**Quinnipiac University**

**Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine**

**Poverty and Health**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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| **Spring 2020** |

**Class meets**: Wednesdays 2:00-4:30

York Correctional Institute

**Facilitator**: Lynn Copes, PhD

**Course goal:** The “Inside-Out” Prison Exchange program is part of a national movement giving undergraduate and graduate students (outside students) and incarcerated individuals (inside students) an opportunity to learn together. This course being offered to outside students at Quinnipiac’s School of Medicine and inside students at York Correctional Institute in Connecticut asks students to examine the impact of poverty upon health in America by applying knowledge of the physiological mechanisms of the stress response to aspects of life of those living in impoverished situations. It is a chance for all students to gain deeper understanding of health from multiple perspectives, and how it is impacted by social status, income/wealth, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and incarceration status/history.

**Objectives**:

• To create an environment that will facilitate the honest exchange of ideas in a diverse group

• To provide opportunities for students to expand and consider their theoretical understanding

about the impact of social status and wealth on health, and explore the practical effects of poverty on aspects of wellness

• To help outside and inside students identify the impact of poverty upon their own health and assist members of each student group to more fully understand the life experiences of others

• To furnish inside students an opportunity to explore complex social, political, and health related topics in an academic setting, through structured discussion and analysis of course materials

• To assist all involved in further developing their capacities for both written and oral self-expression

• To create a connection between outside and inside students that allows members of each

group to more fully understand the life experiences of other group members and how poverty has impacted their past, present, or future health

These objectives will be assessed through weekly discussion, a group project synthesizing the information discussed over the course of the semester into a practical proposal to improve healthcare offerings in a prison, and a written paper reviewing a book and relating it to the topics discussed in the course.

**Format of Meetings**: During the first week of the semester, inside and outside students will meet separately to discuss course format, policies and expectations. Outside students will meet with the instructor on the Quinnipiac University North Haven Campus and inside students will meet with the instructor at the York Correctional Institute. Inside and outside students will first meet as a group the second week of the semester. Again in the third week, each group will meet separately. Beginning in week four, inside and outside students will begin meeting every Wednesday afternoon for 2.5 hours. The meetings at York will consist of a guided dialogue, often in small groups, on particular topics each week.

**Participation**: In class participation is vital to the success of the class (and increases the enjoyment of the two and a half hours we spend together). Please come to class prepared, having done the assigned reading and thought of comments on it, questions about it, and links between the current week’s reading and previous week’s conversations.

**Assignments**

Along with reading and participating in discussion each week, students will collaborate on a group project to create a proposal for creating primary care practices in various communities. The small groups, which will have equal numbers of inside and outside students, will examine physical health care services, mental health care services, food/nutrition, exercise offerings, services for transitioning out of prison, or a similar topic of the group’s choosing. Each student will also choose one book from a list of ~30 to read and write a 5-7 (handwritten) page report about. Book reports will be due Week 17 and will include analysis of the book and thoughts on how its topic(s) relate to class discussions and the group projects. If the book focuses primarily on health, please discuss how poverty can impact health. If the book focuses primarily on poverty, discuss the ways in which health is impacted. More information will be provided in class.

**Grading Policy**: Given the interactive nature of this study, half of the overall course grade will be based on attendance and full participation. Because of the unique opportunity the course affords attendance is of especial importance and absences will not be tolerated (see course policies below). Attention, listening, and actively joining in the dialogue, in both large and small groups are vital components of participation. The rest of the overall course grade will depend on the quality of the written work submitted: final project, presentation of the final project, and the final paper. Standards for written work will be discussed with inside and outside students during the meetings scheduled during the first two weeks of the course.

The School of Medicine grades students in Medical Selectives as Pass/Fail. Each student receives a mid-term grade of pass or fail for all selectives. Any student receiving a fail will be brought to the attention of the concentration coordinators and the SRCC course director for review. At the completion of the semester medical students will receive a grade of Pass, Fail, or Incomplete. Additional information about grading policies can be found in the SRCC Course Description. Please refer to the School of Medicine Student Academic Policies for details regarding academic remediation programs for students who do not pass a selective.

Class Participation: 50%

Final Project: 25%

Presentation: 5%

Final Paper: 20%

**Course Policies**: Because the course is being held in a correctional institution, students are

subject to institutional standards regarding dress and conduct. Full discussion of these

policies will occur during the scheduled meeting at the beginning of the semester. During

class you will not have internet access, access to mobile phones, or laptops. All note taking must

be done using pen and paper.

SRCC Course policies regarding exams, grading, and appeals are as described in the School of Medicine Student Academic Policies. Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct as found in the Student Academic Policies. Violations of the code will be handled as outlined in the Student Academic Policies. Students are expected to maintain academic integrity at all times and must acknowledge the work of others and not present the work of others as their own.

**Rules:**

In additional to the course policies, York Correctional Institute and the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program have additional rules:

1. No outside student may bring anything in to give to an inside student.

2. No inside student may give anything to an outside student.

3. During the semester, there can be no contact between inside and outside students beyond the

classroom. This restriction includes letters, telephone calls, email, and visiting.

4. Once the semester is completed, there is no further contact allowed between the inside students and the outside students.

5. There can be no displays of physical affection between inside and outside students.

6. No personal information may be exchanged, such as address, telephone number, booking

number, or other contact information.

7. Notebooks can be labeled with first names only, with no other identifying information. Papers

submitted are to be marked with first names only.

8. Confidentiality: What is shared in the classroom stays in the classroom. This includes

conversations between participating students outside the classroom.

9. Students may only refer to themselves by their first names (or nicknames). Surnames will not

be allowed and should not be shared.

**Working topic outline**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Location** | **Readings** (all will be provided in class by the professor) |
| 1 | 1/15/20 | Introduction to course | Inside / Outside meet separately | None |
| 2 | 1/22/20 | First meeting | CI | • Preface to David Ansell’s *The Death Gap*  • Chapter 1 in Robert Sapolsky’s *Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers*  • Introduction to Nadine Burke Harris’s *The Deepest Well* |
| 3 | 1/29/20 | Debrief | Inside / Outside meet separately | None |
| 4 | 2/5/20 | Physiology of stress | CI | • Chapters 2-4 in *Zebras*  *•* The Effects of Stress on Your Body, Healthline, 2017  • Stressing Out the Poor, *Pathways*, Winter 2011 |
| 5 | 2/12/20 | History of racism, sexism, and classism in American health care | CI | • Part 1 in *The Death Gap*  • ‘Father of Modern Gynecology’, History.com 2017  • Forgotten Lessons, *The New Yorker*, 2016  *•* Hoffman et al. 2016  • Optional: Infamous Tuskegee Study,  *New York Times*, 2016  • Optional: Jacobs et al. 2006  • Optional: Sotero et al. 2006 |
| 6 | 2/19/20 | Pregnancy; maternal and neonatal health | CI | • Chapter 7 in *Zebras*  • Part 2 in *The Death Gap*  • Mass Incarceration, Stress, and Black Infant Mortality, CAP 2018  • Group A: Slaughter-Acey et al. 2016  • Group B: Almeida et al. 2018  • Group C: Chae et al. 2018  • Group D: D’Andrea et al. 2011  • Optional: Geronimus et al. 2015  • Optional: When a Mother Dies, WebMD  • Optional: Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth, NPR |
| 7 | 2/26/20 | Parenting and childhood trauma; transgenerational biological mechanisms | CI | • Part 3 in *The Death Gap*  • Part 1 in *The Deepest Well*  • Understanding Trauma Fact Sheet  • Poverty as a Childhood Disease*, New York Times*  • How childhood trauma can affect mental and physical health into adulthood, *The Conversation* |
| 8 | 3/4/20 | Immigration | CI | • I study kids who were separated from their parents, *Vox*  • Wood 2018  • Morey 2018  • Ford-Paz et al. 2019 |
| 9 | 3/11/20 | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK | | |
| 10 | 3/18/20 | Sleep, nutrition, and exercise | CI | *•* Part 2 in *The Deepest Well*  **•** The Black-White Sleep Gap, *National Journal*  • Why Food Belongs in Our Discussions of Race, *Civil Eats*  • Optional: Chapters 5 & 11 in *Zebras* |
| 11 | 3/25/20 | Environmental racism and housing inequities | CI | Part 3 in *The Deepest Well*  • Living in a Violent Neighborhood, *Mother Jones*  • Living in a Poor Neighborhood, *Vox*  • Group A: Fumes Across the Fence  • Group B: Bor et al. 2018  • Group C: White & Borrell 2011  • Group D: Line Cost of Segregation  • Optional: The Poison of Poverty, *Medium*  • Optional: America has a water crisis, *Vox*  • Optional: Lead isn’t just a big threat to kids, *Vox*  • Optional: Rothstein et al., 2017  • Optional: ‘Map Twins’, *Citylab* |
| 12 | 4/1/20 | Now what? Trauma-informed care and healing | CI | • Part 4 in *The Death Gap*  • Part 4 in *The Deepest Well*  • Oral et al. 2016  • Miller et al. 2019  • Machtinger et al. 2015  • Building resilience early in life, *The Conversation*  • Why stable relationships are ‘poison control’, *The Conversation*  • Optional: Cheng et al., 2016 |
| 13 | 4/8/20 | Group project | CI | Available in class |
| 14 | 4/15/20 | Group project | CI | Available in class |
| 15 | 4/22/20 | Group project | CI | Available in class |
| 16 | 4/29/20 | Closing Ceremony | CI | None |
| 17 | 5/6/20 | Semester debrief | Inside / Outside meet separately | Book reports due |

*Please note that any part of the above schedule may be modified at the discretion of the Professor.*

**Books to choose from for report:**

A copy of each of these books is available through the York library. If you can’t locate a copy, please let me know and I’ll bring one for you. Outside students can find all these available either in hard copy or electronic copy through the QU library.

*Another Day in the Death of America: A Chronicle of Ten Short Lives* by Gary Younge

*Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor* by Virginia

Eubanks

*Battling over Birth: Black Women and the Maternal Health Care Crisis* – by Helen Arega and

Julia Chinyere Oparah

*Behave* by Robert Sapolsky

*Breathing Race into the Machine: The Surprising Career of the Spirometer from Plantation to*

*Genetics* by Lundy Braun

*Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States* by Carl Zimring

*Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability* – by Alison Hope Alkon and Julian

Agyeman

*Dying of Whiteness: How the politics of racial resentment is killing America’s heartland* by

Jonathan Metzl

*Epigenetics: How Environment Shapes Our Genes* by Richard Francis

*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond

*Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* by Seth Holmes

*Hand to Mouth* by Linda Tirado

*Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues* by Paul Farmer

*Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care* by Danya Bowen Matthew

*Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from*

*Colonial Times to the Present* by Harriet Washington

*Out in the Rural: A Mississippi Health Center and Its War on Poverty* by Thomas Ward

*Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury and* *Healing* by Joy

DeGruy

*Righteous Dopefiend* by Phillippe Bourgois and Jeffrey Schonberg

*So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo

*Spare the Kids: Why Whupping Children Won’t Save Black America* by Stacey Patton

*Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram Kendi

*Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory* by Elizabeth Rosner

*Teeth: The Story of Beauty, Inequality, and the Struggle for Oral Health in America* by Mary

Otto

*A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and its Assault on the American Mind* by

Harriet Washington

*Trapped in America’s Safety Net: One Family’s Story* by Andrea Louise Campbell

*The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and the Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van

der Kolk

*The Boy Who was Raised as a Dog: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Love,*

*Loss, and Healing* by Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz

*The Color of Law*: *A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* by Richard

Rothstein

*The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World* by Michael Marmot

*The Power to Heal: Civil Rights, Medicare, and the Struggle to Transform America’s Health*

*System* by David Barton Smith