

GHP 409/ AAS 410

**Mortality at the Margins:
Race, Inequality and Health Policy in the United States**

Princeton University
Spring 2016

Wednesdays, 1:30pm – 4:20pm
Wallace Hall 366

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2pm – 3:30pm
Wallace 356

Course Description

This course will critically examine the unequal distribution of disease and mortality in the United States along the axes of race, ethnicity, class and place. Through in-depth engagement with case studies, critical historical texts and public health literature we will explore why individuals from some race/ethnicities, class backgrounds, and geographies are more vulnerable to premature death and adverse outcomes than others. What is the role of history, politics and institutions in the epidemiological patterns of disease and illness in the United States? Students will explore topics such as the high levels of infant and maternal mortality in the U.S. Deep South, the public health impacts of the War on Drugs, mass incarceration and disease risk, disparities in mental health, and the persistent racial disparity in HIV/AIDS. The course will pay particular attention to health inequalities in the state of New Jersey, and students will analyze how federal, state and local policies shape life chances of vulnerable citizens. Student work will culminate in a policy memo and a presentation, allowing them to hone valuable skillsets for future participation in the research and policy processes.

Assignments & Grading

Participation (15%): Class discussions are an integral part of the course and all students are expected and encouraged to participate. Each week, students will submit a brief (300 word max) discussion post to Blackboard describing a new insight or an issue that was left unaddressed in the readings. In your posts, you should include at least one discussion question for the upcoming seminar. *Responses are due every Tuesday night by 11:59pm.*

Midterm Take-home Exam (25%): The midterm prompt will be posted to Blackboard on Monday 3/7 and completed exams are due to Blackboard by Friday 3/11.

Presentation (15%): Students will choose a health inequality topic and present on the epidemiological data, the history of the issue, past and current policy responses and future directions. *Presentations will take place during Week 9 and Week 10.*

Policy Memo (10%): Submit a 3-page policy memo proposing a solution to the issue covered in your presentation. *Policy memos due in-class on 4/13.*

Final Paper (35%): Students will submit their 8-10 page final papers on Dean's Date. *Paper topics will be due on 4/20.*

Week 1 (2/3): Introduction to Health Disparities in the U.S.

- Allen LC (1915). "The Negro Health Problem" *American Journal of Public Health*. March; 5(3): 194 – 203
- Institute of Medicine, 2012. *How Far Have We Come in Reducing Health Disparities?: Progress Since 2000*. Introduction & Chapter 2
- Braveman P. et al. 2010. "Socioeconomic Disparities in Health in the United States: What the Patterns Tell Us." *AJPH* 100(S1): S186- S196.
- New Jersey Department of Health, 2008. "Healthy New Jersey 2010: Assessing Progress by Race and Ethnicity."
http://nj.gov/health/chs/documents/hnj2010_disparitytrends.pdf
- Film (to be screened in class): *Unnatural Causes* (PBS, 2008)

Week 2 (2/10): Disease and Health among Native Americans

- Jones, D. S. 2006. "The persistence of American Indian health disparities." *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(12), 2122-2134.
- Beals et al 2005. "Prevalence of Mental Disorders and Utilization of Mental Health in Two American Indian Reservation Populations: Mental Health Disparities in a National Context." *American Journal of Psychiatry*. October.
- Leal Ferreira, Mariana and Gretchen Chesley Lang. *Indigenous Peoples and Diabetes: Community Empowerment and Wellness*. Carolina Academic Press, 2005. Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 17.

Week 3 (2/17): Race, Geography and Health: Disparities in the U.S. Deep South

- Wailoo K. *Dying in the City of Blues*. [Excerpts]
- Rouse Carolyn. *Uncertain Suffering: Racial Health Care Disparities and Sickle Cell Disease*. [Excerpts]
- Reif, S. et al. 2006. "HIV Infection and AIDS in the Deep South." *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(6): 970-973.

Week 4 (2/24): Realities Plaguig Appalachia

- hooks, b. 2012. *Appalachian Elegy: Poetry and Place (Kentucky Voices)*.
- Behringer B, Friedell GH. 2006. "Appalachia: Where Place Matters in Health." *Preventing Chronic Disease*. Oct; 3(4): A113.
- Hendryx M. 2009. "Mortality from heart, respiratory, and kidney disease in coal mining areas in Appalachia." *Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*. 82: 243-249.
- Documentary [to be screened in class] Reichert J, Zaman F. "Remote Area Medical" 2012

Week 5 (3/2): Health in the Postindustrial City

- DuBois, WEB. 1899. "The Philadelphia Negro." [Excerpts]
- Williams D.R. and Collins C. 2001. "Racial residential segregation: a fundamental cause of racial disparities in health." *Public Health Rep* 116(5): 404 – 416.
- Ralph, Laurence. *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. [Excerpts]
- Frazier, LaToya Ruby. "A visual history of inequality in industrial America." TED Talk.
https://www.ted.com/talks/latoya_ruby_frazier_a_visual_history_of_inequality_in_industrial_america?language=en

Week 6 (3/9): Race, Geography and Access to Care in New Jersey

- State of New Jersey Department of Health. *Healthy New Jersey 2020*.
<http://www.state.nj.us/health/chs/hnj2020/about/history/#1>
- Partnering for a Health New Jersey: New Jersey Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Plan 2013 – 2018.
http://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/chronic/documents/chronic_disease_prevention_plan.pdf
- DeLia Derek. 2008. "Hospital Closures in New Jersey: Too Many or Not Enough?" <http://www.cshp.rutgers.edu/publications/hospital-closures-in-new-jersey-too-many-or-not-enough>
- Kaysen Rhonda. 2014. "Repurposing Closed Hospitals as For-Profit Medical Malls." *The New York Times*.

Week 7 (3/23): Racial Disparities in HIV/AIDS in the United States

- McGregor, A. 2012. “Why social policies are key to ending HIV/AIDS in Black America.” <http://thegrio.com/2012/12/04/why-social-policies-are-key-to-ending-hivaids-in-black-america/>
- Denning et al, 2010. “Communities in Crisis: Is there a Generalized HIV Epidemic in Impoverished Areas in the United States.” http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/other/pdf/poverty_poster.pdf
- Black AIDS Institute, 2008. “Left Behind. Black America: A Neglected Priority in the U.S. AIDS Epidemic.” <
http://www.blackaids.org/docs/7_08_left_behind.pdf>
- Cohen, Cathy. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. University of Chicago Press, 1999. [Excerpt]

In-class workshop: How to write a policy memo

Week 8 (3/30): The War on Drugs: Criminal Justice or Public Health?

- Moore LD and Elkavich A. 2008. “Who’s Using and Who’s Doing Time: Incarceration, the War on Drugs, and Public Health.” *American Journal of Public Health*. 98(5): 782 - 786
- The Atlantic, 2015. “The Enduring Myth of Black Criminality.” <http://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/404674/enduring-myth-of-black-criminality/>
- Cooper HL. War on Drugs Policing and Police Brutality. *Subst Use Misuse*. March 2015:1-7. doi:10.3109/10826084.2015.1007669.
- Hansen H and Skinner ME. 2012. “From White Bullets to Black Markets and Greened Medicine: The Neuroeconomics and Neuroracial Politics of Opioid Pharmaceuticals.” *Annals of Anthropological Practice*. 36, pp. 167 – 182.
- Murakawa N. 2011. “The Methamphetamine ‘Epidemic,’ ‘Meth Mouth,’ and the Racial Construction of Drug Scares.” *Du Bois Review*, 8:1. 219-228.
- Case A and Deaton A. 2015. “Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century.” *PNAS*, vol. 112, no.49
- The White House. “A Drug Policy for the 21st Century.” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/drugpolicyreform>

Week 9 (4/6): Unequal Access to Health Care in the U.S.: Past and Present

- Smith, David B. “Civil Rights and Medicare: Historical Convergence and Continuing Legacy.” In *Medicare and Medicaid at 50: America’s Entitlement Programs in the Age of Affordable Care*. Eds. Alan B. Cohen, David C. Colby, Keith A. Wailoo and Julian E. Zelizer. Oxford University Press, 2015
- Washington, Harriet. *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Doubleday, 2006. [Excerpts]
- Nelson, Alondra. *The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. [Excerpts]
- Benjamin, R. 2014. “Race for Cures: Rethinking the Racial Logics of ‘Trust’ in Biomedicine.” *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 8, Issue 6, pp. 755-769.

First Week of Group Presentations (in class)

Week 10 (4/13): Violence as a Public Health Issue

- Wen LS, Sharfstein JM. Unrest in Baltimore: The role of public health. *JAMA*. May 2015. doi:10.1001/jama.2015.5561.
- Lowery W. How many police shootings a year? No one knows. *The Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2014/09/08/how-many-police-shootings-a-year-no-one-knows/>. Published September 8, 2014. Accessed June 1, 2015.
- Cooper H, Moore L, Gruskin S, Krieger N. Characterizing Perceived Police Violence: Implications for Public Health. *Am J Public Health*. 2004;94(7):1109-1118.
- McGregor A (2015). “Politics, Police Accountability and Public Health: Civilian Review in Newark, New Jersey.” *Journal of Urban Health*.
- Fullilove MT, Héon V, Jimenez W, Parsons C, Green LL, Fullilove RE. Injury and anomie: effects of violence on an inner-city community. *Am J Public Health*. 1998;88(6):924-927.

Second Week of Group Presentations (In Class)

Policy Memos due

Week 11 (4/20): Mental Health through the Lens of Race

- Metzl J. *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2009. [Excerpts]
- Williams DR, Williams-Morris R. Racism and Mental Health: The African American experience. *Ethn Health*. 2000;5(3-4):243-268. doi:10.1080/713667453.

Week 12 (4/27): Policies and Health Inequalities: Is Access to Care Enough?

- Kaiser Family Foundation 2008. “Eliminating Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health Care: What are the Options?” <http://kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/eliminating-racial-ethnic-disparities-in-health-care-what/>
- Lillie-Blanton, M. and C. Hoffman. 2005. “The role of health insurance coverage in reducing racial/ethnic disparities in health care.” *Health Affairs*, 24(2): 398-408.

Final Papers Due May 10th (Dean’s Date)