THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT COLLOQUIUM PRESENTS:

Epidemics and the Myths we Create: Confronting the Sociology of Global Health’s Modern Consciousness

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Zoom: https://bit.ly/3ESHBwC

Whether intentional or not, much of the thought produced within the sociology of global health upon infectious disease, by its focus on the “developing world” perhaps would over-assume the differences in dynamics shaping health around the world. This has been buttressed to varying degrees by scientific discourse as well as historical precedent. To bear witness uncritically to the history of global health in the West is to participate in an exercise in myth making. It is to take part in believing that through biomedical intervention, sanitary development and international controls, the West is able to separate itself from the parts of the world suffering from infectious diseases and other ills and is thus superior in its civilization. The elimination of many disease threats over the course of the 19th and 20th century are some of the most powerful signifiers of western modernity’s capacity for progress through scientific rationality and bureaucratization. When we perpetuate these myths we fail to recognize or challenge Global Health strategies that are embedded within wider knowledge regimes that precede and perpetuate colonial visions of difference that are both bad policy but are devastating for health outcomes. This presentation seeks to raise critical questions of the theoretical frameworks of the sociology of global health while calling for a need to re-orient the epistemological foundations of the field to incorporate postcolonial, historical and non-western scholarship on the field.

Please contact Meredith Clason with questions or for assistance at mclason@uchicago.edu.