History of Disease Research Paper (8-10 pp) ............................... 25 % of final grade

Students will write an 8 to 10 page history essay on the impact of a particular disease in history. The assignment is open to meet the interests of the students. Students do not need to feel restricted by time period or place, but they do need to address the question of impact and/or influence of a particular disease on a particular group of people at some specific time and place. A list of possible essay questions for this assignment is attached to the end of this handout. Please come speak with the professor about possibly pursuing another topic for approval BEFORE going forward.

A history research paper is an argument with a thesis supported by evidence. That is, work on your research paper should address a good analytical question to frame an argument that is backed up by good research (be careful not to fall in the descriptive trap). You may find chapters 4 and 5 of Rampolla, *Writing in History* to be helpful.

So where do I begin?
1. First, choose a topic (in this case – a disease) that really interests you.
2. Secondly, build a bibliography by perusing Bibliographies in the History of Medicine and Disease – you need good research resources on which to build an argument – **KEY** RESEARCH PHASE (**Library exercise for students will help you with this**).
3. Thirdly, start reading and familiarizing yourself with the relevant debate or issues – find those articles/books listed in your bibliography (step 2) and start making notes. Refine your research question as your research progresses – RESEARCH PHASE.
4. Fourthly – think about your research; reread your notes; refine your research question as your research progresses – RESEARCH PHASE.
5. Lastly, remember to allow yourself enough time to write the paper – make an outline before drafting your paper; write multiple drafts of your paper; polish argument (content) and prose (grammar and style) for a final paper – **WRITING PHASE**

### Researching and Writing a History Paper

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Key to your research success for this paper is your ability to distinguish between a historical account of your disease and a medical text describing the etiology, diagnosis and/or treatment of your disease. Note: you will not be able to write a good history paper based on science papers or newspaper articles! So make sure you read historical sources on your research topic.

Some bibliographical guides in the library that list good historical sources on various diseases, scientists, and other events are:

**Titles in The D.B. Weldon Library:**
- DBW reference D 205.O94 (8 volumes) - Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World, 1750 to the Present
- DBW reference Q 125.R335 - Reader’s Guide to the History of Science
- DBW reference Q 180.55.D57S29 (3 volumes) - Science and Scientists
- DBW reference R 133.M34 - Encyclopedia of Medical History
- DBW reference R 134.D57 (5 volumes) - Dictionary of Medical Biography

**Titles in Allyn & Betty Taylor Library:**
- TAY reference Q 141.N45x (8 volumes) - New Dictionary of Scientific Biography
- TAY reference WA 13.E564 (2 volumes) - Encyclopedia of Pestilence, Pandemics, and Plagues
- TAY reference WC 13.I435 (2 volumes) - Infectious Diseases: In Context

**Online resources (via shared library catalogue):**
- The Oxford Encyclopedia of the History of American Science, Medicine, and Technology
- Cambridge World History of Human Disease - Also available in DBW reference R 131.C233 1993
- Encyclopedia of World Biography
- Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History - Also in DBW reference RA 649.H293
- Science and Its Times: Understanding the Social Significance of Scientific Discovery

Some databases available on line through Western library that will direct you to scholarly historical articles in academic journals on your topic are:

- **America: History and Life** (Canadian and American History)
- **Historical Abstracts** (Non-North American History)
- **JSTOR**
I encourage students to write a Research Plan, which will serve as a dynamic document to help focus student research and writing. Consider writing 3 versions of your Research Plan:

(1) a preliminary Research Plan (without a thesis statement) in the early phase of your research – which will be for your eyes only;

(2) a draft Research Plan (with a thesis statement) in the mid- or late stages of your research – which you will might consider showing to the professor to make sure you are on the right track;

(3) a final Research Plan (with a clear thesis statement) in the writing stage of your essay – which may also include an Essay Outline of the structure and tenets of your argument.

What is in a Research Plan? As a minimum, make sure the following elements are part of your plan:

- **Topic:** general topic of your research essay; include place and time period
- **Research Question:** or line of inquiry – what do you want to know?
- **Bibliography:** list of secondary sources – where will you find the answers to your line of inquiry?
- **Thesis Statement:** so what is the answer to your research question and/or the general argument of the essay? You’ve done research on ‘x’ topic – so what? Why is this important?
- **Essay Outline:** provides the structure and tenets of the argument

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### Preliminary Research Plan for Star Student, #987654321

**Topic:** The Influenza Pandemic of 1918

**Research Question:** How and why did influenza spread around the world after the First World War, and to what extent was Canada involved in this pandemic?

**Preliminary Bibliography:**


**Thesis Statement:** - yet to be determined
Submitting Your Essay ---

**Format** – your essay should contain a cover page with the title of your paper, your name and student number, the professor’s name (Prof. S.McKellar) and the course code (HIS 2812). It should also contain a bibliography with a minimum of 8 secondary sources (a mix of books and articles). Citations are important in any history research paper. You may use either endnotes or footnotes but **NOT parenthetical referencing** (citations enclosed within parentheses in the body of the essay). Refer to Rampolla, *Writing in History* (any edition) for proper bibliographical as well as endnote/footnote formats.

**Turnitin.com** – a commercial plagiarism detection software under license to Western University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. You must submit a **paper copy** of your history of disease research paper in class on the due date. In addition, you must submit an **identical electronic copy** to Turnitin.com which is available via the OWL course site. Please note that failure to submit your essay to turnitin.com will result in a 0 grade, even if a paper copy has been submitted. The **submission date of the paper copy of your essay** (not the turnitin.com date) will determine if a late penalty will be applied or not.

**Late Penalties** – Penalty for late essays is 2% each day (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) after the due date.

Essays are to be handed to the professor **in class** or to the History Department’s Essay Drop-Off Box in the hallway outside the History Office located at Lawson Hall 2201. Essays in the Drop-Off Box will be collected at the end of the business day to be date stamped (be aware of office hours). Faxed and emailed essays are not acceptable. Essays slipped under professor’s office door are also not acceptable. Extensions may be granted if legitimate circumstances are presented by the student to the professor well in advance of the due date. Poor work planning (such as “I have XX other papers due that day”) is not grounds for an extension.

*Note that after 7 days (one week past the due date), the assignment will not be accepted.*

Students needing accommodation should visit the Social Science Academic Counselling Office, Social Science Centre, Rooms 2105. Website: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca
Grading of a History Essay: What Does Each Grade Mean?*

Essays are graded according to content (what is said) and style (how it is said). Points in content include a familiarity with the material, the incorporation of examples to illustrate or support the argument, and identification and analysis of the issues. Points in style include basic grammar and spelling. Style also includes sentence and paragraph structure, vocabulary, and organization. Organization includes a strong introduction, a clear thesis, a logical organization of the points to be argued, and an eloquent conclusion.

Descriptive remarks of each grade level assigned to essays have been compiled below.

A Grade Paper

A paper of this level displays a solid understanding of the information and the context in which it is presented. It demonstrates reflection and thought, expressed fluently, and written with a style distinguished by its freshness and clarity. The argument is sound, substantive, organized, and uses the sources effectively. One is impressed by the author’s engagement with the topic, the compelling issues, and their significance and implications therein.

B Grade Paper

The author demonstrates a substantial knowledge of the information and context associated with the subject. The paper is well-written and presented with no serious flaws, a good use of sources and a clear thesis. The argument is above average in organization and analysis and brings in points to support the thesis. The conclusion is fine but could be more compelling or forceful. Generally, the paper is competent but not extraordinary.

C Grade Paper

The author demonstrates an acceptable grasp of the material and awareness of the sources. The organization is logical and the style follows proper form, although there may be some lapses in each aspect. The paper would be best described as descriptive because it lacks any substantial analysis, and demonstrates a modest ability to work with the material critically. One senses the author does not fully understand the issues of the subject because the ideas are superficial, undeveloped, and/or tend to stray from the subject. The argument needs to be tighter, and the writing strengthened through editing.

D Grade Paper

The author shows a familiarity with the subject, but not an understanding of it. He or she lacks the writing or communication skill to intelligibly relate what knowledge has been comprehended. The paper is disorganized, lacks structure, and the ideas are undeveloped. There is no evidence of substantial thought or reflection.

F Grade Paper

The author is without any writing skill. Grammar and spelling errors dominate and disguise the lack of organization. The ideas are unrelated to the subject and reveal a complete misunderstanding of the task.

HIS 2812 – List of Possible Essay Questions for Research Paper

1. How did the **Black Death** affect the power of the Catholic Church in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, and why? (A discussion of the incidence and spread of the plague necessary, as well as the medical and social understanding of the disease.)

2. How did the **Black Death** challenge medical and social structures in 14\textsuperscript{th} century Europe? (A discussion of the incidence and spread of the plague necessary.)

3. Which social class was most affected by the **Black Death** in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, and why? (A discussion of the incidence and spread of the plague necessary, as well as the medical and social understanding of the disease.)

4. Analyze the role played by **smallpox** in the European conquest of Native American populations in the New World in the 15\textsuperscript{th}, 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries. How is disease a dominant, contributing, or negligible factor in the outcome of European contact in this period, and why?

5. How and why did **yellow fever** affect the American economy and society in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries?

6. Why were the “tropical diseases,” specifically **malaria and yellow fever**, of such concern to imperialist countries like England and the United States in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century? (Discuss what were “tropical diseases” as well as political, medical and social responses to these diseases.)

7. Why were the **cholera** outbreaks in London, England so significant in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s? (Consider the response and role of society, the medical profession and the government.)

8. How, and why, did **Edwin Chadwick** support a greater government role in public health in 19\textsuperscript{th} century London, England? Is Chadwick a historically significant figure in the history of disease; why or why not? (Consider disease concerns, medical theory, political and economic motives of this period.)

9. What was the impact of the **cholera** outbreak of 1832 in New York City? (Consider political, economic, medical and social implications.)

10. Compare and contrast the pro- and anti-vaccination arguments at the time of Edward Jenner (18\textsuperscript{th} century **smallpox vaccination**) and Louis Pasteur (19\textsuperscript{th} century **rabies**
vaccination). How and why were there such strong debates on vaccinations (noting similarities and differences)?

11. What role did Louis Pasteur play in the application of the new germ theory to disease? How and why were his actions historically significant?

12. How and why does the renaming of “consumption” to “tuberculosis” in the 19th century reflect a shift in the social meaning and medical understanding of this disease?

13. Why and how did tuberculosis as a disease become romanticized in the 19th century? (Consider issues of class and medical treatment at the time.)

14. How and why did typhoid fever spread throughout the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries? What were the dominant political and social responses? (Consider the case of “Typhoid Mary.”)

15. How does the case of “Typhoid Mary,” a healthy carrier of typhoid fever, in the late 19th century in the U.S. reflect the medical, social and political tensions between the public good and individual rights at this time?

16. Were medical and educational programs on tuberculosis effective or not in Canada and the United States during the period from 1900 to 1950? Why or why not?

17. How did the medical profession and national governments (British, American and Canadian) respond to the problem of venereal disease among their soldiers during the First World War, and why?

18. How and why did the influenza outbreak of 1918 reach pandemic proportions? (Consider the international spread and incidence, and why this was dubbed the “killer flu.”)

19. Did the influenza pandemic of 1918 have an impact on wartime mobilization and the homefront for Canadians and Americans? How and why?

20. Explore the discovery of insulin and its impact. Why was insulin celebrated as a miracle therapy in the 1920s since it was not a cure? (Consider who discovered insulin and when, but more importantly the medical and cultural significance of insulin.)
21. Compare and contrast the different outbreaks of polio in Canada and the United States during the 1910s, 1930s and 1950s. How did medical and social responses to these outbreaks differ or not, and why?

22. What role did Franklin Delano Roosevelt play in generating awareness and funding for polio in the first half of the 20th century in the U.S.? How and why were his actions historically significant?

23. Why is the iron lung (a mechanical respirator) a popular icon for the 20th century outbreaks of polio in North America? How did medical technology and devices play a role in the medical and social response to polio in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s?

24. What was the impact of the Cutter Incident (1955) in the larger fight against polio in the United States? (Consider the political, economic and social fall-out of this incident, including the future production of vaccinations and public health vaccination campaigns.)

25. Analyze the discovery of penicillin and its impact. Why was penicillin hailed as a “wonder drug,” and who benefitted from its therapeutic introduction in the 1940s? (Consider who discovered penicillin and when, but more importantly the medical and cultural significance of this drug.)

26. Explore the Tuskegee Syphilis Study of 1932 to 1972 in the United States. How does this study illuminate issues of race and power? (Consider who organized, funded, and participated in this study, including nurse Eunice Rivers.)

27. What was the impact of the Swine Flu outbreak of 1976 for the American government and society?

28. How and why were the HIV-AIDS policies of the 1980s in the United States representative of “value-laden struggles?” (Consider the political and culture climate of the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s.)

29. What was the political and social response to HIV-AIDS in the United States in the 1980s? How and why was HIV-AIDS socially constructed in this way?

30. How and why has HIV-AIDS emerged as the prominent disease concern in Sub-Saharan Africa? (Discuss the “historical legs” of HIV-AIDS and how this disease was framed in the 1980s (hint: differently than the U.S.) Careful not to fall into a discussion of current social policy.)