

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES**

Beate Gundert
LwH 3209
bgundert@uwo.ca

CLASSICAL STUDIES 2906B
GREEK AND ROMAN MEDICINE

Winter Term 2015
Tu./Th. 1:30-2:30 p.m.
WSC 240

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

This half-course provides an overview of the evolution of ancient medical practices and theories based on Greek and Latin texts dating from the Greek archaic period to late antiquity (800 BC to 600 AD) and on relevant archeological findings such as inscriptions, sculptures, vase paintings, and buildings. The period covered represents one of the most creative eras in Western medical history, providing future healers with an authoritative body of medical writings, a clear professional identity, and a detailed medical terminology.

Topics discussed will include ancient views on the structure and function of the body; health and its preservation; symptoms, causes and treatments of physical and mental diseases; the medical profession; divine healing; the patient as individual and type; environmental influences on health. The development of medicine will be set in the context of contemporary philosophical and scientific thought, ongoing technological advances, social and political structures, and religious practices.

The course progresses chronologically through six main cultural periods. After a depiction of traditional forms of healing in Greek poetry and mythology (Archaic Greek Period), we will explore the complementary roles of observation and experience on the one hand, and of theory and hypothesis on the other, found in the first extant body of Greek medical writings, the Hippocratic collection (Classical Period). After Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt, the founding of new scientific institutions such as the Museum of Alexandria led to significant advances in anatomy and physiology, when for a brief period human dissection was performed, not to be taken up again for more than a thousand years (Hellenistic Period).

In Rome, traditional magico-religious healing practices were gradually supplanted by the importation of Greek physicians and medicine, while Roman administrative reforms provided for improvements in water and food supplies, a comprehensive system of sewage disposal, and the establishment of military hospitals (Roman Period). As Rome came to be the most important urban centre in the Mediterranean world, it attracted leading Greek physicians including Galen of Pergamon, whose extensive writings based on original experiments and broad learning represent the culmination of Greek medicine (Greek Medicine in Rome). It is Galen's synthesis that came to dominate medicine among the writers of the Byzantine empire, whose main efforts were devoted to clarifying, systematizing, and adapting the voluminous body of ancient medical writings they inherited (Byzantine Period).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- identify and characterize the main figures and schools in Graeco-Roman medicine;
- identify and date the most important primary historical sources; interpret their medical content; explain their significance for the development of ancient medical thought; put them in their historical and cultural context;
- define and explain the principal ancient medical concepts and locate them in their historical and cultural framework;
- describe the main epochs of ancient history and show how medicine mirrors the most important characteristics of those epochs.

LEARNING OUTCOMES / TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Students completing this course are expected to have acquired:

- an understanding of the diversity and limitations of ancient historical sources and the ability to critically evaluate and interpret them;
- an understanding of medicine as cultural creation which evolves under the influence of changing intellectual, societal, and environmental factors;
- an understanding of the origins of the Hippocratic Oath and of the classical roots of modern conceptions of the physician and medical ethics;
- an awareness of the limitations of medical knowledge at any given time in history preparing them to enter the modern medical market place with an informed scepticism.

CLASS COMMUNICATION

Class will be notified of any class cancellations or room change and other special announcements via WebCt.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Custom Course Package available at the Classics Department, Lawson Hall 3205, \$15 (cash only).
Additional material provided by instructor. Check WebCt frequently.

GRADING SYSTEM

Test No. 1:	25%
Test No. 2:	25%
Final Examination:	50%

All questions are short answer and essay.

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>
[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]
Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Office of the Dean of their home faculty and provide documentation. **Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.**

NOTE FROM THE DEAN OF ARTS and HUMANITIES: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

PLAGIARISM: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

UWO ACCESSIBILITY POLICY. Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services:
<http://accessibility.uwo.ca/students/index.htm>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."