HIS 242/242W

Unequal Unjust

100 Years of Racism in American Public Health and Medicine

Fall 2023

RRL 362

T/TH 14-1515

Instructor: Mical Raz, MD, PhD micalraz@rochester.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays at 1230-130 pm in person or by zoom.

Course Synopsis:

Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking,” argued Martin Luther King Jr. over half a century ago. Racial disparities in health outcomes, in access to healthcare, are a persistent feature of America’s fractured healthcare system. This course is designed to use historical tools of inquiry to address major challenges in current health policy. Its goal is two-fold: on the one hand, to deepen students’ understanding of historical processes in American healthcare, and on the other, to enrich current debates over American health care policy making. Students are encouraged to draw on their historical learning in this seminar to develop informed opinions on current issues in health policy. The focus of this seminar is on current racial disparities, and on the many processes that shaped these racial inequities over the course of the past century. Required readings include both secondary sources in history and thoughtful analyses in current medicine and public health journals and newspapers of current health policy questions.

The course is structured around key topics, and for each topic, students will read and discuss historical analysis, and then read current policy analyses and engage in debates with practitioners and scholars on the current challenges that arise from the legacies of these historical episodes.

The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIS 242 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for the final seminar paper.

Seminar Participation and Grading:

This is a seminar course in which active, well-prepared student participation is expected. Reading should be done in advance of the seminar, not during, and students should come prepared for an informed discussion.

Students should be prepared to read, write and think deeply about the topics at hand, and engage respectfully with each other and with the visitors.

All readings will be posted on blackboard or are available as e-books through the library.

Grade Breakdown

**Verbal Participation**: Total 20%

Participation: 15%

Leading an in-class discussion: 5%- come prepared to summarize some of the main arguments of the reading and with questions to help shape the discussion.

**Primary Sources Assignment**: 20%

**Group “Unessay” Presentation:** Total 17.5%

**Research Paper:** Total 40%

Detailed topic proposal and bibliography: 5% (approx. 1 page)

Final Research Paper: 35% (separate instructions for W and non W students will be shared)

**Final Meme:** 2.5

Send me a meme that embodies some important concept we talked about in class and come prepared to say about 2-3 sentence about it

**Important Dates: (5 pm is deadline )**

Oct 31 – Group Presentations

Nov 2 - Primary Source Assignment

Nov 15 – proposal and bibliography due

December 15 – final papers due

Academic Honesty: All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/.> For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association’s “Defining Plagiarism,” <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>.[[1]](#footnote-1)

All writing should be your own original work. Using AI such as chatgpt is a violation of this course’s academic integrity requirements.

Students with Disabilities: The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the [Office of Disability Resources](http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html) at: [disability@rochester.edu;](mailto:disability@rochester.edu;) (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Writing Skills: We will discuss each writing assignment in detail during class. I am also always willing to talk about writing assignments individually: to help you plan an essay, work through the process, or review comments. I encourage all students to take advantage of this by coming to office hours. Another resource is the UR Writing and Speaking Center, which is dedicated to helping writers at all skill levels to improve. You can reach them at 585- 273-3577 or at https://writing.rochester.edu/OnlineSchedule/AppointmentScheduleEnterStudentID.php

COURSE PLAN

Thursday, August 31, 2023 Intro, Welcome, Overview

**Medicine, Slavery and BLM in Medicine**

Tuesday, September 5, 2023

*Sick from Freedom*, Jim Downs, Intro , Chapter 1.

Jim Downs How Pandemics End <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/06/pandemics-end-when-we-stop-caring-about-their-victims/619127/>

Thursday, September 7, 2023

Read Bailey et al ‘How Structural Racism Works” *NEJM*

Bassett Black Lives Matter, *NEJM*

Visitor, Dr **Linda Clark**

**Maternal Health and Mortality**

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Read *Medical Bondage*, Dierdre Cooper Owens, Intro Chapters 1, 5 and afterword (open access, through library)

Thursday, September 14, 2023 **Dr Twyla Dillon**

Read <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why>

Review https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/maternal-mortality/index.html

**Poverty, Health and Hunger**

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Read Harrington, *Other America*, Chapters 1, 4

Thursday, September 21, 2023 Dr **Mitch Gruber** , Hunger and Health in Rochester

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Read

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-a-new-yorker-article-launched-the-first-shot-in-the-war-against-poverty-17469990/>

Read Laurie B. Green  “*Hunger in America” and the Power of Television: Poor People, Physicians, and the Mass Media in the War against Poverty*

\*\*September 27th, 530, Jim Downs at the Rochester Academy of Medicine\*\*

**Working with Primary sources**

Thursday, September 28, 2023 - Archivist Visit – **Meredith Gozo**

Tuesday, October 3, 2023 Librarian Visit – **( Lara Nicosia**)

**Medical Education and Racism and the URMC**

Thursday, October 5, 2023 Read:

Daina Ramey Berry “The Price For Their Pound Of Flesh” Author intro, chapter 6 , epilogue

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 -**Dr Wendy Gonaver**  
Thursday, October 12, 2023 TBD

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 No class Fall break

**Cancer**

Thursday, October 19, 2023

Read Wailoo – *How Cancer Crossed the Color Line*, Intro, Chapters 1-2

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 **Dr Cupertino**

Read <https://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-oped-the-medical-lesson-chadwick-boseman-20200902-qt3jvyujnncqbacxzenu5g6g7i-story.html>

Review <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/understanding/disparities> and watch embedded movie.

Thursday, October 26, 2023 No class. Independent work on primary sources

**Presentation of Group Projects:**

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

**Blood Transfusion, Organ Donation**

Thursday, November 2, 2023 **Dr Laryea**

Read Vanessa Grubb, “Good for Harvesting, Bad for Planting” Health Affairs

Review statistics <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=27>

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

Read Susan Lederer, *Flesh and Blood*, Chapters

**Diabetes**

Thursday, November 9, 2023 **Dr Mahala Schlagman**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/opinion/diabetes-diet-and-shame.html>

Read <https://www.healthline.com/diabetesmine/race-and-diabetes-whats-the-connection#To-close-the-gap-on-disparities,-inclusivity-should-be-a-priority>

Review <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/disparities.html>

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Read Arleen Tuchman, *Diabetes A History of Race & Disease*, Chapters 3, 5 and Epilogue

**Guns, Violence and Public Health**

Thursday, November 16, 2023 Irshad? Visitor on Rochester gun violence

Tuesday, November 21, 2023 Independent work / Jim Downs lecture make up **(no class**)

Thursday, November 23, 2023 Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Read Metzl, Dying of Whiteness, pages 23 -117 and Mike Spies “A Historian’s Revealing Research on Race and Gun Laws”

<https://www.thetrace.org/2015/11/gun-control-race-history-saul-cornell/>

**Mass Incarceration as a public health problem**

Thursday, November 30, 2023

*A Plague of Prisons*, Drucker, Chapters 2, 6; 8, and first 4 pages of chapter 9. Intro (chapter 1) is optional.

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 **Precious Bedell**

Thursday, December 7, 2023 Final Memefest, course wrap up, check ins on papers, outstanding business

Read Heather Ann Thompson *Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History*, JAH

Tuesday, December 12, 2023 Independent work on final papers

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)