



Georgia Tech · Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts
School of Literature,
Media, and Communication



Syllabus for LMC 3306: Science, Race, and Technology *Designing Disease: Pandemics, Race, and Misinformation*

ATTENTION! FOR THE SPRING CLASS OF 2025, ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND AN ALL-DAY FIELD TRIP ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH AND FRIDAY MARCH 7TH. THESE ARE MANDATORY TRIPS AND SOME REGULAR CLASSES ARE CANCELED TO MAKE UP FOR THE TIME. DO NOT MAKE TRAVEL PLANS FOR THESE TWO FRIDAYS AS THAT WILL NOT EXCUSE YOU FROM THE CLASS OUTING.

Instructor Information

Instructor

Dr. Jennifer Orth-Veillon

Email

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Covid has taught us that pandemics are not just medical or biological phenomena. Its label as the “Chinese flu” and some anti-vaccination campaigns have demonstrated that disease is also socially, politically, and culturally constructed. Throughout history, preventing the contagion and controlling the outbreak of misinformation have proved almost as challenging as containing and curing the virus, especially when it comes to race and ethnicity. In the Middle Ages, Jews were blamed for poisoning wells and spreading the bubonic plague. Without evidence, some doctors claimed African Americans were more responsible than whites for spreading the Spanish flu in 1919. These notions led to further mistreatment and persecution of already-stigmatized groups. Worse, they impeded the impact of real medical and social solutions for all communities.

This class will use iconic works of world literature as access points for investigating race, politics, ethical arguments, and medical innovation in pandemics throughout history. In parallel, students will consult a diversity of scientific and cultural artifacts that address roles that race and ethnicity play in public information about disease. Since we are in Metz, we will put special emphasis on Europe, France, and the Alsace-Lorraine region as we will go on outings that enhance our inquiry. For example, we will visit WWI sites to learn about war's role during the Spanish flu. We will examine medieval quarters and religious structures in Metz to trace the impact of the bubonic plague. The final aims of this course are: to listen to voices silenced during pandemics because communities have only trusted institutions or organizations with authority over health and well-being and ignored those seeking healthy lives for all through justice and social equality; to reflect on the profound assumptions rooted in the language used over time to deal with disease and pandemics.

Albert Camus, *The Plague*, *The Last White Man*, Mohsin Hamid, Bernard Marie-Koltès, *Roberto Zucco*, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," Maryse Condé *Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, Decameron, Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*, Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, *Covid Chronicles*, anything about Zombies...

Site visits: WWI-WWII sites, North-African markets and restaurants, local Medieval churches and quarters, the Metz synagogue, other related sites in France, Germany, or Luxembourg

These core goals of the class align well with GT's new strategic plan outlined here:

<https://strategicplan.gatech.edu/focus/global>

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

- Through course readings and discussions, students will demonstrate knowledge of the origins and types of pandemic literature and media.
- Students will be able to conduct close textual analyses of selected pandemic writing and research.
- Through course readings and discussions, students will demonstrate knowledge of the moral and ethical issues involved in the act of writing about pandemics.
- Write lucid, well-constructed arguments analyzing and interpreting texts and artifacts.
- Synthesize primary and secondary readings to completed an extended project on the course theme.
- Students will utilize travel writing as a tool for analysis of cultural and political issues relevant to pandemics in Europe, Metz, Alsace-Lorraine, and France.
- Understand basic concepts of intercultural sensitivity, worldview structures and mindful learning
- Situate Metz, France and the Grand Est region and Europe in broad historical, cultural, and geopolitical contexts
- Develop and sharpen critical thinking skills and apply them to concepts and debates around pandemics, identity, globalization, and notions of globalism and global citizenship
- Understand and analyze socio-cultural and political developments and current societal debates in France and Europe and be capable of considering these phenomena in cross-cultural, cross-regional and cross-national contexts about disease and pandemics.

Course Requirements & Grading

Students are expected to read and prepare for intense class discussion and class work, complete one group project and one individual project, and participate in class outings.

Grade Breakdown:

Case History Group assignment: 20%

Verdun outing assignment: 15%

Natzweiler-Struthof/Strasbourg outing assignment: 15%

Individual literature presentation project: 30%
Attendance and participation: 20%
=100%

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100% Excellent (4 quality points per credit hour)
B	80-89% Good (3 quality points per credit hour)
C	70-79% Satisfactory (2 quality points per credit hour)
D	60-69% Passing (1 quality point per credit hour)
F	0-59% Failure (0 quality points per credit hour)

See <http://registrar.gatech.edu/info/grading-system> for more information about the grading system at Georgia Tech.

Participation and Classroom Conduct

Good participation entails not only speaking and sharing your thoughts on a regular basis, but also being considerate and respecting the views of others. To earn high points in the participation part of the final grade, students will have demonstrated their awareness of the different functions of classroom comments by:

1. varying their discussion strategies,
2. considering what they say before they say it,
3. taking intellectual risks, and
4. always respecting the feelings of peers by not interrupting classmates while speaking and acknowledging interesting ideas.

Rubrics and Detailed Assignment Descriptions

For each assignment, you will receive a detailed assignment description well in advance of the deadline, which will include the grading rubric. I aim to return your assignments graded within one week of the due date. Delays may be longer with long travel weekends.

Course Materials

Course Texts and Materials.

All course materials are provided in PDFs on Canvas or as links in the syllabus.

Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools

Course Canvas Site, Class Blog

Course Expectations & Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. This includes using unacknowledged AI to complete any portion of your work. Your work is your own.

ChatGPT/AI Policy

This course is about growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed following guidelines set out during the ChatGPT workshop given in class.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, when using generative AI tools in the work of this course, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.
- **Transparency:** Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).
- **Documentation:** You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people.

Using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles may be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Collaboration & Group Work

Aside from group projects, all work must be your own. Work created by AI is not considered your work. If any portion of a group project is suspected of being completed by someone or something other than your group, all group members will be investigated and reported. Your written work will be checked with plagiarism software. Suspected cases of plagiarism/AI use will result in reporting to the Office of Student Integrity.

Attendance Policy

You are required to attend all classes and excursions. You can miss a maximum of 2 days, no questions asked. Each unexcused absence after 2 will result in 1 point deducted from your final grade. You must have approval and justification from the GTE administration in writing for an absence to be excused. If you miss on a group workshop day, you will still be expected to do the work in your group.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

All extensions must be pre-approved before the due date by the instructor and, if deemed necessary by the instructor, justified by the Gatech administration. Missing class does not automatically grant you an extension on an assignment due date. If you miss on a portfolio workshop day, you will still be expected to do the work in your peer group.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom and on Guided Visits

Use of portable technology (cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) during class time is not permitted except for class-specific activities, which must be approved by the instructor. However, please remember that your success in this class will hinge in part on your attention to in-class discussion and content: please refrain from using your device during class except at designated times, and do your best to focus on the task at hand. Otherwise, please leave your laptop in your bag, turn off your cell phone, and resist the urge to text your mom.

During guided visits, cell phone use for texting, surfing the internet, or calling is not permitted. You may take notes and photos, but please refrain from posting them to social media accounts until after the visit is over.

Additional Course Policies

Eating: unless pre-approved or part of a class activity, eating and chewing gum is not permitted in the classroom

Hats: wearing baseball caps or other hats are not permitted during class in the classroom or on guided visits. Hats are permitted outside during guided visits for protection from sun, rain, snow, or cold.

Contacting the instructor by email: Outside of class excursions, the instructor will respond to all emails within the business workday (9am-6pm). If you send an email after 6pm or over the weekend, do not expect a response until the following business day. Please follow the instructions given to you by the GTE administration for contacting me by phone during travel times.

Campus Resources, Physical and Mental Health Resources for Students

GTE staff and faculty are here to help guide you to the right outlet for your mental health concerns. Remember, mental health is health! The sooner you treat the issue, the sooner you will feel better. Don't hesitate to reach out.

Please refer to guide given by GTE. These will also be posted to Canvas. When in doubt, contact Paul Voss: paul.voss@georgiatech-metz.fr

Information Related to Covid-19

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Institute guidelines, information, and updates related to Covid-19. Please consult your emails from GTE staff and faculty regarding changes and updates.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions

Classes may not be recorded by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is pursuant to an accommodation granted by the Office of Disability services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

Diversity and Inclusion

GTE and the LMC support the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in broader society.

Teaching philosophy

The belief that learning must be natural, collective, and discussion-based is at the heart of my teaching philosophy. I do not consider myself the autocrat of this experience, but as a fellow traveler who acts as a facilitator and leader rather than a master. My goal is for students to develop, through an inquiry of creative texts, images, and technologies, the capacity for individual expression through a collaborative process. As such, they acquire a greater understanding of both diversity and universality among their peers, in their own communities, and in the world. As a teacher, there is no greater joy for me than to see students become confident individuals in class and in their production of creative materials.

Course Schedule

**All regular classes take place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30-10:45 a.m. You are required to go on two daytrips with the class on two Friday dates: February 9th to Verdun, and March 22nd to Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp and then to Strasbourg. The other class excursions will be held either during class time or at a time that we can agree upon according to various schedules. Class excursions that take longer than the class time will be compensated by canceling classes during the regularly scheduled time. Not all excursions have been organized yet, which is why not all the cancellations have been posted. This schedule will be modified throughout the semester if we have interesting class opportunities arise. All modified dates will be announced well ahead of time so you can plan accordingly.*

***The accompanying travel details with specific departure and return times will be provided on a separate document before each trip.*

**** The day you see a required assignment or reading/viewing is the date that it is due for that class. For example, unless specified, all readings come from the course reader on the Canvas site. Sometimes, I will only assign parts of the listed readings if we are short on time. I will let you know at least at the class beforehand what pages I've selected.*

Date	Themes and In-class Work	Assignments, Reading/Viewing, and Excursions
January 10 (Wednesday) Class 1	Course Introduction Race, Technology, Science, Pandemics: Defining the terms	
January 12 (Friday) Class 2	Course Introduction	Read Selections from Susan Sontag, <i>Illness as Metaphor</i> - Introduction and Chapter 1 - PDF on Canvas Read “Pandemics: A History of Discrimination” Read “Where Science Meets Fiction: The Dark History of Eugenics”
January 15 (Monday) Class 3	The Black Death in Europe, Middle Ages	Read Geoffrey Chaucer from <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> , “The Prioress’ Prologue and Tale” -PDF on Canvas Watch selections from “Plagues in Historical Perspective: The Jews and the Black Death”
January 17 Class	CLASS WAS CANCELLED DUE TO SNOW	Giovanni Boccaccio from <i>The Decameron</i>, “The First Day: Novel I,II, and II” Watch selections from “Plagues in Historical Perspective: The Jews and the Black Death” Read “Black women most likely to die in medieval plague, Museum of London says”
January 22 Class 4	The Black Death in Europe, Middle Ages	Giovanni Boccaccio from <i>The Decameron</i> , “The First Day: Novel I,II, and II” Watch selections from “Plagues in Historical Perspective: The Jews and the Black Death” Read “Black women most likely to die in medieval plague, Museum of London says”
January 24 Class 4	Chat GPT workshop Presentation Assignment given 1793 Yellow Fever in the U.S.	Read “The Myth of Innate Racial Differences Between White and Black People’s Bodies: Lessons From the 1793 Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania” Browse A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of Some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications

January 29 Class 5	The Spanish Flu, WWI, and the Rise of the Zombie	In class, we will watch Night of the Living Dead , by George Romero
January 31 Class 6	The Spanish Flu, WWI, and the Rise of the Zombie	Read "We Are the Walking Dead": Race, Time, and Survival in Zombie Narrative - PDF on Canvas Read "Zoinks! Tracing The History Of 'Zombie' From Haiti To The CDC" Read "A Zombie is a Slave Forever"
February 5 Class 7	The Spanish Flu, WWI, and the Rise of the Zombie	Presentation #1 CARSON Read "Zombie flu: How the 1919 influenza pandemic fueled the rise of the living dead" Read Katherine Anne Porter, "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" - PDF on Canvas Read "Isolated in a Pandemic: Black Army Soldiers at WWI Camp Greene" Read/watch "Why African Americans Were More Likely to Die During the 1918 Flu Pandemic"
February 7 Class 8	The Spanish Flu, WWI, and the Rise of the Zombie Verdun Assignment Given	Read "How a WWI film from 1919 set the stage for the zombie film genre" In class, we will watch clips from Abel Gance's "J'accuse"
February 9th Friday	All day excursion to Verdun-Thiaucourt	All day excursion to Verdun-Thiaucourt
February 12 Class 9	No regular class meeting	No regular class meeting
February 14 Class 10	Verdun assignment due in class Presentation of Verdun assignment Introduction to <i>The Plague</i> by Albert Camus	Presentation #2 LUKE <i>The Plague</i> , Chapters 1-6 by Albert Camus download PDF here For this novel, we will be pulling from three different arguments about the absence of indigenous people. Please read/browse them over the course of the next 4 classes: Read Connor Cruise O'Brien on "The Plague" - PDF on Canvas

		<p>Read Edward Said “Camus and the French Imperial Experience” pp. 169- 185 in <i>Culture and Imperialism</i> - PDF on Canvas</p> <p>Read Jennifer Orth-Veillon (oui, c’est moi !) “Albert Camus’ <i>La Peste</i> : Allegory in Ruins“ - PDF on Canvas</p>
February 19 Class 11	The Plague	<p>Presentation #3 CHLOE</p> <p><i>The Plague</i>, Chapters 7-12 - Albert Camus</p> <p>Read selections from Daniel Defoe, <i>Journal of a Plague Year</i></p>
February 21 Class 12	The Plague	<p>Presentation #4 NOAH</p> <p><i>The Plague</i>, Chapters 13-18 - Albert Camus</p>
February 26 Class 13	<p>The Plague</p> <p>Course cancelled</p>	<p>Presentation #5 ALISON</p> <p><i>The Plague</i> Chapters 19-24 - Albert Camus</p>
February 28 Class 14	The Plague	<p>Presentation #5 The Plague, Chapters 19-24 ALISON</p> <p><i>The Plague</i> Chapters 19-24 - Albert Camus</p>
March 4 Class 15	Spring Break - no class	Spring Break - no class
March 6 Class 16	Spring Break - no class	Spring Break - no class
March 11 Class 17	<i>The Plague</i>	Presentation 6 <i>The Plague</i> Chapters 25_30 - Albert Camus, SERENA
March 13 Class 18	<i>The Last White Man</i>	Presentation #7 NAEHA <i>The Last White Man</i> , Chapters 1-8
March 18 Class 19	<p><i>The Last White Man</i></p> <p>AIDS MAKEUP CLASS 5-6:15 pm in the Green Room</p>	<p>9:30 - 10:45 Presentation #8 NATALIA <i>The Last White Man</i>, Chapters 9-16</p> <p>5-6 :15 Presentation #9 LAUREN Bernard Marie-Koltès, <i>Roberto Zucco</i> pages 151-168 until scene 7</p>
March 20 Class 20	AIDS	<p>Presentation #10 ALENA</p> <p>Bernard Marie-Koltès, <i>Roberto Zucco</i> pages 168-187 until scene 11</p>

		Read <u>"The University of Strasbourg: The Dark Years"</u>
March 22 Friday	All day excursion to Natzweiler-Struthof and Strasbourg, Modern and Contemporary Art Museum	All day excursion to Natzweiler-Struthof and Strasbourg, Modern and Contemporary Art Museum Read <u>"The University of Strasbourg: The Dark Years"</u>
March 25	AIDS	PRESENTATION #11 JASON Bernard Marie-Koltès, <i>Roberto Zucco</i> , 187-203
March 27	No regular class meeting	No regular class meeting
April 1	Easter Monday - no class	Easter Monday - no class
April 3 Wednesday Class 22	AIDS - Guest speaker, Jean de Pange	Roberto Zucco
April 5 Friday Class 23	Final Project Class Workshop - Assignment given for final project Conclusion Roberto Zucco and AIDS	
April 8 Class 24	Final Project Class Workshop	
April 10 Class 25	Final Project Class Workshop	
April 15 Class 26	Final Project Presentations -	
April 17 Class 27	Final Project Presentations	
April 22 - last day - Class 28 Class 27	No regular class meeting	No regular class meeting