UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Medicine

2627-1-I0304D004-I0304D00401

Aims

The course aims to provide students with:

- knowledge and understanding of the historical and epistemological evolution of medicine, with particular attention to the cultural and social contexts that have shaped its development;
- the ability to apply acquired knowledge to critically interpret the evolution of healthcare professions within historical and socio-medical frameworks;
- independent judgment in evaluating historical changes in the concepts of health, disease, and care, as well as the evolving social role of healthcare professionals;
- communication skills to clearly and appropriately present historical content and reflections using language suitable for academic and healthcare contexts;
- learning skills to autonomously deepen their understanding and connect historical knowledge with future developments in medicine and the health professions.

Contents

This course offers a historical and epistemological overview of the development of medicine, focusing on key transformations in healthcare, the emergence of public health, and the evolution of the health professions.

Detailed program

Pre-Hippocratic Medicine. The birth of rational medicine in the classical world (Hippocrates and his writings, Hellenistic medicine, medical sects, Galen). Medieval medicine (Salernitan Medical School, Monastic Medicine, Arab Medicine). Medicine and the scientific revolution (Vesalius, Harvey, iatrochemistry and iatromechanics).

Medicine and society between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Ramazzini, Enlightenment medicine, Frank, the use of statistics in medicine and the advent of epidemiology, the birth of public health). The nineteenth-century birth of biomedicine and the major discoveries of the 19th century (anesthesia, antisepsis, the development of semiotics and clinical practice, synthetic drugs). The evolution of the concept of health in the twentieth century (WHO and major international conferences, the birth of universal healthcare systems, the Italian healthcare system). The evolution of medicine in the twentieth century (the pharmacological revolution, the evolution of surgery and transplantation, the advent of healthcare technologies).

Prerequisites

No prerequisites

Teaching form

Lectures with guided discussions on historically relevant issues in medicine and the health professions.

Students are encouraged to critically reflect on the changing concepts of health and care.

All classes are delivered in person: 4 sessions of 2 hours each.

Language of instruction: Italian.

Textbook and teaching resource

Cesana G, Riva MA. Medicina e Società. Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2017.

Additional teaching materials will be provided by the teacher.

Semester

1st Year, 2nd Semester

Assessment method

Final written exam including 10 multiple-choice questions (with one correct answer), designed to assess basic knowledge and understanding of the course topics

Office hours

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

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION