



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



Syllabus for LMC 3318: *Designing Disease: Modern Media in the Age of Pandemics*

Do not take this class if you cannot commit to attending 2 all-day Friday outings that make up 30% of your assignment grade: Friday, February 6 and Friday, March 6. You will be penalized if you do not attend. If you cannot make these outings, please consider taking another class without travel requirements. Pre-planned personal travel does not excuse students from these trips.

Instructor Information

Instructor :
Dr. Jennifer Orth-Veillon

Email :
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Office hours :
By appointment, office #227

Course Description

Covid, despite modern advances in medical technology, taught us that pandemics are not just about medical or biological phenomena. Preventing the contagion and controlling the outbreak of information gleaned –both accurate and inaccurate–proved almost as challenging as containing and curing the virus. Via the lens of world literature, film, and media, this class will explore ethical questions throughout the history of biology and medicine during pandemics. From the Middle Ages to the contemporary world, we will look at representations of health, disease, and the medical establishment, and the cultural implications of medical innovation. Along with literature, film, and media, students will consult a variety of scientific and cultural artifacts that will add to ethical discussions about pandemics. Over the course of the semester we will reflect on the profound assumptions rooted in the language, images, and media used over time to deal with disease and pandemics.

And, since we are in Metz, we will put special emphasis on Europe, France, and the Alsace-Lorraine region as we take required Friday outings that enhance our inquiry. For example, we will visit WWI sites to learn about war's role during the Spanish flu. We will also travel to Colmar to view the Isenheim Altarpiece to discover art's role in health communication as well as to Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp to view the history of Nazi medical experiments.

Texts and selections from texts: Albert Camus, *The Plague*, Bernard Marie-Koltès, *Roberto Zucco*, Katherine Anne Porter "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, Decameron, Daniel Defoe, *Journal of a Plague Year*, Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, *Covid Chronicles*, anything about Zombies...

Films: *The Night of the Living Dead* by George Romero, *Atlantique* by Mati Diop, *J'accuse* by Abel Gance

Site visits: Verdun, St. Mihiel American WWI cemetery, Thiaucourt German WWI cemetery, the city of Colmar, the Unterlinden Museum, Metz Roman and Imperial Walks.

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.

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Arts, Humanities & Ethics area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic and philosophical works?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

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, participate in class outings, and accurately respond to reading quizzes.

Grade Breakdown and Brief Assignment Description:

- Case History Group activity. In a small group, you will work with a small group to compile a mini case history of a person found in a literary work we study using real medical evidence and history about a pandemic: 10%
- WWI outing photo essay assignment: On our WWI outing, you will be asked to compile a thematic series of photographs from the sites to accompany a short essay: 15%
- Natzweiler-Struthof/Colmar photo essay outing assignment: On this outing, you will be asked to compile a thematic series of photographs from the sites to accompany a short essay 15%
- Small group presentation project on one work of literature and one pandemic (individual element included): with 1-2 other students, you will give a presentation on one work of literature, film, or media and its corresponding pandemic: 30%
- Participation – see below for description: 20%
- Reading Quizzes: for each work consulted, you will be given a multiple choice short, factual reading comprehension quiz. There will be about 10 quizzes over the semester and I drop the lowest grade: 10%

=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

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.

If ChatGPT/other AI software over-use is suspected in your assignments, you will be asked to redo the assignment. We will dedicate part of a class to discuss what this means.

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. This includes the two Friday outings on February 6th and March 6th

Extra-curricular travel does not excuse you from the 2 required outings. These are commitments you must make to take this course.

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 cannot use these absences for the two Friday outings.**

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.

Travel plans like late trains or missed connections do not count as excused absences. When traveling, plan to arrive the day before your classes begin.

You must be on time to class. Regular, unexcused tardies/leaving class early will result in deduction of points. You may not leave class early unless you request my permission beforehand. Catching a train or needing to get to the airport on time are not valid reasons. If you leave early for an unexcused reason, points will be deducted.

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 put it in your bag, and resist the urge to text your mom...Remember, I can always see if you are texting or doing something other than class work. If I see you using these devices for use other than class use, I will ask you to put the device away.

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: 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.

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.