

# ETHN 142: Race, Medicine and Global Inequality

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## Instructor

Dr. Kianna Middleton  
(she/her)

## Email

[kmmiddleton@ucsd.edu](mailto:kmmiddleton@ucsd.edu)

## Course Meeting Details

MWF 10-10:50am,  
Warren West ([Map](#))

## Virtual Office Hours

Wednesdays, 1-2:30pm  
(appointment only)

## Course Overview

Welcome to *ETHN 142: Race, Medicine and Global Inequality*. Over the quarter we will scrutinize inequalities in medicine through various texts including scholarly medical articles, news articles, blogs and social media posts. We will delve into the history of medical practices and examine the creation of medical knowledge with attention to the ways in which race (and sexuality, gender, disability) are central. Medicine has a violent history. Racial stereotypes and myths (like racial differences in lung capacity and pain tolerance) haunt medicine, and it will be our job this quarter to learn about the origins of these falsities and the current impact in medicine. Moreover, we will familiarize ourselves with liberatory medicine and movements who are dedicated to antiracist medicine. By the end of the quarter, we will develop projects that share resources about medical inequalities, general health education, and new definitions of “medicine” and “health,” to others as a part of community care. It is my hope that class functions as a space where we can discuss the importance of medicine (access, practices, education), its history of racism and violence, and envision better medical futures.

## Course Learning Objectives

1. We will study shifting definitions of medicine and work together to expand what counts as medicine, practice, and knowledge.
2. We will engage a variety of sources (some scholarly, some not) about medicine and inequality that dismantle the belief that medicine (and the creation of medical knowledge) is exclusive to a particular class, race, community, or authoritative voice.
3. We will be able to better recognize racism (and (hetero)sexism, ableism) and health disparities in medicine and challenge misused and/or outdated beliefs about medicine and health.
4. We will familiarize ourselves with current movements in liberatory, intersectional, antiracist medicine.
5. We will work as a class and in small groups to create resources (zines, social media accounts, websites, recordings) about medicine, health, and wellness to share with others.

## Course Materials

All texts for this course will be available for free and electronically. Readings will be posted to Canvas and can be found in the weekly modules tab. Note: I have made PDFs available when possible. For other readings, links are included for download. If you are off campus, you may need to use UCSD's VPN services [here](#) to access readings. Please let me know if you have any difficulties accessing course materials.

## Course Schedule

\*Schedule is subject to change. All readings are to be read by the date they appear on the syllabus.

Fridays are reserved for in-class discussion and activities\*

Week	Readings
Week One   <i>Approaching Medicine</i> (9/27-10/01)	M (9/27): Course Introductions W (9/29): "Racial Categories in Medical Practice: How Useful Are They?" (Braun, et al., 2007) <u>AND</u> "Structural Racism and Supporting Black Lives—The Role of Health Professionals" (Hardeman et al., 2016) F (10/01): Discussion
Week 2: <i>Rest as Reparations</i> (10/04-10/08)	M (10/04): "40 Rest as Reparations" ( <i>Healing Justice Podcast</i> , 2019) W (10/06): "Sleep Disparity, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic position" (Grandner, et al., 2016) <u>AND</u> "The Racial Inequality of Sleep" (Resnick, 2015) F (10/08): Discussion
Week Three   <i>Talk that Talk: Doctors</i> (10/11-10/15)	M (10/11): "The Art of Medicine: Abolition Medicine" (Iwai, et al., 2020) W (10/13): "When a cardiologist flagged the lack of diversity..." (McFarling, 2021) <u>AND</u> "Canadian Doctors of Colour Offer a Frank Look at Racism in Medicine" (Trinh, 2020) F (10/15): Discussion
Week Four   <i>Disability Matters</i> (10/18-10/22)	M (10/18): "Black, Disabled and at Risk" (Abrams, 2020) <u>AND</u> Imani Barbarin Coins #PatientsAreNotFaking" (Knupper, 2019) W (10/20): "The Erasure of Indigenous People in Chronic Illness" (Deerinwater, 2018) <u>AND</u> "Lead's Racial Matters" (Chen, 2012) F (10/22): Discussion
Week Five   <i>In My DNA</i> (10/25-10/29)	M (10/25): "The Emergence, Politics, and Marketplace of Native American DNA" (TallBear, 2014)

Week	Readings
	W (10/27): “A Biologist’s Perspective on DNA and Race in the Genomics Era” (Gabriel, 2012) <u>AND</u> “I Took DNA Tests in the U.S. and China” (Ha, 2019) F (10/29): Discussion <b>MIDTERMS DUE TO CANVAS BY 11:59PM</b>
Week Six   <i>Let’s Talk About (Biological) Sex...</i> (11/01-11/05)	M (11/01): “Misogynoir in Medical Media” (Bailey, 2016) W (11/03): “Divergence or Disorder?: The Politics of Naming Intersex” (Reis, 2007) <u>AND</u> “The Five Sexes, Revisited” (Fausto-Sterling, 2000) F (11/05): Discussion
Week Seven   <i>The Queer Life of Medicine</i> (11/08-11/12)	M (11/08): “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body” (Somerville, 2000) W (11/10): “Quest for a Cause: The Fat Gene, the Gay Gene, and the New Eugenics” (LeBesco, 2009) F (11/12): Discussion
Week Eight   <i>The Road to Reproductive Justice</i> (11/15-11/19)	M (11/15): “Debating Reproduction: Birth Control, Eugenics, and Overpopulation in Puerto Rico, 1920-1940” (Briggs, 2002) W (11/17): “The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women” (Lawrence, 2000) F (11/19): Discussion
Week Nine   <i>Talk that Talk (pt. 2): Students Talk Back</i> (11/22-11/26)	M (11/22): “UCSF Doctors, Students Confront Their Own Unconscious Bias” (Dembosky, 2015) <u>AND</u> “Healing Youth Alliance Group Focuses on Mental Health...” (Menitoff, 2021) W (11/24): NO CLASS F (11/26): NO CLASS
Week Ten   <i>Unhealthy World: Environmental Racism and Climate Change</i> (11/29-12/03)	M (11/29): “As Above, So Below: Anti-Black Violence as Environmental Racism” (Wright, 2021) W (12/01): “To Survive a Climate Catastrophe” (Berne, 2020) <u>AND</u> “Toxic Waste Dumping in the Global South as a form of environmental racism: Evidence from the Gulf of Guinea” (Okafor-Yarwood and Adewumi, 2020) F (12/03): Final Project Presentations <b>(PROJECTS DUE DEC 10<sup>TH</sup> AT 11:59PM, CANVAS)</b>

## Assignments

*Daily Writing Prompts (20%)*

*Midterm Essay (25%)*

*Final Resource Project (35%)*

*Participation (includes discussions, reading questions, office hours) (20%)*

*\*\*Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be posted in the assignment tab on Canvas.*

### Grading Scale:

A+ (97-100)	B (85-83)	C- (72-70)
A (96-93)	B- (82-80)	D and below – not passing
A- (92-90)	C+ (79-76)	
B+ (89-86)	C (75-73)	

### *Daily Writing Prompts*

For the first five minutes of class, we will free-write on a topic that relates to the week's course materials/themes. You do not need to submit polished writing: writing can be fragments, lists, etc. Daily writing will also loosely serve as an attendance and participation meter, though there is no formal attendance for this course and there are other ways to participate. If you are unable to attend class, please submit your writing by the end of the day.

### **Midterm Essay – What Counts as Medicine?**

Each week the assigned readings define and discuss what medicine is and how race and racism are underlying components of unequal medical treatment/practice and knowledge formation. We will discuss common medical issues (pain tolerance, diabetes, lung capacity) and expand what counts as health issues and medicine (sleep inequality, police violence and racism). In your midterm essay you will write about one or two readings and answer the following questions:

1. Summarize the topic(s) and explain the historical relationship between medicine, race, and inequality.
2. Does the author challenge medical authority or propose a solution to medical inequalities?
3. Personal and Cultural Connections: If you feel comfortable sharing, what are your personal experiences with medicine or the topic (from your chosen reading)? Alternatively, you may also discuss a current event, celebrity, art (etc.) that sheds light on the author's beliefs about medicine. Based on either your personal experiences or current event, explain why you either agree or disagree with the author's arguments.

### *Midterm Topic Example:*

- *Define medicine through the article “The Racial Inequality of Sleep”. How is sleep inequality part of medicine?*
- *Is sleep inequality a historical issue? How does race factor into sleep health/hygiene?*
- *Does Resnick challenge medical authority or critique it? Does he propose a solution?*
- *I will reflect on my own sleep patterns, things people have told me about sleep, rest, and race. I will determine if I agree with Resnick based on my personal experiences and the arguments he presents.*

Midterm Specifications: Papers should be 4-5 pages, double spaced, 12pt font. Include a bibliography for all sources you use. **Submit your essay through Canvas by Oct. 29<sup>TH</sup>, 11:59pm.**

### *Final Resource Project*

For the final, you will work in pairs or small groups (no larger than 4) on an informative health resource project that could (in theory) be distributed to a community of your choosing. The knowledge we have gained this quarter can be used to further empower ourselves and others with truths about racism in medicine, proposed changes to medical systems and academics, and movements toward liberatory medicine. This is a chance to be creative and research a health topic that you feel deserves more attention. This is also an opportunity to create something for a community (could be your own community) that deserves better resources, care, or medical justice. Utilizing a medium of your choice (ex. zines, podcasts or videos, webpages and blogs, a series of social media posts), you will work throughout the quarter with your partner or group to create the resource. Example topics: rest as reparations, QTBIPOC mental health and wellness, racism as health disparity, the history of medicine, and general health topics.

You will meet with your partner or group at least 3 times during the quarter and submit brief progress reports through Canvas. For this reason, it is important for you to attend class (as much as possible) and communicate with your classmates on Canvas or elsewhere (if you are not able to attend class in-person) to form connections and find groupmates.

Your resource project should address the following:

1. Select a medicine-related topic in which racial inequality, disparity, racism is embedded.
  - What is the racial history behind the issue in medicine?
  - What are the current debates or cultural framing around the issue today?
2. Select an appropriate audience and medium for your resource project.
  - Who needs this information most? Why?
  - What does your chosen medium provide your audience that other another medium would not?
3. Complete research about your topic and share your findings in an appropriate manner.

- What sources have you used? Who do you feel is an authoritative voice on the subject matter?
  - Have you incorporated class texts and resources into your project? (You will need to include 2 class texts)
  - Are you sharing your research in a way that resonates with your audience? For example, you might speak to kindergartners differently than your fellow classmates.
4. Liberatory medicine
- How is the medical establishment failing to address your topic/failing to recognize race and racism in medicine?
  - How do you wish your chosen community were treated in medicine? How should information be created and shared?

Resource specifications: Because the formats vary, there is no word/page/time limit. Rather, you will need to address the questions above in a creative format that showcases the research, cooperation, and care for your chose topic and audience. **Projects are due Dec 10<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm to Canvas.** We will spend our last day of class (Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>) informally sharing projects with the class. Your project does not need to be completed by Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> but you will be asked to talk about your topic.

## Participation

I understand that attendance is difficult during the pandemic for many reasons. Please let me know as soon as you can if you are having any difficulties attending in-person classes. Though I will keep track of attendance for myself, I will not award or deduct points from your final grade. However, I encourage your attendance for class lectures, discussion, and community. Remember that you will need to work with a partner or group for your final project and being present in class is a good way to get to know others. Please attend class as much as you can. You will be graded on participation, and you can participate in many ways:

- Submitting responses to daily writing prompts. You may submit your warmup during class or at any point during the rest of the day for credit.
- Speaking up in class
- Attending virtual office hours
- Attending and contributing to discussions (possibly including Zoom breakout sessions) and completing reading guides and other activities.
- Meeting with your final project partner or group

Note: if you are unable to join us in-person this quarter, you can still participate in the above. You may submit writing prompts to Canvas, attend virtual office hours, participate in activities and reading guides, and meet with your partner or group (online).

## Communication Responsibilities

I know that you have busy schedules and responsibilities and priorities beyond this course. It is your responsibility to communicate with me if you are having any difficulties with workload or attending class. I cannot help you succeed in my class if I do not know what is going on. Please do not wait until the end of the quarter to speak with me, particularly if you know that you are struggling early in the quarter.

## Academic Integrity

*From the University:*

"Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act by asking yourself: a) is what I'm about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, don't ask a friend—ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at [academicintegrity.ucsd.edu](http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu)" (Source: Academic Integrity Office, 2018).

*For this course:*

It is understandable that you are now navigating new educational terrain during this pandemic. You may be attending class from a location where you do not have the same resources, dedicated time, or silence to work on projects. Our goal is to work together this quarter. Your work does not need to be perfect; it is more about working intentionally and being generous readers and writers. Whatever you are able complete this quarter is more than enough.