Humanities Coronavirus (COVID-19) Syllabus

To help us think and teach about contagion, global health, and community in a time of social distancing and fear, we are collecting contributions to this crowd-sourced syllabus, which focuses on literary, historical, philosophical/religious, and cultural aspects of current health crisis and its history.

Document editors: Sari Altschuler s.altschuler@northeastern.edu and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon e.dillon@northeastern.edu, Department of English, Northeastern University

---

**Literature/Primary Sources**

   


Hawthorne, Nathaniel. “Minister’s Black Veil.” [mask wearing] 
[https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13707/13707-h/13707-h.htm](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13707/13707-h/13707-h.htm)
Jonson, Ben. "On his First Son."

Morello, Stephen. “The Lung Block” [tuberculosis] 
[https://www.archives.nyc/the-lung-block?fbclid=IwAR1Z8f9wdqskI3-N2nOBJ9bvHSmpKQGmVvf0lfMFivAcru7E9EiA1q-mE](https://www.archives.nyc/the-lung-block?fbclid=IwAR1Z8f9wdqskI3-N2nOBJ9bvHSmpKQGmVvf0lfMFivAcru7E9EiA1q-mE)
[https://poets.org/poem/litany-time-plague](https://poets.org/poem/litany-time-plague)
Poe, Edgar Allan. “King Pest: A Tale Containing an Allegory.” Richmond, VA, 1835 [probably cholera, but not explicit]
Literature/Secondary Sources


Cultural Studies/Theory


Bailey, Kenneth, and Lori Lobenstine. “Social Justice in a Time of Social Distancing.” [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c7166ee4b0e7db2be69480/t/5e6900b6b689bb5bc5f5d474/1583939767600/Social+Justice+in+a+Time+of+Social+Distancing.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53c7166ee4b0e7db2be69480/t/5e6900b6b689bb5bc5f5d474/1583939767600/Social+Justice+in+a+Time+of+Social+Distancing.pdf).


---

### History


https://academic.oup.com/jhmas/article-abstract/53/2/132/862038?redirectedFrom=PDF&fbclid=IwAR00wdQW8QW8FzDtF4eUHOk-5y_HpT9kg0re3VSzqvNJ9CT8HqL5aiGxs

Covid-19 Forum by a collection of historians and anthropologists:


[https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520291607/punishing-disease?fbclid=IwAR1dYGu9YQjXIFhs8r-foBjIAErNtMtPo1gCd9d7omeOpgficZ509sOhg8](https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520291607/punishing-disease?fbclid=IwAR1dYGu9YQjXIFhs8r-foBjIAErNtMtPo1gCd9d7omeOpgficZ509sOhg8)


---

**Philosophy**

Nail, Thomas. “Why a Roman philosopher’s views on the fear of death matter as coronavirus spreads.” *The Conversation*. (March 12, 2020)


---

**Popular books**

**Films**

*The Host* (2006), Bong Joon-Ho  
*The Seventh Seal* (1957), Ingmar Bergman  
*12 Monkeys* (1995), Terry Gilliam  
*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) Don Siegel  
*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), Philip Kaufman

**Outbreak**

*Contagion*  
*Children of Men*  
*I Walked with a Zombie*  
*How to Survive a Plague*  
*The Normal Heart* (HBO)  
*World War Z*

**Relevant syllabi**

Sari Altschuler’s abridged “Imagining Contagion” syllabus:  

Molly Farrell’s “Outbreak Narratives” syllabus:  
https://docs.google.com/document/d/18dl5yXdHwGQh9WzAIA7WMp1TQKlqKjnFuTtuk__HFB4/edit

Emly Waples’s “Going Viral: Epidemics in American Literature, History, and Culture”:  
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/561bc511e4b01ff56ffdb2b6/t/5b29255f70a6ad51fa7b4954/1529423200046/GoingViral.syllabus.F17.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0wBjA3FO31IWZqdkjDToe9mZvJUPgREMmBAruh3ZYB7UCx8OeNG87zw

**Useful Threads for Other Resources**

Alondra Nelson on #coronavirussyllabus  
https://twitter.com/alondra/status/1238148640268603394
Anthropology covid-19 syllabus
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-IRVbz1nsBQJHcaCVh8QLRBiwj3cFT_bXSwmTNs_Hf0/edit#heading=h.fbubynqned6z

Bryan Waterman on his Contagion course and other recs:
https://twitter.com/_waterman/status/1233506424770170881

Novels by women with disease-spreading plots:
https://twitter.com/secondshelfbks/status/1236751567812001792

K-12 Resources