

## MHCH 665

### Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

*1 semester hour credit*

Fall 2016

Wednesdays 3:35 –4:45pm

Rosenau Hall – Room 228

**INSTRUCTORS: Diane L. Rowley, MD, MPH**

*Professor of the Practice of Public Health  
Maternal and Child Health Department*

**Email:** drowley@unc.edu

**Office #:** 919.843.9291

**Office Hours:** Rosenau Hall – Room 422B (by appointment)

**William (Bill) Jenkins, PhD, MPH**

*Adjunct Professor  
Epidemiology Department*

**Email:** bjenkins1945@yahoo.com

**Mobile:** 404-505-0555

**TEACHING ASSISTANT:**

**COURSE PURPOSE:**

Eliminating health disparities is a broad national goal for improving the health of Americans, and part of the mission of the Gillings School of Global Public Health. However, little to no progress has been made on eliminating disparities in morbidity and mortality experienced by African-Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other sub-populations compared to the U.S. population as a whole. This course provides students with the basic concepts about the origins of and contributing factors for health disparities. There are no prerequisites to enroll in this course and both undergraduate and graduate students are welcomed.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Define health disparities and health inequities.
2. Describe measures of health disparities and healthcare disparities experienced by racial/ethnic groups in the US.
3. Critically discuss at least 3 contributors to racial/ethnic disparities in health and healthcare.
4. Differentiate strategies for reducing health disparities from strategies for reducing overall population mortality and morbidity.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Learning will take place via lectures, videos/webinars, reading assignments, and discussions.

1. **Attendance.** Students are expected to attend class on time and to stay until the end. To the extent possible, please inform the instructors if you know ahead of time that you will be absent or late for a class.
2. **Assignments.** Required readings or webinars will be assigned each week and will be available through Sakai. Students are expected to complete the assignment prior to attending the class

covering that topic. Suggested readings for students who wish to pursue a topic in more depth will be included.

- 3. Class participation.** This course involves active learning in the form of discussions. *All students* will be expected to participate actively in the discussion and to use, challenge or develop concepts from lectures and assignments. Most class meetings will consist of 30 minutes of lecture material and an equal time for discussion. Students are expected to participate actively in discussions; and . Class participation will be graded daily on the quality of participation. Some topics may be controversial, it is important for students to agree to respect the opinions expressed by others.

The amount of material to be covered, the short duration of the class, or the size of the class may limit discussion time in class. Furthermore, some students are not very vocal in class and can think more coherently by writing. To provide students an opportunity to express themselves in a manner that suits their learning style and skills, students can contribute to class participation by writing short essays.

- 4. Short essays.** *Each student is expected to complete at least one essay.* (not longer than 2 pages) and delivering it the Sakai Drop Box. The essay should focus on one key idea from a reading assignment (required or suggested) or from class. Essays will provide evidence to instructors of the degree to which you understood the reading assignment, to demonstrate your understanding of the topic and to offer your insights. Each essay should include your name and date in the top right of the page and a title, and have a font size of 11, and 1 inch margins.

*Each essay must be submitted within two weeks of the class discussion topic.* The last date to submit essays is Wednesday, November 23rd.

Students who **want to be considered** for a grade of honors (for graduate students) or A (for undergraduate students) should submit a minimum of 3 essays. The essay should include a brief description of the reading or class discussion and a commentary. Submission of 3 essays does not automatically qualify a student for honors or an A. Essays will be judged on the quality of the thought process, as well as, proper citation of references. Grades for essay submitted after the due date will be reduced by 5% each day it is late.

- 5. Final exam.** Students will be given a final take-home exam. Students will be tested on their cumulative knowledge of topics covered in the course. The final exam is given in compliance with UNC final exam regulations and according to the UNC Final Exam calendar. { *need correct dates*} *The exam will be posted after our last class session on Sakai by Wednesday, December 7th and will be due under Sakai Assignments on Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> by 4:00pm.*

#### **GRADING:**

Undergraduate student grades will be based on the following scale:

A = Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development (A=96-100%; A-=90-95%).

B = Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development (B=85-89%; B-=80-84%)

C = A totally acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development (C=75-79%; C-=70-74%).

D = A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development (D=65-69%; C-=60-64%).

F = For whatever reasons, an unacceptable performance. The student's performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content (F≤59%).

Graduate student grades will be based on the following scale:

H = High Pass

P = Pass

L = Low Pass

F = Fail

Grades will be determined by **Attendance 30%, Class Participation/voluntary Essays 30% , Required Essay 10%, and Final Exam 30%.**

**HONOR CODE:**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student, is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected.

Students are expected to complete the short essays and final exam on their own. If a student needs additional assistance with an assignment, s/he should consult with the instructors.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

| DATE | CONTENT  | ASSIGNMENT  |
|------|--|---|
| 8/24 | <p><b>Overview of Class</b></p> <p><b>History of Health Disparities Research</b></p>   |   |
| 8/31 | <p><b>Does Race Exist?</b></p>   | <p><b>Required reading:</b></p> <p>Gravlee CC. How race becomes biology: embodiment of social inequality. <i>Am J Phys Anthropol.</i> 2009 May;139(1):47-57.</p> <p>Eisenhower A, Suyemoto K, Lucchese F, Canenguez K. "Which box should I check?": examining standard check box approaches to measuring race and ethnicity. <i>Health Serv Res.</i> 2014 Jun;49(3):1034-55.</p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b></p> <p><i>Jones CP, Truman BI, Elam-Evans LD, Jones CA, Jones CY, Jiles R, et al. Using "socially assigned race" to probe white advantages in health status. Ethn Dis 2008 Autumn;18(4):496-504.</i></p>  |
| 9/7  | <p><b>Measuring Health Disparities</b></p> <p><i>Presenter: Dr. Bill C. Jenkins*</i></p> <p><b>NOTE:</b><br/><b>Homework assignment will be given during class</b></p> | <p><b>Required reading:</b></p> <p>Keppel K, Pamuk E, Lynch J, et al. Methodological issues in measuring health disparities. <i>Vital and Health Statistics.</i> 2005 July;2(141):1-4.<br/><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_02/sr02_141.pdf">www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_02/sr02_141.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b></p> <p><i>CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report — United States, 2013 MMWR Supplements November 22, 2013/ Supplement / Vol. 62 / No. 3.</i><br/><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/other/su6203.pdf">http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/other/su6203.pdf</a></p> <p><i>AHRQ's 2014 National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report:</i><br/><a href="http://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqdr/">http://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqdr/</a></p> <p><i>Ro M. Moving Forward: Addressing the Health of Asian American and Pacific Islander Women. Am J Public Health.2002;92:516–519.</i></p> |

|      |                                 |  |
|------|---------------------------------|--|
|      |                                 | <i>Brawley OW, Berger MZ. Cancer and Disparities in Health: Perspectives on Health Statistics and Research Questions. Cancer Vol 113, Issue S7: p. 1744-1754: 2008</i>   |
| 9/14 | Measuring Health Disparities    | Discussion of homework assignment  |
| 9/21 | Challenge:<br>Reporting by Race | <p><b>Required reading:</b><br/>Yudell M, Roberts D, DeSalle R, Tishkoff S. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY. Taking race out of human genetics. <i>Science</i>. 2016 Feb 5;351(6273):564-5. doi:10.1126/science.aac4951</p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b><br/><i>Espey DK, Jim MA, Richards TB, Begay C, Haverkamp D, Roberts D. Methods for improving the quality and completeness of mortality data for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Am J Public Health. 2014 Jun;104 Suppl 3:S286-94.</i></p> <p><i>Yi SS, Kwon SC, Sacks R, Trinh-Shevrin C. Commentary: Persistence and Health-Related Consequences of the Model Minority Stereotype for Asian Americans. Ethn Dis. 2016 Jan 21;26(1):133-8.</i></p>   |
| 9/28 | Healthcare Disparities          | <p><b>Required reading:</b><br/>All students are expected to complete the RACE IAT (Implicit Association Test: <a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html</a>)**</p> <p><b>**Note:</b> For extra credit submit your IAT results and a one-page essay describing your reactions to your test results in the Sakai Drop Box by 4:00pm on 9/30.</p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b><br/>Institute of Medicine Report Brief. What Health Care Providers Need to Know About Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare. <a href="http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2003/Unequal-Treatment--OConfronting-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparities-in-Health-Care/Disparitieshcproviders8pgFINAL.pdf">http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2003/Unequal-Treatment--OConfronting-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparities-in-Health-Care/Disparitieshcproviders8pgFINAL.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Dovidio JF, Penner LA, Albrecht TL, Norton WE, Gaertner SL, Shelton JN. Disparities and distrust: the implications of psychological processes for understanding racial disparities in health and health care. Soc Sci Med. 2008; Aug;67(3):478-86.</i></p> |
| 10/5 | Healthcare Disparities          | <p>Rowley DL, Hogan VK. Disparities in infant mortality and effective, equitable care: Are infants suffering from benign neglect? <i>Ann Rev of Public Health</i> 2012 Apr;33:75-87. Epub 2012 Jan 3. Review. [PMID: 22224890]</p> <p><b>Suggested:</b><br/><i>Van Ryn M, et al. The impact of racism on clinical cognition, behavior and clinical decision making. Dubois Review 20118(1):199-218</i></p>   |

|       |   |   |
|-------|---|---|
| 10/12 | Emerging Disparities  | <p><b>Required reading:</b><br/>Toward equity and access: removing legal barriers to health insurance coverage for immigrants. Guttmacher Policy Review Winter 2013;6(1)<br/><a href="http://sparky.guttmacher.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/pubs/gpr/16/1/gpr160102.html">ttp://sparky.guttmacher.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/pubs/gpr/16/1/gpr160102.html</a></p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b><br/><i>El-Sayed AM, Paczkowski MM, March D, Galea S. Trends in the Mexican infant mortality paradox over the past two decades. Ann Epidemiol. 2014 Nov;24(11):831-6. doi: 10.1016/j.annepidem.2014.09.005. Epub 2014 Sep 18.</i></p> <p><i>Lee CC. Unjust barriers: Prenatal care and undocumented immigrant. J Contemporary Health Law and Policy 2015(I), Article 6. Available at: <a href="http://scholarship.law.edu/jchlp/vol31/iss1/6">http://scholarship.law.edu/jchlp/vol31/iss1/6</a></i></p> <p><i>Singh GK, Rodriguez-Lainz A, Kogan MD. Immigrant health inequalities in the United States: use of eight major national data systems. ScientificWorldJournal. 2013 Oct 27;2013:512313.</i></p> <p><i>Alcántara C, Chen CN, Alegría M. Do post-migration perceptions of social mobility matter for Latino immigrant health? Soc Sci Med. 2014 Jan;101:94-106.</i></p> |
| 10/19 | Fall Break - NO CLASS   |   |
| 10/26 | The Raising of America: DNA IS NOT DESTINY: HOW THE OUTSIDE GETS UNDER THE SKIN | No reading assignment.  |
| 11/2  | Physiologic Responses to Discrimination   | Reading assignment will be posted on Sakai in October 2016  |
| 11/9  | Unnatural causes: Is inequality making us sick? Part 2: When the bough breaks   | <p><b>Required reading:</b><br/>Lu, M., &amp; Halfon, N. (2003). Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: a life-course perspective. <i>Maternal and Child Health Journal</i>. 7:1 (13-30).</p> <p><b>Suggested reading:</b><br/>Christopher G, Simpson P. Improving birth outcomes requires closing the racial gap. <i>Am J Public Health</i>. 2014 Feb;104 Suppl 1:S10-2.</p>   |
| 11/16 | Social Determinants of Health Video: <i>Unnatural causes:</i>                   | <p><b>Required reading:</b><br/><a href="http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/What_Is_Health_Equity.pdf">http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/What_Is_Health_Equity.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Suggested readings:</b></p>   |

|              |  |  |
|--------------|--|--|
|              | <i>Is inequality making us sick? Part 1: In sickness and in wealth</i> | Walters KL, Mohammed SA, Evans-Campbell T, Beltran RE, Chae DH, Duran B, Bodies don't just tell stories, they tell histories. Du Bois Review 2011; 8(1): 179-189.<br><br><a href="http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/primers.pdf">http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/primers.pdf</a>   |
| <b>11/23</b> | <b>Thanksgiving Recess - NO CLASS</b>                                  |  |
| <b>11/30</b> | <b>Health Disparity vs. Health Inequity</b>                            | <b>Required reading:</b><br>Braveman, PA, Kumanyika S, Fielding J, Laveist T, Borrell LN, Manderscheid R, Troutman A. Health disparities and health equity: the issue is justice. Am J Public Health. 2011 Dec;101 Suppl 1:S149-55. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2010.300062. 21551385.<br><br><b>Suggested reading:</b><br>Östlin P, Schrecker T, Sadana R, Bonnefoy J, Gilson L, Hertzman C, Kelly MP, Kjellstrom T, Labonté R, Lundberg O, Muntaner C, Popay J, Sen G, Vaghri Z. Priorities for research on equity and health: towards an equity-focused health research agenda. PLoS Med. 2011 Nov;8(11):e1001115. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001115. |
| <b>12/7</b>  | <b>Final Class Discussion</b>  | Gee GC, Ford CL. Structural racism and health inequities: old issues new directions. Du Bois Review 2011; 8(1): 115-132.<br><br><b>**NOTE:</b> Final exam will be posted on Sakai by 4:00pm  |
| <b>12/12</b> | <b>Final Exam Due</b>  | <b>DUE</b><br>Final exam ( <i>submit under Sakai Assignments by 4:00pm</i> )   |

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** The instructors reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including assignment due dates and exam dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.