What diseases and ailments did early modern Londoners suffer from? How did they understand health and disease, accidents and epidemics? What treatments were available, and from whom? How did Londoners approach death, and how did they deal with the dead? This MA option examines the characteristics of disease, demography, mortality, and the disposal of the dead in the early modern city, with special attention to the plague epidemics, and considers individual and collective responses to these problems. It concentrates on London between c. 1550 and 1700 – the documentary evidence for this is very rich – but an appreciation of the wider context is important. We focus on two important contemporary works, John Graunt’s *Natural and political observations upon the Bills of Mortality* (1662), and Daniel Defoe’s fictional *Journal of the Plague Year* (1720), but also draw on records of medical practice – including the College of Physicians’ prosecutions of irregular medical practitioners, and the casebooks of the early modern astrological medical practitioner Simon Forman - remedy collections, and personal records such as wills, journals, and letters. Archaeology is also making an important contribution to our understanding of health, burial practice, and the material culture of death.


Webster, C., ed., *Health, medicine and mortality in in the 16th century* (1979)


And see [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-physicians/1550-1640](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-physicians/1550-1640) for Pelling and White’s database of ‘Physicians and medical practitioners in early modern London’ based on the College of Physicians’ prosecutions; and [http://www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk](http://www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk) for the Casebooks project.