

UNIVERSITY OF BERN

TO VACCINATE OR NOT?

*Historical, Religious, and Social Aspects of
Vaccination Hesitancy*

LECTURE SERIES AND GRADUATE SEMINAR
FALL / WINTER 2021



LECTURE SERIES AND GRADUATE SEMINAR

In the last weeks of 2020, the forthcoming distribution of a vaccine against COVID-19 was hailed in various media as “the light at the end of the tunnel.” In parallel, however, pressure mounted from several groups opposing the vaccination campaigns organized by numerous governments across the world. The discovery of modern vaccination in the late 18th century is regarded well beyond the medical profession as a great human achievement that was able to save millions of lives. And yet, skepticism and distrust toward vaccines and the sheer refusal of inoculation pose major questions for science and for societies as a whole. From its beginning, the practice of vaccination sparked heated debates on its safety, its efficacy, and the right of governments to coerce their citizens to undergo a medical procedure. Hesitancy against vaccination draws on medical, political, philosophical, and religious discourses and avails itself of the media technologies of its time. Using these resources, it can construct and spread false narratives while, at the same time, providing a sense of cohesion. Accordingly, to study these (re)actions and understand them against the background of global and local realities, we need to mobilize the knowledge and competences of numerous disciplines.

The lecture series and seminar, “To Vaccinate or Not? Historical, Religious, and Social Aspects of Vaccination Hesitancy” allows graduate students to benefit from the insights provided by international experts from different fields of research, and to engage in in-depth discussions of the various topics approached throughout the semester in a highly interdisciplinary setting.

ORGANIZERS

Prof. Dr. Thomas Abel, Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine

Prof. Dr. Andrea Rota, Institute for the Science of Religion

Prof. Dr. Hubert Steinke, Institute for the History of Medicine

Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities

Bern Graduate School for Health Sciences

Swiss School of Public Health



LECTURE SERIES PROGRAM

Tuesday, October 5, 16:15–18:00, VonRoll – Room 002

Prof. Dr. Eberhard Wolff, University of Zurich and University of Basel

Zugänge zum “Sich-nicht-impfen-lassen” und anderen Impfkulturen. Eine historische Fallstudie aus dem 19. Jahrhundert mit Ausblicken auf die Gegenwart

Public Lecture, Tuesday, October 19, 18:30–20:00, UniS – Room S 003

Prof. Dr. Robert D. Johnston, University of Illinois at Chicago

Pox, Populism, and Politics: Three Centuries of American Vaccination Controversies

Tuesday, November 2, 16:15–18:00, VonRoll – Room 002

Prof. Dr. Philip Tarr, University of Basel

Vaccination Hesitancy and Complementary Medicine

Public Lecture, Tuesday, November 16, 18:30–20:00, UniS – Room S 003

Prof. Dr. Andrea Kitta, East Carolina University

God is My Vaccine: Religious Belief and COVID in the United States

Public Lecture, Tuesday, November 30, 18:30–20:00, UniS – Room S 003

Dr. Katharina Paul, University of Vienna

Der (Stellen-)Wert von Impfungen: Politik, Wissenschaft, und Öffentlichkeit

Tuesday, December 14, 16:15–18:00, VonRoll – Room 002

Dr. Mike Denl, University of Cape Town and University of Geneva

Social-Cultural Determinants of Vaccinations: An Assessment

GRADUATE SEMINAR

The Graduate Seminar will meet on Tuesday in Room 002, Uni Von Roll, from 16:15 to 17:45, on the following dates:

21 September; 28 September; 12 October; 27 October; 9 November;
23 November; 7 December; 21 December

The languages of the Graduate Seminar are English and German

The participation to the Lecture Series is an integral part of the Graduate Seminar

ECTS

For students of the MA-Program *Religion in globaler Gegenwart*: 3 ECTS

For Ph.D. students of the Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities: 3 ECTS

For Ph.D. students of the Graduate School for Health Sciences: 1 ECTS

CONTACT

You can register for the lecture series and graduate seminar by sending an email to

Prof. Dr. Andrea Rota, andrea.rota@relwi.unibe.ch

Melissa Solothurnmann, melissa.solothurnmann@students.unibe.ch

Please address your questions at the same addresses.