OVERVIEW:

One of the three overarching goals of Healthy People 2020 is to achieve health equity, eliminate disparities and improve the health of all groups. Numerous health equity foci have emerged during the past decade. In this seminar, we will: (1) examine the contributors and root causes to these health inequalities; (2) understand the pathways and mechanisms through which the root causes are "embodied" to create adverse health effects in some populations; (4) review and assess specific public health, medical and other strategies to create equity. The overarching goal of this seminar is to stimulate learners to expand their perspective on advancing progress toward achieving health equity.
COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:
This course focuses on understanding and addressing health equity. The first segment of the course examines theoretical frameworks for inequity causation and the most commonly discussed contributing factors. This second section will focus on approaches to equity assessment.

PREREQUISITES:
Epid 600 OR Bios 600
Or equivalent courses with permission of instructor

Learners should have sufficient skill in accessing, understanding and exercising critical analysis of published scientific literature. This is necessary to be able to synthesize knowledge across disciplines to advance understanding to address the complexities of health inequity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
At the completion of this course, learners should be able to:
1. Review frameworks for improving health equity.
2. Critically assess existing efforts to address health inequities
3. Develop a specific professional strategy for contributing to the evidence base for health inequities research or intervention

PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES THAT SHOULD EVOLVE AS A RESULT OF THIS COURSE:

Diversity & Cultural Competency - The ability to interact with both diverse individuals and communities to produce or impact an intended public health outcome.
1. Demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the varied perspectives, norms and values of others based on individual and ethnic/cultural differences (e.g., age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, region and social class).
2. Show effective and productive skills in working with diverse individuals including co-workers, partners, stakeholders, and/or clients.
3. Develop, implement, and/or contribute to effective public health programming and conduct research that integrates: (1) knowledge levels of health access among individuals and within communities, and (2) culturally-appropriate methods for conducting practice or research.

Leadership - The ability to create and communicate a shared vision for a changing future; champion solutions to organizational and community challenges; and energize commitment to goals.
1. Demonstrate basic team building, negotiation, and conflict management skills.
2. Create a climate of trust, transparency, mutual cooperation, continuous learning, and openness for suggestion and input with co-workers, partners, other stakeholders, and/or clients.
3. Exercise productive organizational, time-management and administrative skills.
4. Develop knowledge of one’s individual strengths and challenges, as well as mechanisms for continued personal and professional development.

COURSE FORMAT:
Learning will take place via readings, discussion, (including an online discussion blog), and group projects.
Students are expected to participate fully in all learning experiences. The instructors would like for the classroom to be a “co-learning” experience. That is, learners are encouraged to respectfully challenge ideas as a way to
develop their own thinking and are expected to share their accumulated knowledge from other sources in discussions. We will learn together.

Students are expected to apply the knowledge and skills gained in other core courses toward this content area. The extent that students accomplish this should be reflected in their class participation, their writing and in the final group project.

**Discussions**
While there will be a specific discussion topic proposed for each session, learners are encouraged to shape the discussion around the issues of interest to them, and/or to contribute to course readings. Participation in the discussion sessions is mandatory and critical to achieving learning objectives.

Additionally, learners will be asked to participate in an online discussion blog. The blog serves as a way to synthesize ideas. A portion of the grade is determined by the quality of contributions to the blog.

The classroom will be considered an active learning zone. This means that ideas may not be perfectly formed when expressed and people may express things unaware that it is offensive to others. To protect this class as an active learning zone, we will establish some ground rules during the first class.

**Group Projects**
The group project(s) will entail self-initiated contact with professionals working on research, intervention, policy or direct service related to elimination of health inequality. The goals of the exercise are to identify a program that is designed to address inequities for some population group, to obtain information on how the program operates program (from various perspectives (designer, participant, administrator, etc..)); to critique the program efforts to reduce or eliminate the inequity, using a specific framework for assessing impact of the program efforts on inequity reduction/elimination.

Learners will be assigned to a group by the instructors to ensure diversity of skills. All effort will be made to match your interests with the topic the group will focus on.

*The instructors are open to, and appreciate any comments during the semester that will help to improve and/or enrich the learning experience. If there is a problem or room for improvement, please do not wait for the end of semester evaluation to express it.*

**Course Requirements and Grading:**
The distribution of weights for each class activity is as follows:

1. **Class Participation and Readings** (30%)
Measured by attendance, quality of participation in class discussions and/or online discussion, and evaluation completion.

2. Blog/Written Assignments (30%)
3. Group Project (40%)

(1) Class Participation and Reading (30%): Learners are expected to attend all classes and to participate actively in discussions. Learners are expected to complete all assigned readings. Class participation will be graded daily on both attendance and the quality of participation. During discussion classes, learners will be randomly called on to present on key ideas of specific readings, or other information. Responses will be an indicator of preparation for class. Learners will be able to say “I’d like to yield that discussion to another student” without loss of face if they do not feel sufficiently prepared to respond. However, the number of times the learner yields will adversely affect their participation grade.

(2) Written Assignments (30%)

Online Forum/Blog Participation. Every week learners must post a comment, pose a question for discussion, or post a diary relating to the readings or a relevant topic. Learners may also post new articles and their links to webpages, documentaries, etc, as long as they are related to course material. Learners on the forum can constructively discuss the postings. Learners are expected to treat the online forum as a formal discussion (complete sentences, references where necessary, etc.). The purpose of this exercise is to assist learners in processing the readings and class lectures and to use the new knowledge to develop their own thinking, and to share their thoughts with others. We recognize that some learners are better at expressing their thoughts in writing vs. orally. The forum is accessible only to the learners in this class and instructors.

Written assignments. Two written assignments will be given during the semester. All submissions and comments will be available to other learners to read. The purpose is to expand your learning opportunities by monitoring the growth and development of your co-learners’ thinking as well as that of your own.

(3) Group Project (40%):

Groups will consist of 4 or fewer students. Membership will be assigned by the instructors in order to achieve a balance of background and skills. The purpose of the group project is to identify and critique activities in progress (research, medical care, intervention programs, policies, etc.) for the elimination of health inequities at the state or local level in North Carolina; nationally through the NIH, CDC, or other Federal agency; through the AMA, ACOG, APHA, and/or some other professional organization. The professionals and/or participants you choose to interview should all have a connection to the same program or outcome. For example, you are interested in inequities in diabetes among Native Americans, you might identify a program that addresses inequities in diabetes in this population, perhaps delivered through Indian Health Service, then choose to
interview someone at the program implementation level, someone in the agency that funds the program, someone who helped to write the grant who conceptualized the program, and perhaps a program participant.

Groups should identify and then analyze an existing program or intervention of their choosing related to creating equity. Learners will use a defined approach called R4P as the basis for their assessment of the programs. R4P will be described in a class session. The interview questions will be developed based on the R4P framework.

(a) Meet with your group to discuss the focus and to divide tasks. Each group is expected to meet with (in person or by phone) a minimum of 3 professionals involved with addressing inequities in a specific outcome, at different levels of intervention (personal care, program design or implementation, research, policy-making, funding). As such, groups should determine how to distribute tasks. A description of the task list should be submitted by February 17, 2017 by noon to the dropbox in Sakai. The list should state the topic of the group project, who is in the group, contact information, meeting dates, work distribution, leadership, etc. This means that the groups should begin meeting as soon as possible after the assignments are made. You will be graded on the quality of completion of your specific assignment.

(b) Identify relevant professionals (community-based, local, State or Federal agency, professional organization, private funder working on health disparities). The Instructors can assist in identifying these professionals. The professionals and an alternate must be identified and names submitted to instructor by February 24, 2017 along with a list of interview questions. These items should be submitted via the drop box by 5 pm.

(c) Interview the professionals:

Interviews should be conducted and completed between February 24 and March 22. A working session is scheduled for March 8 with an opportunity to consult with instructors about your group project. Be sure to plan your time carefully based on your presentation date. It may be very challenging to coordinate your schedule with those of busy professionals, and you may need more than one conversation to complete your interviews. After your interviews, you will have to synthesize information through discussion among your group. The best group presentations clearly demonstrate integration among the component parts of the project.

Further, do your homework! Your interaction with these professionals will reflect on your professionalism, as well as that of the Instructors and UNC SPH. Do not waste their time by asking questions that you could easily have found out from publicly available information about the program. These interactions are expected to probe deeper into related issues. The conversations should be thought provoking to both you and the professional you are interviewing.
(d) Present an oral report (group) to the class that describes the assessment of the program in the context of the R4P framework for health inequities. Each group is allotted 45 minutes for presentation and discussion. This should include a conceptual framework for both disease elimination and inequity elimination, description of program activities, a critical analysis of the program or activity with respect to health equity, critical theory, etc. A project that does not focus on inequity elimination, but solely on disease reduction is not responsive to the assignment. The oral report should include a brief background on the relevant health outcome, including any relevant medical, etiologic and epidemiologic information. In addition, the presentations and discussion are expected to be, and will be evaluated on the extent that they incorporate concepts discussed in class or the readings. Please keep the background information to the minimum necessary as most of the presentation should focus on your reporting of and critical analysis of interview findings.

Presentation dates (April 12 or April 19) will be assigned later in the semester, but will occur during the final weeks of class. If you face challenges during the semester, consult with an Instructor to remedy the situation.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Lead discussant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/11/17</td>
<td>Orientation, Introductions, Course expectations, Discussion of projects</td>
<td>Rowley and Faustin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/18/2017</td>
<td>Social Determinants of Health: The Whitehall studies</td>
<td>Rowley</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/25/2017</td>
<td>What is Health equity?</td>
<td>Rowley</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/1/2017</td>
<td>The World Health Organization (WHO) Social Determinants of Health Framework</td>
<td>Rowley</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/8/2017</td>
<td>Expanding the equity framework for the US:R4P (Repair, Restructure, Remediate, Remove, Provide) and HRIME (Hogan-Rowley Institutional Measure of Equity)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/15/2017</td>
<td>What about race?</td>
<td>Faustin</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/22/2017</td>
<td>Historical trauma</td>
<td>Entire class</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/1/2017</td>
<td>System science and equity</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/8/2017</td>
<td>Work in groups</td>
<td>Hogan</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/15/2017</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>Hopper</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>3/22/2017</td>
<td>Equity Evaluation</td>
<td>Brooks</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>3/26/2017</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/5/2017</td>
<td>Equity in all health policies</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/12/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>4/19/2017</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>4/28/2017</td>
<td><strong>DISCUSSION—</strong></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>5/3/2017</td>
<td>Office Hours (2:00-3:15 or by appointment)</td>
<td>Rowley</td>
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