

Syllabus for OLLI Course

Plagues, Pestilences, Poxes and Pandemics

Version 2.0

Spring 2024 Semester

Introductory Note:

Thank you for registering for this course.

Much of the information may be dry facts, but I will always try to look at the human aspect, and possibly explore my real-life experiences or those of audience members.

1. Instructor Information:

Néstor A. Ramírez, MD, MPH, FAAP is a retired physician with a specialty in Pediatrics and a sub-specialty in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine (care of premature and ill newborn infants). See the OLLI classes catalogue for more details. You can contact me at nestorbabydoc@gmail.com before, during and after the course.

2. General Course Information:

Purpose and Plan of this Program's Presentations:

Provide a peripatetic, panoramic perusal of the particulars of past, present and potential plagues, pestilences, poxes and pandemics that produce pervasive panic and persistently put the permanence of people on this planet at prolonged peril, plus presenting possible positive principles of prevention.

3. Course objectives: At the end of the sessions, participants should be able to:

- Understand the descriptive terminology of catastrophic diseases affecting humans.
- Accept that narratives of distant past events may be just stories and not real histories.
- Learn about newer diagnostic and therapeutic resources in research of the 4P's.
- Hear prior "facts" about HIV/AIDS, the Plague, CoVid-19, and vaccines be debunked.
- Review the global implications of malaria, yellow fever, cholera and polio.
- Grasp the social, economic and political consequences of epidemic diseases.
- See the harm and destruction caused by tiny little mosquitos.

4. Course policies:

Registered OLLI members can participate in any or all sessions of the 8-week course. If special accommodations are required, they must be requested from and arranged through OLLI administration. Attendees may download all presentation materials which will be available at least one week before each session from the course-specific folder on the OLLI website. Out of respect for the time of all participants, short questions and comments during the session are permitted and encouraged. I usually have at least three question sections: at the first and second thirds during the presentation, and one at the end. Longer discussions should be done after the end of each session.

5. Grading and Evaluation:

There is no required reading material. There will not be any type of testing or grading.

6. Learning Resources:

The class presentations will be available in the course-specific folder on the OLLI website several days before each session both as PowerPoint and PDF versions. If you don't have PowerPoint, in the Internet you can find free software to watch PowerPoint presentations on your device.

A suggested optional supplementary list of reading or viewing materials is attached and will also be posted on the website. This is alphabetized by title, and is not a formal bibliography. This is intended only to provide references for members who want to dig deeper into a topic. This is totally voluntary. Most of the titles are available at the U of I library and/or the Champaign and Urbana Public libraries.

7. Course Calendar:

Duration: 8 weekly sessions, Tuesdays from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM, from February 27, 2024 through April 16, 2024, **Live** at OLLI. (Unfortunately, no ZOOM or hybrid option is available.)

8. Short description of the course sessions:

- ❖ Session 1: February 27th, 2024 → Definitions
 - Epidemiologic terms
 - Biblical plagues:
 - Old Testament: Plague of Ashdod (Philistines), 10 Plagues of Egypt, Leprosy
 - New Testament: 7 Final Plagues in the Revelation of St. John the Divine

- ❖ Session 2 : March 5th, 2024 → The many Plagues
 - Plague of Athens

- Antonine Plague
 - Plague of Cyprian
 - Plague of Justinian (1st Plague Pandemic)
 - The Great Mortality (The Black Death, 2nd Plague Pandemic)
 - Doctors and the Plague, Precautions and Treatments
 - Modern Plague (The 3rd Plague Pandemic)
 - The Arts and the Plague
 - Exploring *Yersinia pestis* through paleoanthropology, microbiology and DNA research
 - Current cases of Plague, US and elsewhere
- ❖ Session 3: March 12th, 2024 → Other Infectious Pestilences
- Polio: Viral, no vector
 - Cholera: Bacterial, no vector
 - Yellow Fever: Viral, with vector
 - Malaria: Parasitic, with vector
- ❖ Session 4: March 19, 2024 → The Columbian Exchange
- What was it?
 - Bi-directional flow of animals, plants riches and diseases.
 - Extermination of New World populations by imported diseases.
 - Concept of “Virgin Soil “Epidemics”.
 - North American epidemics and affected tribes, the Wampanoags.
 - Smallpox, Syphilis, Typhus
- ❖ Session 5: March 26, 2024 → 20th Century Pandemics, Past and Present
- The Influenza virus and its complexities
 - The Flu Pandemics:
 - Spanish Flu
 - Chinese Avian Flu
 - Hong Kong Flu
 - Asian Flu
 - Cholera’s seven pandemics
 - Encephalitis Lethargica
- ❖ Session 6: April 2, 2024 → HIV and AIDS
- Origins and progression of the pandemic
 - The Virus
 - Naming the disease and its effect on research, funding, public’s perception
 - Concept of “Patient Zero” and new approach
 - Current incidence and mortality
 - Therapies: PEP, PrEP, ART
 - Prevention
 - Social and Religious issues
 -
- ❖ Session 7: April 9, 2024 → 20th and 21st Century viruses
- Chikungunya Fever

- Dengue Fever
 - West Nile Fever
 - Nipah virus
 - The Corona viruses: SARS, MERS, CoVid-19
- ❖ Session 8: April 16, 2024 → Crystal ball into the future?
- Characteristics of a new Pandemic
 - Re-emergence of previously eradicated illnesses
 - Humanity’s role in new pandemic (?)
 - Spillover from other species
 - Science denial, antivaxxers, misinformation and disinformation
 - Which lens to use: dark gray or rosy pink?

❖ *****

OLLI Spring 2024 Semester

Suggested Optional Reading/Viewing List

(Alphabetical by Title)

Not a formal Bibliography

1. **American Plague (The)**, The Untold Story of Yellow Fever, the Epidemic that Shaped Our Country. Crosby, Molly Caldwell. Berkeley Book, New York, NY, 2006.
2. **Angel of Pestilence (The)**. Video Lecture No. 3 in: Mysteries of the Microscopic World. Fleury, Bruce E. The Great Courses, Chantilly, VA, 2011.
3. **Asleep**, The Forgotten Epidemic That Remains One of Medicine’s Greatest Mysteries. Crosby, Molly Caldwell. Berkeley Books, New York, NY, 2010.
4. **Biblical Plagues (The)**. Wengler, Gabrielle (Director). Documentary, 3 episodes, on You Tube “Hazards and Catastrophes” series. 2014. Available on Amazon Prime.

5. **Black Death (The)**, Did Humans Spread the Plague? Armstrong, Dorsey and Fleury, Bruce. Audio Lecture, The Great Courses, Chantilly, VA, 2015.
6. **Black Death (The)**, The World's Most Devastating Plague. Armstrong, Dorsey. 24 Video Lectures. The Great Courses, Chantilly, VA, 2016.
7. **Black Death (The) and The Dancing Mania**. Hecker, Justus Friederich Karl. FV Editions, Amazon Kindle E-Books, Online, 2007, (translated from an 1832 original in German).
8. **Chimp (The) and The River**, How AIDS Emerged from an African Forest. Quammen, David. W.W. Norton & Company. New York, NY, 2015.
9. **Cholera Years (The)**, The United States in 1842, 1849 and 1866. Rosenberg, Charles E. The University of Chicago Press, London, UK, 1962.
10. **Coming Plague (The)**, Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance. Garrett, Laurie. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY, 1994.
11. **Drunk with Blood**: God's Killings in the Bible. Wells, Steve. SAB Books, Lahore, Pakistan, 2013.
12. **Ebola, Through the Eyes of the People**. Close, William T. Meadowlark Springs Productions, Marbleton, Wyoming, 2002.
13. **Ebola, The Natural and Human History of a Deadly Virus**. Quammen, David. W.W. Norton & Company. New York, NY, 2014.
14. **English Sweating Sickness (The) 1485-1551: A Viral Pulmonary Disease?** Taviner, M, Thwaites, G, Gant, V. Medical History, Vol. 42: 96-98, 1998.
15. **Epidemics and Society**: From the Black Death to the Present. Snowden, Frank M. Open Yale Course Series. Original lecture texts (Spring 2010) accessed from website. (Revised edition available as a book from Amazon May 2020.)
16. **Fourth Horseman (The)**, A Short History of Epidemics, Plagues, Famines and other Scourges. Nikiforuk, Andrew. M. Evans & Company, Inc. New York, NY, 1991.
17. **Germs, Genes, & Civilization**, How Epidemics Shaped Who We Are Today. Clark, David. Pearson Education, Inc. Publishing as FT Press, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2010.
18. **Ghost Map (The)**, The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic - and How it Changed Science, Cities and the Modern World. Johnson, Steven. Riverhead Books, Penguin USA Group, New York, NY, 2006.

19. **Great Mortality (The)**, An Intimate History of the Black Death, The most Devastating Plague of All Time. Kelly, John. Harper Perennial, New York, NY, 2006.
20. **Great Plague (The)**. Porter, Stephen. Sutton Publishing, Limited. Redwood, Trowbridge, Wilshire, UK, 1999
21. **Guns, Germs and Steel**, The Fates of Human Societies. Diamond, Jared. W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY, 1999
22. **History of the Black Death (The)**, Parts 1, 2, and 3. Sil, Nitin, Producer. Flash Point History Documentary Podcast. April 2020. (Accessed on You Tube).
23. **Hot Zone (The)**, A Terrifying True Story. Preston, Richard. Random House, New York, NY, 1994.
24. **How Black Death Reshaped Town and Field**. Harreld, Donald J. Video Lesson 4 in Economic History of the World since 1400. The Great Courses, Chantilly, VA, 2016.
25. **Little Book of Pandemics (The)**, 50 of the Most Virulent Plagues and Infectious Diseases. Moore, Dr. Peter. Key Porter Books/Elwin Street Ltd., London, UK, 2007.
26. **Malaria: Diseases in History series**. Cunningham, Kevin. Morgan Reynolds Publishing, Greensboro, North Carolina, 2009.
27. **Meningitis**. Knieb, Martha. (Epidemics: Deadly Diseases Throughout History series). The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. New York, NY, 2005
28. **1918 Flu (The)**. Fleury, Bruce E. Video Lectures Nos. 11, 12, and 13 in Mysteries of the Microscopic World: [11] A Conspiracy of Silence, [12] The Philadelphia Story, and [13] The Search for the Virus. The Great Courses, Chantilly, VA, 2016.
29. **Next Outbreak? (The)**, We're Not Ready. Bill Gates. TED Talk, April 3, 2015. Accessed on You Tube April 2020.
30. **Pandemic: How to Prevent an Outbreak**. NETFLIX Documentary Series, Season 1, Episodes 1-4. Online at www.Netflix.com. January 2020.
31. **Pandemics, Global Perspectives**. Green, Robert. Cherry Lake Publishing, Ann Arbor MI, 2008.
32. **Plague of the Philistines (The)**. Shrewsbury, JFD. Journal of Hygiene Vol 47 No.3, pp 244-252. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK, 1949. (Published online 2009).

33. **Plague and Pestilence**, A History of Infectious Disease. Altman, Linda Jacobs. Enslow Publishers, Inc. Aldershot, Hants, UK, 1998.
34. **Plagues and Peoples**. McNeill, William H. Anchor Books/Random House, Inc., New York, NY, 1976.
35. **Plagues, Pestilences and Pandemics: Are you ready?** Griffith University, Queensland, Australia, Online Course, FutureLearn, 2020.
36. **Plague, Pox & Pestilence**. Kiple, Kenneth F, Editor. Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, London, UK, 1997.
37. **Plagues Upon the Earth, Disease and the Course of Human History**. Harper, Kyle. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2021.
38. **POX, An American History**. Willrich, Michael. The Penguin Press, New York, NY, 2011.
39. **Sleeping Sickness and other Parasitic Tropical Diseases** (Epidemics: Deadly Diseases Throughout History series). Ramen, Fred, The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. New York, NY, 2002.
40. **Speckled Monster (The)**, A Historical Tale of Battling Smallpox. Carrell, Jennifer Lee. Plume/Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2004.
41. **Spillover**, Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic. Quammen, David. W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY, 2012.
42. **Theme of Death in Italian Art (The)**: The Triumph of Death. Valser, Ingrid. Graduate Thesis, Department of Art History, McGill University, Montréal, Canada, 2001.
43. **West Nile Fever**. (Epidemics: Deadly Diseases Throughout History series). Margulies, Phillip. The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. New York, NY, 2004