

Race and Health Disparities

Manning Hall 320, 12:40-2:05 pm MW

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Hicks

Office: Manning Hall 300A

Email: kahicks2@memphis.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 1-2 pm, and by appointment.

Course Description: in this class we will examine the relationship between race, racism and health disparities. Through readings, films and class discussion we will trace the history of the race concept and the development of scientific racism; we will examine how race, a culturally constructed concept, became incorporated into our systems of law and governance, and; we will examine how cultural constructions of race lead to disparities in exposure to health hazards, and diagnosis and treatment of illness.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the historical development of systems of racial classification and their use in scientific inquiry and public policy.
2. To understand the power of an abstract cultural concept like race to create meaningful differences in experience, health and quality of life.
3. To examine specific examples of health inequalities, and gain some basic experience with relevant research methods.
4. To examine potential strategies for better understanding health disparities and working toward health equity.
5. To develop written communication skills through self and peer-evaluation of in-class position papers.

Required Texts:

Graves, Joseph L Jr. 2001. *The Emperor's New Clothing: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Rouse, Carolyn Moxley. 2009. *Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease*. University of California Press.

Additional readings will be posted on ecourseware (<http://elearn.memphis.edu>).

Course Assignments:

Participation (20%): Everyone needs to miss class from time to time as a result of health problems or other eventualities. Students may miss three classes without losing any attendance points – no documentation necessary. Each additional absence will result in a loss of 3 points off your participation grade. This class will involve a substantial amount of in-class discussion to work through the ideas presented in the assigned readings. You will also be evaluated on your engagement with the material during class discussion. This means that you should come to class having read the assigned material, and do your best to contribute to class discussion.

Reading Questions (20%): There are a total of 12 weeks of course readings for discussion. Each student will select 10 of those weeks to submit written responses to reading questions. Each week I will post a list of several reading questions; each undergraduate student is responsible to choose and thoroughly answer 2 of these questions, each graduate student 3 (around 300 words for each question), and to suggest one or two questions for class discussion. These responses will be due in hard copy at the beginning of Monday's class. These questions will be designed to help you synthesize and think about the texts, and assess your understanding of the material. Your answers to these questions should be thoughtful, and refer to specific examples from the text to support your conclusions. You each get two weeks off from answering questions, which you might choose to save for later on in the semester when you need extra time.

Position Papers (60%): Students will write three in-class position papers. These will consist of two mid-term papers and one final paper. I will give you the question you will address one week in advance and each student will be allowed to bring in a single-sided 8½ by 11 page outline to help them write their paper. You will have one full class period to complete the assignment. An example of a question might be "To what extent can we reduce health disparities by reforming our health care delivery system?" Your paper will be judged not based on the position you take, but on your ability to use class readings, films and discussion to support your arguments, and on the clarity with which you express your ideas.

Everyone has different levels of experience and practice with persuasive writing, but everyone can improve their written communication skills. In order to help you learn a little more about your own writing style and to allow you to learn from others, each student will complete a self-assessment and anonymous peer-assessment for the two mid-term papers. Rather than writing your name on your paper, each student will choose a 4-digit id number to protect their privacy. During class time, each student will complete an evaluation of their own paper, and those of two other students. You will be evaluated based on your ability to provide positive, constructive feedback to the other students and thoughtfully discuss your own paper. The grade for the position papers will break down as follows:

Position papers: 45% (3 papers @ 15% each)

Peer and self-assessments: 15% (2 mid-term assessments @ 7.5 % each)

I will post extended instructions and guidelines early on in the semester to help you prepare for the papers and evaluations.

Bonus assignment

Undergraduate students may earn up to 3% extra credit by helping with data collection for one of two projects: one a study of the effectiveness of the South Memphis Farmers Market in enhancing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in a food desert, and one an evaluation of a diabetes awareness event put on by Ballet Memphis. I will provide additional information on these opportunities in class.

Graduate and Honors Students

In addition to the assignments listed above, graduate and honors students will be required to help with data collection on the Ballet Memphis project, and complete a short 5-page paper using course materials to analyze and interpret our findings from this project. This paper will be due at the beginning of the final class period. Additional information about this paper and project will be provided in class. Graduate and honors grades will break down as follows:

Attendance and participation: 15%

Reading questions: 15%

Position papers: 60%

Ballet Memphis paper: 10%

Note: There is no specific grade for helping with data collection on the Ballet Memphis project, but only those students who participate in the project or, in cases where the student absolutely cannot attend the Ballet Memphis event, make alternative arrangements with the instructor early on, will be allowed to complete the final paper.

Course Policies and Considerations:

- Students are responsible to read and follow the syllabus. I have provided this information to ensure you have the tools you need to be successful in this class.
- I encourage you to come see me during office hours, whether for help with the course material or to discuss news relevant to the course, or to discuss assignments. I am also more than happy to help clear up any points of confusion or answer any questions that you would prefer not to ask in class.
- It is important to remember that there are no stupid questions. Do not be afraid to speak up or ask questions. For every student who asks a question, there are likely many others in the class wondering the same thing, and discussing it as a class helps to develop greater understanding.
- Late assignments will not be accepted. If you cannot complete your assignment for acceptable documented health or school related reasons, you must speak with me before the due date, and make alternate arrangements. If you are unable to come to class, you can submit your assignments electronically by the appropriate deadline.
- Students are responsible to check ecourseware regularly for news postings and required readings. You will be advised of any changes or corrections to the syllabus over email.
- Cheating or other academic misconduct will result automatically in failure in the course and notification of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs. I encourage you to discuss the course material with other students, whether in-class or in study groups. Talking with others about the material helps you learn it better and come up with new ideas. When it comes to assignments and exams, however, you must complete the work on your own, without collaboration with others, and without copying from other

students. Please note that letting others copy from you, is as serious an offense as copying from someone else, and will also result in automatic failure.

- Cell phones, MP3 players, etc., must be turned off and stowed; no newspapers, crosswords, sudokus, or work for other classes; no talking during class. This policy is designed to ensure that you do not disrupt the class, or distract other students who are trying to pay attention. This is an issue of basic courtesy and respect: every other student has the right to pay attention and learn.
- Students with disabilities should contact me toward the beginning of class so we can make appropriate alternative plans for submitting or completing course assignments.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	Aug 29	Introduction	Welcome to Anth 4/6571
	Aug 31	Introduction to health disparities	Amy J Shulz and Leith Mullings. 2006. Gender, Race, Class and Health: Intersectional Approaches. Jossey-Bass. Pp 89-116
2	Sept 5	Labor Day	No class
	Sept 7	Historical emergence of race concept	Emperor's New Clothes pp 1-73
3	Sept 12	Scientific racism and public sphere	Emperor's New Clothes pp 74-154
	Sept 14		
4	Sept 19	Scientific challenges to race concept	Emperor's New Clothes pp 155-200
	Sept 21		
5	Sept 26	Political and legal constructions of race in the US	Matthew Frye Jacobson. 1998. Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp 1-12, 39-135
	Sept 28		
6	Oct 3		In-class position paper
	Oct 5	Position papers	General discussion of position papers self and anonymous peer-evaluation
7	Oct 10	Diabetes disparities	Leandris C Liburd. 2010. Diabetes and Health Disparities: Community-Based Approaches for Racial and Ethnic Populations. New York: Springer Publishing Company. Pp 3-82, 141-161, 257-272
	Oct 12		
8	Oct 17	Fall Break	No class
	Oct 19	Race in genetic research	Barbara A. Koenig et al. 2008. Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Pp 39-53, 70-82, 89-99, 172-188
9	Oct 24	Development of race-specific drugs and products	Barbara A. Koenig et al. 2008. Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Pp 129-169, 201-231
	Oct 26		

10	Oct 31	Cardiovascular health disparities and stress	Dressler et al. 2005. Race and Ethnicity in Public Health Research: Models to Explain Health Disparities. <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> . Gravlee et al. 2005. Skin Color, Social Classification, and Blood Pressure in Southeastern Puerto Rico. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> .
	Nov 2		
11	Nov 7	Asthma health disparities	Ian Whitmarsh. 2008. Biomedical Ambiguity: Race, Asthma, and the Contested Meaning of Genetic Research in the Caribbean. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Pp 1-14, 57-144, 183-189
	Nov 9		
12	Nov 14		In-class position paper
	Nov 16	Position papers	General discussion of position papers and anonymous peer grading
13	Nov 21	Health care disparities	Uncertain Suffering pp 1-88
	Nov 23	No class	
14	Nov 28	Health care disparities	Uncertain Suffering pp 89-168
	Nov 30		
15	Dec 5	Health care disparities	Uncertain Suffering pp 168-267 Note: graduate and honors Ballet Memphis papers due at the beginning of class.
	Dec 7		
	Dec 14	Final Exam: 10:00 am - 12:00 noon	Final in-class position paper