MHCH 665

Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

1 semester hour credit

Fall 2016
Wednesdays 3:35 –4:45pm
Rosenau Hall – Room 228

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

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.

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 13th 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>Overview of Class History of Health Disparities Research</td>
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| 8/31  | Does Race Exist?         | Required reading:  
Suggested reading:  
| 9/7   | Measuring Health Disparities  
*Presenter: Dr. Bill C. Jenkins*  
*NOTE: Homework assignment will be given during class* | Required reading:  
[www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_02/sr02_141.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_02/sr02_141.pdf)  
Suggested reading:  
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<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Measuring Health Disparities</td>
<td>Discussion of homework assignment</td>
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| 9/28  | Healthcare Disparities                   | **Required reading:** All students are expected to complete the RACE IAT (Implicit Association Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html)**  
**Note:** 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.  
### 10/12 Emerging Disparities

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**


### 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

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**

### 11/16 Social Determinants of Health Video: Unnatural causes:

**Required reading:**

**Suggested readings:**
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<tr>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Recess</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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**NOTE:** Final exam will be posted on Sakai by 4:00pm |
| 12/12 | Final Exam Due         | DUE Final exam (submit under Sakai Assignments by 4:00pm)               |

**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.