

**Course Title:** Introduction to Health Disparities  
**Semester:** Spring 2017  
**Course Number:** 10:832:212  
**Course Day and Time:** **ONLINE- weeks begin on Tuesday at 12:01am and end on Monday at 11:59pm Initial posts are due Friday at 11:59pm.**  
**Location:** ONLINE- CANVAS  
<https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas>  
**Course Instructor:** Dr. Kathleen Michell  
**Contact Information:** [kmichell@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:kmichell@rci.rutgers.edu) \*Phone available, if needed  
**Office Hours and Location:** By appointment only

**Required Text:** LaVeist, Thomas A. (2005). Minority Populations and Health: An Introduction to Health Disparities in the United States. Jossey-Bass.

**Additional Materials:** Additional readings and videos will be posted CANVAS

**Instructor will respond within 48 hours Monday-Friday**

**\*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.**

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**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

**Methods of Student Evaluation:**

**All assignments must be submitted in CANVAS by their due date, by Monday at 11:59pm**

Weekly Quizzes	40%
10 highest grades out of 13; 4% each	
10 weekly discussion boards	20%
2 points per week: 1 point for initial response/1 point for two follow-up	
Research paper 8-10 page research paper double spaced required. Must include at least five (5) scholarly references to support the student's position	25%
Research Topic posted to discussion board / 2 responses	1%
Attendance and participation each week- on CANVAS	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Final Grading:**

<b><u>A</u></b>	<b><u>90-100</u></b>
<b><u>B+</u></b>	<b><u>86 - 89</u></b>
<b><u>B</u></b>	<b><u>80 – 86</u></b>
<b><u>C+</u></b>	<b><u>77-79</u></b>
<b><u>C</u></b>	<b><u>70 - 76</u></b>

<u>D</u>	<u>60 - 69</u>
<u>F</u>	<u>59 and Below</u>

### 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. I will not round up.

**\*\*I WILL NOT NEGOTIATE ANY GRADES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES\*\***

### Policy on Late Assignments:

Student assignments will be accepted up until 1 week after the due date, however points will be deducted as follows:

After due date (within 1 week):

- Half credit awarded for all late assignments
- After 1 week for due date, no points awarded

**Forum Discussions: The forums are the heart of the course where we interact together and learn from each other. Both postings are required in order to be considered for maximum points. The forums will close at 11:59pm on Monday. Late Forum posts are NOT accepted. Initial posts are due Friday at 11:59pm.**

### **RUBRIC FOR CURRENT EVENTS FORUM ASSIGNMENTS**

**The Initial Response:** The initial response must be 300 to 500 words in length and directly answer the question posed by the instructor with at least two (2) scholarly references to support a student's opinions. The initial response MUST be in the form of a new thread underneath the Instructor's thread.

**The Secondary Response:** The secondary response must be 100 to 150 words and must clarify, support, or contradict another student's initial or secondary response. This post also must have two (2) scholarly references to support the student's position. The secondary response **MUST** be in the form of a new thread underneath another student's thread (either initial or secondary)

**Participation:** Students should post on multiple days to receive the participation points. Regardless of the number of posts submitted on a single day, only students posting responses on two or more days of the class shall receive participation points.

**Success in an Online Course:** Listed below are some tips in how to be successful in the online portion of the course:

- Read the syllabus thoroughly at the start of the course and refer to it often.
- Check in often into the course; once a day is recommended.
- Adhere to all deadlines established within the course material.
- Contact instructor for any questions.

**Netiquette:** The word "netiquette" is short for "Internet etiquette." Rules of netiquette have developed with the growth of the Internet to help users act responsibly when they access or transmit information online. You should be aware of the common rules of netiquette for the Web and employ a communication style that follows these guidelines.

- Wait to respond to a message that upsets you and be careful of what you say and how you say it.
- Be considerate. Rude or threatening language, inflammatory assertions (often referred to as "flaming"), personal attacks, and other inappropriate communication will not be tolerated.
- Never post a message that is in all capital letters -- it comes across to the reader as SHOUTING! Use boldface and italics sparingly, as they can denote sarcasm.
- Keep messages short and to the point.
- Always practice good grammar, punctuation, and composition. This shows that you've taken the time to craft your response and that you respect your classmates' work.
- Keep in mind that threaded discussions are meant to be constructive exchanges.
- Be respectful and treat everyone as you would want to be treated yourself.
- Use spell check.

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### **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. As a shared value, administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it. See the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

### **Attendance and Cancellation of Classes**

In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is expected at all regularly scheduled meetings of a course and individual courses may set policies for maximum absences. Please refer to the link below for more specific information:

<http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/courses/registration-and-course-policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-class>

**All writing assignments will follow APA 6 edition guidelines.**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **WEEKLY QUIZZES (10 total, 4% each = 40% total)**

The quizzes are based on the lectures, required readings, and films. All quizzes are open note, times, and taken online through CANVAS. There will be a total of 13 quizzes offered in total and the lowest three (3) grades will be dropped. The highest 10 quiz scores will be worth 50% of your final grade. That means you have the option to opt out of three (3) quizzes. However, I strongly suggest that you take all 13 quizzes in order to maximize your opportunities to receive the highest overall grade possible. It is also not possible 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 Tuesdays at noon and must be taken by Monday nights at 11:59pm. Quizzes will close automatically and cannot be taken after that time. There are no exceptions to this rule. 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.***

**DISCUSSION BOARDS (20%)**

The forums are the heart of the course where we interact together and learn from each other. Both postings are required in order to be considered for maximum points. The forums will close at 11:59pm on Monday. Late Forum posts are NOT accepted. Initial posts are due Friday at 11:59pm.

**All writing assignments will follow APA 6 edition guidelines.**

**RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC (1%)**

Students must post their research topic in appropriate module/week. Students must also respond to at least two other posts.

**All writing assignments will follow APA 6 edition guidelines.**

**RESEARCH PAPER (25%)**

Research paper 8-10 page research paper double spaced required. Must include at least five (5) scholarly references to support the student's position.

**TOPIC**

Students must choose one racial/ethnic group to write about. Students must include the history, the group's current social and health profile, while including at least one current event encompassing the group. Students must also identify 2-3 social and/or health problems they

believe impacts the group the most, and what policy solutions they think would be of assistance.

**All writing assignments will follow APA 6 edition guidelines.**

### **MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM**

\*There are no midterm or final exams for this section. Students are assessed in discussion board responses and the final paper.

### **ATTENDANCE/ PARTICIPATION (14%):**

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 participate.

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.

### **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/>

**\*\*\*Please note: No videotaping / audiotaping / screen shots of my lectures is permitted\*\*\***

### **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 CANVAS 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 <https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/canvas>. 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 CANVAS course website

### **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.



### Class Outline by Week:

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
1	1/17	Introductions Demographic Profile of the United States Epidemiology of Health and Illness	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(skim) Shrestha, Laura B. and Elayne J. Heisler. 2011. "The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States." <i>Congressional Research Service</i>.</li> <li>LaVeist, Thomas. "The State of Racial Inequalities in Health."</li> <li>Williams, David R. 2012. "Miles to Go Before We Sleep: Racial Inequities in Health." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 53:279-295.</li> </ol> <p><b>INTRO Discussion Board DUE</b></p>
2	1/24	'Race': Historical and Conceptual Issues	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LaVeist, Chapter 2</li> <li>LaVeist, Chapter 1</li> <li>"U.S. Census Looking at Big Changes in How it Asks About Race and Ethnicity" (Pew Research Center, 2014)</li> </ol> <p><u>Film:</u> "Race: The Power of an Illusion – Part 1 (The Differences Between Us)" (55 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 1</b> <b>Discussion Board 1 DUE</b></p>
3	1/31	Socioeconomic Status and Health	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"This is Why Poor People's Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense" (Huffington Post)</li> </ol>

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
			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) 4. "Beyond Broke: Why Closing the Racial Wealth Gap is a Priority for National Economic Security" (Duke University & Center for Global Policy Security)  <u>Film:</u> "Unnatural Causes – In Sickness and Wealth" (56 min) <b>*QUIZ 2</b> <b>INTRO Discussion Board 2 DUE</b>
4	2/7	Stress and Health	<u>Required Reading:</u> 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) 4. "Stressed, Tired, and Rushed: A Portrait of the Modern Family" (NYT, 2015) 5. "Stressed Out: Americans Tell Us About Stress in Their Lives" (NPR, 2014) 6. "The Contrarians on Stress: It Can Be Good for You" (NYT, 2014)  <b>*QUIZ 3</b> <b>INTRO Discussion Board 3 DUE</b>
5	2/14	Black Americans I	<u>Required Reading:</u> 1. "King's Dream Remains an Elusive Goal: Many Americans See Racial Disparities" (Pew Research Center) 2. "The Unfinished March" (Economic Policy Institute)

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
			<p>3. Agyemang, Charles, Raj Bhopal, and Marc Bruijnzeels. 2005. "Negro, Black, Black African, African Caribbean, African American, or What? Labelling African Origin Populations in the Health Arena in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." 2005. <i>Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health</i> 59:1014-1018.</p> <p>4. (skim) "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites Are Worlds Apart" (Pew Research Center, 2016)</p> <p><u>Film:</u></p> <p>1. "Race: The Power of an Illusion – The Story We Tell" (57 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 4</b> <b>Discussion Board 4 DUE</b></p>
6	2/21	Black Americans II	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <p>1. Geronimus, Arline T. 2006. "Weathering and Age Patterns of Allostatic Load Scores Among Blacks and Whites in the United States." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 96:826-833.</p> <p>2. Geller, Amanda, Jeffrey Fagan, Tom Tyler, and Bruce G. Link. 2014. "Aggressive Policing and the Mental Health of Young Urban Men." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 104(12): 2321-2327.</p> <p>3. Read, Jen'nan Ghazal, Michael O. Emerson, and Alvin Tarlov. 2005. "Implications of Black Immigrant Health for U.S. Racial Disparities in Health." <i>Journal of Immigrant Health</i> 7(3): 205-212.</p> <p><u>Film:</u></p> <p>"Unnatural Causes – When the Bough Breaks" (30 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 5</b></p>

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
			<b>Discussion Board 5 DUE</b>
7	2/28	Impact on Health	<p><u>Please watch the following lecture at home:</u>            “Going Beyond Race: The Impact of Racism on Health” (Camara P. Jones, MD, PhD)  <a href="http://urbanhealth.jhu.edu/media/urban-health-videos/going-beyond-race-the-impact-of-racism-on-health">http://urbanhealth.jhu.edu/media/urban-health-videos/going-beyond-race-the-impact-of-racism-on-health</a> (1<sup>st</sup> hour only, not the Q&amp;A session)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 6</b>  <b>Discussion Board 6 DUE</b></p>
8	3/7	American Indians/Alaska Natives I	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LaVeist, Chapter 11</li> <li>2. Mohatt, Nathaniel Vincent, Azure B. Thompson, Nghi D. Thai, and Jacob Kraemer Tebes. 2014. “Historical Trauma as Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of How History Impacts Present-Day Health.” <i>Social Science &amp; Medicine</i> 106: 128-136.</li> <li>3. Jones, David S. 2006. “The Persistence of American Indian Health Disparities.” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 96:2122-2134.</li> </ol> <p><b>*QUIZ 7</b>  <b>Discussion Board 7 DUE</b></p>
		SPRING BREAK	
9	3/21	American Indians/Alaska Natives II	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Landen, Michael, Tim Naimi, Larry Nielsen, and Mack Sewell. 2014. “Alcohol-Attributable Mortality Among American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States, 1999-2009.” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 104: S434-S439.</li> <li>2. Berman, Matthew. 2014. “Suicide Among Young Alaska Native Men: Community Risk Factors and Alcohol Control.” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 104:S329-S335.</li> <li>3. Cobb, Nathaniel, David Epsey, and Jessica</li> </ol>

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
			<p>King. 2014. "Health Behaviors and Risk Factors Among American Indians and Alaska Natives, 2000-2010." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 104: S481-S489.</p> <p><u>Film:</u> "Unnatural Causes – Bad Sugar" (29 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 8</b> <b>Discussion Board 8 DUE</b></p>
10	3/28	Hispanics/Latinos I	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Who is Latino?" (The Washington Post)</li> <li>2. "Seven Major Immigration Myths Debunked" (Huffington Post)</li> <li>3. "Immigration Myths and Facts: Behind the Fallacies" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce)</li> <li>4. (skim) "When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity." (Pew Research Center, 2012)</li> </ol> <p><b>*QUIZ 9</b> <b>Discussion Board 9 DUE</b></p>
11	4/4	Hispanics/Latinos II	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LaVeist, Chapter 13</li> <li>2. "Health of Hispanic Adults: United States, 2010-2014" (CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2015)</li> <li>3. Vega, William A., Michael A. Rodriguez, and Elisabeth Gruskin. 2009. "Health Disparities in the Latino Population." <i>Epidemiologic Reviews</i> 31:99-112.</li> <li>4. "The Health Toll of Immigration" (NYT, 2013)</li> </ol> <p><u>Film:</u> "Unnatural Causes – Becoming American" (29 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 10</b></p>

Week	DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS and READINGS (Readings are due for following week)
			<b>Discussion Board 10 DUE</b>
12	4/11	Asian Americans I	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of Asian Americans" (Tseng, 2009)</li> <li>2. "Toward a Contextual Understanding of Asian American Health" (Islam et al., 2009)</li> <li>3. (Skim) Pew Research Report, "Rise of Asian Americans" (2013)</li> </ol> <p><u>Film:</u> "America By the Numbers: Pass or Fail in Cambodia Town" (30 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 11</b></p> <p><b>Discussion Board DUE PAPER TOPIC DUE</b></p>
13	4/18	Asian Americans II Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders	<p><u>Required Reading:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Social, Demographic, and Cultural Characteristics of U.S. Pacific Islanders" (Panapasa, 2009)</li> <li>2. "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Health Disparities" (Asian &amp; Pacific Islander American Health Forum, 2010)</li> <li>3. "Puerto Rico's Invisible Health Crisis" (The Atlantic, 2015)</li> </ol> <p><u>Films:</u> "Unnatural Causes – Place Matters" (29 min) "Unnatural Causes – Collateral Damage" (29 min)</p> <p><b>*QUIZ 12</b></p>
14	4/25	End of Class wrap-up  <b>*Course ends on Monday 5/1/2017</b>	<b>*QUIZ 13</b> <b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>

### Quizzes At-a-Glance

Quiz #	Covers lectures and films from:	Quiz Available	Quiz Due
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic Profile of the United States</li> <li>Epidemiology of Health and Illness</li> </ul>	1/24	1/30
2	'Race': Historical and Conceptual Issues	1/31	2/6
3	Socioeconomic Status and Health	2/7	2/13
4	Stress and Health	2/14	2/20
5	Black Americans I	2/21	2/27
6	Black Americans II	2/28	3/6
7	"Going Beyond Race: The Impact of Racism on Health" (Lecture by Camara Jones, MD, PhD)	3/7	<b>3/10 * To be completed prior to spring break *</b>
8	American Indians I	3/21	3/27
9	American Indians II	3/28	4/3
10	Hispanics/Latinos I	4/4	4/10
11	Hispanics/Latinos II	4/11	4/17
12	Asian Americans I	4/18	4/24
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian Americans II</li> <li>Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders</li> </ul>	4/25	5/1

- All quizzes will be due the following Monday evening by 11:59pm. No exceptions. You must allot sufficient time for potential technical issues.

**Discussion Boards at a Glance**

Discussion Boards	Boards Available	Two Responses Due
Introduction to classmates	1/17	1/23
1	1/24	1/30
2	1/31	2/6
3	2/7	2/13
4	2/14	2/20
5	2/21	2/27
6	2/28	3/6
7	3/7	<b>3/10 * To be completed prior to spring break *</b>
8	3/21	3/27
9	3/28	4/3
10	4/4	4/10
Research Topic Discussion Board	4/11	4/17

- All of initial discussion board posts will be due the Friday evening by 11:59pm. No exceptions. You must allot sufficient time for potential technical issues.