In the age of COVID-19, we need to rethink the origin and evolution of human diseases in the past. Where did the human diseases come from and how did they spread across the globe? How did they affect past human societies? How did humans adapt to different infectious diseases culturally and biologically?

This intensive online course will introduce the students to the field of paleopathology, a subfield of biological anthropology that examines changes in human health in the past. We will begin by examining the concept of disease and the basic diagnostic criteria for different categories of disease. Next, we will focus on the infectious diseases and examine their origins, the environmental factors that have affected their spread in human populations, and their impact on human cultures. We will then take a close look at human dietary adaptations and the physiological disorders associated with different subsistence practices. After the mid-term exam we will then go on to address heritable diseases and the role of environmental factors in their origin and evolution. In a comprehensive review at the end of the session, we will discuss global trends in community health and how the distribution of several disease groups was affected by increasing sedentary life style, and settlement nucleation, the development of agriculture, agricultural intensification, urbanization, colonial expansion, and industrialization.

Register on-line through CUNYfirst:
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