Course Title: Introduction to Health Disparities
Semester: Fall 2017
Course Number: 10:832:212
Course Day and Time: Fridays, 10:20am-1:20pm
Location: Tillett 264
Course Instructor: Dawne Marie Mouzon, PhD, MPH
Contact Information: dawne.mouzon@rutgers.edu
Office Hours and Location: Fridays, 9:00am-10:00am, Tillett Hall lobby
*must use Sign-Up tool on Sakai*


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.*

Grader: Thalya Reyes; treyes87@gmail.com

**Course Description**
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 status (SES), and gender. Because social justice is a fundamental goal of public health, it is crucial to understand which groups are at higher risk of developing poor health outcomes in order to better inform health and health policy interventions.
Course Assessment
The following assignments will assess the course learning goals:

Think critically in public health
Each student will complete a series of quizzes regarding health disparities for various race/ethnic groups.

Effectively communicate public health information
Each student will be required both to lead a weekly online discussion about a health topic related to the class and to participate in weekly online discussions.

Utilize information literacy skills in public health
Students will be tested on at least five (5) peer-review journal articles through examinations.

Course Grading
A=90-100; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

40% ................ Weekly Quizzes (10 highest grades out of 13, 4% each)
20% ................ Midterm (in class)
25% ................ Final exam (in class, during official final exam period)
10% ............. Attendance
5%............... Class Participation

Grading Policy
• There are NO extra credit opportunities for this class. Please do not request extra credit.

• Grades are earned. Please do not ask me to reconsider grades I have assigned. Saying that you “really worked hard in this class” does not mean that you have earned an A. Needing a good grade in order to graduate, be removed from academic probation, or to be admitted into medical school are also not sufficient arguments to debate a grade with me. You are welcome, however, to attend office hours for more detailed feedback on how to improve your future grades.

**I WILL NOT NEGOTIATE ANY GRADES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

WEEKLY QUIZZES (10 total, 4% each = 40% total)
The quizzes are based on the lectures, required readings, and films. All quizzes will be timed, open note, and taken online via Sakai. There will be a total of thirteen (13) quizzes and the lowest three (3) quiz grades will be dropped. Although you have the option to opt out of three quizzes, I strongly recommend that you take all quizzes in order to maximize your opportunities to receive the highest final grade possible. Please note that you will not have access to review any quizzes that you did not take. Therefore, it is impossible to view quiz feedback unless you take a quiz. For these reasons, it makes the most sense to take each quiz, even if you do not feel fully prepared.

Please do not request additional time to complete a quiz due to technical difficulties or other personal reasons, as I cannot honor those requests.

Quizzes will typically be posted by Sundays at noon and must be taken by the following Sunday night at 11:50pm. Quizzes will close automatically and cannot be taken after that time. There are no exceptions to this rule, for any reason. Please see the table below for more details about the content for each weekly quiz.

******Important Note******

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

MIDTERM (20%) and FINAL EXAM (25%) – taken in class
The exams are based on the 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. If you arrive after the first exam is turned in, you will not be permitted to take the exam. You will not be allotted extra time if you arrive late to an exam.

In the vast majority of cases, I cannot honor requests for make-up exams (whether taking the exam early or late). Makeup exams will only be permitted if you provide the obituary for a family funeral you need to attend. Please note that even if you obtain a Dean’s note, the final decision is mine. Personal holidays, vacations, broken alarm clocks, weddings, jobs, exams in other courses, traffic, bad weather, scheduled travel, or the Rutgers bus system are not acceptable reasons for missing or being late to an exam. Any makeup exam will consist of short-answer questions and will be given at a time convenient for me. All makeup exams will carry a minimum 15% point penalty (i.e., the highest grade you can earn is 85%).
The final exam will follow the official final exam schedule established by the University, which will ultimately be posted at finalexams.rutgers.edu. I cannot deviate from this schedule so please do not request to take the exam at another time (whether early or late), as I cannot honor these requests. Please make any travel plans accordingly. Please do not request exam study guides or review sessions. I do not provide either.

**ATTENDANCE (10%):**
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. Even though this is a large class, I believe strongly in class participation. I will take attendance at every class. I may not remember each person’s name, but I recall faces and I have your photos. If you sign in another member of the class who is late or not present, you will be penalized.

Please make every effort to be on time, as late arrivals are disruptive to everyone, including me. If you will be significantly late, please stay home. If you are consistently late, leave consistently early, or take repeated bathroom breaks, it will harm your attendance grade. If you are on social media or using your cell phone during class, it will harm your attendance grade.

*It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet.* I cannot keep track of individual students' attendance at each class. Please do not email to say you forgot to sign the attendance sheet and request credit for being present. I cannot honor these requests.

If you miss a lecture, you must acquire the lecture notes from a fellow classmate, as it is not my policy to share my personal notes. Additionally, I am unable to review a lecture during office hours if you missed the class. I do not accept doctors’ notes for missed classes. Please do not ask me to excuse an absence as I cannot honor these requests.

This class only meets on a weekly basis. After three (3) absences, your final grade will begin to drop. Each student is allotted three (3) unexcused absences before your final grade is affected. The final grade (not the attendance grade) will be dropped by 5% points on the fourth (4th) absence and 10% points on the 5th absence. At six (6) or more absences, you will fail the course. There is no exception to this policy whatsoever.

**CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION (5%):**
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. As stated above, given the large nature of this class, I may not remember each person’s name, but I recall faces and I have your photos. This allows me to keep track of the most active participants.
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/

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 leave the class.

***Please note: Any videotaping or audiotaping of my lectures is strictly prohibited.
By enrolling in this class, you are agreeing to honor this rule.***

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, 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. By continuing to take this course, you have agreed to this policy.
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.
# Class Outline by Week

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| 1    | F   | 9/8  | • Demographic Profile of the United States  
• Epidemiology of Health and Illness | Required Reading:  
| 2    | F   | 9/15 | ‘Race’: Historical and Conceptual Issues | Required Reading:  
1. “Historical Aspects of Race/Ethnicity and Health” (LaVeist, Chap 1, 2005; on Sakai)  
2. “Conceptual Issues in Race/Ethnicity and Health” (LaVeist, Chap 2, 2005; on Sakai)  
In-Class Film:  
“Race: The Power of an Illusion – Part 1 (The Differences Between Us)” (55 min) |
| 3    | F   | 9/22 | Socioeconomic Status and Health | Required Reading:  
1. Tirado, Linda. 2013. “This is Why Poor People’s Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense” *(Huffington Post)*  
2. “Reaching for a Healthier Life: Facts on Socioeconomic Status and Health in the U.S.” *(MacArthur Foundation)*  
3. “Race and Socioeconomic Factors Affect Opportunities for Better Health” *(RWJF, 2009)*  
In-Class Film:  
“Unnatural Causes – In Sickness and Wealth” (56 min) |
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| 4    | F   | 9/29 | Stress and Health | Required Reading:  
1. “Status and Stress” (NYT, 2013)  
2. “Like All Animals, We Need Stress. Just Not Too Much.” (NPR, 2014)  
3. “This is Your Stressed-Out Brain on Scarcity” (NPR, 2014)  
| 5    | F   | 10/6 | Black Americans I | Required Reading:  
1. “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal: Many Americans See Racial Disparities” (Pew Research Center)  
2. “The Unfinished March” (Economic Policy Institute)  
4. “On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart” (Pew Research Center, 2016)  
In-Class Film:  
“Race: The Power of an Illusion – The Story We Tell” (57 min) |
| 6    | F   | 10/13 | Black Americans II | Required Reading:  
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<td>In-Class Film: &quot;Unnatural Causes – When the Bough Breaks” (30 min)</td>
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<td>In-Class Film: &quot;Unnatural Causes – Bad Sugar” (29 min)</td>
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| 10   | F   | 11/10 | Hispanics/Latinos I | Required Reading:  
2. Vargas Ilosa, Alvaro. 2013. “Seven Major Immigration Myths Debunked” (Huffington Post)  
3. “Immigration Myths and Facts: Behind the Fallacies” (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)  
| 11   | F   | 11/17 | Hispanics/Latinos II | Required Reading:  
In-Class Film: “Unnatural Causes – Becoming American” (29 min) |
| 12   | *W  | 11/22 | CLASS CANCELLED | Please watch the following lecture at home:  
“Going Beyond Race: The Impact of Racism on Health” (Camara P. Jones, MD, PhD)  
http://urbanhealth.jhu.edu/media/urban-health-videos/going-beyond-race-the-impact-of-racism-on-health (1st hour only, not the Q&A session)  
Required Reading:  
| 13   | F   | 12/1 | Asian Americans I | Required Reading:  
1. “Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of Asian Americans” (Tseng, 2009)  
2. “Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of U.S. Pacific Islanders” (Papanasa, 2009)  
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   In-Class Film:  
   “America By the Numbers: Pass or Fail in Cambodia Town” (30 min)  
   Required Reading:  
   1. “Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of U.S. Pacific Islanders” (Panapasa, 2009)  
   3. “Toward a Contextual Understanding of Asian American Health” (Islam et al., 2009)  
   In-Class Films:  
   “Unnatural Causes – Place Matters” (29 min)  
   “Unnatural Causes – Collateral Damage” (29 min) |

*FINAL EXAM: TBA (according to official University schedule at finalexams.rutgers.edu)  
*NO EXCEPTIONS*
## Quizzes At-a-Glance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quiz #</th>
<th>Covers lectures and films from:</th>
<th>Quiz Available</th>
<th>Quiz Due</th>
<th>Feedback shown</th>
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| 1      | • Demographic Profile of the United States  
        • Epidemiology of Health and Illness | Sun 9/10       | Sun 9/17       | Tues 9/19      |
| 2      | ‘Race’: Historical and Conceptual Issues        | Sun 9/17       | Sun 9/24       | Tues 9/26      |
| 3      | Socioeconomic Status and Health                 | Sun 9/24       | Sun 10/1       | Tues 10/3      |
| 4      | Stress and Health                               | Sun 10/1       | Sun 10/8       | Tues 10/10     |
| 5      | Black Americans I                               | Sun 10/8       | Sun 10/15      | Tues 10/17     |
| 6      | Black Americans II                              | Sun 10/15      | Sun 10/22      | Tues 10/24     |
|        | **MID-TERM**                                   | N/A            | N/A            | N/A            |
| 7      | American Indians/Alaska Natives I              | Sun 10/29      | Sun 11/5       | Tues 11/7      |
| 8      | American Indians/Alaska Natives II             | Sun 11/5       | Sun 11/12      | Tues 11/14     |
| 9      | Hispanics/Latinos I                            | Sun 11/12      | Sun 11/19      | Tues 11/21     |
| 10     | Hispanics/Latinos II                           | Sun 11/19      | Sun 11/26      | Tues 11/28     |
| 11     | “Going Beyond Race: The Impact of Racism on Health” (Lecture by Camara Jones, MD, PhD) | Sun 11/26      | Sun 12/3       | Tues 12/5      |
| 12     | Asian Americans I                              | Sun 12/3       | Sun 12/10      | Sun 12/12      |
| 13     | • Asian Americans II                           | Sun 12/10      | Sun 12/17      | Tues 12/19     |
|        | • Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders  |                |                |                |

- All quizzes will be available by Sundays at noon, at the latest.
- All quizzes will be due the following Sunday evening by 11:50pm. No exceptions. You must allot sufficient time for potential technical issues.