

SEGREGATION & HEALTH

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Learning goals

Students who take the course will:

- Review the current state of racial residential segregation across U.S. cities
- Assess the history, policies, and practices that have led to current segregation levels and that sustain them in the contemporary moment.
- Evaluate how segregation perpetuates the current state of Black-White health disparities in the U.S.
- Critically evaluate public discourse related to race, neighborhoods and inequality.
- Interpret quantitative data (e.g., U.S. census) related to segregation.
- Write intensively, in order to improve writing skills.

Day/Time: Wednesdays, 2:15 - 5:15 PM

Location: BLAKE HALL, RM. 131

Office Hrs: Mondays, 12-2

Course description

The words “racial segregation” bring to mind images from a bygone era, such as water fountains and other public facilities marked as for use by “Whites Only”. The passage of civil rights laws forbade that kind of legalized segregation, but in many ways, the United States remains just as segregated as before those laws were passed. The result is a cascade of limited access to critical resources and opportunities, and overexposure to negative neighborhood features and public policies. This course examines the connection between two of the United States’ most stark racial inequities: Black-White residential segregation and Black-White health disparities. For many diseases and health conditions, Black people in the U.S. have higher prevalence, more severe disease, and higher mortality rates. This health portrait is not attributable solely to restricted access to medical care; so what are the causes? In this class we will examine racial residential segregation as the cornerstone upon which Black-White health disparities are built. We will seek to answer questions such as: What are the mechanisms through which Black neighborhoods have been and continue to be segregated? How do predominantly Black neighborhoods differ from predominantly White neighborhoods? What impact does segregation have on education, income and wealth, environmental exposures, neighborhood amenities, criminal justice, and more? Taken together, how does racial segregation affect health disparities in the United States? This seminar draws on interdisciplinary social science and public health scholarship, and is open to juniors and seniors.

Course structure

This is a 400-level seminar. This means it is not the kind of course that relies on and rewards memorizing tons of facts. Instead, the focus is on close readings, critical analysis, discussion of assigned texts (including written scholarship and other media such as films), in-class exercises, working with quantitative data, and other analytic inquiries. Lecture will be minimized.

The amount of reading is substantial most weeks. To be successful in this class and to come ready to contribute to the kinds of discussion a small class requires, you will need to keep up. Everyone is expected to actively and constructively participate; a 3-hour class will only be as stimulating as you make it.

Course Requirements & Grading

In-class analytic papers (20%): Each class period, we will be discussing the readings assigned for that day. On many days, our discussion will be framed in part by the analysis you put forth in written analysis that you will complete at the beginning of class. In these papers you will engage with the readings and connect them to other materials. For example, imagine that we read two works for a class period, by authors Lopez and Mensah. I may ask you to answer a question such as “Describe what you believe are the strongest facets of Mensah’s argument about suburban street design and racial hierarchy.” Or, I may show a film clip and ask a question such as: “How would Lopez explain the conflict raised in the film?” Apart from readings, I will also draw on material I present in class. For example, I may lecture about the work of an author named Smith in one class, and some weeks later, give you an article from the *New York Times* to read in class, and ask, “What does Smith’s theory suggest will be likely outcomes for the people described in this newspaper account?” The goal is for you to interpret and argue with the readings, connect the ideas to current events and cultural texts, etc. Doing so will help you dig deeper into the material and allow us to have richer discussion during class. Obviously, successful completion of the analytic papers necessitates having closely read all the assigned works *before you come to class* that day and taking good notes on the content we cover in class.

After class, I will grade each paper; the average of these grades over the semester will comprise 20% of your grade. Your grade is based on the strength and clarity of your arguments and use of the readings. Since you

are writing in class and will not have a chance to revise your writing as you would a take-home paper, your grade is not about the beauty of your prose. Yes, you still have to write clearly – and appropriate grammar is part of that – but the emphasis here is on comprehension and argumentation.

As well, in order to strengthen your skills in communicating ideas to a broader audience – and not just writing an assignment because a professor asked you to – on some days, I will re-circulate all response papers (without grades) amongst the class, and each student will give brief feedback by jotting comments, questions, suggestions, etc., in the margins of classmates' papers. This is not a snark fest! Feedback should focus on a careful assessment of the ideas presented in the paper, use of evidence, and writing clarity. This peer review will NOT factor into your grade, but is intended to give you additional feedback on your work, and to give you practice critiquing the work of others.

Hurricane Katrina interview and movie review (20%): We will watch a film about Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast in September, 2005.

First, prior to watching the film, you will conduct a brief interview with anyone of your choosing, as long as they are aged 35 or older. Your interview will consist of a set of questions based on the survey the Pew Charitable Trust conducted soon after the disaster. Your write-up of this interview will comprise 10% of your grade.

Next, you will write a 5-page paper in which you critique the film – focusing on the issues raised in the Pew survey questions. This portion of the assignment is another 10% of your grade.

Book review (20%): You will write a 3-page book review of *Reproducing Racism*. Note that we will read the whole book for the day we discuss it, whereas other books are spread out over more than one class session. The book review is due that same day, so you will need to plan well in advance. Because this is later in the course, when we will have encountered many of the core ideas that Roithmayr discusses, you will be well positioned to tackle the whole book in one go. I will provide more details about form the review should take, but as with everything else in the class, it will focus on assessing the strength of argumentation and evidence.

Final paper (40%): The final paper will ask you to integrate what you have learned over the course of the semester and write a paper in which you offer arguments about the ways in which segregation operates in the United States and how it affects health. The length will be determined at a later date, but it will be in the neighborhood of 8 pages – definitely not more than 10, and potentially fewer than 8. Don't be fooled! Shorter papers are *much* harder to do well than long (e.g., 20 pages) ones. You will need to be as concise and clear as possible and offer your strongest analysis. It goes without saying that you need to work through several revisions before turning it in – do not hand in a first draft.

The format is as follows. You will read two articles that appeared on two different websites: Salon.com, an online magazine, and Brownstoner.com, a New York City blog about real estate. Along with the articles, you will read the numerous comments that followed each article. In the final paper, you will assess the themes that emerge in these comments, critically evaluate them, and argue what their implications are for Black-White health disparities.

The readings are:

1. ☼ Denvir, D. (2011). The 10 most segregated urban areas in America (plus reader comments). You are to read the article written by Denvir, and view the slideshow, here:

http://www.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/2011/03/29/most_segreated_cities

And then read the hundreds of reader comments in the PDF in Sakai.

2. ☞ Brownstoner. (2006). Corcoran's Brooklyn Heights Office Accused of Bias (plus reader comments). First read the National Fair Housing Alliance report (in Sakai), then read the PDF of reader comments to an article posted on the real estate blog Brownstoner, also in Sakai.

Read these at any time, but do not wait until the last minute!! Especially because you will need to read them more than once in order to produce a strong analysis for the final paper. The best strategy would be to read them early in the semester, then a second time as we get further in the course and you know more about the theories, statistics, history, and policies that relate to the commenters' claims, and then once more as you actually begin writing the final paper.

Course Policies

Academic integrity

The short version: You must do your own work. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade on an assignment or in the course, or worse, depending on the circumstances. The long version: As detailed on the Rutgers Academic Integrity webpage (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>), "Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals... Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses." The University has a disciplinary procedure for academic dishonesty, which I will follow. We will discuss how to appropriately cite others' ideas. If you have any confusion about what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to meet with me for clarification. I will use Turnitin on all assignments, and you will be able to view the report from the computer analysis.

Deadlines

In fairness to all students, I will strictly enforce deadlines. It is not fair when some students manage to turn their work in by the stated deadline, while others are able to submit after that with no repercussions. Therefore, any work turned in late will incur penalties. Late work without an extension *will drop by 10 points per day, including weekends*. I will only approve extensions in one of two scenarios: 1) Ahead of time, you submit documentation to show that you will be unavailable at the time the paper is due; 2) After the fact, due to documented illness or personal/family emergencies. Extensions will NOT be granted for routine conflicts, other curricular requirements and course demands, computer glitches, etc.

Submitting assignments

For all written assignments except those produced in class, you must: a) Type your work. No handwritten material will be accepted; b) Upload your work to Sakai before class, so I have a permanent record of everyone's work for the semester; and c) Bring a hard copy to class, which I will grade and return to you. BOTH submissions are required. If you bring the print version of your assignment to class and you have not uploaded it to Sakai by the deadline, it is LATE. All written work is due by class start time, 2:15 pm, unless otherwise noted.

Citation Style

You are required to use APA (American Psychological Association) style for formatting references and for citation style in your written work. We will discuss APA Style in class, and I will also post to Sakai documents on how to cite in APA format. Books on APA Style are available through the libraries and in the department office.

Absence reporting

I assume and expect that you will be at each class session barring illness or emergencies. To report that you

will be absent from class (e.g., because you are sick), please use the following link: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. This is Rutgers' system-wide notification, which ensures students and faculty that there is an official record of student absences. The system will automatically send an email to me. If you know in advance that you will miss a class period (e.g., out of state travel) please use the website to indicate the date and reason for your absence. If your commitments are such that you think it likely you will miss more than one class, you should see me so we can determine whether this semester is a good time for you to take this course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who require accommodations for disabilities are urged to contact the Office of Disability Services at 732-932-2848 or dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu. This office works with students to document any disability and to determine appropriate accommodations. I am unable to create accommodations on an individual basis. Please see me if you have further questions.

Class notifications

Check your email everyday! I will communicate with the class through Sakai, and therefore all communications will be sent to your official Rutgers email. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, etc., that I send through Sakai; you will not be excused because you didn't see it.

Electronics

No screens or phones during class time, unless otherwise directed (e.g., if a class session will require you to use a calculator, which you have on your phone). If you have an emergency and must take a phone call or send texts, just let me know and you can step outside to handle it. You can also use devices during the break if you need to.

Office Hours

Office hours are a time for you to come by and ask questions, discuss any issues you are having in the course, give feedback on the course, get feedback on how you are doing, etc. You are especially encouraged to come to office hours if you find yourself having a tough time in the course, -- don't wait until much of the semester has gone by and it's too late to rectify it. But of course, office hours are not only for those having difficulty. And apart from regularly scheduled hours I am also available by appointment.

Course Readings

Required books for purchase: (These are listed in the schedule by author's last name only)

1. Alexander M. (2009). The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. New York: The New Press.
2. Bell, J. (2013). Hate Thy Neighbor: Move-in Violence and the Persistence of Racial Segregation in American Housing. New York: NYU Press.
3. Roithmayr, D. (2014). Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage. New York: NYU Press.
4. Taylor, D. (2014). Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution and Residential

Mobility. New York: NYU Press.

5. Ward, J. (2013). Men We Reaped: A Memoir. New York: Bloomsbury.

Required articles, reports, book chapters, or other:

These will be available on-line from the Rutgers library, or I will have posted them in Sakai. The latter are marked with ☞

Course Schedule

January 21 First day: Introduction to the course, overview of segregation statistics.

January 28 Fundamental causes of health; History of segregation policies

Reading due:

1. Williams, D. R., & Collins, C. (2001). Racial residential segregation: A fundamental cause of racial disparities in health. *Public Health Reports*, 116, 404-416.
2. Taylor, pages 147-261

February 4 Hurricane Katrina: segregation and natural and unnatural disasters

Reading due:

1. Visit this website and play the animated graphic scene by scene:
<http://www.nola.com/katrina/graphics/flashflood.swf>
2. ☞ Hurricane timeline (I created this by summarizing accounts from a number of sources)
3. ☞ The Brookings Institution (2005). *New Orleans After the Storm: Lessons from the Past, a Plan for the Future*. Washington DC: Author.

Assignment due:

Write-up of interview results

February 11 Hurricane Katrina continued; Wealth disparities

Reading due:

1. **on reserve at Chang Library
Shapiro, T.M. (2005). The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality. New York: Oxford University Press. (excerpt, pages 1-30).

Assignment due:

Film review

February 18 Segregation and toxic physical environmentsReading due:

1. Taylor, pages 6-122

February 25 Violence as a tool to maintain segregationReading due:

1. Bell, pages. 1-116

March 4 Violence & segregation, continuedReading due:

1. Bell, pages 116-207

March 11 Racism, socioeconomic position, and healthReading due:

1. Jones, C.P. (2002). Levels of racism: A theoretic framework and a gardener's tale. American Journal of Public Health, 90:1212-1215.
2. ☼ Scott, J. (2005, May 16). Life at the Top in America Isn't Just Better, It's Longer, *The New York Times*.
3. ☼ Blitstein, R. (2009). Racism's Hidden Toll. *Miller-McCune*. Retrieved from <http://www.miller-mccune.com/health/racisms-hidden-toll-3643/>

March 18 NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK**March 25 Segregation and police practices**Reading due:

1. Bergner, D. (2014). Is Stop-and-Frisk Worth It? *The Atlantic Magazine*. Available at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/03/is-stop-and-frisk-worth-it/358644/>
2. ☼ Rothstein, R. (2014). *The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of its Troubles*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

3. ⌘ New York Civil Liberties Union. (2012). Stop-and-Frisk 2011 Report. New York: Author.

April 1 Foreclosures, subprime lending, & the undermining of Black wealth

Reading due:

1. Phillips, S. (2010). The Subprime Crisis and African Americans. *Review of Black Political Economy*, 37, 223-229.
2. ⌘ Transcript, *This American Life*. "The Giant Pool of Money". Original airdate 05/09/2008.
3. ⌘ Powell, M., & Roberts, J. (2009, May 16). Minorities Affected Most as New York Foreclosures Rise, *The New York Times*.

April 8 Intergenerational disadvantage & the perpetuation of inequality

Reading due:

1. Roithmayr, entire book

Assignment due:

Book review

April 15 Mass incarceration

Reading due:

1. Alexander, pages 1-139

April 22 Mass incarceration, continued

Reading due:

1. Alexander, pages 140-262

April 29 Last day: Segregation & health—a personal account

Reading due:

1. Ward, entire book

May 4 READING DAY

Assignment due:

Final paper!

Papers are due electronically in Sakai **AND** a hard copy in my hands/mailbox/under my office door by 4:30 pm. At 4:31 your paper is late.

CLOSING COMMENT

MAY 20, 2012

Is Segregation Back in U.S. Public Schools?

INTRODUCTION



Emily Berl for the New York Times

Last week marked the 58th anniversary of the [Brown v. Board of Education](#) decision, which declared racial segregation of public schools unconstitutional. But segregation, now due largely to geography, still remains an issue for most school systems, from [New York City](#) to [Charlotte, N.C.](#), and beyond. In his article in The Sunday Review, David L. Kirp, the author of "Kids First," said that "[desegregation is effectively dead.](#)"

How can we integrate public schools when neighborhoods have become more segregated? Is it time to bring back busing? What other options and solutions are out there for providing a quality education for all children?

DEBATERS

 <p>Integrating Rich and Poor Matters Most <small>RICHARD D. KAHLENBERG, CENTURY FOUNDATION</small></p>	 <p>Busing Isn't the Answer, Choice Is <small>TERRY L. STOOPS, JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION</small></p>
 <p>Busing Taught Me Valuable Lessons <small>ERIC MONTGOMERY, BUSED IN SCHOOL</small></p>	 <p>Worth the Commute <small>PAGE LEGGETT, BUSED IN HIGH SCHOOL</small></p>
 <p>Focus on Better Education Instead <small>LANCE T. IZUMI, PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE</small></p>	 <p>Draw Out Diversity With Unique Offerings <small>PEDRO NOGUERA, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY</small></p>
 <p>ZIP Code Shouldn't Affect School Quality <small>MICHELLE RHEE, STUDENTSFIRST</small></p>	 <p>True Integration Is Difficult and Necessary <small>DONNA BIVENS, UNION OF MINORITY NEIGHBORHOODS, BOSTON</small></p>

The issues with which we will wrestle throughout this course are central to American social life, and repeatedly surface in public discourse, as in the above example from the *New York Times*' "Room for Debate" column. By the time you complete this course, you should be well-equipped to engage in your own debate, even if you are not called upon to do so by the NYT. As you will see in the texts that you will read for the final paper, most Americans are under informed about inequality in this country. At the conclusion of the course, you will therefore have knowledge that most Americans do not. What will you do with it?