Class participation is also required; during class you are expected to be attentive, cooperative, respectful, and willing to learn. You should arrive each day ready to participate in class activities (i.e., do all readings and written assignments before class), which may include classroom writing exercises, group work, and other activities. Note that a poor attendance record will hurt your participation, since it will be impossible for you to participate effectively in class if you are not present.

Rudeness or other classroom-inappropriate behaviors will not be tolerated, and I expect that you will not only treat your instructor with respect, but you will also listen to your colleagues and respect their right to express an opinion—even if you disagree. In the university setting, disagreement and discussion are expected and welcomed, and you should feel free to speak up at any time to contribute to our discussions.

(2) Writing Assignments:

There will be two short written critical reactions (due October 5 and November 30) and a longer final paper (December 12). For the critical reactions (2-3 pages each), you will write a 1 page summary of a piece of modern scholarship on ancient medicine, followed by a 1-2 page reaction exploring connections between that piece of modern scholarship and one of the primary texts from the course. On the day these critical reactions are due, we will have a “symposium” in which you will share some of your reactions with the class; participation in these sympotic exercises will count as a portion of the grade for each reaction paper. For the final paper (5-6 pages), you will perform a comparative analysis of two primary texts, making use of at least three works of modern scholarship in your analysis. You will develop this paper in stages: on November 16 you will turn in a 1- 1.5 page prospectus outlining your plans for the paper. This prospectus will be graded and count as 25% of the grade for the final paper assignment; based upon your prospectus I will give you feedback concerning the direction of your paper and suggestions regarding research.

The purpose of the writing assignments is to improve your analytical writing skills (your use of appropriate diction and grammar), as well as your ability to write persuasive and well-argued essays. Since you may not be accustomed to writing papers of this nature, you are encouraged to organize your thoughts beforehand, ideally with an outline. Choose words with meaning to make your point, and cite examples carefully. There will be no room for “filler” if you are to answer the question completely. The writing assignments must be typed, double-spaced, use Palatino or Times New Roman font, and have one-inch margins on all
sides. Each Writing Assignment must be printed out and handed in at the beginning of class on the day it is due. Please make sure that your work is stapled together when you hand it in.

If, in the unlikely event that you are not in class on the day when one of the papers is due, you must e-mail me your paper by the time that class period starts AND you must give me a hard-copy of the paper the next time our class meets. Otherwise, your paper will be considered late; late papers are subject to being downgraded 5% per day they are overdue. Papers more than one week late will not be accepted, and a grade of 0% will be recorded for any missing work. If you foresee that you will have a problem meeting the deadline for a paper, you may be granted an extension only if you talk with me about it at least a week in advance of the due date. For this course, revised papers will not be accepted, so make sure to do your best with what you hand in. To help improve your work for each of the writing assignments, you are encouraged to make use of The Learning Center (1300 Boylan Hall).

(3) Assessment Details for Tests:

Midterm: There will be one midterm scheduled on October 17. The midterm will consist of multiple choice questions and a choice of essay questions (of which you must respond to one).

Final Exam: The final exam (on December 19) will be a cumulative test of material from the entire semester, but with a greater focus on material from the second half of the term. It will consist of a variety of questions, including matching, multiple choice, short answer, passage identifications, and an essay.

(4) Presentations (with written annotations):

Each student will be assigned a date to deliver a 5-10 minute presentation of an image, short video, or other multimedia content that illustrates your impressions/understanding of an aspect of the current text we are reading (i.e. the text to be discussed in class on the day of the presentation). It should focus on and engage with one particular aspect of the text, and it should not attempt to summarize or engage with the entire current text. The presentation should connect with the text in an accurate, thoughtful, and original way. Presentations will typically be given near the beginning of class time.

No more than one week after the presentation, the student must submit a one to two paragraph written annotation of the multimedia item, to be featured on our course’s Library Guide website (see link below). The written annotation should be sent to me via email, along with a separate file containing the image or multimedia content. Your annotation should contain full and properly formatted attributions for the images/multimedia content, explanation of the item’s historical/social/cultural context, and discussion of the item’s significance to ancient medicine, including its relevance to the present reading. The collection of images formed on this site will provide a visual and interactive representation of course content, thus serving multiple learning goals. See: http://libguides.brooklyn.cuny.edu/ancientmedicine_goyette/home

(5) Classroom Etiquette and Policies:

Disruptive behavior in the classroom will negatively affect your participation grade. This includes:

- Texting/use of electronic devices: I will allow laptop computers/tablets—for note-taking purposes ONLY—but I forbid the use of iPhones, Androids, Blackberries, PDAs, cell-phones, etc. during class time (N.B. a large phone ≠ a “tablet”). These devices are extremely distracting to the instructor and to your fellow students. If you are seen texting or using one of these devices, you may be asked to leave class.
for the rest of the day. Please, for the sake of our collective sanity, just turn off your devices and put them away before the beginning of class.

Please note: the use of electronic devices to photograph slides or any other things during class is also prohibited. I will allow ample time for you to process and copy down information projected on the slides, and if you would like extra time to review the slides outside of class time, you are welcome to come to my office hour or make an appointment. I will not be posting the slides on Blackboard.

Talking to others (or to yourself) when the instructor is speaking or when a fellow student who has been called upon is speaking. This is frowned upon even if you are trying to understand a point or discussing material relevant to class. We will be doing several group work exercises in this course, so you will have plenty of opportunities to communicate your thoughts on the readings to others! If you have a question or would like to respond to someone’s comments, just raise your hand and you will be called upon in turn.

Excessive lateness to class

Eating noisy and/or pungent food (food that is “quiet” and non-odorous is fine).

Other Classroom Policies:

-You must bring the text(s) that will be discussed to every class meeting. We will be reading from and working out of the texts, and will sometimes do exercises that require use of the texts. If you do not have the necessary text(s) with you, you may be asked to leave class until you have obtained a copy of it.

-I am available during my office hour or by appointment to provide study advice, discuss any concepts or ideas that you would like to review or investigate further, or for help with preparing papers.. For the papers, I can provide feedback about the general direction of your papers (including your thesis, an outline, or specific points you may be concerned about), but I cannot read over your entire paper before you submit it. If you are in need of this sort of help, you should consider going to The Learning Center (1300 Boylan Hall).

-I am happy to respond to your emails, but please note that I will not respond to emails that are written in an unprofessional or disrespectful manner. Please include a salutation in your email, make sure to include your name, and use proper grammar and spelling. Consider this training for the professional world, where these conventions are expected, and where it could cost you an interview or job if they are not followed. If you do not receive a response from me within 48 hours, it is most likely because your email was not composed in a professional manner—in which case, you are welcome to try again.

(6) College Policies:

Academic Integrity Policy: This course is administered under the purview of CUNY’s policy on academic integrity. This includes plagiarism (copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise stealing another’s words without proper citation) and cheating of any kind (e.g., copying test or homework answers) that attempts to pass off another’s work as your own. Any violation of academic integrity will result in a failure (with a grade of zero) on the assignment in question, and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Brooklyn College’s policy on academic integrity is stated below:

“The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation,
confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.”

For further information on your rights and responsibilities as a Brooklyn College student, please refer to CUNY’s policy on academic integrity at its on-line location: http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/be/policies.

In truth, it is best just to do your own work. In addition, do NOT use Spark Notes, Wikipedia, or any such “assistance.” These are often not helpful and will give you inaccurate information or even information that our class will not focus on. Remember that there are many ancient medical texts and we will only be reading a handful of them and analyzing them in a way unique to this course.

Computers and Learning: Blackboard and E-mail:
Since there are public computer labs on campus, I expect that everyone enrolled in this class will be able to communicate electronically. To use the Blackboard system, visit https://portal.cuny.edu/portal. This course will make use of our Blackboard site. I will use Blackboard as a place to post announcements (emergency class cancellations, syllabus changes, study questions, etc.), items of interest (e.g., classical culture in the news, lecture opportunities), as well as any supplementary readings. All communication from me will be sent to the e-mail address that you have registered on CUNYFirst.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities who require accommodations (e.g., academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or services) for this course must register with the Center for Student Disability Services (718-951-5538). Verification of your disability is required from the Center for Student Disability Services for you to receive reasonable academic accommodations. If you have any further questions regarding disability services, please speak with someone at the Center for Student Disability Services.

Note on Non-Attendance because of Religious Beliefs:
Appropriate allowances will be made for nonattendance because of religious beliefs in line with Title I, Article 5, Section 224-a of the New York State Education Law (see Brooklyn College Bulletin p. 53). Please let me know in advance if you anticipate any conflict due to religious observance and we will make any necessary accommodations.

(7) Course Schedule:
The daily schedule is attached to this course description, and we will follow this general outline. In order to ensure the best learning experience possible, I reserve the right to make adjustments to the syllabus as the term progresses. Any changes will be announced and/or distributed in class, via e-mail, or on our Blackboard site. Any significant changes to this course description will also be announced via similar venues. Note: Although topics and readings may change, homework due dates and exam dates will not change unless agreed to by class vote. I want you to be able to plan ahead.

If there are any issues that I have not covered in this course description, please feel free to come and talk to me about them. I am looking forward to an interesting and enjoyable course, and hope you will be as invigorated by the study of ancient medicine as I am!

Course Calendar

N.B. All readings and assignments should be completed by the date under which they are indicated.

8/29 (Mon.)
Topics: Course Introduction
Hippocratic Texts

8/31 (Wed.)
Readings: The Oath, The Canon (Lloyd pp. 67-69), Medical Oaths (on Blackboard)
   “Hippocrates, the Hippocratic Corpus, and the defining of medicine” (Nutton pp. 53-71)
Topics: Scientific Writing and Literature; The Hippocratic “School”; Medical Oaths

9/5 (Mon.)
***Labor Day—No Classes***

9/7 (Wed.)
Readings: Tradition in Medicine (Lloyd 70-86)
Topics: Ancient Views of Medicine as “Science”; Ancient Medicine and The Scientific Method

9/12 (Mon.)
Readings: The Nature of Man (Lloyd 260-271), A Regimen for Health (Lloyd 272-276)
   Part of “Hippocratic Theories” (Nutton 78-86—from beginning of first paragraph on p. 78)
Topics: Hippocratic Concepts of the Human Body; Humoralism

9/14 (Wed.)
Readings: Epidemics, Book I (Lloyd 87-112)
Topics: The Case History as a Paradigm of Knowledge; “Technical Writing” as Literature

9/19 (Mon.)
Readings: Epidemics, Book III (Lloyd 113-138)
   “Hippocratic Practices” (Nutton 87-103)
Topics: Hippocratic Practices of Diagnosis and Treatment

9/21 (Wed.)
Readings: The Science of Medicine (Lloyd 139-147)
   “Religion and medicine in fifth- and fourth- century Greece” (Nutton 104-115)
   Power and Rasko article, “Whither Prometheus’ Liver?...” (in course packet)
Topics: Medicine, Science, and Religion

9/26 (Mon.)
Readings: The Sacred Disease (Lloyd 237-251)
   Euripides’ Heracles—Introduction, Synopsis, and Selected Scenes (in course packet)
Topics: Religion and Medicine; Faith-Based Healing Practices; The Cult of Asclepius; “Scientific” vs. “Literary” Representations of Illness

9/28 (Wed.)
Readings: Dreams (Lloyd 252-259);
   Pseudo-Aristotle’s Problema 30.1 (in course packet)
   Celsus’ De Medicina—selections from Book III (in course packet)
Topics: Dream Interpretation in Ancient Medicine; Concepts of the Mind, Genius, and Madness

10/3 (Mon.)
***No Classes Scheduled***

10/5 (Wed.)
***Critical Reactions Symposium #1***
10/6 (Thurs.) (Conversion Day—Thurs. = Mon.)
Readings: Airs, Waters, Places (Lloyd 148-169)
Topics: Ethnographical Writing; Medical Views on Race and Ethnicity; Review for Midterm

10/10 (Mon.)
***No Classes Scheduled (Indigenous Peoples’ Day)***

10/12 (Wed.)
***No Classes Scheduled***

10/17 (Mon.)
***Midterm***

Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Medicine

10/19 (Wed.)
Readings: The Seed (Lloyd 317-323)
    Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*—selections (in course packet)
Topics: Concepts of Conception and Procreation

10/24 (Mon.)
Readings: The Nature of the Child (Lloyd 324-346)
Topics: Embryology; Nature and Nurture; Early Genetic Theories

10/26 (Wed.)
Readings: Readings from *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome*, Part I (pp. 225-255) (in course packet)
Topics: Hysteria; The Body, Gender, and Sexuality in Ancient Medicine

10/31 (Mon.)
Readings: Readings from *Women’s Life in Greece and Rome*, Part II (pp. 255-272) (in course packet);
    Selected scenes from Seneca’s *Phaedra* (in course packet)
Topics: Gynecology; Nurses and Midwives; Love and Lovesickness

Plagues

11/2 (Wed.)
Readings: *Septuagint*, Book of Samuel 2.24; Homer’s *Iliad* Bk. 1 lines 1-100, 303-317; Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* lines 1-101 (all three readings in course packet)
Burkert, “Guilt and Causality” article — first half (pp. 102-116) (in course packet)
Topics: Representations of Plague in Ancient Literary Sources

11/7 (Mon.)
Readings: Thucydides, “The Athenian Plague”; Procopius, “The Justinian Plague” (both in course packet)
    Burkert, “Guilt and Causality” article — second half (pp. 116-128) (in course packet)
Topics: Representations and Understandings of Plague in Ancient Literary Sources

11/9 (Wed.)
Topics: Concepts of Plague and Contagion; The Reception and Influence of Ancient Plague Literature
Medicine in the Roman Empire

11/14 (Mon.)
Readings: Celsus, De Medicina Preface secs. 1-56 (pp. 1-11) (in course packet)
“Alexandria, anatomy and experimentation” (Nutton, 130-141)
Topics: Ancient Views on the History of Medicine; Ancient Medical Schools and Ideologies; Dissection and Vivisection

11/16 (Wed.)
Readings: Celsus, De Medicina Prologue secs. 57-75 (pp. 11-15); Book VII (pp. 1-6)—selections (in course packet)
Topics: Ancient Medical Schools and Ideologies; “Roman” Medicine and “Greek” Medicine; Surgery
*** Paper Prospectus Due***

11/21 (Mon.)
Readings: Pliny the Elder’s Natural History—selections from Books 26, 28, and 29 (in course packet)
Part of “The Consequences of Empire” (Nutton 173-181)
Topics: Herbal Approaches to Medicine; Medicine and Roman History

11/23 (Wed.)
***To Be Announced***

11/28 (Mon.)
Readings: Greek Magical Papyri and Demotic Magical Papyri—selections (in course packet)
Galen—“The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher”
“The Life and Career of Galen” (Nutton 222-235)
Topics: Magic and Medicine; Galen’s Approach to Medicine; Galen as an Ancient Medical Authority

11/30 (Wed.)
***Critical Reactions Symposium #2***

12/5 (Mon.)
Readings: Galen—“An Exhortation to Study the Arts”; “The Exercise with the Small Ball” (both in course packet)
Part of “Galenic Medicine” (Nutton 236-243)
Topics: The Ideas and Influence of Galen

East Meets West and Conclusions

12/7 (Wed.)
Readings: Huangdi Neijing—selections (in course packet)
Topics: East Meets West: The Divergence and Convergence of Medical Traditions

12/12 (Mon.)
Readings: “Conclusion” (Nutton 318-324)
Topics: Course Reflections; Review for Final Exam
***RESEARCH PAPER DUE***
12/19 (Mon.)
***Final Examination — 1:00-3:00 PM***

**Disclaimer:**
We will be studying some aspects of ancient medicine and ancient civilization that some in our society do not condone or identify with, and throughout the course we will engage in frank discussion of matters of health, illness, and the human body. If you are easily offended by frank discussion of such matters, you may not wish to take this course. In addition, please do not try to perform any of the medical procedures or remedies described in the ancient texts. These texts are of historical interest, and are not intended for therapeutic use, as many of the substances they recommend are toxic, and many of the procedures they describe are extremely dangerous and/or ill-advised. Please do not attempt to treat yourself or others using these therapies, and see a qualified health professional instead.