UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Medicine in Myths and Tales

2021-2-H4101D217

Aims

Main aim of the course is to introduce students to the historical evolution of medicine, by analyzing myths and tales belonging to different historical periods.

Contents

Myths and traditions, as expressions of popular beliefs, can provide valuable information on health and medical knowledge in the ancient world, and sometimes can be more useful than the writings of ancient physicians. These non- medical sources are often used by historians and anthropologists to better understand the evolution of medicine over the centuries. This course will describe some examples of myths and legends belonging to the different historical periods and containing medical issues. Furthermore it will provide examples of medical doctrines of the past, based on mistaken beliefs, that have remained in clinical practice and in public opinion until the contemporary age.

Detailed program

The use of myths and legends in the history of medicine - Myths of ancient civilizations - The medieval legends – myths and tales of the Romantic Age (lunatics, etc) - medicine and fairy tales – ancient beliefs and medical

curiosities (spontaneous human combustion, ftiriasis, maternal imagination, etc.).

Prerequisites

Second Year Medical Students and above.

Teaching form

Lectures, group discussion

In COVID-19 emergency, the lessons will be recorded and delivered asynchronously

Textbook and teaching resource

Bondeson J. A cabinet of Medical curiosities. Cornell University, 1997

Semester

Semester 2

Assessment method

Final group discussion

Office hours

By appointment, writing to michele.riva@unimib.it