

## Sample Syllabus

### Ancient Science and Medicine

This course looks at key moments in the early history of science and medicine, including texts from the Greek, Roman, Islamic, and Chinese traditions. We will read a combination of ancient texts in translation, and contemporary commentaries on them. The focus will be on questions of contemporary interest arising from ancient science and medicine.

### Objectives

- gain familiarity with the intellectual roots of western and eastern cultures
- develop the ability to read and interpret ancient texts in translation
- develop skills in constructing and critiquing arguments
- gain familiarity with classical philosophical, scientific, and medical concepts

### Texts

Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science*

Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*

Islamic Medical Manuscripts: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/arabic/>

### Assessment

Interpretation Papers	6 x 5%
Platonic Dialogue	20%
Podcast	20%
Final Exam	30%

### Interpretation Papers

In a 500 word paper, interpret and explain in your own words the meaning and significance of a passage from one of the assigned texts. The passage can be as short as a paragraph or as long as a page, and must not have been previously discussed in class.

### Platonic Dialogue

Write a dialogue (2000 words) in the style of the Platonic dialogues, examining one of several topics provided by the instructor. Your tutorial leaders will work with you on how to research and construct a critical dialogue.

### Podcast

In small groups or independently, research a topic of contemporary interest as it was treated in ancient scientific/medical texts. Produce a 5 min. podcast suitable for a general audience. Students who read Arabic or Chinese are encouraged to consult un-translated texts.

### Exam

The final exam will consist of short answer, long answer, and interpretation questions. Topics will be taken from readings, lectures, and class discussions.

### Schedule

#### *Part I: Introduction*

Lindberg, Chapter 1

Hesiod, *Theogony* II.104 – II.506

**Part II: Ancient Greek Science and Medicine**

Lindberg, Chapter 2 to p. 34  
Empedocles, Leucippus and Democritus

Lindberg, Chapter 2, from p. 35  
Plato, *Timaeus*

Lindberg, Chapter 3  
Aristotle, *Physics*

Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*  
Nancy Tuana, "The Weaker Seed"

Lindberg, Chapter 5  
Epicurus and Zeno

Lindberg, Chapter 6  
Lloyd, *Hippocratic Writings*, selections

**Part III: Hellenistic Science and Medicine**

Lindberg, Chapter 7  
Euclid, *Elements*, selections

Archimedes, *On Floating Bodies*  
Ptolemy, *The Almagest*, selections

Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, *On Anatomical Procedures*, selections

**Part IV: Islamic Science and Medicine**

Watt, Chapters 1-2  
Ansary, *Destiny Disrupted: A History of the World Through Islamic Eyes*, Chapter 1  
Jacquart, *The Influence of Arabic Medicine*

Lindberg, Chapter 8  
Al-Haytham, *Book of Optics*

Lindberg, Chapter 10  
Al-Khwarizmi, *Algebra*, selections

Watt, Chapter 3  
Avicenna, *The Canon of Medicine*, selections  
Rhazes, *On Small-pox and Measles*

**Part V: Traditional Chinese Science and Medicine**

Needham, *Science in Traditional China*, selections

*Huang Di Nei Ching (The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine)*, selections