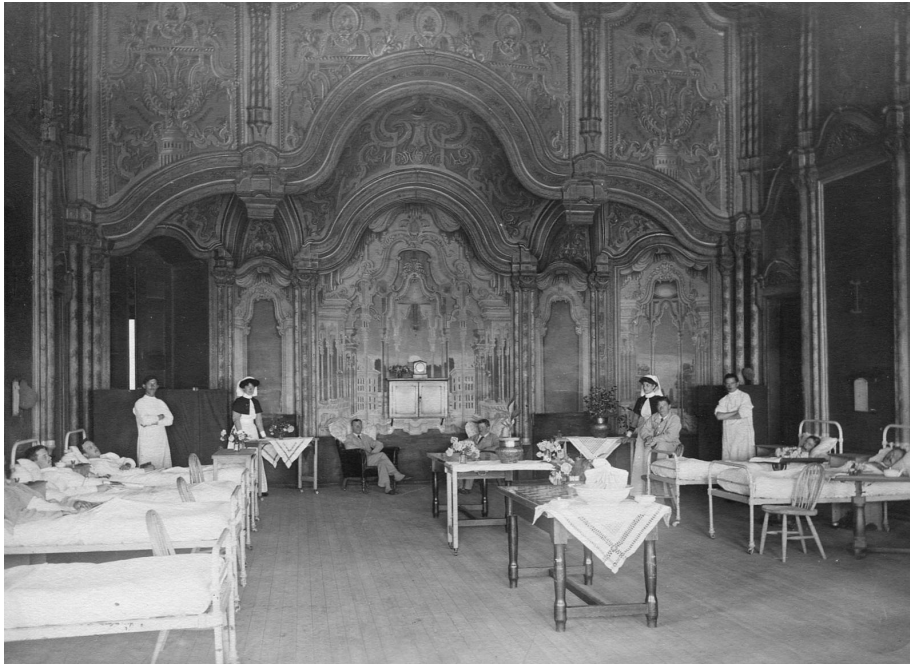


Historical Perspectives on Medicine in the Modern Middle East



Citadel Hospital, Cairo, 1915 (Credit: [Australian Army Museum of Western Australia](#))

Course Description

What can we learn about the Middle East through the study of medicine? In recent years, scholars of the region have increasingly plumbed the histories of hospitals, doctors, and patients to provide novel perspectives on topics such as cultural exchange, religion, state power, and colonialism. This course will provide students with an overview of new scholarship in the history and historiography of medicine, while also affording them a chance to delve into several of the field's canonical works. Through guided discussions of the assigned texts, students will gain an understanding of core concepts in the history of medicine, develop their own insights, and build toward presenting a small independent research project by the end of term.

Discussion questions may include (but are certainly not limited to): How has medicine historically been used to enact and/or resist state power? Is modern medicine inherently colonial? What political roles can and should doctors play? How is modern medicine opposed to and/or compatible with Islamic ethics? Is it possible to write the history of medicine from the patient's perspective? And lastly, how does medicine emerge from and mediate cultural encounters between East and West? Students are also strongly encouraged to bring their own questions into class.

Instructor Bio:

Theo J. Rossi is a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, where she examines the neglected history of mental healthcare in khedival Cairo (1805-1884), drawing on Arabic medical textbooks and journals, as well as archival government sources. She aims to demonstrate that khedival mental healthcare was characterized by dynamic institutional and discursive shifts, the study of which can provide new insights into how the Egyptian state developed, how modern medicine emerged in the Middle East, and how psychiatry coalesced as a global discipline. Theo holds a certificate from the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA), a master's from the University of Oxford, and a bachelor's from the University of Chicago.

Proposed Course Flow:

Week One: Hospitals

- Michael W. Dols, “The Origins of the Islamic Hospital: Myth and Reality,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 61, no. 3 (1987): 367–90.
- Michel Foucault, “The Lesson of the Hospitals,” *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (Abingdon: Routledge Classics, 2003).

Week Two: Doctors

- Hannah-Louise Clark, “Civilization and Syphilization: A Doctor and His Disease in Colonial Morocco,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 87, no. 1 (2013): 86-114.
- Omar Dewachi, “Doctors without Empires,” *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

Week Three: Patients

- Roy Porter, “The Patient’s View: Doing Medical History from Below,” *Theory and Society* 14, no. 2 (March 1985): 175–98.
- Orkideh Behrouzan, “Tending ADHD, Shifting Moralities, and Generational Perceptions,” *Prozak Diaries: Psychiatry and Generational Memory in Iran* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

Week Four: Medicine as an art of the contact zone

- Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 33-40.
- Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, “Professional Medical Discourse on Sex Differences and Sexuality in Egypt, 1827-1928,” *Medicine and Morality in Egypt: Gender and Sexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2016).

Week Five: Medicine and Islam

- Khaled Fahmy, “Medicine, Enlightenment, and Islam,” *In Quest of Justice: Islamic Law and Forensic Medicine in Modern Egypt* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018).
- Stefania Pandolfo, “The Psychiatrist and the Imam,” *Knot of the Soul: Madness, Psychoanalysis, Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

Week Six: Medicine and state power

- Soha Bayoumi and Sherine Hamdy, “Nationalism, Authoritarianism, and Medical Mobilization in Post-revolutionary Egypt,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 47 (2023): 37-61.
- LaVerne Kuhnke, “The Conquest of Smallpox: Variolation and Vaccination,” *Lives at Risk: Public Health in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Week Seven: Medicine and colonialism

- Richard Keller, “Spaces of Experimentation, Sites of Contestation: Doctors, Patients, and Treatments,” *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).
- Chris Sandal-Wilson, “The Colonial Clinic in Conflict: Towards a Medical History of the Palestinian Great Revolt, 1936-1939,” *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 47 (2023): 12-36.

Week Eight: Student presentations

- Each student will give a 10-minute presentation on a topic of their choosing, followed by a Q&A session with the class. The instructor will work with each student individually from Weeks Five-Seven, offering guidance on how to choose a compelling topic and conduct effective research.

Note: PDF versions of all readings will be provided over email by the instructor.