Course Title: Introduction to Health Disparities
Semester: Fall 2017
Course Number: 10:832:212 - Sec80 (Hybrid)
Course Day and Time: Wednesdays, 4:30pm-5:50pm
Location: Brookdale Community College
Course Instructor: Ronald Quincy, Ph.D.
Contact Information: rquincy@ejb.rutgers.edu
Office Hours and Location: By arrangement – Bloustein, Room 254


Additional Materials: Additional readings are posted on Sakai as PDF documents.

The films “Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?” and “Race: The Power of an Illusion” can be streamed online from the RU Libraries website with a valid RU login.

To access the films, please go to http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/ and select the "Audio/Video" tab. Type in the name of the film and log in using your RU credentials.

*Please Note:* This course is only open to students who have officially declared a public health major or minor. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Course Description (catalog)
The overarching goal of this class is to provide a broad overview of health disparities in the United States, with a focus on the three types of inequality - race/ethnicity (and nativity status), socioeconomic position (SEP), and gender. Because social justice is a primary thrust of public health, it is crucial to understand which groups are at higher risk of developing poor health outcomes.
Public Health Learning Goals

Students Will:
1. Think critically in public health
2. Utilize information literacy skills in public health
3. Develop, apply, and analyze concepts from research methods and basic statistics

Course Grading
A=90-100; B+=86-89; B=80-86; C+=77-79; C=70-76; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

25% ................ In Class Quizzes
30% ............... Midterm (in class)
30% ............... Final exam (in class)
15% ............... Attendance and Class Participation
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

IN CLASS QUIZZES (5 total, 5% each = 25% total)
The quizzes are based on the lectures, required readings, and films. All quizzes are open note, times, and taken online through Sakai. There will be a total of 5 quizzes offered in total. The 5 quiz scores will be worth 25% of your final grade.

MIDTERM (30%) and FINAL EXAM (30%) – taken in class
The exams are based on the text, lecture notes, films, in-class discussions, and assigned readings. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. Exams start at the beginning of class and will be concluded at the end of class.

Requests for make-up exams are strongly discouraged.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE (15%):
You are expected to complete all of the assigned readings (and film viewing, if applicable) before the due date and be prepared to discuss them during lecture.

I will take attendance at every class. The quizzes and exams are derived largely from lecture notes; therefore, it will be hard to attain a good grade in this class if you do not attend class. Please make every effort to be on time, as late arrivals are disruptive to everyone. If you are on social media or using your cell phone during class, it will harm your participation grade.

It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet. I cannot keep track of individual students' attendance at each class. If you miss a lecture, you can acquire the lecture notes from a fellow classmate.

This class only meets on a weekly basis. After two (2) absences, your participation grade will begin to drop. Each student is allotted two (2) unexcused absences before your final grade is affected. The final grade will be dropped by 5% points for three (3) absences and 15% points for four (4) absences. After four (4) absences, you will fail the course.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity is vital to the mission of Rutgers, to education at Rutgers and membership in the Rutgers community. It is a core value that supports trust among students, and between students and teachers. It is also a shared value; administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it.

Academic dishonesty is not an individual act that affects only the students involved. It violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and is an offense against scholarship. For this reason, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with harshly. Honesty matters. Please see the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

*****Important Note:******

Collaboration on quizzes is strictly prohibited. All students will be required to sign an honesty pledge for each quiz. Any cases of cheating on quizzes will be immediately reported to the University’s Office of Academic Integrity.

CLASS RULES

The use of cell phones is disruptive both to the class and to me. Be sure to turn your cell phone tones off before class begins. It is also distracting and disrespectful to use a tablet or laptop for anything other than taking notes or seeking answers to questions posed in class. Be sure to restrict your use to these tasks only. Students answering email, texting, on social media (other than for class purposes), or doing work for other classes will be asked to close their device and/or leave the class.
DIVERSITY STATEMENT
It is my fundamental goal to foster an intellectual environment that not only tolerates but also supports and affirms all types of diversity, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, nativity status, sexual orientation, age, religion, social class, and disability status. I will formally address any instances in which these standards are violated.

You may notice that there is no designated lecture(s) for White Americans. Because we are studying health and social inequality, we will compare each race/ethnic group to White Americans as the (historically) majority group in the United States. Therefore, this group is covered extensively throughout this course.

**SYLLABUS CHANGES**
Please note that I reserve the right to make any necessary changes to the syllabus, including but not limited to changing dates, topics, assignments, quizzes, and readings. An effective instructor must continually adapt to the conditions of the class and in that spirit, I may choose to add or remove items as needed. I will announce these changes on Sakai and provide ample time when changes are deemed necessary.

COMMUNICATION
I expect students to regularly access their Rutgers e-mail and/or the course website at sakai.rutgers.edu. Important information will be disseminated to your Rutgers account (unless you change your e-mail address through the Rutgers system) and will be posted on the Sakai course website. I will provide outlines and/or Power Point slides as a courtesy to you, in order to help you master the material and follow along in class instead of taking notes furiously. The outlines/slides are NOT meant to be a replacement for attending class or engaging fully in class. If I sense that they are handicapping your attendance and/or effort, I will either put less detail on them or stop providing slides altogether.
E-mail

E-mail is the best way to reach me. If you have questions about the class material, I am more than happy to help you. However, I do expect that you will first make a concerted effort to find the answer yourself in the class or book material. Regardless of the purpose, I am happy to correspond by e-mail within the following guidelines:

1. Please use an email account that lists your name as the sender. Include an informative subject with the course name (i.e., "Health Disparities question") and make sure your full name is included in the text of the e-mail.

2. I will only use your registered email address to send you email. It is your responsibility to check this account for important course updates/announcements. Saying, "I only check my G-mail account" is not an adequate excuse for missing course announcements. If you send me email from another account, I will respond to that account but will not send other email/class announcements to that address.

3. Please do not e-mail me with administrative questions that can be answered by looking at the syllabus. If it is a substantive question about class material, please first look for the answer in the book and lecture notes. After that, I'm happy to help you.

4. Please do not email me less than 24 hours before exams or deadlines with last-minute substantive questions about class material. Be sure to plan ahead and request my help in a timely manner, which I am happy to provide.

5. Allow 24-48 hours for a response from me. I check email frequently but I am often bombarded with many emails that might back me up. Please do not expect to receive an immediate response from me, but do email again 48 hours after the initial email if I have not yet responded.
Course Outline by Week

**Week 1 – Wednesday, September 6**
Topic: Demographic Profile of the U.S.

Learning Goals:

- To understand the shifting composition of the U.S. population in terms of race/ethnicity, immigration, age, marriage, and fertility/family formation patterns.
- To understand important historical events in the study of health disparities.
- To understand patterns of years of potential life lost across race/ethnic groups.
- To understand the factors contributing to the recent epidemic of increased White mortality.

Required Readings:

Week 2 – Wednesday, September 13
Topic: Epidemiology of Health Disparities

Learning Goals:

- To understand the shifting composition of the U.S. population in terms of race/ethnicity, immigration, age, marriage, and fertility/family formation patterns.
- To understand important historical events in the study of health disparities.
- To understand patterns of years of potential life lost across race/ethnic groups.
- To understand the factors contributing to the recent epidemic of increased White mortality.

Required Readings:

Week 3 – Wednesday, September 20

Topic: 'Race': Historical and Conceptual Issues

Learning Goals:

- To understand why race is a social construct, not based in biological or genetic differences between groups.
- To learn how the racial classification system has been inconsistent historically within the U.S. and across different countries.

Forums:

The forums will be our way to explore the week's topic through current events.

Each week up to 5 students (under Forum Schedule) will be assigned to post a unique, current (within the last year) article and objective, thought provoking summary related to the week's topic. Every student (including the ones posting) are required to submit an objective, thoughtful response to at least two (2) posts.

Sample Post for Discussion Leaders

Required Readings:

1. LaVeist, Thomas. 2005. “Historical Aspects of Race/Ethnicity and Health.” (Chapter 1)
2. LaVeist, Thomas. 2005. “Conceptual Issues in Race/Ethnicity and Health.” (Chapter 2)

Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
2. Click Login at the top right
3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right

Film to watch: “Race: The Power of an Illusion – The Differences Between Us” (60 min)

Please watch before Lecture #3

Activity:

“Sorting People: Can You Tell Somebody's Race by Looking at Them?”
Week 4 – Wednesday, September 27
Topic: ‘Race’: Socioeconomic Status and Health

Learning Goals:

- To understand how socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with health and whether racial/health inequities are due to racial/ethnic differences in SES.
- To learn how the biological stress response operates to impact health.

Required Readings:

1. Tirado, Linda. 2013. “This is Why Poor People’s Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense.” (Huffington Post)
3. Starecheski, Laura. 2014. “This is Your Stressed-Out Brain on Scarcity.” (NPR)

Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
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3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right

Films to watch:

“Unnatural Causes - In Sickness and Wealth” (56 min)
http://www.ted.com/talks/nina_jablonski_breaks_the_illusion_of_skin_color
“Skin Color is an Illusion” (TED talk by Nina Jablonski, PhD)
Week 5 – Wednesday, October 4
Topic: Black Americans Part I

Learning Goals:

- To learn the sociodemographic, economic, and health profile of Black Americans.
- To learn about the increasing population of Black immigrants (Caribbean-born and African-born).
- To understand the weathering theory of accelerated aging among disadvantaged groups.
- To learn research related to the immigrant paradox.

Required Readings:


Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)

2. Click Login at the top right
3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right

Film to watch: Episode 2 of “Race: The Power of an Illusion – The Story We Tell” (57 min)
Week 6 — Wednesday, October 11
Topic: Black Americans Part II

Learning Goals:

- To learn the sociodemographic, economic, and health profile of Black Americans.
- To learn about the increasing population of Black immigrants (Caribbean-born and African-born).
- To understand the weathering theory of accelerated aging among disadvantaged groups.
- To learn research related to the immigrant paradox.

Required Readings:

2. “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal: Many Americans See Racial Disparities” (Pew Research Center)

Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
2. Click Login at the top right
3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right
Film to watch: “Unnatural Causes – When the Bough Breaks” (27 min)
Week 7 — Wednesday, October 18

Topic: Mid-Term
**Week 8 – Wednesday, October 25**

Topic: American Indians / Alaska Natives Part I

**Learning Goals:**

- To understand the concept of historical trauma as it applies specifically to this population.
- To understand the geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of this group.
- To understand the most pressing public health issues and the leading causes of preventable death among this population.

**Required Readings:**

Week 9 – Wednesday, November 1
Topic: American Indians / Alaska Natives Part II

Learning Goals:

- To understand the concept of historical trauma as it applies specifically to this population.
- To understand the geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of this group.
- To understand the most pressing public health issues and the leading causes of preventable death among this population.

Required Readings:


Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
2. Click Login at the top right
3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right
Film to watch: "Unnatural Causes - Bad Sugar" (28 minutes)
Week 10 – Wednesday, November 8
Topic: Hispanics / Latinos Part I

Learning Goals:

- To understand detailed migration patterns among Hispanics/Latinos, both by nationality and over time.
- To learn the most common ways in which Hispanics self-identify culturally.
- To understand the Hispanic Mortality Paradox, including proposed causal mechanisms for this trend and factors suggesting this survival advantage will erode over time.

Required Readings:

3. “Immigration Myths and Facts: Behind the Fallacies.” (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
Week 11 – Wednesday, November 15
Topic: Hispanics / Latinos Part II

Learning Goals:

- To understand detailed migration patterns among Hispanics/Latinos, both by nationality and over time.
- To learn the most common ways in which Hispanics self-identify culturally.
- To understand the Hispanic Mortality Paradox, including proposed causal mechanisms for this trend and factors suggesting this survival advantage will erode over time.

Required Readings:


Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
2. Click Login at the top right
3. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4. Click Select
5. Login with your NetID and password
6. Find the video assigned in the player on the right
Film to watch: "Unnatural Causes - Becoming American" (27 minutes)
Week 12 – Wednesday, November 22
Topic: Happy Thanksgiving!
Week 13 – Wednesday, November 29

Topic: Asian Americans

Learning Goals:

- To understand historical patterns of Asian immigration and population growth.
- To ascertain the socioeconomic status differences between Asians.
- To understand the wide range of health advantages many Asian subgroups experience.

Required Readings:

4. “Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of Asian Americans” (Tseng, 2009)

Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
8. Click Login at the top right
9. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
10. Click Select
11. Login with your NetID and password
12. Find the video assigned in the player on the right

Films to watch:

"Unnatural Causes - Place Matters" (29 min)
"Unnatural Causes - Collateral Damage" (29 min)

"America By The Numbers - Pass or Fail in Cambodia Town"
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americabythenumbers/episodes/episode-106/ (29 min)
Week 14 – Wednesday, December 6
Topic: Asian Americans

Learning Goals:

- To understand historical patterns of immigration and population growth.
- To ascertain the socioeconomic status differences
- To understand the wide range of health advantages and disadvantages

Required Readings:


Film Viewing:

You will have to login to see the videos (Institutional Login)
14. Click Login at the top right
15. Find Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
16. Click Select
17. Login with your NetID and password
18. Find the video assigned in the player on the right
Films to watch:

"Unnatural Causes - Collateral Damage" (29 min)
Week 15 – Wednesday, December 13
Topic: Final Exam
## Quizzes At-a-Glance

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<td>- Demographic Profile of the United States</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>- Epidemiology of Health and Illness</td>
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<td>3</td>
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