

# History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health

**Director of undergraduate studies:** Ivano Dal Prete (ivano.dalprete@yale.edu), HQ 253; hshm.yale.edu

History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on how different forms of knowledge and technology have been created in various times, places, and cultures, and how they have shaped the modern world. The major explores a wide range of questions. Is science universal, or does each culture have its own approach to trustworthy knowledge? What is the relationship between medical expertise, social and racial inequality, and everyday life? What is the nature of technology and its relationship to political, economic, and military power? Why do even the best public health campaigns have unintended consequences?

Course topics include the history of American and Western medicine and public health, medicine and race from the slave trade to the present, health and healing in Africa, scientific knowledge production in the global South, institutions of confinement, health activism, biotechnology, the history of the earth sciences, climate change and planetary catastrophe, the scientific revolution, scientific collections, and material culture.

A major in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health offers excellent preparation for a wide range of careers. Premedical students and others interested in health-related fields can combine preprofessional training with a broad humanistic education. The major also provides a solid foundation for any career at the intersection of the sciences, technology, and public life, including law, business, journalism, museum work, public policy, and government.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

See Links to the attributes indicating courses approved for the major requirements.

The major in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health requires twelve term courses (and twelve credits), including the two-term senior requirement. Students select a concentration of seven courses that guide them through an area of specialization. The seven concentration courses must include two courses in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health; one seminar in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health or in History; one full-credit science course; and three electives chosen from relevant courses in any department. At least one HSHM (or HIST) seminar must be taken before the senior year.

**Concentrations** The seven standard concentrations in the major are: Colonialism, Knowledge, and Power; Environment and Society; Gender, Reproduction, and the Body; Media, Information, and the Public; Medicine and Public Health; Minds and Brains; Science, Technology, and Society. Students may also design customized concentrations in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). No later than the beginning of the junior year, students in the major must select a standard concentration or indicate that they wish to design their own.

See the Concentrations section for more information.

**Electives** Beyond the seven concentration courses, students must complete three additional electives in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health. One of the electives must be a seminar, and one must be chosen from a concentration other than

the one selected for the major. All courses for the major are chosen in collaboration with the student's adviser.

**Credit/D/Fail** No more than one History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health course taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major, and this course must be taken before the fifth term of enrollment.

**Outside credit** Courses taken at another institution or during an approved summer or term-time study abroad program may count toward the major requirements with DUS approval.

#### SENIOR REQUIREMENT

**Students are held to the requirements that were in place when they declared their major.** However, with approval from the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), the following senior requirements, updated for the academic year 2024–2025, may be fulfilled by students who declared the major in a prior term.

Students must complete a two-term senior project in HSHM 4900 and 4910. The Senior Project Workshop, HSHM 4200, may be taken as an elective (for half-credit) in addition to HSHM 4900 and 4910. Note, that enrolling in HSHM 4200 will be in addition to the twelve, one-credit courses.

Students select a project adviser, propose a tentative topic and title, and submit a proposal to the senior project director. The final product of the senior requirement may be a written essay or an alternative project such as a film, exhibition, catalog, atlas, or historical data reconstruction. In the case of an alternative project, the student must identify a second reader in addition to the adviser before the senior project director approves the project. The adviser or the second reader must be a faculty member in History of Science, Medicine, and Public Health. A written component of the senior project must illustrate sources and the intellectual significance of the project. For more details about requirements and deadlines, majors should consult the HSHM Senior Project Handbook; copies are available from the senior project director and on the program website.

#### SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisites** None

**Number of courses** 12 courses for 12 credits (incl senior req)

**Distribution of courses** 7 courses in concentration (incl 2 HSHM courses, 1 sem in HSHM or HIST taken before senior year, 1 full-credit science course, and 3 related electives); 3 addtl HSHM electives, to incl 1 sem and 1 course outside major concentration

**Senior requirement** Two-term project HSHM 4900 and 4910

#### CONCENTRATIONS

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beginning of the junior year, students in the major must select a standard concentration or indicate that they wish to design their own.

Students may find courses that fulfill the requirements of the concentrations in Yale Course Search by searching the "Any Course Information Attribute" dropdown search feature.

Colonialism, Knowledge, and Power (YC HSHM Colonial Know & Power)

Environment and Society (YC HSHM Environ & Society)

Gender, Reproduction, and the Body (YC HSHM Gender, Reprod & Body)

Media, Information, and the Public (YC HSHM Media Info & Public)

Medicine and Public Health (YC HSHM Med & Public Health)

Minds and Brains (YC HSHM Minds and Brains)

Science, Technology, and Society (YC HSHM Sci, Tech & Society)

FACULTY ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM OF HISTORY OF SCIENCE,  
MEDICINE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Professors** Deborah Coen, Naomi Rogers, John Warner

**Associate Professors** Paola Bertucci, Joanna Radin, William Rankin

**Assistant Professors** Nana Quarshie, Marco Ramos, Carolyn Roberts

**Lecturers** Sakena Abedin, Ivano Dal Prete, Ziv Eisenberg, Chitra Ramalingam

**Affiliated Faculty** Rene Almeling (*Sociology*), Toby Appel (*Yale University Library*), Melissa Grafe (*Yale University Library*), Dimitri Gutas (*Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations*), Jessica Helfand (*School of Art*), Marcia Inhorn (*Anthropology*), Kathryn James (*Yale University Library*), Amy Kapczynski (*Law School*), Gundula Kreuzer (*Music*), Amy Meyers (*Yale Center for British Art*), Alan Mikhail (*History*), Ayesha Ramachandran (*Comparative Literature*), Paul Sabin (*History*), Jason Schwartz (*School of Medicine*), Gordon Shepherd (*School of Medicine*), Frank Snowden (*History*), Rebecca Tannenbaum (*History*), R. John Williams (*English*)