SOC 3769 Health Disparities  
Summer 2011

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Lecture: 9:10-10:30am T/TH

Course Description

“The success or failure of any government in the final analysis must be measured by the well-being of its citizens. Nothing can be more important to a state than its public health; the state’s paramount concern should be the health of its people.”  
~Franklin D. Roosevelt

Health and healthcare have been persistently stratified institutions in the United States. Racial and Ethnic disparities expose minority populations to disproportionately high levels of social and environmental health hazards. As a result, people of color often experience health problems and poor health outcomes at a higher rate and intensity than comparison populations. Furthermore, shifting demographic patterns in the United States have compounded structural health disparities within larger proportions of the population. The intersection of health and race is useful for illuminating historical and structural patterns of discrimination and social marginalization that persist today.

During the course, we’ll deconstruct the social and biological aspects of race and ethnicity. Additionally, we’ll explore demography in the U.S. and global contexts, as well as spatial segregation, systemic racism, environmental justice, social class, and healthcare access from a variety of perspectives. Engaging with historical and structural points of view, we’ll critically and empirically assess the effects of privilege and injustice within a variety of population subgroups.

Course Objectives

Students will be expected to:
1) Demonstrate an ability to formulate hypotheses and general perspectives using critical logic and thought.
2) Utilize the proper application of theories for creative analyses of possible causes and consequences of health disparities.

**Required Texts**


*Any additional readings will be provided via online course reserves

**Americans With Disabilities Statement**
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (available online at http://www.sa.utah.edu/ds), 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). DCS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

**Grading Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory Essay</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Class Quizzes/Activities</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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**Quizzes/Activities**

During the course of the semester, 10 classes will be designated for in-class quizzes or activities worth 10 points each. A missed in-class quiz or activity cannot be made-up. In the event of a **pre-arranged excused absence**, a 2 page (double spaced) summary of information relevant to the topic covered and must be handed in during the next scheduled class period directly following that of the quiz.
**Introductory Essay**

This essay is intended to introduce you to some important concepts and issues related to race and health. It should be no more than 5 pages (12 pt. font, double spaced). It should also be properly cited where necessary using at least 2 references from legitimate academic sources. Please be conscious of proper grammar and spelling. You must choose one of the following two essay topics:

1. Deconstruct “race” as a social and biological concept. Explain why there is no general consensus on the definition of race. What are some of the factors that lead to differences in health outcomes among different races?

2. Choose a particular racial or ethnic group and discuss some of the health outcomes that are unique to the group. In addition, provide and explain some of the common theoretical arguments for the persistence of the outcomes (be sure to cite your sources).

**Final Paper**

The course will cover a breadth of topics on disparities in health outcomes. This paper will be an opportunity to explore a specific topic in more detail. It should be **no more than** 10 pages in length (12 point font, double spaced) with a minimum of 5 references from academic sources. We’ll discussed the paper in more detail later in the course.

**Active participation**

In order to stimulate critical thought, students will occasionally be asked to engage in individual and group activities during class.

**Course Outline**

TBA

*The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus*