11/22  Public Health  Politics I: Plague in Chinatown

Guest Lecture: Anne Pollock

Bubonic Plague
   Pathophysiology
   History
   Rats, fleas, and Yersinia pestis, 1894/1898

Honolulu 1899
   Quarantine and fire: entire neighborhood destroyed

San Francisco, 1900: Plague in Chinatown
   Quarantine: fear of spread, vs. fear of lost trade
   Ethnic bias: irrational implementation of a quarantine
   What rights of Chinese individuals?
   Resistance to explanations and interventions
   Inoculation debates

Earthquake, 1906
   Chinatown destroyed, plague moves throughout city
   Epidemic transformed, managed differently: war against rats

Plague in 2005: Remains Endemic in Western US

Parallels to Plague
   SARS and Bird Flu: Asian epidemics
   HIV: disease and identity, public health and individual rights
   Epidemics expose social fault lines
   Public health measures imperfect and politicized
   Quarantine: appropriate measure, or punishment?