

Roman Medical Authors: Fall 2014

Summary: The present course will serve as an opportunity to discuss important issues in Roman medical literature, which can serve as a foundation for further research in this very large area of surviving classical literature. Medical literature survived so extensively because it was still functional and studied for scientific purposes until the 18th century and even beyond. The lasting appeal of ancient medical science was rooted deeply in its rational roots and connection with Greek philosophy, but also in its ability to provide effective treatments for some conditions through the use of time-tested cures and methodologies. In this course we will read a variety of authors and topics and we will use these texts as a pathway to a better understanding of ancient science, culture, thought, history and gender studies.

Class Expectations: Each week we will be reading a fairly substantial amount of text. The rich vocabulary will allow students to enrich their own Latin vocabulary very substantially. Moreover, students should be able to enrich their understanding of Graeco-Roman culture and acquire a greater appreciation of the beginnings of science and scientific thought.

Assessment: Based on preparation and contribution to weekly discussions plus one research paper on the following topic:

Research Paper Topic: Explain the lasting appeal of Graeco-Roman medicine with specific reference to topics and themes discussed in this course.

The paper is due **on the last week of the semester**. There will be no other exam.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction into Graeco-Roman Medicine

Weeks 2-13: Celsus: *De Medicina* (selections from books 2 and 4 [start reading from the beginning], and 7 sections 28 sqq.)

Week 14: Scribonius Largus, introduction

Week 15: Selections from William Harvey *De Motu Cordis*

Week 16: Review

Important general books:

Vivian Nutton: *Ancient Medicine*, 2nd ed. Routledge 2013

James Longrigg. *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*. London: Routledge, 1993

Helen King. *Greek and Roman Medicine*. Reprint. Classical World Series. Bristol, U.K.: Bristol Classical Press, 2002. xi + 73 pp. (a brief survey for basic understanding).

Lesley Dean-Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

