



University of Oxford

The Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine

Special History of Medicine/African Studies Seminar

SEMINAR ROOM, 47 BANBURY ROAD, OXFORD, OX2 6PE

Friday 2 November 2.15pm

Coffee will be available from 2.00pm

All are welcome

Epidemic Threat and Colonial Medicine on the Eastern Cape Frontier

Andrew Offenburger, Yale University

Previous scholarship has shown how missionaries, agricultural epidemics, and colonial expansion dominated historical developments in South Africa's Eastern Cape during the nineteenth century. This paper seeks to add a new dimension to this historiography by exploring how human epidemics - or the mere threat of them - and colonial medicine impacted on life on the frontier, escalating social and political tensions that crippled Xhosa independence. Contrary to previous assertions that 'colonial medicine...was not an effective instrument of colonial hegemony', archival and linguistic evidence reveals how Western medicine compromised indigenous political structures and epistemologies, consistent with other 'medical frontiers' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Details of all Wellcome Unit events can be found at: <http://www.wuhmo.ox.ac.uk/>

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