**COVID-19, Racism and Public Health**

**Spring 2021**

**Wed-based Course**

**Instructor: Dr. Abi Fapohunda**

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**Office Hours:**

**Virtual Office**: https://pitt.zoom.us/j/3968282969

**Description:**

This 1- credit course, offered through the Global Studies Center and co-sponsored by the Department of Africana Studies, offers an opportunity for students to learn about the compounding effects of multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage and how they impact COVID-19 exposure, cases, and deaths. The obstacles that inequalities create may not be easily discernible or understood by looking at or thinking about racism, health and now the impact of COVID-19, among African Americans, in a conventional way. You cannot change outcomes without understanding the causes or how they come about. The pandemic has exposed systemic racial inequalities in the U.S. health delivery system. Why are African American and other people of color being hit hard by COVID-19? In this class, we will read pertinent literature and discuss racially issues including what it means to be a person of color in the U.S. during a pandemic. We will focus on pre-existing conditions, essential workers, structural inequities, and how social determinants of health are influenced by implicit bias and racial discrimination.

**Structure:**

This class will be a seminar (discussion) class. Students will be assigned weekly readings or video(s) to watch on structural inequities and social determinants of health, and COVID-19 and its implications from a public health perspective.

**Objectives:**

At the end of the course, students will, hopefully:

1. Understand the relationship between racism and people of color vulnerability to COVID-19
2. Use the information garnered to put in perspective the challenging conditions under which African Americans have lived for centuries
3. Understand the implications of structural inequities and the lopsided impact of COVID-19 on the Black and other people of color communities.

**Assignment:**

*Weekly Assignments*: There will be a question posted weekly on Canvas in preparation for class discussion. Students are expected to write a short answer to the question (no longer than 200 words) and share it with their classmates and the instructor. The questions and due dates will be available on Canvas.

*Final Assignment*: A 3-page double-spaced essay due on April 26th. Task for this assignment is to pick a public health interest in one of the topics/issues discussed in class or through assigned readings, develop a strategy to address the topic or issue/topic selected by the student. Each student must produce a short proposal of their plan.

**Grades:**

This is a Pass/Fail class. To pass this course, students are expected to complete all assignments and attend all sessions.

***Academic Integrity Policy***

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic Integrity](http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](http://pitt.libguides.com/academicintegrity/) for an overview of the topic. For hands-on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](http://pitt.libguides.com/academicintegrity/plagiarism).

***Disability Services Policy***

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

***Statement on Classroom Recording***

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student’s own private use. According to the Pitt Policy, “In order to facilitate the free exchange of ideas during lectures, if a faculty member intends to record their lecture with student participation, they must advise the students, via e-mail and at the beginning of the lecture, that the lecture, including their participation, is being recorded. Students should not be required to participate in the recorded conversation and should be encouraged to ask questions off-line. Further, the recorded lecture may be used by the faculty member and the registered students only for internal class purposes and only during the term in which the course is being offered. Faculty who have questions should contact [faculty@pitt.edu](mailto:faculty@pitt.edu). Consult the University policies for additional information on copyright.”

According to the Digital Media Law Project, Pennsylvania's recording law is a ["two-party consent" law](http://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/recording-phone-calls-and-conversations). “The law does not cover oral communications when the speakers do not have an "expectation that such communication is not subject to interception under circumstances justifying such expectation." See [18 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 5702](http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=pac-1000) (link is to the entire code, choose Title 18, Part II, Article F, Chapter 57, Subchapter A, and then the specific provision). Therefore, you may be able to record in-person conversations occurring in a public place without consent. However, you should always get the consent of all parties before recording any conversation that common sense tells you is private.”

Pitt policy suggests a reasonable expectation of privacy in the classroom space, so any recording of classmates or professor requires clear consent.

In addition to subjecting you to criminal prosecution, violating the Pennsylvania wiretapping law can expose you to a civil lawsuit for damages by an injured party.

***Copyright Notice***

Course materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](https://www.copyright.gov/) and the [University Copyright Policy](http://oscp.library.pitt.edu/intellectual-property/copyright/pitt-policies-on-copyright/).

***Accessibility***

Canvas is ADA Compliant and has fully implemented the final accessibility standards for electronic and information technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Please note that, due to the flexibility provided in this product, it is possible for some material to inadvertently fall outside of these guidelines.

***Diversity and Inclusion Statement***

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University’s Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University’s mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, see: [**http://diversity.pitt.edu/affirmative-action/policies-procedures-and-practices**](http://diversity.pitt.edu/affirmative-action/policies-procedures-and-practices).

I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing [titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu). Reports can also be filed online: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/make-report/report-form>. You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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| Spring  2021 | Topics |
| Week 1 | * Introduction to Course/Overview of COVID Statistics |
| Week 2 | * The Race GAP: Black// White. Reuters Graphics |
| Week 3 | * Review of Social Determinants of Health |
| Week 4 | * Myths, Misinformation and Mistrust |
| Week 5 | * Racial Segregation and the Legacy of Redlining |
| Week 6 | * Occupation, Education, Housing, Wealth Gap and Income Disparities |
| Week 7 | * The Impact of Systemic Racism in Healthcare: Healthcare Access and Utilization |
| Week 8 | * Impact of Comorbidities. Why those comorbidities exist in the first place. |
| Week 9 | * What COVID-19 Job Losses Reveal About Racism in America |
| Week 10 | * Workers of Color on the Frontlines |
| Week 11 | * Mental Health Impact on People of Color |
| Week 12 | * Culturally Sensitive Communication |
| Week 13 | * Lessons Learned about COVID-19 |
| Week 14 | * Final Presentation - Proposal |