

History 408: Plagues and Pandemics



(ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY / DE AGOSTINI PICTURE LIBRARY / G. DAGLI ORTI / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES:
A pharmacist prepares medicines to treat a patient suffering from smallpox in this illustration from a 17th-century Ottoman manuscript of Ibn Sina's Canon of Medicine.)

Spring Semester 2021

Blended course

3 Credit Hours

Time: TTh, 9:30-10:45

Dr. Sanja Kadrić (I go by Sanja or Dr./Prof. Kadrić)

E-mail address: sanja.kadric@tamuc.edu

Office hours: Thursdays **12:30-5:30** via Zoom (link on D2L)

This course is an overview of major epidemics in human history from the ancient period to the present day, from the plague of Athens to HIV/AIDS and COVID19. You will have the opportunity to conduct historical research on an epidemic of your choosing and to assess the effects of this epidemic on world history at large. This course is a world history through the eyes of disease. We will strive to connect plagues and pandemics to global social, economic, political, and other histories. We will also strive to contextualize our contemporary struggles with COVID19 in the greater history of major epidemics.

Student Learning Outcome: By the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate proficiency in historical bibliographic research by locating sources appropriate to researching a given historical topic.

COVID-19:

Please, click on the following link to access A&M-Commerce COVID19 Information, <https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

TECHNOLOGY, ACCESS, AND NAVIGATION:

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all coursework in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these problems. Please let me know if you encounter these problems and we will do our best to work around or to resolve them. However, if I do not know of the issue, I cannot help or excuse you. **If you are worried about access to a personal computer or a good internet connection in relation to this course, please talk to me as soon as possible so we can figure out a solution.** *I am more than willing to work with you, but I need to know to do so.*

THE COURSE:

Readings:

- There is no textbook for this course. Instead, over the course of the semester, we will be reading and listening to a selection of articles and podcasts culled by me. All are available for free online or through our library database. All are also posted clearly on and accessible through our D2L page.
- I also use D2L to post other class materials, announcements, and assignment instructions, so please check it regularly. If you foresee issues with doing so (lack of technology and/or regular internet access), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss alternative arrangements.
 - I reserve the right to make changes to the class schedule and readings. If I do so, I will notify you ahead of time.
 - Please check to make sure that you can access the readings on D2L *the day before* (preferably, even earlier) any scheduled class. If an article or a link is malfunctioning, get in touch with me immediately. Unless you contact me about an issue accessing a reading in a timely manner, I will not grant an excuse nor an extension on work.

General expectations:

- **Reading** – You are expected to read, mull over, and jot down notes on the readings *before* every class. You can use these notes while you write your essay exams, so I highly recommend taking notes and highlighting as you read.
 - For help with notetaking, see the **ASK THE CLASS forum on D2L**.
- **Participating** – Because almost half of this course revolves around discussion sessions, verbal participation is essential to your success.
- **Listening** – The other half of this course revolves around my lectures. I encourage you to watch them on the day that they are posted and to take notes. You can use these while writing your essay exams, participating in discussion sessions, and writing your final paper.
 - For help with lecture notes, see the **ASK THE CLASS forum on D2L**.
 - If you cannot or are for any reason uncomfortable with joining our Zoom discussions with video, you are free to have your video turned off. However, you will need to unmute and participate verbally.

Assignments and grade breakdown:

- **Lectures (15% of your final grade)**
 - Each Tuesday, I will post a lecture to D2L. You will earn a point for each lecture that you watch. I will check on D2L whether you access each lecture.
- **Discussion Sessions (25% of your final grade, 8 in all)**
 - Discussion sessions will occur live on Zoom. Please see the course schedule for due dates. Each discussion session is worth 100 points.
 - You will participate in a live small-group and class-wide discussion session on Zoom almost every Thursday of the semester.
 - The discussion sessions will ask you to apply your weekly readings and my lecture towards answering complex questions and engaging your classmates in stimulating discussion.
 - In each session, you will be divided into small groups and given a single question to discuss and to prepare an answer. I will observe and grade your participation in this small group. You will then elect a speaker who will present

- your answer to the class at large in class-wide discussion. I will also observe and grade your participation in the class-wide discussion. Together, your participation will be graded out of 100 points.
- You need to engage verbally in some form to get an A on this assignment. However, if you have issues doing so, please reach out to me as soon as possible so that we can discuss possible alternative arrangements.
 - **Essay Quizzes (30% of your final grade, 3 in all)**
 - The essays will be written on D2L and will ask you to recall and synthesize material from your readings and my lectures to answer an essay question of your choice.
 - The essays will be timed. You will have the entire class period (9:30-10:45) to write them. See the course schedule for essay dates.
 - You must write all the essays at their scheduled time. In case of an emergency or an issue beyond your control, you may be allowed to write a make-up essay. However, you must contact me to discuss this.
 - **Final Paper (30% of your final grade, 100 pts)**
 - Instead of a final exam, you will be writing a final paper. Feel free to start working on and/or consulting me for help on this paper immediately.
 - **Due date: April 28, 2021 by 11:59 PM**
 - Your final paper must be submitted to D2L by this date. This final paper is your final exam. This means that I absolutely cannot accept any submissions after the due date.
 - I will provide a detailed rubric later in the semester. For now, know that this paper must be typed and double-spaced in 12-point font, Word format, ~2500 words. It will be graded on (1) content, accuracy, and aptness of analysis and (2) quality and accuracy of prose, grammar, and style. You **must** consult academic literature and provide a properly formatted bibliography.
 - **Presentations:** Over the last few weeks of class, you will present your preliminary work to the class and receive constructive feedback. Your oral presentation will count towards your final paper grade.
 - **The library and I are here to help. Our librarian is Sarah Northam.** She is available to assist you in your research, whether it is using the library or identifying and locating sources. She will also come and speak with us in class. Here is how to contact her:
 - Sarah Northam, Head of Research and Instruction Services, Gee Library: 903-886-5714 or Sarah.Northam@tamuc.edu

FINAL PAPER CASE STUDY:

Choose any topic related to plagues and pandemics in world history to research as a case study. You could choose anything from a particular plague, pandemic, or disease that we have in class, perhaps one that we did not get a chance to cover or covered only briefly, or you could choose something related such as vaccines, the ecological impact of disease, or disease and religion, to name just a few options. It is most important that you work on something that actually interests you and/or can benefit you professionally or personally. You will conduct extensive historical bibliographic research on this issue by locating appropriate primary and secondary sources. You will use your research to analyze this topic and its importance to our understanding of world and human. I will provide more details as well as a detailed rubric as the semester progresses.

SCALE:

All grades will be computed on the following standard scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or below

UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES:

If you anticipate missing any portion of class, please notify me *at least one day* before the scheduled class period. It is in your best interest to let me know as soon as possible so we can work out an arrangement if one is possible.

If an emergency occurs, notify me *within a day of the emergency* (or as soon as possible, depending on the situation) to provide documentation and discuss the potential of make-up work. Make-up opportunities may be awarded at my discretion. The same goes for extensions for any assignments associated with this class. Assignments that are received late without just cause or without a previously approved excuse will not be accepted.

E-mails: One of your jobs as a student is professionalizing yourself in preparation for whatever employment you may seek after your university years. An important element of professionalism is communication, and one of the primary modes of communication in a class is e-mail. I want you to consider class-related e-mails to me and fellow students as an exercise in professionalism. Please use formal English in your e-mails, and do not forget to sign your message with your full name. Before you shoot off an e-mail, ask yourself, "Would I send this e-mail to my boss?" If not, take some time to think on why and revise. I will respond to your e-mails in a timely manner, no later than 24 hours after receiving them.

Student conduct: All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail here:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC attendance policy: For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Grades and grade complaints: I will return all graded assignments to you no later than a week after they are submitted, but likely earlier. One day after receiving any grade, you can make an appointment with me and discuss your grade. I do not guarantee that I will change your grade, but I would be happy to hear your case.

Academic Integrity: Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work.

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Disability Services: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact me and:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Non-discrimination Policy: Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statements: Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Week 1 – Pandemics

1.1 January 12

Introduction to the course

1.2 January 14

“Pandemics: waves of disease, waves of hate from the Plague of Athens to A.I.D.S.”

By Samuel K. Cohn

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 2 – Plague of Athens

2.1 January 19

“The cause of the plague of Athens: plague, typhoid, typhus, smallpox, or measles?”

By Burke A. Cunha, MD

2.2 January 21

“Plague of Athens—Fungal Poison?”

By JANE BELLEMORE, IAN M. PLANT and LYNNE M. CUNNINGHAM

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 3 – Justinian’s Plague

3.1 January 26

“The Plague of Justinian”

By Lizabeth Hardman

3.2 January 28

“Justinian’s Plague, Hagiography and Monasticism”

By Craig A. Molgaard, Amanda L. Golbeck, Kerry E. Ryan

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 4 – The Black Death

4.1 February 2

“The transmission of the Black Death to western Europe: a critical review of the existing evidence”

By Hans Ditrich

4.2 February 4

ESSAY QUIZ #1

Week 5 – The Columbian Exchange

5.1 February 9

“The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease, Food, and Ideas”

By Nathan Nunn and Nancy Qian

5.2 February 11

“Was the Huey Cocoliztli a Haemorrhagic Fever?”

By John S. Marr and James B. Kiracofe

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 6 – The Moscow Plague

6.1 February 16

“Catherine II, Bubonic Plague, and the Problem of Industry in Moscow”

By John T. Alexander

6.2 February 18

“Sewage and the City: Filth, Smell, and Representations of Urban Life in Moscow, 1770-1880”

By Alexander M. Martin

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 7 - Polio

7.1 February 23

“Race and the Politics of Polio: Warm Springs, Tuskegee, and the March of Dimes”

By Naomi Rogers

7.2 February 25

“Between East and West: Polio Vaccination across the Iron Curtain in Cold War Hungary”

By Dora Vargha

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 8 – The Spanish Flu Pt. I

8.1 March 2

“Plagues & wars: the ‘Spanish Flu’ pandemic as a lesson from history”

By Daniel Flecknoe, Benjamin Charles Wakefield, and Aidan Simmons

8.2 March 4

ESSAY QUIZ #2

Week 9 – The Spanish Flu Pt. II

9.1 March 9

“The 1918 “Spanish Flu” Pandemic in the Ottoman Capital, Istanbul”

By M. Kemal Temel

9.2 March 11

Workshop: Doing Historical Research – via Zoom from 9:30-10:45

Week 10 – HIV/AIDS

10.1 March 16

“The AIDS Pandemic in Historic Perspective”

By Powel Kazanjian

10.2 March 18

“AIDS and global security”

By Gwyn Prins

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 11 – COVID19

11.1 March 23

Origins: COVID, the New Deal, and the Importance of Leadership

<http://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/covid-new-deal-economy-leadership>

Origins: The American Dream after Covid-19

<http://origins.osu.edu/article/american-dream-after-covid-19>

11.2 March 25

Origins: Going Viral: COVID Conspiracies in Historical Perspective

<http://origins.osu.edu/connecting-history/covid-influenza-conspiracies-fake-news>

Associated Press: Analysis: Virus shows benefit of learning from other nations

<https://apnews.com/3adf5722134f03d86be9a1726b910997>

ASSIGNMENT: Join the Zoom discussion session from 9:30-10:45!

Week 12

12.1 March 30

Summative comments and prep for essay quiz, presentations, and final paper

12.2 April 1

ESSAY QUIZ #3

Week 13

13.1 April 6

Final Paper Presentations!

13.2 April 8

Final Paper Presentations!

Week 14

14.1 April 13

Final Paper Presentations!

14.2 April 15

Final Paper Presentations!

Week 15

15.1 April 20

Final Paper Presentations!

15.2 April 22

Final Paper Presentations!

Week 16 – Finals Week

16.1 April 27

Regular Zoom office hours from 12:30-5:30

**FINAL EXAM DUE:
April 28, 2021 by 11:59 PM to D2L Dropbox**