EPIDEMICS
PLAGUES AND CULTURES FROM THE BLACK DEATH TO THE PRESENT

INSTRUCTOR: MARTIN PERNICK

Description: From the Black Death of 1347 to the latest emergent infections such as Zika, dramatic disease outbreaks both influenced and reflected human history. This course explores how medicine and culture intersected to affect the causes of and responses to epidemics; and it uses selected specific epidemics to illuminate aspects of global history from the ancient world to the present. Themes will include the causes of epidemiological change, the social and cultural impact of each scourge, the organized public health responses and the development of medical therapeutics and technologies. This course will demonstrate how studying responses to an epidemic can provide insights into the cultures it affected. It will also provide a historical perspective from which to consider the role and limits of medicine in confronting current epidemics.