

**Introduction to Health Disparities and the
Structural and Social Determinants of Health (M19-580)**

Fall 2022 (August 30, 2022 – December 17, 2022)

Thursdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm Central Time

Location: Richmond Room

INSTRUCTORS

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OFFICE HOURS

By appointment

PREREQUISITES

None

TARGET AUDIENCE

Clinicians, clinicians-in-training, and postdoctoral researchers who are planning to conduct clinical or population health research on health disparities and the structural and social determinants of health.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to explore how structural and social determinants of health (SSDoH) produce and maintain health disparities, and to introduce students to strategies for conducting ethical and impactful health disparities research. There will be a variety of learning modalities, including expert guest lectures to discuss cutting-edge research, key foundational and recent readings related to SSDoH and health disparities, and course discussion. The course will use case studies and a research proposal to help students apply what they've learned to real-life situations. The course will be held in person and will use a combination of whole-class and small-group discussion.

COMPETENCIES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. define health disparities and inequities,
2. explain how social and structural determinants of health – including interpersonal and structural racism – produce and maintain health disparities across each phase of disease development,
3. identify strategies for assessing and addressing health disparities in their own research, and
4. describe the effects of involving community partners in health disparities research,

GRADING, ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES, AND POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS

- Grades will be based on 100 total points.
- All assignments should be uploaded to the Assignments section of Canvas by 9am Central Time on the day they are due.
- *Late assignments will be penalized by 5% each day they are late.*
- We ask that students maintain open communication with the instructors about their needs.
- Detailed instructions for each assignment are located on Canvas in the Assignments section.

Assignment	Description	Due date	Points
Keepers and queries	Students will propose a “keeper” and a “query” for each assigned course reading for 8 of the 10 class sessions that have assigned readings. Full credit will be automatically provided to everyone for the remaining 2 of 10 classes (i.e., 4 points)	Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14	20
Expert interview	Students will (a) interview a researcher about their experience developing and conducting a health disparities research project and (b) write a paper describing lessons-learned (1-2 pages, single-spaced).	Portions of the assignment are due on Weeks 4, 6, and 11	30
The Color of Medicine reflection paper	Students will reflect on the concepts and stories presented in the movie, Color of Medicine: The Story of Homer G. Phillips Hospital (1 page, single-spaced)	Week 8	10
Research proposal	Students will propose a research project that seeks to either (a) understand why a disparity exists or (b) reduce an existing disparity. They will write a paper (3-5 pages, single-spaced).	Portions of the assignment are due on Weeks 3 and 15	30
Research proposal presentation	Students give a 10-minute presentation describing their research proposal to the class	Weeks 15 and 16	10
Total points			100

Grading Scale

A: 90-100 points

B: 80-89 points

C: 70-79 points

Canvas

We will use Canvas to manage our class, access assignment instructions and media articles, and post course-related questions. Canvas can be accessed at <https://mycanvas.wustl.edu/>. Log in to the **Wash U MyCanvas** version (*not* the MD program version) with your WUSTLKey and the class should appear on the homepage.

- All updates and reminders will be posted on Canvas.
- Lecture notes and additional readings and assignment instructions will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester.
- We encourage students to post materials related to the class that they discover in their own time (e.g., a link to a news story about health disparities) to the discussion thread.

Students should post all general questions that may be relevant to others in class to the Discussion thread. Student-specific questions (e.g., related to a grade or absence) should be emailed directly to the instructors.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

We recognize that we are holding this course in a pandemic. The course will be held synchronously and will not be recorded to maintain confidentiality about the ethical issues disclosed and discussed. If you anticipate issues with attendance, deadlines, or completion of assignments, please email the instructors *as soon as possible*. Emails will be answered within 2 business days.

- **Class attendance.** We expect but do not require students to attend class. However, because some content (e.g., guest lectures, discussion) will not be available outside of class time, missing too many classes may mean missing content that is critical to completing assignments correctly. We anticipate that missing more than 3 class sessions may result in a lowered grade.
- **Class participation.** We expect students to make active and meaningful contributions to class discussion. Participation can take many forms, including talking, writing on the walls with dry-erase paint, making anonymous annotations on the Jamboard, making posts to the Canvas discussion board, or emailing questions, comments, or discussion points to instructors before class.
- **Readings assigned for each class should be read ahead of the class.** Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the readings and relate them to case studies, guest lectures, expert interview experiences, and their own research (past, present, and imagined future).

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week # & Date	Topic	Homework Due	Readings Due (click link to access)
Week 1 Sept 1	Introduction to the course; Foundations of health disparities and the social and structural determinants of health	None	Alcaraz KI, et al. Understanding and addressing social determinants to advance cancer health equity in the United States: A blueprint for practice, research, and policy. CA Cancer J Clin. 2020. Jones CP. Invited commentary: "race," racism, and the practice of epidemiology. Am J Epidemiol. 2001.

Week 2 Sept 8	Etiology	Keeper & Query	<p>Phelan JC, Link BG. Is racism a fundamental cause of inequalities in health. Annu Rev Sociol. 2015.</p> <p>Ekenga CC, et al. Cancer risk from air toxics in relation to neighborhood isolation and sociodemographic characteristics: A spatial analysis of the St. Louis metropolitan area, USA. Environmental research. 2019.</p>
Week 3 Sept 15	Detection and diagnosis	<p>Keeper & Query</p> <p>Research proposal, part 1: Provide instructors with the topic you will be writing about.</p>	<p>Kurani SS, et al. Association of Neighborhood Measures of Social Determinants of Health With Breast, Cervical, and Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates in the US Midwest. JAMA Netw Open. 2020.</p> <p>Hunleth JM et al. Beyond Adherence: Health Care Disparities and the Struggle to Get Screened for Colon Cancer. Qual Health Res. 2016.</p>
Week 4 Sept 22	Prevention	<p>Keeper & Query</p> <p>Expert interview, part 1: Provide instructors with the name of the scientist being interviewed and the date the interview will be held.</p>	<p>Weise N, et al. Disparities in germline testing among racial minorities with prostate cancer. Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases. 2021.</p> <p>Kreuter MW, et al. Unmet basic needs and health intervention effectiveness in low-income populations. Preventive medicine. 2016.</p>
Week 5 Sept 29	Treatment and survival	Keeper & Query	<p>Jou K et al. Eliciting the Social Determinants of Cancer Prevention and Control in the Catchment of an Urban Cancer Center. Ethn Dis. 2021.</p> <p>Lam MB et al. Medicaid Expansion and Mortality Among Patients With Breast, Lung, and Colorectal Cancer. JAMA Netw Open. 2020</p>
Week 6 Oct 6	Survivorship and end of life	<p>Keeper & Query</p> <p>Expert interview, part 2: Turn in the interview questions</p>	<p>Parks CA et al. A Scoping Review of Food Insecurity and Related Factors among Cancer Survivors. Nutrients. 2022.</p>

		along with the citation(s) for the peer-reviewed article(s) you read to inform the development of the questions.	Soto Perez de Celis E et al. Patient Navigation to Improve Early Access to Supportive Care for Patients with Advanced Cancer in Resource-Limited Settings: A Randomized Controlled Trial. Oncologist. 2021.
Week 7 Oct 13	The Color of Medicine	View and discuss video during class	Savage, N. North St. Louis residents oppose naming medical center for historic Black hospital. St. Louis Public Radio 2021.
Week 8 Oct 20	Community-based participatory research (CBPR) and community engaged research (CER)	The Color of Medicine reflection papers	Sanders Thompson VL et al. Strategies of community engagement in research: definitions and classifications. Transl Behav Med. 2021. Mikesell L, Bromley E, Khodyakov D. Ethical community-engaged research: a literature review. Am J Public Health. 2013.
Week 9 Oct 27	CBPR ethical considerations – study design	Keeper & Query	Baumann AA, Cabassa LJ. Reframing implementation science to address inequities in healthcare delivery. BMC Health Serv Res. 2020. Vyas DA, Eisenstein LG, Jones DS. Hidden in Plain Sight - Reconsidering the Use of Race Correction in Clinical Algorithms. N Engl J Med. 2020.
Week 10 Nov 3	CBPR ethical considerations – study development and conduct	Keeper & Query	Peterson A, et al. The Health Equity Framework: A Science- and Justice-Based Model for Public Health Researchers and Practitioners. Health Promotion Practice. 2021. Colditz GA, et al. Translating science to practice: community and academic perspectives. J Public Health Manag Pract. 2008.
Week 11 Nov 10	CBPR ethical considerations – study reporting	Keeper & Query Expert interview, part 3: Turn in the expert interview paper.	Flanagin A, Frey T, Christiansen SL, AMA Manual of Style Committee. Updated Guidance on the Reporting of Race and Ethnicity in Medical and Science Journals. JAMA. 2021.

			Moodie S. Power, rights, respect and data ownership in academic research with indigenous peoples. Environ Res. 2010.
Week 12 Nov 17	Addressing SDOH; Perspectives on community engagement in research	Keeper & Query	Komaie G, et al. Training Community Members in Public Health Research: Development and Implementation of a Community Participatory Research Pilot Project. Health Equity. 2018.
Week 13 Nov 24	No class - Thanksgiving		
Week 14 Dec 1	Developing and maintaining a research team	Keeper & Query	Bennett LM, Gadlin H. Collaboration and team science: from theory to practice. J Investig Med. 2012. Heckert A, Forsythe LP, Carman KL, Frank L, Hemphill R, Elstad EA, Esmail L, Lesch JK. Researchers, patients, and other stakeholders' perspectives on challenges to and strategies for engagement. Res Involv Engagem. 2020.
Week 15 Dec 8	Class presentations	Research proposal, part 2: Written proposals Research proposal, part 3: Research proposal presentations	
Week 16 Dec 15	Class presentations	Research proposal, part 3: Research proposal presentations	

DROP DATES

You may drop for any reason during the course of the semester. However, you may only receive a partial or no tuition reimbursement depending upon how far into the semester you drop the course. See the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Late withdrawals will appear on your transcript as a withdrawal.

MPHS POLICIES

Academic Policy Guidelines:

Guidelines regarding MPHS course registration and enrollment, grades, tuition obligation, and academic leave are consolidated in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Please review this document.

Guidelines for Academic and Non-Academic Transgressions:

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By registering for this course, you have agreed to the terms of the **MPHS Academic Integrity Policy**, outlined below and in more detail in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Please review this policy before submitting your first graded assignment.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Policy:

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may lead to probation, suspension, or dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism (the use of someone else's ideas, statements, or approaches without proper citation). Academic dishonesty also includes copying information from another student, submitting work from a previous class for a new grade without prior approval from your instructor, cheating on exams, etc. You are responsible for reviewing [WashU's academic integrity resources](#) to become aware of all the actions that constitute academic dishonesty.
- All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Registrar for investigation and potential disciplinary action. In addition, the instructor will make an independent decision about the student's grade on any assignment in question. The MPHS process regarding academic dishonesty is described in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#)

DISABILITY RESOURCES

It is the goal of Washington University to assist students with disabilities in removing the barriers their disabilities may pose and provide support in facing the challenge of pursuing an education at Washington University.

Washington University recognizes and accepts its professional, legal and moral responsibility to avoid discrimination in the acceptance and education of qualified students with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodations to such students consistent with the principles embodied in the law. These guidelines apply to students seeking admittance as well as to those who become disabled while they are enrolled.

Washington University makes every effort to insure that all qualified applicants and students can participate in and take full advantage of all programs and opportunities offered within the university. Washington University encourages and gives full consideration to all applicants for admission. Washington University does not discriminate in access to its programs and activities on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, color or national origin.

To learn more about services provided to students with disabilities, initiate the process of formal documentation and/or to arrange for accommodations, please review the [Disability Resources](#) for the Med School at the start of the course.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

You can also speak confidentially and learn about available resources by contacting [Dr. Gladys Smith, PhD](#), Sexual Violence Prevention Therapist and Licensed Psychologist at the Medical Campus, (314) 362-2404. Additionally, you can report incidents to the Office of Student Affairs or by contacting WUSM Protective Services 314-362-4357 or your local law enforcement agency.

BIAS RESOURCES

The University has a process through which students and staff who have experienced or witnessed bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. For details see: diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/.

Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The DEI Training Team designs, facilitates and leads diversity education programming for faculty, staff and students on a wide range of topics including: creating a climate of respect, the value of diversity and the role of biases in our day-to-day lives.

diversity.med.wustl.edu/training/

The Office of Diversity Programs promotes diversity among and prepares medical students to lead in a global society. A priority for the Office of Diversity Programs is to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures and identities.

mddiversity.wustl.edu/

The Diversity and Inclusion Student Council promotes an inclusive campus environment for all School of Medicine students.

sites.wustl.edu/disc/

The Office for International Students and Scholars embraces the university's mission of welcoming promising students from around the world.

wumma.wustl.edu/