CfP: Ecologies of Health and Disease in Eurasia: New Perspectives in the Medical-Environmental Humanities and History

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Location: Norway
Subject Fields:
- Eastern Europe History / Studies
- Environmental History / Studies
- History of Science, Medicine, and Technology
- Russian or Soviet History / Studies
- Urban Design and Planning

Ecologies of Health and Disease in Eurasia: New Perspectives in the Medical-Environmental Humanities and History

Oslo School of Environmental Humanities, University of Oslo, Norway
June 1-2, 2023

Keynote speaker: Professor Kate Brown (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

This workshop aims to develop a multidisciplinary dialogue on the entanglements of politics, society, ecology, environment, health, and disease in the regions of East-Central Europe, Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, bringing together scholars in the history of medicine and the medical humanities with scholars in environmental history and the environmental humanities. It aims to deepen understandings of regional particularities and traditions, including a possible divergence in approaches to environment and health in Eurasia from approaches taken in other regions, such as Western Europe, East Asia, and South Asia. At the same time, the workshop aims to explore the local, transnational, international, and global connections, circulations, and integrations that cut through and extend beyond the regions of Eurasia and call its distinctiveness into question. It aims to foster a discussion about what the study of the regions of Eurasia might contribute to the developing fields of medical-environmental humanities and medical-environmental history. Questions that the workshop will address include:

- Where were links between the physical environment, health, and disease made visible in the regions of Eurasia, and where were they obscured? How can these developments be explained?
- Which categories, concepts, disciplines, and practices were employed to analyse and enact the relationship between environment, health, and disease in the regions, and how did these shape approaches to managing, protecting, building in, and transforming the physical environment? Who were the main actors participating in these processes?

The workshop welcomes papers on diverse topics, building on a range of methodologies and theories.
Drawing on the “environmental turn” in the history of architecture, design, and planning, it seeks also to integrate the built environment into the medical-environmental humanities and history of the regions of Eurasia. Papers are welcome in and across such disciplines as history; anthropology; science and technology studies; literature; film studies; history of art, architecture, design and planning; and geography. Papers may address some of the following themes:

- the role of ecology, climate, geography, and/or landscape in medical research, theory, and practice
- the environmental knowledge produced in biomedical research, also in relation to indigenous and vernacular knowledge
- indigenous, vernacular, religious, and spiritual epistemologies, knowledges, practices, and environments
- psycho-physiological responses to the physical environment and understandings of the human body and mind
- antibiotic and probiotic medical research, theory, and practice in ecological and environmental context
- entanglements of human and more-than-human health and disease
- biopolitics and micro-biopolitics in relation to the physical environment
- (divergences in) approaches to global health, international organizations, and congresses in relation to the physical environment
- architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and environmental design in relation to environmental management, transformation, and protection and to medicine and public health
- agriculture and the health and disease of plants, animals, and soils
- toxicity, radioactivity, and pollution, in relation to environment, medicine, health, and disease

To apply for the workshop, please send a paper title and abstract (200-400 words) and a brief academic biography (200-400 words) to Johanna.Conterio@iakh.uio.no by February 1, 2023. Workshop papers will be pre-circulated and are due May 15, 2023. The workshop will be in a hybrid format, allowing for virtual participation. Accommodation for two nights in Oslo will be provided for all in-person participants. Limited funds will be available to offset travel costs. PhD students and early career researchers are encouraged to apply. An edited volume drawing on workshop papers is planned.

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