

For HDSLCL distribution only

**EPID-615-901: Public Health Issues & Interventions in Communities of Color
Fall 2007**

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Rowe, Assistant Professor

Department of African American Studies

Office: Starke House

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Office Hours: Thursdays at 3:00pm and by appointment

GUEST LECTURER:

Dr. Royster, MD, MPH, FACPM

Director of Minority Health & Public Health Policy

Virginia Department of Health

TIME AND PLACE:

5:00pm-7:50pm, Thursdays

Grant House, Room 314

1008 East Clay Street

*Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree—
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*

MPH PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the MPH Program at Virginia Commonwealth University is to promote health and well-being through commitment to public health education, excellence in research, and dedication to community service.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of critical public health-related issues and intervention strategies that may influence life chances and disease susceptibility among different ethnic or racially identified groups. Additionally, time will be devoted to a careful examination of certain medically underserved populations in the United States. The class will further be enhanced by periodic guest lectures by Dr. Michael Royster, Director of Minority Health and Public Health Policy for the Virginia Department of Health particularly around his work in expanding Virginia's efforts in eliminating health inequities for all citizens.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to build critical thinking skills by exploring the complexities of public health issues and intervention strategies particularly as they involve vulnerable populations and communities of color.

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Describe and provide a socio-economic picture of the U.S. population to include race, ethnicity, and cultural attributes.
- 2) Identify and describe certain political, social, cultural, economic and environmental barriers facing population groups in communities of color in the U.S and their health effects.
- 3) Present examples of best practices and intervention strategies designed to mitigate and eliminate health inequities among different ethnic groups.
- 4) Describe key health indicators as measures of disease burden and health outcomes in communities of color.
- 5) Identify and discuss the impact of cultural myths and cultural bound syndromes that may pose a barrier to improved health status.
- 6) Identify and describe key components of the health policymaking process in the U.S.
- 7) Elucidate the link between social justice and health

EXPECTED OUTCOME:

- 1) Improve students' knowledge and understanding of health status indicators.
- 2) Equip students with the ability to distinguish the cause and effects of health status differences among identified ethnic groups.
- 3) Provide students with the requisite analytic tools essential to prepare a competitive research proposal.
- 4) Describe the impact of social, cultural, economic, demographic and political factors that relate to public health.
- 5) Equip students with the ability to recognize and describe the burden of disease caused by certain practices exhibited by individuals of color.
- 6) Identify and describe determinants of health and health status.
- 7) Describe selected health policies and their impact on health outcomes.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS:

1. Continually review course syllabus throughout the semester.
2. Complete all assignments in a timely manner.
3. In-class participation is an essential part of the student's evaluation.
4. Outside readings and individual research are required.
5. Always be prepared.
6. Consult with the instructor timely for any assistance required.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Weekly Discussion of Readings**—Each student will select and sign-up for a week in which they will provide **5 questions** and lead a class discussion about the week's readings. This activity will be worth **25 points or 25%** of your final grade. A copy of the week's 5 questions must be turned in to the professor prior to the discussion group. All students are expected to do all of the weekly readings and participate in the week's discussion.
2. **Mid-Term Exam:** The Mid-Term will consist of short answer, multiple choice, and 1 essay question. It will be based on the readings covered thus far, and subsequent lectures. The mid-term will be worth **25 points or 25%** of your grade. The mid-term will be on **Thursday, October 18th**. **No make-up exams will be given except for a legitimate medical excuse or personal emergency (be prepared to document these).**
3. **Peer Review Panel**—Each student will identify an issue of importance to the health of at least one special population group, develop and present a research proposal that includes an intervention strategy. Research proposals will follow the current NIH format—NIH guidelines will be provided by the instructor. Students should contact the instructor for approval of their research proposal before proceeding. Students will select a date (either November 29th or December 6th) to present their proposal to the group. You will be responsible for providing a draft of your proposal to the instructor and your other class mates one week prior to your presentation. The group will give you feedback on your proposal after your presentation. The class will discuss details of this aspect of the course throughout the semester. Peer Review Panel Discussions will be worth **25 points or 25%** of your grade.
4. **Research Proposal**—Each student will submit a final research proposal using current NIH guidelines. A copy of these guidelines is available on blackboard. **Final Research Proposals are due via e-mail attachment by 5pm on Thursday, December 13th. NO LATE PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED!!!!** Research Proposals must will adhere to NIH guidelines and must be ordered as follows 1) Cover Sheet 2) Budget Request (containing key personnel and justifications—a copy of this form is on blackboard) 3) Research Plan and Bibliography 4) Curriculum Vitae. A maximum of 10-double spaced pages, using a sans serif font such as Ariel or Helvetica in a size not smaller than 12 points and maintain at least 1 inch margins all around. Curriculum Vitae should be in the NIH Style (a copy of a blank form is available on Blackboard) and contain education and professional background and publications pertinent to the project. Completed Research Proposals will be worth **25 points or 25%** of your final grade.

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5. **Important Note**—Please disconnect and put away pagers, cellular telephones and similar devices during the lecture. Appropriate and courteous classroom decorum is expected. Please arrive to class on time, and note that I consider it discourteous when someone leaves class without prior notice or checking with me in advance.
6. **The VCU Honor System:** All students are subject to the policies and regulations of the **VCU Honor Code**. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the honor system as presented in the *Schedule of Classes*, the *VCU Resource Guide*, and the *Undergraduate Bulletin*, or on the *VCU web site* at: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html> regarding exams, assignments, and academic honesty. Violators will be subject to university penalties.
7. **Disability Accommodations:** SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require that VCU provide an "academic adjustment" and/or a "reasonable accommodation" to any individual who advises us of a physical and/or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or accommodation, arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience. Additionally, if your coursework requires you to work in a lab environment, you should advise the instructor or department chairperson of any concerns you may have regarding safety issues related to your limitation(s). This statement applies not only to this course but also to every other course in this University.

GRADING SCALE:

100-92 points (%) =A:

Is earned when an assignment meets all requirements. This grade demonstrates exceptional insight, creativity and originality. An assignment that meets this criteria will be well conceptualized and demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the literature, issues and impact. The effort should include a thoughtful analysis. The student's work must be well organized, well-written and properly edited (proofed and spell-checked), well-articulated (in the case of oral presentations-you will keep the interest of the audience and discuss your topic in a systematic and engaging manner), and follow specified guidelines.

91-82 points (%) =B:

Is earned when an assignment meets all requirements but fails to demonstrate exceptional insight, creativity and originality. The student's work will be well-organized, properly edited and meet presentation guidelines.

81-70 points (%) =C:

Is earned when an assignment fails to meet part of the requirements and demonstrates an average grasp of related concepts, issues and scholarship.

Below 70 points (%) =D:

Is earned when an assignment fails to meet several parts of the requirements and does not demonstrate a grasp of the issue, and is poorly written or presented. Please **speak** with the Instructor immediately should you have questions or concerns about any assignment or course requirements.

REQUIRED TEXTS & WEEKLY READINGS: (books are available at **the MCV Campus Bookstore**)

- 1) David Satcher & Rubens Pamies (2005) *Multicultural Medicine and Health Disparities*~also available through VCU Libraries as an e-book at: <http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=57149>
- 2) Richard Hofrichter (2003) *Health Social Justice: Politics, Ideology & Inequity in the Distribution of Disease*.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

□ Week 1

Thursday, August 23rd

Theme: History of Public Health

Activities: Introductions, Overview of Course Syllabus; Sign-up for Weekly Readings Group Leaders

There will be no reading assignment before the first class.

□ **Week 2**

Thursday, August 30th

Theme: Culturally Specific Public Health Interventions

Guest Lecturer: *Dr. Aashir Nasim—“The Impact of Culturally Protective Factors on Substance Use”*

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 26-29

□ **Week 3**

Thursday, September 6th

Theme: Health–Care Disparities Across the Life Span

Guest Lecturer: *Katherine Cloud-Borgstedt, Adult Social Services—“Elderly Abuse”*

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 1-6

□ **Week 4**

Thursday, September 13th

Theme: The Disparate Burden of Disease

Lecture: Obesity: Perspectives from African American Women

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 7-12

□ **Week 5**

Thursday, September 20th

Theme: The Disparate Burden of Disease

Lecture: Mental Health: Culture, Race, & Ethnicity

Film: “The Deadly Deception” (Nova video about the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment)

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 13-20

□ **Week 6**

Thursday, September 27th

Theme: Issues in Health-Care Policy & Delivery

Guest Lecturer: *Fatima Sarif, Coordinator for Cultural & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) at VDH—“Cultural Competency”*

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 21-25

IOM Report on Unequal Treatment: The Executive Summary (available on Blackboard or class handout)

□ **Week 7**

Thursday, October 4th

Theme: Issues in Health-Care Policy and Delivery

Guest Lecturer: *Dr. Royster, “Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)”*

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion: *(Available on Blackboard or class handout)*

1) Israel, B. et al. 2005. “Community-based Participatory Research: Lessons Learned from the Centers for Children’s Environmental Health & Disease Prevention Research.” *Environmental Health Perspectives.* 113 (10): 1463-1469.

2) Israel, Barbara, et al. 2001. “Community-based Participatory Research: Policy Recommendations for Promoting a Partnership Approach in Health Research.” In *Education for Health: Change In Learning & Practice.* 14(2): 182-197

3) Minkler, Meredith 2004. “Ethical Challenges for the “Outsider” Researcher in CBPR.” *Health Education & Behavior.* 31(6): 684-697.

□ **Week 8**

Thursday, October 11th

Theme: Issues in Health-Care Policy and Delivery

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Guest Lecturer: Nichole Martin, Supervisor--Community Health & Prevention at VDH "Faith Based Initiatives"

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Satcher & Pamies—Chapters 30-34

□ **Week 9**

Thursday, October 18th

MID-TERM EXAM!!!!

□ **Week 10**

Thursday, October 25th o

Theme: Social Forces Exacerbating Health Inequities

Guest Lecturer: *Dr. Royster* "Race, Gender, Class & Health Disparities"

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Hofrichter—Chapters 2, 3, 4, 8, 9

□ **Week 11**

Thursday, November 1st

Theme: Health Research Proposals

Lecture: The IRB Process

Activity: Writing Research Proposals

**Last Day to Withdrawn from a Class with a Grade of "W" is Friday, November 2nd*

□ **Week 12**

Thursday, November 8th

Theme: Theory, Ideology, & Politics: Critical Perspectives

Guest Lecturer: *Dr. Royster*, "Public Health & Social Justice"

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Hofrichter—Chapters 10, 13, 17, 18, 19

□ **Week 13**

Thursday, November 15th

Theme: Strategies: Perspectives on Social Policy & Practice

Film: Salud! (documentary about health care system in Cuba)

Weekly Readings for Class Discussion:

Hofrichter—Chapters 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

□ **Week 14**

Thursday, November 22nd

NO CLASS—UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY—THANKSGIVING!!!

□ **Week 15**

Thursday, November 29th

Theme: Class Presentations

Activity: Class Presentations & Peer Review Panels

□ **Week 16**

Thursday, December 6th

Theme: Class Presentations

Activity: Class Presentations & Peer Review Panels

LAST DAY OF CLASS—COURSE EVALUATIONS—FINAL COPY OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE via E-MAIL ATTACHMENT BY 5PM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13TH

***note this syllabus is subject to change**

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