

PSY 493: ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Kaston D. Anderson Jr. (any pronouns)

Time: Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:00pm-4:20pm

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Location: Snyder Hall, C302

Instructor Information

Office: Psychology 238

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00pm-2:00pm

Course Description: This course focuses on theories, methods, and applications of health disparities research and practice. Using a multicultural perspective, we will examine the historical, ethical, and legal issues that influence health disparities and health equity. Analyses of primary literature will be integrated throughout the course to facilitate discussion and provide examples of methodologies in the field.

Course Objectives: The primary learning objectives for this course are to:

- Understand the difference between health disparities and health equity; and the implications for both on research, policy, and practice
- To critique and evaluate existing research in health disparities and health equity
- To develop and support a scholarly position through clear, concise, and effective writing

Students will meet the objectives listed above through a combination of the following activities in this course:

- Attend course lectures and participate actively in class activities.
- Complete weekly required readings of the scientific literature in health disparities and health equity.
- develop a comprehensive perspective paper integrating recent literature in a health disparity topic.

Textbook & Course Materials. All readings will be available in PDF format on D2L and are required reading. To do well in this course, you will also need an Internet connection and access to D2L.

Technical Assistance. If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you can:

- Visit the D2L Help Site at <http://help.d2l.msu.edu/>
- Call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345

Resource Persons with Disabilities (RCPD). To make an appointment with a specialist, contact: (517) 353-9642 Or TTY: (517) 355-1293. The website for RCPD is <https://rcpd.msu.edu>

Prerequisites: None.

Grading Policy: Your grade in this course is based on the following activities:

- Weekly scholarly discussion = 20% of total grade

- Five (5) Kritik assignments (creation, evaluation, and feedback) = 50% of total grade
- Final Op-Ed submission on D2L (Due Dec. 8 @ 5:00pm) = 20% of total grade
- Final presentation = 10% of total grade

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

- 89.5% - 100%: 4.0
- 84.5%-89.4%: 3.5
- 79.5%-84.4%: 3.0
- 74.5%-79.4%: 2.5
- 69.5%-74.4%: 2.0
- 64.5%-69.4%: 1.5
- 59.5%-64.4%: 1.0
- 0%-59.4%: 0.0

Course Outline

August

- 25-29: Course Introduction
- Syllabus Overview
- Kritik360 Introduction
- *What Is an Op-Ed (And Why Should Anyone Care?)*
- *Finding Your Fire: Choosing a Health Disparities Topic That Matters to You*
- **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Kritik introduction assignment due Aug. 29
 - Kritik calibration assignment due Aug. 29

September

- **1: Labor Day. No class.**
- 2-5: Health Disparities vs. Health Equity: Are The the Same?
 - Braveman, P. (2014). What are health disparities and health equity? We need to be clear. *Public Health Reports*, 129(Suppl. 2), 5-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549141291S203>
 - Whitehead, M. (1992). The concepts and principles of equity and health. *International Journal of Health Services*, 22(3), 429-445. <https://doi.org/10.2190/986L-LHQ6-2VTE-YRRN>
- 8-12: Intersectionality & Syndemic Theory

- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist policies. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1, 139–167. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=uclf>
- Singer, M. (1996). A dose of drugs, a touch of violence, a case of AIDS: Conceptualizing the SAVA syndemic. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*, 24(2), 99-110. <https://ojs.library.okstate.edu/osu/index.php/FICS/article/view/1346>
- *Your Story, Their Problem: Creating a Hook That Hits*
- **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - * Op-Ed creation assignment #1 due Sep. 12 on Kritik
- 15-19: Ecological and Minority Stress Models
 - Sep. 16: Mental health day. No class.
 - Neal, J. W., & Neal, Z. P. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directors for ecological systems theory. *Social Development*, 22(4), 722-737. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12018>
 - Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674-697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
 - *Evidence Without Doing The Most: Weaving Data Like a Pro*
 - **Note: Outside class work day on Sep. 17th**
 - **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - * Op-Ed evaluation #1 due Sep. 17 on Kritik
 - * Op-Ed feedback #1 due Sep. 19 on Kritik
- 22-26: Op-Ed Work Week outside class.
 - **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed creation assignment #2 due Sep. 26 on Kritik
- 29-30: Outside class activity: When Op-Eds Go Wrong

October

- 1-3: Life Course Theory & fundamental Cause Theory
 - Elder, G. H. Jr.(1998). The life course as developmental theory. *Child Development*, 69(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1132065>
 - Clouston, S. A. P., & Link, Bruce G. (2021). A retrospective on fundamental cause theory: State of the literature and goals for the future. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47, 131-156. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-090320-094912>
 - *Calling Things Out Without Getting Canceled: Rhetoric % Risk*
 - **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - * Op-Ed evaluation #2 due Oct. 1
 - * Op-Ed feedback #2 due Oct. 3
- 6-10 Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration
 - * Louis-Jean, J., Cenat, K., Njoku, C. V., Angelo, J., & Sanon, D. (2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19) and racial disparities: A perspective analysis. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Disparities*, 7(6), 1039-1045. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-020-00879-4>

- * Abuelezam, N. N., Al-Sayed, A. M., Galea, S. (2019). Relevance of the "immigrant health paradox" for the health of Arab Americans in California. *American Journal of Public Health*, 109, 1733-1738. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305308>
- * **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed creation assignment #3 due Oct. 10 on Kritik
- 13-17: Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation
 - * Sandbakken, E. M., Skrautvol, A., & Madsen, O. J. (2021). 'It's my definition of a relationship, even though it doesn't fit yours': Living in polyamorous relationships in a mononormative culture. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2021.1982755>
 - * van Anders, S. M. (2015). Beyond sexual orientation: Integrating gender/sex and diverse sexualities via sexual configurations theory. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44(5), 1177-1213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-015-0490-8>
 - * *What's the Point? Developing a Clear, Bold Argument*
 - * 13: Last day for students to withdraw from a course
 - * **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed evaluation #3 due Oct. 15 on Kritik
 - Op-Ed feedback #3 due Oct. 17 on Kritik
- **Fall Break. No class.**
- 22-24: *Now What? Writing Actionable Solutions Without Being Cliché*
 - * **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed creation assignment #4 due Oct. 24 on Kritik
- 27-31: Outside class activity: Revise Op-Ed.

November

- 3-7: Socioeconomic Status & Social Class
 - * Hawkins, R. B., Charles, E. J., & Mehaffey, J. H. (2020). Socio-economic status and COVID-19-related cases and fatalities. *Public Health*, 189, 129-134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.09.016>
 - * Mena, G. E., Martinez, P. P., Mahmud, A. S., Marquet, P. A., Buckee, C. O., & Santillana, M. (2021). Socioeconomic status determines COVID-19 incidence and related mortality in Santiago, Chile. *Science*, 372(6545), eabg5298. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abg5298>
 - * *Title Clinic: Crafting a Headline That Grabs*
- 10-14: HIV, Substance Use, & Violence
 - * **Oct. 21-22: Fall break. No class.**
 - * Ogunbajo, A., et al. (2021). Multilevel barriers to HIV PrEP uptake and adherence among Black and Hispanic/Latinx transgender women in southern California. *AIDS and Behavior*, 25(7), 2301-2315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-021-03159-2>
 - * Watson-Thompson, J., et al. (2020). Together helping reduce youth violence for equity (ThrYve): Examining the development of a comprehensive multisectoral approach to youth violence prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 66, 244-255. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12449>
 - * **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed creation assignment #5 due Nov. 14 on Kritik
- 17-21: Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

- * Israel, B. A., et al. (2010). Community-based participatory research: A capacity-building approach for policy advocacy aimed at eliminating health disparities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(11), 2094-2102. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2009.170506>
- * Ward, M., et al. (2018). A conceptual framework for evaluating health equity promotion within community-based participatory research partnerships. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 70, 25-34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2018.04.014>
- * *Polish Like a Professional: Cutting the Fat, Keeping the Flame*
- * **Assignments Due This Week:**
 - Op-Ed evaluation #5 due Nov. 19 on Kritik
 - Op-Ed feedback #5 due Nov. 21 on Kritik
- * **24-28: Thanksgiving Break. No class.**

December

- * 1-5: In-class office hours with Professor. Polish Op-Ed for final submission.
- * 8: Final presentations and course reflection.

Academic Integrity

- Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Department of Psychology adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.)
- **If you are suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty, you will be required to give an in-person, closed-book oral defense of the material in front of the Professor. If you do not attend—or pass—the oral defense, the academic integrity infraction will be reported to the University.**
- You are expected to adhere to the Spartan Code of Honor, which is as follows: "*As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.*"
- Unless authorized by the Professor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course.
- You are not authorized to use any unauthorized Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules will receive a failing grade for the course and be referred to departmental and college administrators for further sanctions—up to and including expulsion. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also the Academic Integrity webpage.)
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) is permitted in this class **only for the final submission of your Op-Ed assignment in D2L**. Upon submission, you must submit three (3) files:
 - * Your original compiled Op-Ed
 - * the **full** conversation between you and the AI tool
 - * the revised Op-Ed

- Course materials such as lectures are the intellectual property of the Professor. Additionally, it is important to safeguard the privacy of students taking this class and discussing complex issues. Recordings of the class, lecture notes, other materials created by the Professor, and screenshots of the class (including of online discussions) may not be shared with those not in the class or uploaded to other online environments. Impermissible use of class recordings and lecture notes or other material may subject the student to disciplinary action under the MSU Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (<https://ossa.msu.edu/srr>).

Lack of knowledge of the academic integrity policy is NOT a reasonable explanation for a violation.

Limits to Confidentiality

All materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. The Professor and Teaching Assistants must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

Class Accommodations

It is your responsibility to provide the Professor with written documentation of your accommodations from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD). Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to the Professor at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). **Requests received after this date will not be honored.** Please reference the following link for specific student responsibilities: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/accommodations/student-accommodations>.

Other Course Policies

Drops and Adds. The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Commercialized Lecture Notes. Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

Disruptive Behavior. Article 2.III.B.4 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.

Attendance. Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

Building Rapport. If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, you should notify the Professor or one of the Teaching Assistants know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your Professor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.