COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor:
Rafael E. Pérez Figueroa, M.D., M.P.H.

Location:
194 Mercer Street, Room 204

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Institute of Medicine (2011) has determined that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals face significant health disparities in the United States and globally, including risk for several cancers, mental illnesses, and various infectious diseases, including but not limited to HIV/AIDS. LGBT people are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, and engage in other risky behaviors than their heterosexual peers. This course examines these health disparities and considers how structural factors including discrimination, homophobia, unequal rights and protections under the law and unequal distribution of health services, shape health behaviors and create health risks for LGBT individuals.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar examines the core interdisciplinary theories, knowledge, research, and methods evidenced in in understanding LGBT health. The course introduces students to the main conceptual frameworks for the study of LGBT individuals and communities across the lifespan and overviews existing knowledge about LGBT health in the United States and globally. The course highlights research design, measurement, ethics, and analysis issues in population research in LGBT health. Local experts on LGBT health will serve as guest lecturers and provide in-depth explorations of their most recent research findings, ranging from cell to society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students will be able to:
1. Analyze terminology and concepts utilized to assess health in the LGBT population.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the epidemiology of LGBT health disparities in the U.S. and globally.
3. Assess the main health issues of LGBT populations across the life-course using a developmental perspective.
4. Apply and evaluate the key theoretical perspectives that inform research on LGBT health and the main challenges and limitations of each.
5. Evaluate health policies related to disparities among LGBT populations.
6. Explain how social and environmental factors can interact with individual behavioral factors to influence health outcomes among sexual minorities.
REQUIRED READINGS


Note: All other readings on NYU Classes are required unless otherwise indicated.

RECOMMENDED READINGS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all lectures and activities of this course. If you cannot attend a certain lecture, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor. All other absences will be considered unexcused and will impact the final grade.
2. Students are expected to come to class on time to prevent disrupting the lecture and classroom activities.
3. Complete all assigned readings prior to class.
4. This course will strictly adhere to NYU policies on plagiarism and academic integrity. (See the attached policy statement at the end of this syllabus)
5. Complete all assignments, due dates are noted below. Late homework will not be accepted.
6. **Health Profile**: Students will be assigned in groups to summarize and present a health profile on a hot topic on LGBT health. In this assignment students will submit a 1,000 to 1,250 words health profile and will deliver an in class presentation. Groups will be asked to identify a health outcome of choice (e.g. anal cancer, heart failure, depression, HIV) and a population of interest (e.g. gay and bisexual men ages 18 to 29, middle-age lesbians). The health profile must address the following elements:
   a) Biology and epidemiology of the health outcome.
   b) Health behaviors and/or risk factors.
   c) Characteristics of the population of interest and extent of the problem in that population.
   d) Strategies in place to address the health outcome and gaps in knowledge.
   **Due date**: Presentation (March 13); Health Profile (March 27).
7. **Posts (3)**: Each student will be responsible for writing 3 brief reflections during the semester:
   a) **Post 1**: Summarize in 250-500 words a policy or legislation that confers unequal protection to sexual minorities in the U.S. and influences LGBT health outcomes.
   b) **Post 2**: Summarize in 250-500 words the main findings of any of the readings assigned and discuss how the findings inform LGBT health.
   c) **Post 3**: Briefly in 250-500 words, describe one challenge conducting LGBT health research in different regions of the world and explain how addressing this limitation might add to our understanding of LGBT health.
Due dates: Post 1 (February 20); Post 2 (April 10); Post 3 (May 8).

8. **Final Paper Proposal:** Each student will be required to write a paper on a topic of choice. You may choose to write about topics relevant to LGBT health that either has research, clinical, or policy implications. In 1 page students will provide some background about the topic, outline the project, and discuss the project’ implications.
   **Due date:** April 3.

9. **Final Paper:** After receiving approval from the instructors for the proposed topic, select the format that is most useful for you to forward your current academic and/or professional trajectory. The final product must be a well-written and polished essay without typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors.
   
   a) **Literature Review:** Students who opt to write a review of the literature should include: (1) an introduction to the theoretical context of the research topic; (2) the formulation of specific research questions guiding the literature review; (3) a review of relevant empirical literature; (4) a critique of the state of knowledge on the topic; (5) and a discussion of needs for further research. Students may model their work on articles published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (must adhere to submission requirements of this journal). This option is intended to allow students to familiarize themselves with academic studies and policy research on an issue of their choice. The exercise may be treated as a chance to develop a strong foundation in the student’s area of interest.

   b) **Research Proposal:** Students opting to write a research proposal should include: (1) a review of the relevant literature; (2) a critique or synthesis of the theoretical foundations; (3) formulation of the research problem(s) and/or hypotheses to be tested; (4) a justification of a problem and/or hypotheses. Data sources and research designs are expected in the proposal, but they can be brief. The format of this assignment should conform to the actual application requirements of a funding agency of choice (students must specify the funding agency and provide the requirements, no more than 6 pages).
   
   **Due date:** May 15.

**Note:** Provide APA or AMA formatted references and citations in all your papers (review folder titled references under resources in NYU Classes).

**COURSE OUTLINE**

1. **Course Overview** (January 30)

   Objectives:
   - Provide an overview of the course.
   - Introduce students and instructor.
   - Evaluate the conceptual framework of the IOM for the study of LGBT health.

   Readings:
2. **Fundamentals of LGBT Health Disparities** (February 6)

Objectives:
- Analyze terms and concepts in LGBT health.
- Understand the demography of LGBT populations in the U.S.

Readings:

Website:
- Gay Data: http://www.gaydata.org
- The Kinsey Institute: http://www.indiana.edu/~kinsey/
- The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid: http://www.bisexual.org/kleingrid.html

3. **History of LGBT Populations** (February 13)

Objectives:
- Conceptualize LGBT populations in a socio-historical context.
- Assess historical shifts in LGBT identities.

Readings:

Multimedia:

4. **LGBT Health Disparities: A Population Perspectives** (February 20)

Objectives:
- Identify health disparities experienced by LGBT populations.
- Describe social and structural causes that foster health disparities for LGBT populations.
- Introduce a population perspective for the study of LGBT health.
• Evaluate the strengths and limitations of studying sexual minorities from a population perspective.

Readings:

Website:

5. **Conceptual Frameworks and Theoretical Perspectives** (February 27)

Objectives:
• Understand the main conceptual frameworks and perspectives utilized for the study of LGBT health.
• Discuss the strengths and limitations of such frameworks.
• Describe different challenges doing population-based LGBT health research.

Readings:

6. **LGBT Health During Childhood and Adolescence** (March 6)

Objectives:
• Critique the unique social factors associated with LGBT youth health related experiences.
• Examine the main developmental issues during sexual minorities’ childhood and adolescence.
• Assess the main health disparities among LGBT youths.

Readings:
7. **Health Profile Presentations** (March 13)

8. **Spring Break** (March 20)

9. **LGBT Emerging Adult and Adult Health** (March 27)

   Objectives:
   - Identify the unique developmental milestones faced by LGBT adults.
   - Discuss health risks faced by sexual minorities during adulthood.
   - Analyze the main health issues affecting LGBT individuals during early and middle adulthood.

   Readings:

10. **LGBT Older Adult Health** (April 3)

   Objectives:
   - Understand how LGBT seniors are exposed to unique health risks in comparison with their heterosexual counterparts.
   - Analyze the challenges addressing the health needs aging LGBT individuals in the U.S.

   Readings:
11. **Transgender Health** (April 10)

Objectives:
- Provide a general context of transgender and intersex health issues and experiences.
- Understand gender dysphoria and its health care implications.
- Analyze the main health risks of transgender and intersex men and women.

Readings:

12. **Sexual Minority Women’s Health** (April 17)

Objectives:
- Evaluate the main health risks of sexual minority women.
- Analyze the main barriers addressing sexual minority women’s health disparities.

Readings:

13. **HIV/AIDS and Sexual Minorities** (April 24)

Objectives:
- Evaluate different factors that place sexual minorities at risk for HIV/AIDS.
- Analyze the synergies of mental health, substance use, and sexual behaviors in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Examine the strength and limitations of HIV prevention strategies targeting sexual minorities in the U.S.
Readings:


Website:
The White House Office of National AIDS Strategy:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/onap/nhas

APA Resolution on Combination Biomedical and Behavioral Approaches to Optimize HIV Prevention: http://www.apa.org/about/policy/biomedical-hiv.pdf

14. **Intersectionality and Global Issues in LGBT Health** (May 1)

Objectives:
- Analyze how race and ethnicity are related with other social categories.
- Conceptualize how different social identities may influence health outcomes among LGBT individuals.
- Understand the similarities and differences in LGBT communities across the globe.
- Discuss challenges in conducting health research among sexual minorities in different regions of the world.

Readings:

Kidd, J. D., & Witten, T. M. (2010). Transgender and transsexual identities: The next strange fruit—hate crimes, violence and genocide against the global trans-communities. *Journal of Hate Studies, 6*(1), 31-63. Required sections: Section 4 (pg. 44-50), though rest of article is highly recommended.


15. **Health Policies and LGBT Health** (May 8)

Objectives:
- Discuss how health policies are related with other structural factors that impact LGBT health.
- Evaluate the main policies that affect LGBT outcomes and experiences in relation to the healthcare system of the U.S.
- Analyze future directions in LGBT health.

Readings:


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**GRADING**

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<th>Health profile</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posts (3)</td>
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<td>Final paper proposal</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
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Grades for the course will be determined from the following scale:

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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Students are reminded free expression in an academic community is essential to the mission of providing the highest caliber of education possible. Provocative ideas respectfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. New York University encourages civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement without degrading, abusing, harassing, or silencing others. The teachers for this course are committed to maintaining an environment that opens doors, opens hearts, and opens minds.
“The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience in The Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. This relationship takes an honor code for granted. Mutual trust, respect, and responsibility are foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high quality scholars, but also to cultivate honorable citizens. Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams, making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others, and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.” (New York University, 2013)

Please see the complete statement of academic integrity at:

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980, and online at http://www.nyu.edu/csd) and are required to present a letter from the center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.