

Health, Human Rights, and Advocacy Nexus Course Syllabus

Fall 2019

Created in 2011, this student-run course is intended to provide students with a space for building critical thinking and community around social justice work. It is also a core component of the Human Rights and Social Justice Scholars (HRSJ) program for first year medical students though the course is open to all students. The course goals are to examine how social processes influence health; to provide a forum for thinking critically about a variety of health and human rights issues; and to empower students to improve local and global health systems.

This Nexus course is available to all students and is mandatory for HRSJ Scholars. To receive Nexus credit, students may only miss one class.

Week 1: Race, Racism, and Medicine: A Living Legacy

| 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

This class will teach students about the role that race and racism play in medicine and other systems. In addition, the class will give students some starting points for how they can engage with and deconstruct these racist systems.

Facilitator:

Seshat Mack MD/PhD

Week 2: Mass Incarceration: The New Jim Crow

Monday, September 24 | 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. | **Hess 9-101**

This class will discuss healthcare within the incarceration system as well as the impact of mass incarceration outside the prison. Students will be encouraged to consider why mass incarceration is the new Jim Crow, as described by Michelle Alexander, and how we ended up with this system. In addition, the class will try to lift up narratives that haven't received as much attention, such as the impact of mass incarceration on Latinx, immigrants, and LGBTQ folks of color.

Facilitator:

- Dr. Jonathan Giftos, *Einstein College of Medicine, Clinical Director of Substance Use Treatment at Rikers Island*

Week 3: Healthcare System

Monday, October 1 | 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

This session will introduce students to the many sources of healthcare that exist outside the hospital and will encourage students to think about where healthcare is provided and why. Students will learn about the structures within the current healthcare landscape.

Facilitator:

- Dr. Roberts Fields, *Mount Sinai, Assistant Professor in Family Medicine and Community Health and Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Population Health*

Week 4: LGBTQ+ Health Advocacy

Monday, October 21st | 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. |

Students will hear from three medical professionals and LGBTQ+ health activists on their advocacy work as a family doctor, geriatrician, and transgender health specialist and program director at the Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery. Students will discuss homophobia and transphobia in the medical system and developments in providing queer-positive, trans-positive, intersectional medical care.

Panelists:

- Dr. Victor Sta Ana, *MD, Assistant Professor in Family Medicine and Community Health, Mount Sinai and Institute for Family Health*
- Zil Goldstein, *NP, Mount Sinai, Transgender Health Specialist and Program Director of Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery*

Week 5: Immigration and Health

Monday, October 15 | 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

Students will learn about what medical resources are available for people who have recently immigrated to the United States and about the significant barriers they still face. They will learn how physicians can advocate for their immigrant patients.

Speaker:

- Regina Chessari, *Esq., Senior Staff Attorney, LegalHealth, New York Legal Assistance Group*

Week 6: Housing and Homelessness

| 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

This class will engage students with information about the changing East Harlem neighborhood and the importance of zip code. In addition, students will learn about individuals who are experiencing homelessness and the unique challenges in providing healthcare to this population.

Facilitator:

- Dr. Andrew Coyle, *Mount Sinai, Internal Medicine*

Week 7: Gun Violence

| 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. |

This session will ask students to participate in a discussion on the epidemiology of gun violence and to engage with relevant literature on the topic. Students will discuss the health effects of exposure to violence and brainstorm possible medical and community-level interventions.

Facilitator:

- Dr. Rosalind Wright, *MD, MPH, Mount Sinai, Pediatrics and Environmental Health*

Week 8: Childhood Trauma and Sexual Violence

This session will introduce students to the many pathways through which childhood trauma affects health. Through the lens of sexual violence and sex trafficking, it will focus on ways to integrate trauma-informed care into medical practice.

Facilitators:

- Dr. Makini Chisolm-Straker, *Mount Sinai, Emergency Medicine*
- Dr. Daniel Miller, *Hudson River Healthcare, Family Medicine*

Week 9: Substance Use, Addiction, and Harm Reduction

| 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

In this class, students will compare and contrast the different responses to the crack and opioid epidemics as well as the impacts of each on East Harlem. This class will seek to make connections between past and present epidemics. In addition, students will think about how medicine deals with substance abuse and whether it does a good job of doing so.

Facilitators:

- Emily Winkelstein, *MSW, Community Engagement Manager at NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*
- Terrell Hayes, *Peer Navigator at New York Harm Reduction Educators and Peer Network of NY*

Week 10: Wrapping Up and the Role of the Physician

| 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. |

For our final session, students will reflect on the role of the physician in dismantling structural inequity and human rights abuses. Students will be asked to read an article and then engage in

a discussion on the opportunities and limitations of continuing this work as a clinician, as well as the challenges of incorporating these values into a career.