

Summer 2020

HST 460 The Black Death

CRN: 1380 | 4cr. | Dr. Swedo | ONLINE

(GEI: Science, Technology, and Society)



This class focuses on the epidemic that swept across Europe from 1347-52, affecting all those living, regardless of social status, age, gender, or religion. This course explores the nature of the epidemic—the disease itself, its spread, the fear and speculation it caused, and its societal devastation. We will also investigate both immediate and long-term effects on medieval Europe, in terms of daily life, social interactions, treatment of minorities, and the economy. To understand how the epidemic changed western European society for both individuals and for communities, we will consider medieval psychology, scientific knowledge, spirituality, and aesthetics. Finally, we will set the medieval epidemic in its broader context, by discussing problems in studying historical plagues and by looking at more recent epidemic outbreaks, in order to understand how diseases affect human and animal survival, and how the environment can be an agent for changing human history.

For more information: Dr. Elizabeth Swedo | swedoe@wou.edu