Course Description
In this course, we will explore texts and physical evidence that give insight into the ancient experience and construction of disease and disability in the Bible. We will seek to determine how a culture’s understanding of the make-up of body and mind (and the nature of the relationship between those two) influence the ways in which impairments of the mind and body are described, categorized, labeled, legislated, suppressed, celebrated, feared, or revered. Always keeping one foot in the present, we will also consider the cultural legacy of biblical portrayals of disability and analyze the contribution of early Jewish and Christian texts and traditions to modern disability discourses.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze biblical texts with a critical eye towards the power dynamics and ideologies of disease and disability at work in the text.
- Contextualize biblical discourses about disease and disability by appeal to the cultural and social artifacts of antiquity.
- Articulate the social and theological significance of modern conceptions of disease and disability and distinguish them from their biblical counterparts.
- Hone skills in academic writing, argumentation, discussion, and presentation.
Assessment & Measurement

1. **Weekly Discussion Postings (25%)**
   Students will write weekly posts that will be shared with the class via Canvas. For each class session, all students are expected to read their classmates’ posts and respond to at least two. These posts may include critical reflections on primary and secondary readings, responses to crafted questions posed by the instructor, or the identification of certain “puzzles” in the material that are deemed worthy of further exploration. See Rubric for Postings below.

2. **Daily Participation (15%)**
   Daily attendance and active participation is required. In short, “active participation” means coming to class ready to engage the texts and one’s classmates, but see the Rubric for Discussion Participation below for a fuller description. One aspect of this course that may be new to you is the keeping of a Collective Notes document via Google Docs. Depending on class size, each student will serve at least once as the Chief Note-Taker (CNT) for the day. The responsibility of the CNT is to provide a summary of different moments of interest in a given class session. Verbatim transcription of the class discussion is not the goal. The nature of the Google Doc is such that at any time another class member may pop in to add a reflection or a comment. The intended result is a collection of the most salient reflections and some sense of the contours of the discussion.

3. **Critical Summary of “EXTRA” Readings (10%)**
   Students will each be responsible for one critical reading of an extra article or book chapter pertaining to one of the daily topics. Options are listed as EXTRA in the Schedule for each day, but an article of the student’s finding and choosing is also welcomed (perhaps one that is especially pertinent to your research or interests). The presentation should not exceed fifteen minutes (ten minutes is a good goal), and should include a concise summary of the argument, at least three points of substantive critique, and questions for further discussion by the class. Tips for discussion leading will be provided.

4. **Presentation of Research Topics (15%)**
   Each class session will feature one or more student presentations, with a handout, in which students will present on a research topic (to be determined in consultation with the instructor), share their research questions and a preliminary bibliography. Rubrics for these presentations will be distributed.

5. **Research Paper or Take-Home Final (35%)**
   You have two options for this final assessment. You may either build on your presentation to conduct research for a term paper on a biblical passage of your choosing and write a 13-17 page research paper, due in finals week via Canvas, OR you may write a take-home final that will be distributed at the end of Week 10. Students should consult with me about their paper topics prior to the presentation of the research topics (see above).
Required Resources

An ecumenical study Bible of your choosing. Recommended are one of the two following:


3. Articles from *Disability Studies and Biblical Literature* (2011) and other required readings will be made available through Canvas.

Classroom Community Expectations:

All members of the class (both students and instructor) can expect to:

*Participate and Contribute:* All students are expected to participate by sharing ideas and contributing to the learning environment. This entails preparing, following instructions, and engaging respectfully and thoughtfully with others. While all students should participate, participation is not just talking, and a range of participation activities support learning. Participation might look like speaking aloud in the full class and in small groups as well as submitting questions prior to class or engaging with Discussion posts. We will establish more specific participation guidelines and criteria for contributions in our first weeks of the term.

*Expect and Respect Diversity:* All classes at the University of Oregon welcome and respect diverse experiences, perspectives, and approaches. What is not welcome are behaviors or contributions that undermine, demean, or marginalize others based on race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or socioeconomic status. We will value differences and communicate disagreements with respect. We may establish more specific guidelines and protocols to ensure inclusion and equity for all members of our learning community.

*Help Everyone Learn:* Part of how we learn together is by learning from one another. To do this effectively, we need to be patient with each other, identify ways we can assist others, and be open-minded to receiving help and feedback from others. Don’t hesitate to contact me to ask for assistance or offer suggestions that might help us learn better.

**Guidelines for using Canvas Discussion:**

- Use subject lines that clearly communicate the content of your post
- Write concisely and be aware that humor or sarcasm doesn’t always translate in writing.
• Be supportive and considerate when replying to others’ posts. This means avoiding use of jargon or inappropriate language, and it means disagreeing with respect and providing clear rationale or evidence to support your different view.
• Keep focused on the topic and reference readings and other class materials to support your points (as applicable).
• Try to use correct spelling and grammar and proofread your submissions. After submitting, use the edit feature to make corrections and resubmit (don’t create a new or duplicate post that corrects your error).
• Contribute and interact often!

Course Technology

• As an in-person course with virtual components and the occasional and potential need for online instruction (synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid), this course will use Canvas actively. To access our course Canvas site, log into canvas.uoregon.edu using your DuckID. If you have questions about using Canvas, visit the Canvas support page. Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone (541-346-4357) or by live chat on the Live Help webpage. You will need access to the course discussion board weekly, but not necessarily during a particular time of day. However, there is a cut-off time for each discussion board, so be sure you give yourself enough time to participate thoughtfully and to respond to others’ posts.

• Office Hours & Communication. I will be available by email and appt. via Zoom through Canvas. I’m more than happy to meet in person before or after class if you prefer — just let me know in advance and we can make that happen. I will attempt to respond to emails within twenty-four hours, weekends excepted. Please be sure you have checked the syllabus and the assignment instructions carefully before emailing so that you can answer your own question if possible.

POLICIES

COVID STUFF
With the University’s mask-optional policy now in force, if you have proof of vaccination, you are not required to wear a mask. However, you are encouraged to wear one if you prefer. You are encouraged to stay home if you develop COVID symptoms. If you do not come to class because you think you may have COVID, please take a COVID test.

NOTE ON ATTENDANCE
Class attendance will be taken daily. You are allowed two absences from lecture, regardless of the reason—no need to get permission or explain. This means we do not have “excused” or “unexcused” absences. Please stay home and use one of your four absences if you are sick. We know our UO community will still be navigating COVID-19, and some students will need to use some of their four absences to isolate and rest if
they get COVID. I made my absence policy with this in mind, so please use your absences with care so they’re there for you if you need them.

In the case of such absences, you may inquire about a lecture link and complete notes as if you were in class. Repeated tardiness will be dealt with on an ad hoc basis, and course points may be deducted. Missing three in-class sessions may result in failing the course. Your success is genuinely important to me. If challenges come up for you this term around attendance, please contact me as soon as you can. Together we can identify what resources or strategies might be available to support you and your learning.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. At UO, 10% of students use the Accessible Education Center (AEC). Your success in this course is important to me, and I want to work with you to provide whatever accommodations, services, or adjustments necessary. If you choose to self-disclose, kindly do so within the first week of class so that I can work with you and the Accessible Education Center to provide appropriate access to the classroom, the course, and its contents. Please note that last-minute requests may not be able to be accommodated. Visit https://aec.uoregon.edu/ for additional information. You are also encouraged to contact the AEC in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

YOUR WELLBEING
Life at college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you’re facing such challenges, you don’t need to handle them on your own—there’s help and support on campus.

As your instructor if I believe you may need additional support, I will express my concerns, the reasons for them, and refer you to resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I care and that help is available. Getting help is a courageous thing to do—for yourself and those you care about.

University Health Services helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).
MANDATORY REPORTER STATUS
I am an assisting employee. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 5411-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. Additional resources are available at UO’s How to Get Support webpage. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY
The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g., quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. (According to the policy, some examples of practices considered dishonest are: giving or receiving assistance during an examination and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the willful presentation of another person’s writings, opinions, or thoughts as one’s own, without proper credit and documentation. For additional information about plagiarism, see https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.) If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student’s obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Any student who deviates from the Academic Misconduct Policy can expect that the instructor will pursue all appropriate disciplinary procedures through the University. The statement is online at https://dos.uoregon.edu/academic-misconduct.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM
You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in this class as long as it contributes to your learning. However, all students are expected to listen actively to one another in order to participate in classroom activities. There may be some class sessions where we will use technology together (I will let you know in advance), and in those instances, all students should make arrangements, if possible, to bring a laptop or tablet to class. Please turn off your cellphones or set them to silent and avoid looking at them.

LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS:
You can do the reading quizzes up to 24 hours late, but you cannot receive full credit for late work. You may do Discussion Posts late, but you cannot receive full credit for late work. In the event of late submissions, 5% of the total points will be deducted per 24 hours past the deadline.
IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE DATES: (to be updated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Last day to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 8:</td>
<td>Process a complete drop (100% refund, no W recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 14:</td>
<td>Drop this course (100% refund, no W recorded; after this date, W's are recorded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15:</td>
<td>Withdraw from this course (100% refund, W recorded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16:</td>
<td>Last day to change to or from audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 26:</td>
<td>Withdraw from this course (0% refund, W recorded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 26:</td>
<td>Change grading option for this course</td>
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ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS
I will provide occasional “temperature check” evaluations throughout our time together where you can give me feedback about your experience in the course. At the end of the course, final Course Evaluations will be done online. Please report your feedback on your experience.

Checking Your Work
All written submissions should be written in standard English prose and as free as possible from grammatical errors. There are too many digital grammar tools available online nowadays to not check your work (Grammarly, for one, or the good ol' Check Spelling feature in Word, Pages, or whatever word processor you prefer). Please also run your submissions through the TurnItIn feature available on Canvas assignment submissions to make sure you’re not plagiarizing.

Grading Scale
93–100 = A
90–92 = A–
87–89 = B+
83–86 = B
80–82 = B–
77–79 = C+
73–76 = C
70–72 = C–
Etc.

GRADING RUBRICS:  In-Person Discussion Grading Rubric

A range: Your attendance is nearly perfect and you regularly engage with in-class activities/discussions. You respect classmates and listen well. You actively participate in small and whole group discussions, and demonstrate that you have (prior to class) carefully read and thoughtfully considered the text(s). You ask important, relevant questions that are central to the meaning of the texts, discuss implications of the material, are supportive of the comments of others, and are adept at advancing the
discussion through your participation.

**B range:** You come to class participate regularly with in-class activities/discussions. What you say during whole group and small group discussions demonstrates you have completed the reading and have somewhat considered the text(s). Your comments also indicate that you are listening to your peers and thinking carefully about what is being said during the discussion. You will sometimes engage your peers and can advance the conversation, but sometimes choose not to do so.

**C range:** You attend class regularly and generally exhibit that you are listening, but only occasionally speak during whole group discussions and small group discussions. Or you may be active in discussions, but irregular in attendance. Or you might participate, but do so in a way that shows little evidence of having read fully or thought carefully about the texts prior to class. You rarely seek to advance the discussion, but are congenial when called upon to answer questions.

**D range:** You attend class irregularly or participate infrequently and/or occasionally detract from class activities/discussions (whole group and small group) by not having read or making irrelevant comments. When you do participate in the class discussion, you do not demonstrate much evidence of being prepared in advance of class or having thought deeply about the text(s). You rarely or never seek to advance the discussion in productive, relevant ways and/or exhibit little interest in class activities/discussion and/or the texts.

**F:** You miss class more than you attend. When you are present in class, you are rarely (or never) prepared for discussion, and do not participate in (or sometimes detract from) class activities/discussions (whole and small group). The few comments you make during discussion often indicate a superficial level understanding/familiarity of the text(s) and/or it is apparent you are not listening to the discussion and/or have thought very little about the text(s) prior to the class discussion.

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**Research Paper Grading Rubric**

**A range:** An “A” paper has a compelling and interesting argument which does more than restate the text or class discussion. Moreover, the essay has style. Ideas are carefully analyzed and examples used to support points are well chosen, persuasive, and directly applicable to the argument. The paper is well organized: ideas flow logically, the structure of the essay is smooth, transitions are handled well and paragraphs are fully developed. Sentences are sophisticated, words chosen aptly, and the grammar is correct. Overall the paper is lively, well paced, and interesting. The reader comes away convinced that the writer cares about his or her ideas and about the language used to convey them.

**B range:** The B essay offers a worthwhile and interesting idea. The writer offers evidence and explains clearly how the evidence supports the argument. Some paragraphs may be awkward, but they each develop a specific point. The writing, although not necessarily elegant, is clear and draws the leader along a logical
progression from point to point. Together the paragraphs build an argument. The reader does not have to read a paragraph two or three times to get the idea the writer is trying to convey. The B essay is, for the most part, mechanically correct. Spelling is good, punctuation is accurate, and the essay is, by and large, free of stylistic or grammatical problems. It does not digress in unexpected ways and the paper ends by keeping its promise to argue and inform the reader about the issue with which it began.

**C range:** The C essay has a thesis, but it is vague or obvious. It does not advance an argument that anyone might care enough about to debate: “Disability is an interesting topic to study.” The thesis is often based on a personal opinion. If the writer is a recognized authority, this expression of personal taste might be noteworthy, but writers gain authority by learning how to justify and support their opinions. Opinion by itself is never enough. It must be defended. The paper is not well-organized: the transitions between sentences and paragraphs are often awkward and the logical connections between ideas are often vague or unclear. The C essay often has grammatical and typographical errors, but a paper without such flaws may still be a C essay.

**D/F range:** An unsatisfactory paper is inadequate in terms of subject, substance, structure, and/or style. It has no thesis and describes the material in vague or uninteresting terms. There is little indication that the writer understands the material being presented. The paper jumps from one idea to another, and ideas are not developed from sentence to sentence. This essay usually repeats the same thoughts again and again, often in the same words. The essay is filled with mechanical and grammatical faults (subject-verb disagreement, faulty use of punctuation, obscure pronouns, sentence fragments and spelling errors).

**Canvas Discussion Posting Guidelines**

The ideal Canvas discussion post is insightful and clearly written, raising a question that is substantive and challenging. It shows evidence of an awareness of the accumulated topics and discussions of the course, and points towards a resolution of the problem being addressed. The post probes the assumptions and arguments of the text under discussion and raises questions for respondents to engage. It does not consist of bland opinion statements such as, “I like this text.” If you do like the text, and this is of course fine, you must ask: Why does it appeal to you? What questions does it answer or not? How could it have pushed further? If you were to write the article, how would you want to do it differently? If you are reflecting on a piece of primary literature, try to identify tensions within the text itself. How do those tensions get resolved, if at all, in the text? You might also wish to raise a concern or question about practical ministry and how these texts and ideas relate to that. Whatever the topic of your post, it should in all cases be clearly written, concise, and curiosity piquing.
Week 1: Introductions, Preliminary Theoretical Considerations, and the Experience of Disease in Antiquity

Primary Sources:
Plato, *Timaeus* 82a-89e
Klein, Enki and Ninmah

Secondary Sources:

EXTRA:
Ch. 1 - The Body in Greco-Roman Culture (3-37)

Week 2: Social, Cultural, and Archaeological Considerations - Places of Healing, Places of Exclusion, and Health-Care Personnel

Primary Sources:
Inscriptions from Epidaurus (Edelstein & Edelstein [T.423], 229-237)
Leviticus 21-22
John 5:1-17
Galen, *On Recognizing the Best Physician* (selections from Iskandar trans.)

Secondary sources:


EXTRA


Week 3: Theories of Disease Etiology and Theories of Disease Remediation (Modes of Healing)

Primary Sources:
Deut 28
Psalms 6, 30, 38, 41, 103
Isaiah 53; Matt 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24
Anonymous Londinensis, selections (trans. Jones)
Greek Magical Papyri (Betz edition, selections)

Secondary Sources:
1) Kee, Medicine, Miracle, and Magic, Ch. 1 “Healing in the Old Testament and Post-Biblical Traditions” (9-26); 67-79 (on miracle); 107-112 (on magic).
   Ch. 6 - The Body, Disease, and Pollution (136-162)

EXTRA:
2. Hogan, Healing in the Second Temple Period, Ch. 1 “Healing in the Hebrew Scriptures” (3-26)
3. Ian Johnston, Galen on Diseases and Symptoms (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), “Chapter 1.6 - Causation in disease and symptoms” (pp. 81-125; focus on 84-106)
Week 4: Dermatological Issues
Primary Sources:
Lev 13-14
Numbers 12
2 Kings 5
2 Chronicles 26:16-23//2 Kings 15:1-6
Luke 17:11-19
Gregory of Nyssa, Homily in Miller and Nesbitt

Secondary Sources:
2) Mary Douglas, “Atonement for Sick Bodies” in Leviticus as Literature, 176-194
3) Lawrence, Ch. 4 “Stench of Untouchability” (76-97) in Sense and Stigma in the Gospels: Depictions of Sensory-Disabled Characters. Oxford University Press, USA, 2013.

EXTRA:
1. Aretaeus of Cappadocia, On Acute and Chronic Diseases (Miller & Nesbitt, Appendix 1 (pp. 163-72)

Week 5: Sensory Impairments

Primary Sources:
Job 29:15; Ex 4:1-17; Ps 146:8
2 Sam 4, 5:6-8, 9, 14:25-31
Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52
Acts 3:1-10
[Aristotle] Physiognomy (Hett ed. [LCL]) or Smith and Ross ed.)

Secondary Sources:
4) Hector Avalos, “Introducing Sensory Criticism in Biblical Studies: Audiocentricity

EXTRA:


**Week 6: Mobility Impairments**

**Primary Sources:**
Job 29:15; Ex 4:1-17; Ps 146:8  
2 Sam 4, 5:6-8, 9, 14:25-31  
Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52  
Acts 3:1-10  
[Aristotle] *Physiognomy* (Hett ed. [LCL]) or Smith and Ross ed.)

**Secondary Sources:**

**Week 7: Mental Illness and Epilepsy**

**Primary Sources:**
David’s feigning of madness (1 Sam 21:10-15)  
Saul - 1 Sam 16:14-23; Deut 28:20  
Mark 5:1-20/Matt 8:28-34/Luke 8:26-39  

**Secondary Sources:**


EXTRA:


**Week 8: Reproductive and Sexual Disabilities, Male and Female**

**Primary Sources:**

- Gen 29; Ex 23; Deut 7; Judges 13; Ps 113; Job 24
- Soranus, *Gynaecology* 3.1 (Temkin trans., pp. 128-143)
- Isaiah 56:1-8; Acts 8:26-40

**Secondary Sources:**


**EXTRA:**


Week 9: "Heresy" as Disease and the Power of Metaphor

Primary Sources:
2 Cor 12:1-10; Gal 4:12-20; 1 Cor 11:27-34
1 Tim 4:1-5; 2 Tim 2:14-26
Ignatius, Eph (esp. sections 6-7) [[add sec. 20]]
Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion (pp. 1-7, 13-15)

Secondary Sources:

EXTRA:


Week 10: Disability and the Theological Imagination

Primary Sources
Matt 5:1-11/Lk 6:20-26

Secondary Sources:

EXTRA