ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND GENDER ISSUES IN AMERICA’S HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

COURSE OVERVIEW

The goals of this class are to introduce students to issues involving race and ethnicity, culture and gender as they relate to health and health care access in the United States. The instructional method will be lecture and class participation. Lectures will focus on health issues involving African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Latinx, European and Native Americans, women and members of the LGBTQ communities. A number of the lectures will be presented by experts in their respective areas of practice.

In addition to health issues, this course will provide the student with an understanding of policy issues confronted by providers in health delivery. The public policy process will be addressed, focusing specifically on how advocacy groups, health care providers, researchers, and community groups work toward improving health.

The course will incorporate readings from academic journals, periodicals, as well as guest speakers, documentaries, media clips, in-class discussion to explore these questions together. While our objectives will be focused on the themes and inquiries detailed above, additional course outcomes will include the development of your critical analytical, writing, speaking, and presentation skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To develop a strong understanding of

- The role of history, power, privilege and structural inequality in producing health inequities.
- The contexts of gender, race, poverty, history, migration and culture in designing interventions within public health systems.
- The strategies policymakers utilize to improve the health and health care access of all Americans.

ABOUT ME

I am Executive Director of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON). Established in 1976, A3PCON is a coalition of over 40 community-based organizations and individual supporters who advocate for the rights and needs of the Asian Pacific American (API) community in the greater Los Angeles area, with particular focus on low-income, immigrant, refugee and other vulnerable populations. As such, A3PCON serves and represents the 1.5 million APIs in Southern California.

From November 2010 to June 2016, I was Executive Director of South Asian Network (SAN). SAN is a community-based organization dedicated to advancing the health, well-
being and civil rights of South Asians in Southern California. Located in Artesia, California, SAN serves the needs of individuals of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepalese and Sri Lankan descent in the areas of civil rights, violence prevention and health and health care access. On April 24, 2014, I received the White House Champions of Change award for my efforts to improve health care access for South Asian Americans.

Before my time at SAN, I served as Senior Attorney at the National Health Law Program (NHeLP) for eleven years. At NHeLP, I worked to improve access to quality health care for low-income individuals, authoring numerous articles, reports and training materials and provided legal assistance and training to hundreds of health attorneys and advocates across the country. My work at SAN and NHeLP has been featured in numerous publications, including the LA Times, San Francisco Chronicle and NPR and I have been a regular contributor to Huffington Post. Over the past twenty years, I have taught classes on health care access, civil rights and policy advocacy at Stanford Law and Medical Schools, University of California at Los Angeles and University of Southern California. I currently serve as Lecturer at UCLA in the Asian American Studies Department.

I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Certificate in Women’s Studies from Duke University and a Juris Doctor degree from Boston University School of Law. I live in Los Angeles with my daughters Vaishali and Meghana and my husband Shai Halbe.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Course Readings (REQUIRED):**

R. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
D. Tweedy, *Black Man in a White Coat*

and weekly assignments

**Course Grading.** The final grade is based on the following:

- Attendance, engagement in group discussions, in-class quizzes, brief assignments – 10%
- Journal – 20%
- Advocacy Project – 15%
- Podcast – 20%
- Final Exam – 35%
GENERAL POLICIES

Creating a Learning Community

“A learning community is a safe yet challenging environment composed of people who support each other as they explore their differences. Learning and community - both elements of the term are important. Only by learning can people grow. And only when provided a safe environment – in which mistakes are acceptable – can people support each other and draw on each other’s different experiences to expand their own knowledge and capabilities.” (Source: Wasserman & Doran, 1999 in Creating Inclusive Learning Communities)

In order for us to build a respectful learning environment where everyone feels comfortable to voice their thoughts, here are a few guidelines for consideration:

1. Make a commitment to your learning and the group’s development as a whole.
2. Step forward, step back: create space for everyone to share.
3. Expect and be willing to explore differences in experience and thought.

If you ever feel uncomfortable in class, please speak with me during office hours so we can figure out the best solution to ensure that everyone is able to participate.

Due Dates

Papers and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Assignments that are turned in late will be penalized a third of a letter grade for each half day it is late. A paper will not be accepted once it is more than one week late. Please let me know if you require any accommodations and I will be happy to provide them.

Center for Accessible Education

UCLA’s Center for Accessible Education (CAE) facilitates academic accommodations for regularly enrolled, matriculating students with disabilities. The CAE provides access to the numerous educational opportunities available to students on our campus and empowers students to realize their academic potential.

To obtain disability-related accommodations and services through the CAE, students should complete a Request for Services form and upload appropriate documentation.

Class Attendance and Participation

Students should attend all class meetings, be on time, and be prepared to participate on a substantive and analytic level in discussions of the readings and topics. This means that the reading assignment for each class date in the schedule should be completed before class. Excessive tardiness or absences will negatively affect your grade. You are responsible for getting notes from classmates when you are absent. If you need to be
absent from class to participate in a religious observance, please provide a written list of the dates you will need to be absent by the second day of class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction and overview of course topics

R. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, What is Health Equity (May 2017)
https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2017/05/what-is-health-equity-.html

CPeHN, The Landscape of Opportunity: Cultivating Health Equity in California

Week 2: African American Health and Health Care Access

Watch on your own: “Miss Evers’ Boys”

Finish reading R. Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

Kaiser Family Foundation, Health and Health Care for Blacks in the United States

Centers for Disease Control, African American Health: Creating Equal Opportunities for Health

JOURNAL ENTRIES 1 AND 2 DUE 4/11/19 AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

Week 3: Native American and European American Health and Health Care Access

Start reading A. Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
Week 4: **Latinx Health and Health Care Access**

Kaiser Family Foundation, Health and Access to Care Among Hispanics


Kaiser Family Foundation, Health and Health Care for Hispanics in the United States


Kaiser Family Foundation, The Role of Language in Health Care Access and Utilization for Insured Hispanic Adults

Kaiser Family Foundation, Living in an Immigrant Family in America: How Fear, and Toxic Stress are Affecting Daily Life, Well-Being & Health


Vision Y Compromiso, The Promotor Model: A Model for Building Healthy Communities


JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE

Week 5: **Asian American and Pacific Islander Health and Health Care Access**

Start reading D. Tweedy, *Black Doctor in a White Coat*

Kaiser Family Foundation, Health and Health Care for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Asian American Profile


ADVOCACY PROJECTS DUE

Week 6: **Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Health Care**

APIAHF, Connecting Limited English Proficient Individuals to Health Care Services


Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Cultural Competence in Health Care: Is it Important for People with Chronic Illnesses (Feb 2004)
Week 7: Women’s Access to Health Care

Office of Research on Women’s Health, How Sex and Gender Influence Health and Disease


NHeLP, Medicaid and Reproductive Justice

https://healthlaw.org/resource/fact-sheet-medicaid-reproductive-justice/


Week 8: LGBTQ Communities and Health Access

Healthy People 2020, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health


Center for American Progress, Discrimination Prevents LGBTQ People from Accessing Health Care


NHeLP, Protections for Transgender Individuals in Health Care Settings


NHeLP, The Vital Fight for Behavioral Health Parity for LGBTQ People
PODCAST DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS (Thursday, May 23)

**Week 9: Race, Gender and the Health Care Workforce**


"Credentials Don't Shield Doctors, Nurses from Bias," *WebMD*, Octo.18, 2017


“Dr. Paid Less: An Old Title Still Fits Female Physicians,” *New York Times* (July 12, 2016)


**Week 10: Complete Remaining Topics/Review**

Kaiser Family Foundation, Key Facts about Health and Health Care by Race and Ethnicity (June 2016)

FINAL JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE

Week 11: Finals Week

TAKE HOME FINAL DUE at 4pm in my box in Asian American Studies Department office and through TurnItIn