

First Year Seminar Proposal Form

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1. **Title and Description:** “Roots of Inequity in Public Health”. This FYS course provides an opportunity for students to explore, discuss, and critically appraise past and current sources of institutional racism, systemic oppression, and power imbalances that have shaped perpetuation of health disparities among traditionally and historically marginalized groups. The course focuses on strategies for repairing relationships and resolving mistrust in the health care system, and development of action plans to nurture equitable practices in public health. Reflective writing assignments and development of concise oral presentations are fundamental to this course.

2. **Format:** This course follows a critical and transformational pedagogical approach that awakens students’ critical consciousness, encourages interrogation of conventional assumptions, and nurtures positive cognitive dissonance via consumption of scholarly literature, written reflection assignments, oral presentations, and robust classroom discussions. The instructor will shepherd the learning process by assigning key readings; supporting a “safe space” for students to engage; moderating classroom discussions; and guiding students in acquiring new knowledge and enhancing critical writing and oral presentation skills. Classes will focus on group discussion and student presentations. Reflective writing will bolster learning between class sessions.

3. **Content:** The course will follow a modified version of a highly reputable and approachable curriculum developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Content was developed to prepare future public health practitioners to confront root causes of inequity, and focuses on exploration of systems of inequity in the distribution of health disparities; strategizing effective ways to intervene on root causes of inequity; and forming relationships with peers, communities, and organizations to elevate the voices and agency of marginalized groups. Overview of course topics (**bold**) and selected readings/videos/assignments (*italicized*):

1. **Introduction to the Roots of Health Inequity**, an exploration of social determinants of health and equity; assessing how and whether change occurs within the culture of communities and organizations; and navigating systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

1.1. **The Gardener’s Tale**

- a. **Watch:** [The Cliff of Good Health & The Gardener’s Tale, Dr. Camara Jones](#)
- b. **Read:** Jones, C. (2000). [Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener’s Tale](#). *American Journal of Public Health*.
- c. **Write & Report:** Reflect on the allegory of the Gardener’s Tale
- d. **Discuss:** How do we change the garden?

1.2. **Community Engagement**

- a. **Read:** Goodman, R., et al.(1998). [“Identifying and Defining the Dimensions of Community Capacity to Provide a Basis for Measurement”](#) *Health Education and Behavior*.
- b. **Read:** NY Times. (2020). [“Pollution is killing Black Americans: This community fought back.”](#)
- c. **Write:** Reflect on unearned privilege and how to leverage it for equity
- d. **Discuss:** How can communities drive public health initiatives?

2. **“Frames” and Forces that Influence Public Health Practice**, an exploration of the “mental models” or “frames” that influence personal/social perspectives on health.

- 2.1. What is a Frame?**
- Watch:** American Medical Association, "[Prioritizing Equity: Narratives and Language](#)."
 - Read:** Bhatia et al., "[Using Our Voice: Forging a Public Health Practice for Social Justice](#)".
 - Write & Report:** Reflect on personal mental models and frames
 - Discuss:** How do we challenge mental models of contemporary public health
- 2.2. Decoding Language**
- Read:** Krieger, N. (2006). "[Researching Critical Questions on Social Justice and Public Health: An Ecosocial Perspective](#)," In Social Injustice and Public Health, Oxford Univ Press.
 - Watch:** "[Water Rights and Diabetes in Arizona](#)" & "[Diabetes Among Native Americans](#)"
 - Write:** Reflect on how language choice affects meaning
 - Discuss:** How do we decode language to prioritize equity?
- 2.3. Public Health Frames & Strategic Action in Public Health Deliberation**
- Read:** Wallack & Lawrence. (2005). [Tackling Health Inequities through Public Health Practice](#). American Journal of Public Health, 95, 567-70.
 - Write & Report:** Reflect on the systems that drive differential health outcomes
 - Discuss:** How do we align frames for strategic action?
- 3. Connecting the Past and the Present to Inform a More Equitable Future**, an exploration of historical traumas and transformations that have shaped disparities over the last 150 years.
- 3.1. Learning from History**
- Read:** Fairchild. "[The exodus of public health: What history can tell us about the future](#)." AJPH.
 - Watch & Read:** "[Wicked Silence](#)," Laura Scott. (2015). Documentary Film Program, WFU.
 - Write:** Reflect on historical traumas that shaped contemporary health
 - Discuss:** Learning from the past to promote a more equitable future
- 3.2. Legacies of Social Injustice:**
- Read:** Krieger, N., and Birn, A-E. (1998). "[A vision of social justice as the foundation of public health: Commemorating 150 years of the spirit of 1848](#)." AJPH.
 - Write & Report:** Timeline of Social Injustice and Public Health: 1850-Present
 - Discuss:** How do these legacies live on; How do we overcome them?
- 4. Root Causes of Health Inequity**, an examination of class and classism, race and racism, sex and sexism, gender and genderism, and the socio-cultural factors.
- 4.1. Class Oppression**
- Watch & Read:** Richard Wolff, "[How Class Works](#)." "[Foreclosures can make you sick](#)."
 - Write:** Reflect on the implications of class oppression for well-being
 - Discuss:** How does class oppression affect health?
- 4.2. Racism**
- Read:** Griffith, et al (2008). "[Racism in Organizations](#)." Journal of Community Psychology.
 - Watch:** "[Justice on the table](#)," and "[The House We Live In](#)"
 - Write & Report:** Reflect on race as a system of power and a public health crisis
 - Discuss:** How do we dismantle systemic and institutionalized racism?
- 4.3. Gender Inequity**
- Watch:** Portia Wu, "[Women and Workforce Fairness Issues](#)"
 - Read:** Sen, G. "[Unequal, Unfair, Ineffective and Inefficient: Gender Inequity in Health](#)."
 - Write & Report:** Reflect on experiences with gender inequity
 - Discuss:** Gender and relations of power
- 5. The Principles of Social Justice and Relationship Repair**; an examination of the principles of social justice; frameworks and strategies for advancing equity-relevant narratives.
- 5.1. What is Social Justice?**
- Read/Watch:** "[Health equity and social justice](#)."
 - Read:** Young, I. M. (2014). "[Five Faces of Oppression](#)."
 - Write & Report:** Reflect on the Five Faces of Oppression

d. **Discuss:** *Forms of oppression and distributive injustices*

5.2. Tackling Causes of Social Justice

a. **Read:** Wallack L. [Building a Social Justice Narrative for Public Health](#). *Health Educ Behav*.

b. **Read:** Sotero, M. (2006). "[A Conceptual Model of Historical Trauma](#)." *JHDRP*, 1(1): 93–108.

c. **Write & Report:** *Reflect on intergenerational trauma*

d. **Discuss:** *Building a social justice narrative for public health*

5.3. Developing Strategies

a. **Read:** Carroll, J., & Reisel, D. (2018). [Introducing restorative practice in healthcare settings](#).

b. **Watch:** "[Prioritizing equity spotlight series: Beyond an apology to restorative justice](#)."

c. **Write & Report:** *Reflect on restorative and remedial justice*

d. **Discuss:** *How do we create healing after harm?*

6. Shaping and Sharing a New Public Health Narrative; an examination of dominant public health narratives; identification and clarification of how to counter dominant worldviews.

6.1. Dominant Narratives in Public Health

a. **Read:** Yearby, (2022). "[Structural racism in historical and modern US health care policy](#)."

b. **Watch:** *California Newsreel*. (2008). "[Unnatural Causes: is inequality making us sick?](#)"

c. **Write & Report:** *Opioid crisis; Flint Water Poisoning; Mass Incarceration*

d. **Discuss:** *How do public narratives and privilege affect public health?*

6.2. Interrogating, Subverting, and Reclaiming Public Narratives

a. **Read:** Jensen, R. (2011). "[The anguish of the American dream](#)."

b. **Read:** *The Opportunity Agenda*. (2015). "[Shifting the narrative on poverty](#)."

c. **Watch:** [Dr. Aletha Maybank, MD, MPH, on the AMA's work to advance health equity](#). (2022).

d. **Write & Report:** *Group strategies and action plans for health equity*

e. **Discuss:** *How do we subvert dominant public narratives?*

4. **Assignments and Evaluation of Students:** For each unit of material, students will review selected materials and prepare: written reflections to critically assess materials, peer-led group discussion guides, and IGNITE-style presentations to concisely convey critical analyses to their peers. Written and oral presentation assignments also will include a historical timeline of health equity relevant events and a final group-based strategic action plan for advancing equity at multiple system levels.

5. **Outcomes and Assessment:** This class will follow the four learning outcomes for all FYS courses.

1) *Read increasingly sophisticated text critically*—Students will critically analyze scholarly literature and media, and will receive guidance to critically analyze texts and build concise, cogent arguments.

2) *Pose and respond to complex issues*—Students will review selected materials outside of class, reflect and prepare assignments, and spend class time sharing oral presentations and engaging in group discussion. 3) *Identify, analyze, interpret and evaluate different points of view*—Students will discuss and debate issues while researching, analyzing, and formulating their own conclusions. 4)

Construct cogent arguments in both written and oral form—Written reflections, development of concise oral presentations, and creation of strategic actions plans are fundamental for this course.

6. **Schedule:** I plan to teach this FYS in the Fall and/or Spring as needed (starting Spring 2023), preferably one section per semester; twice a week for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

7. **Internal or External Support:** There is no internal or external support needed.

8. **Synopsis for Dissemination:** This FYS course will explore, critically appraise, and discuss roots of health inequity, sources and systems of oppression that perpetuate various health disparities among historically and traditionally marginalized populations, and development of intentional strategies to advance equity within and across levels of society.