



Ca' Foscari
University
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Department of
Philosophy and
Cultural Heritage



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**Wednesday 2019
June 19**
h. 3.00 – 5.30 p.m.

**Malcanton Marcorà
Palace,
Aula Biral**
Dorsoduro 3484/D,
Venice

Introduction by
prof. **Pietro Omodeo**

Guests hosted by
the ERC endeavor
EarlyModernCosmology
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Workshop ERC EarlyModernCosmology

Presents

Discussions on the History of Medicine

Hannah Marcus Harvard University, Department of the History of Science
Forbidden Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and Censorship in Early Modern Italy

The Roman Index of Prohibited Books (1559) not only banned the works of theologians like Luther and Melanchthon; it also made it illegal for scholars in Italy to read many works of medicine written and published in Northern Europe. While some of these books were burned, many others were expurgated, or selectively censored. This talk examines copies of expurgated medical books to reveal that Catholic authorities understood the printed book as both an intellectual threat and also a physical object that could be manipulated and regulated. By combining historical and bibliographical approaches, I delve into the medical books themselves as a lost archive about the process of censorship. This archive reveals the varied forms in which readers encountered books and negotiated the unstable relationships between reading, writing, and orthodoxy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Close examination of censored objects reveals book expurgation as a process of memory damnation. This *damnatio memoriae* was not about forgetting, but instead was meant to memorialize the desecration of non-Catholic authors and to deepen the distinction between confessional communities while still allowing useful medical works to circulate in Catholic Italy.

Cynthia Klestinec Miami University, Department of English
The Agon: Renaissance Surgery and Some Mechanics

In the sixteenth century, patients submitted themselves to an array of procedures that were notable, at the time and by their own standards, for being invasive, violent and painful. This paper is an attempt to understand the historical features that shaped the acceptance and even the development of agonistic medicine, a kind of medicine that foregrounds a struggle, an agon, between the art or techne of the practitioner and the nature of the body. Although art or techne might be construed as a servant to the nature of the body, the agonistic conception is present and well illustrated in the Hippocratic texts on surgery. In Guido Guidi's collection of surgery texts (1544), the patient's body is depicted in a set of machines, traction devices. These images were created not only to elucidate the text's recommendations for how to treat fractures and dislocations but also to present the surgeon's techne as rational, adhering to principles drawn from mechanics about the application of force and counterforce to the body.