Building a more inclusive healthcare system Collaborative research with Family Tree Clinic

Geography 294-02 Macalester College



Community Engagement Word cloud provided by Family Tree Clinic

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a collaborative project with the Family Tree Clinic, a community-based provider of reproductive and sexual health services, located in Minneapolis. For the past five years the clinic has studied the barriers that affect Black people's access to health care. Clinic staff have collected dozens of interviews with people who are underserved by the current health care system. By centering their perspectives and experiences, students will collaborate with Family Tree Clinic staff to identify ways of working toward health equity at Family Tree Clinic and beyond. Students' core contributions will be made through a qualitative research project analyzing the interview transcripts, distilling essential themes, and identifying courses of action. Through this work, students will develop their capacities for collaboration and group work; learn qualitative data analysis techniques, research ethics, and project management skills; and expand their understanding of health disparities and equity as well as the geography of health care access. The class will generate a report for Family Tree Clinic that will inform its efforts to build a more inclusive healthcare system.

Goals

Satisfactory work in this seminar will help you develop capabilities that you will use after college, whatever path you follow.

Through full participation in the work of this course you will:

- (1) Develop your qualitative research and analysis capabilities;
- (2) Expand your collaboration and communication skills;
- (3) Deepen your understanding of the barriers and opportunities for creating more socially inclusive systems in our society;
- (4) Grow in your ability to articulate ideas through writing, speaking, and creating; and
- (5) Engage in self-reflection as a way to integrate learning.

By the end of this class you will be able to:

- (a) Identify myriad barriers to and opportunities for expanding access to the healthcare system in the United States:
- (b) Comprehend research ethics and know how to practice them;
- (c) Demonstrate problem-solving and critical-thinking skills through work on an original inquiry entailing qualitative research;
- (d) Practice engaged learning through inclusive participation in class;
- (e) Support your and others' growth and learning through collaboration in small + large group discussions; and
- (f) Reflect upon your learning process and outcomes in this course.

We will pursue these aims in a variety of ways, including interacting with course content, working on assignments, and supporting each other in this work. There are multiple principles, norms, and expectations that help to ensure that our engagement rests on an inclusive and supportive foundation.

Format

We will work on developing our abilities as qualitative researchers primarily through a collaborative action research project. Some but not all of the work on this project will take place in our regular class

meetings. These will consist of a mix of in-class activities, discussion, presentation, practicums, and workshops. Your regular attendance, preparation, and full participation are necessary to sustain an optimal environment for learning. I therefore expect you to have completed all assignments, including the required reading, before coming to class.

I also expect you to engage in research activities that will take place outside of our scheduled meeting times. Our research project for the class will ask each of you to contribute time outside of our regularly scheduled meetings, especially during more intensive phases of exploration and in-depth analysis. I estimate that you will need to spend approximately 4 hours outside of class per week on these tasks. These out-of-class activities are thus an important part of our course format and I expect you to treat it as you would any other major course assignment.

POLICIES

Moodle

Moodle will serve as a virtual home for our class. I will post copies of the syllabus and assignments on Moodle and use its announcement forum. Any post to the announcement forum will also be sent to your e-mail. Following the schedule outlined in this syllabus, there is a link to course resources, including assigned readings. All assignments are posted on Moodle. Please turn in your assignments via Moodle. Feedback is shared via Moodle as well. I will do my best to remind you of tasks and assignments during our meetings. That said, a best practice will be checking our course Moodle page regularly each day to see any announcements and review tasks to complete so that you are prepared for the day's activities.

Communication

I will make regular announcements to our class when we meet and through Moodle. You may reply to announcements issued through Moodle, however these replies are sent to everyone in the class by default. Take care using this feature.

For one-on-one communication, I invite you to contact me via email or schedule a time during my office hours. I will also be available for 10-15 minutes after our in-person meetings. This will enable casual or impromptu conversations.

Please allow for a 24-hour response time to your email messages during the week and 48-hour for messages sent on the weekend. Generally speaking, I plan to reply to email messages during my office hours.

Office Hours

First, it may be help to consider: "What are office hours for?" I see them as an extension of our class -- as an opportunity to work through something challenging or perplexing and/or a chance to share connections, realizations, and excitement about the course or related material. In either case, coming to my office hours is an act of trust. I pledge to respect you and earn your trust through careful listening and compassionate support.

My office hours will be held in Carnegie 104e. My office hours are scheduled for Tuesdays 9-10:30 am, Wednesdays 12-1:30 pm, and Thursdays 1-2 pm. I will not hold office hours during the October and November breaks. If these times do not work with your schedule, don't hesitate to contact (via email or otherwise) and we can set up an appointment for an alternative time.

How to show up for office hours

You must first claim or sign up for office hours by navigating to my google calendar: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUdZZm5wZURDYXBhfGRlZmF1bHR8ZjQ5 MjlmNTdmMTAzYmU1ZDlhODkxYmZjODQ0Yzc3ZWU

Scroll through the calendar [top left side, use the < and > buttons] to select a day and time to meet. You can do this in advance or, if there's an open slot, you can do in the moment. Appointment slots are 15 minutes long. You are welcome to drop by my office hours without making an appointment in advance, but I will prioritize meeting with those who have scheduled an appointment. On this point, I encourage you to check my google calendar before you stop by to make sure I am available.

Inclusivity

I am committed to providing a safe and equitable learning environment that welcomes and supports everybody. We as learners and teachers all bring various experiences and life contexts to this course. These differences will emerge in class and be part of what we negotiate and benefit from as a developing community.

I acknowledge that academic institutions have evolved within a historical context that privileges certain students over others and certain perspectives and knowledges over others. In this classroom, I will do my best to be aware of how these inequities may manifest.

I hope you will feel comfortable coming to me to express any concerns or suggestions; this is an iterative process that requires the collaboration of all. Indeed, I resolutely believe that the work of anti-racism is essential to inclusion. Furthermore, this work is an ongoing process in which we must strive to understand and unpack inherited assumptions and create more emancipatory and egalitarian practices so that we might dismantle systems of oppression and exclusion wherever we encounter them.

In our first few meetings, we will work together to generate a set of shared norms and expectations that ground how we participate and interact with each other. The norms we generate will reflect our unique situation, but will be grounded in principles of mutual respect, inclusion, and maintaining a focus on learning. We may need to revisit these norms and expectations and adjust them according to how our interactions unfold. These will be recorded and made available through Moodle.

Accommodations

I am committed to ensuring access to course content for all students. If you have a disability, please meet with me early in the term to discuss your accommodation plan. If you have not yet obtained a plan or are unsure if you have a disability that requires accommodation, please contact Disability Services: disabilityservices@macalester.edu, or call 651-696-6974.

Public Health Expectations

When we are in class together on campus, we will follow the Mac Stays Safer Community Commitment.

If you do not feel well, please do not come to class. This includes if you are experiencing common cold symptoms. If you miss class, we can make arrangements to cover missed material, activities, and assignment deadlines.

Attendance

Being there plays an essential role in learning. I expect you to attend all scheduled class meetings. Attendance will be important not only for your learning, but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another.

Your presence in class matters. And to re-iterate, support is available for you to attend class via remote connection if needed.

I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. Although I hope it isn't the case, those unavoidable circumstances may be more common during this term given that we are still in a pandemic. If you will not participate in class for any reason, please inform me via email. It is also your responsibility to make up work you missed in your absence.

If you anticipate missing a scheduled class, for instance for religious observance, please let me know as soon as possible and before the add/drop period so that we can plan to accommodate your absence.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is expected at all times. All work for this course must be your own. You must properly cite any work on which you draw in your written assignments. Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course. Furthermore, such behavior will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in suspension or even dismissal from the college. Please see me if you have questions about what counts as plagiarism.

Why I am teaching this course

I rely on qualitative research methods for my own scholarship and I routinely teach a qualitative research methods course at Macalester. I have long held that research is best learnt by doing and have sought to teach qualitative research methods through a hands-on project. Since 2013, I have developed such projects by working in partnership with a community organization. You can see some of the past projects here. I really value these sorts of partnerships because they help to create authentic and relevant research questions that are significant in the wider world. Moreover, work on such projects matters for much more than a grade – it will make a different in the growth and development of a particular community. In 2021, I was approached by folx at Family Tree Clinic about connecting with a course to help them with a research inquiry and found their project compelling since it directly addresses some of the greatest challenges we currently face in the United States: institutional racism, structural inequality, and systems change.

COLLEGE RESOURCES

Personal health and well-being

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this module and your career. In fact, research shows that health and wellness are integral to your learning and personal growth and development. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage

more fully in your academic experience. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, cultural, financial, etc., and how they can have an impact on your academic experience. I encourage you to remember that sleeping, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don't hesitate to contact me and/or find support from other resources, including those listed on the Hamre Center for Health and Wellness:

macalester.edu/healthandwellness

Title IX concerns

Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. If you (or someone you know) has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone, and that help and support are available.

It is my role as a professor to make sure our learning environment is as safe as possible for everyone in our community. *I am a mandatory Title IX reporter*. This means that I can serve as a resource for you, but I am required by law to report any violations, including sexual assault, to the Title IX office. For a list of confidential resources, see the Title IX office's <u>support resources page</u>. For more information about Title IX, see Macalester's <u>Title IX website</u>.

Academic Excellence

Support with writing projects is available through the Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center. I consider the MAX Center to be a fantastic complement to *any* course you take at college as its mission is to support your ongoing growth and development as a critical thinker, reader, and writer. Whenever you want to boost your skills and abilities, I fully recommend connecting with the helpful and supportive folx at the MAX Center.

CURRICULUM

Readings

There is one text that you are required to read for this course:

• brown, adrienne maree (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Chico, CA: AK Press

The text is available for purchase through the campus bookstore and a copy is also on reserve (4-hour loan period) at the library.

We will discuss the text about mid-way through the semester. I recommend that you begin reading it as soon as possible.

In addition to the required text, we will read a number of scholarly articles and practitioner essays. This format allows us to explore a variety of writing styles, perspectives, and empirical cases. These readings are referenced in the schedule by last name of the author. These are available through our course Moodle page. Let me know if you have any problems accessing this material in a timely manner. Bring a paper or electronic copy of assigned readings to class.

Assignments

You are expected to participate in all facets of the project, from organizing a research strategy to analyzing data to communicating your findings. You will be graded on the fulfillment of your responsibilities in the course and your performance in the following assignments:

High Stakes

<u>Final product.</u> You will contribute to the final product in two ways. You will be responsible for:

a "primary contribution" that focus on communicating a substantive part of the research findings. Our class will work collaboratively to envision the final product and delineate contributions for each person. Your work will be graded based on the quality and creativity of the composition. The first draft of the primary contribution is due Nov 21st.

a "secondary contribution" that will focus on select ancillary components of the final product, such as an introduction, description of methods, or conclusion. The first draft of the secondary contribution is due November 21st. Specific responsibilities for your primary and secondary contributions will be determined during the course, likely on October 19th.

<u>Final presentation</u>. For your contribution to the final presentation, you will be graded on the pertinence, organization and clarity of your contribution as well as how it meshes with the content your peers contribute. We will give the final presentation on December 5th.

<u>Final reflection</u>. After the final product is complete, you will reflect on your experience conducting qualitative research and working collaboratively with others as well as your individual learning within the course. This reflection is due Dec 16th.

Low Stakes

<u>Journal</u>. For this course you are required to keep a record of your reflections in response to several prompts over the semester. The purpose of the journal is for you to spend time reflecting on your

experiences in the class in general and our collaborative project specifically. The content of the journal will not be graded, but you must meet deadlines in order to receive credit. You will be given prompts for reflection at an appropriate time and it is my hope that through keeping a journal, you will honestly consider the progress of the group project and your individual learning, and explore the challenges and rewards of group projects and collaborative partnerships. The journal entries are due Sept. 14, Sept. 23, Sept 28, Oct 7., Oct 31., and Nov 11.

<u>Preliminary analysis – insights and themes</u>. You will be assigned to work as part of a group to analyze an aspect of the research project. You will work collaboratively to share preliminary findings with the class on Nov. 14th.

<u>Participation</u>. This is very much a self-directed and cooperative course. You are expected to be able to use your knowledge, skills, and energy to achieve the goals of the project. It will be up to each of you to maintain a high level of commitment to the project. Most class time will be given to working on the project, so it is in your best interest to be present! There will be a few points in the semester when you will be called upon to contribute ideas and suggestions based on review of relevant articles and websites. Your preparation and contribution on these matters are also an important facet of your participation.

Changes

As the term unfolds, there may be reason to make changes to the course. I will announce any changes to readings, topics, or the schedule in class and via Moodle. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.

Flexibility

This course is centered around the completion of a collaborative project. The work of the project will likely deviate from what the syllabus envisions, in terms of both the deadlines and scope of work. At all times, we will make collaborative decisions that try to balance workload and project integrity. Above all, your flexibility in realizing this objective is requested and integral to the project's success.

Grading: Contract for a B+

In this course, you will use a "Contract for a B+." This will help us focus on the process of developing as qualitative researchers and supporting collaborative work on a project. Noah and I will provide you with ample and constructive feedback on your work throughout the semester, but I will *only grade your final portfolio* (the final drafts of your high-stakes essays along with a culminating reflection). By the time you turn in this work, you will have had multiple opportunities to receive feedback on your work. This will give you space to grow in your research skills and will give me the chance to guide and mentor you without grades getting in the way. In addition, you will be graded only on meeting the responsibilities outlined in our Contract for a B+. If you meet the contract—that is, if you fulfill all the responsibilities listed in the contract—you are guaranteed at least a grade of B+ for this course. Higher grades (A-, A) are determined by the quality of your work beyond meeting the contract. I do not expect your work to be perfect, but I do expect you to meet the basic responsibilities of the course and to work to improve your knowledge and skills.

Meeting Contract

With the Contract for a B+, earning a B+ depends on fulfilling all the participant responsibilities. I also understand that sometimes life happens and you may need an extension or you may need to be absent

from class. Each participant thus receives six "Self-Care Tokens" that they may use to excuse an absence or extend a deadline; two tokens will grant you a 48-hours extension on a high-stakes writing exercise and one token will extend a deadline for a low-stakes writing exercise. However, please note that some deadlines may be designated as inflexible (either because we are doing peer review or because of my own tight schedule to provide feedback; these "hard deadlines" will be noted on the specific prompts). Missing any of these hard deadlines constitutes a major contract breach. Two minor contract breaches (involving a low-stakes responsibility or more than three absences in class meetings) or one major contract breach (involving a high-stakes responsibility) will result in a final grade lower than a B+. This will be noted in the contact, which you will be required to sign to be a part of the course.

If you are having difficulties with any of the course responsibilities, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your progress and figure out a way to get you on contract. I want you to succeed and to do your best in this course, so please talk with me about how things are going for you at any point in the module.

Grades Higher than a B+

While fulfilling the terms of the grading contract will earn you a B+, grades of A and A- require demonstrated leadership in developing and advancing our shared work. This can be achieved by finding ways to support the collaborative work of the group and taking ownership in one or more aspects of preparing and delivering the final product set in the class. You will have an opportunity to identify the ways in which you may have contributed leadership in the final reflection for the course. In sum, if you stayed on contract the entire term, the lowest grade you can earn is a B+. However, if you breached contract during the module, your final grade will be lower than a B+. If you stay on contract and contributed leadership, you can earn a grade higher than a B+.

List of Assigned Readings

- Alday-Mondaca, Carolina and Lay-Lisboa, Siu. 2021. The Impact of Internalized Stigma on LGBT Parenting and the Importance of Health Care Structures: A Qualitative Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 18*, 5373.
- American Alliance of Museums. 2022 [Website]. Definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion. Available at: https://www.aam-us.org/programs/diversity-equity-accessibility-and-inclusion/facing-change-definitions/
- Belmont Report. 1979. *Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.* The national commission for the protection of human subjects of biomedical and behavioral research.
- Bledsoe, Adam, Wright, Willie, Eaves, LaToya. 2020. Black Geographies, in Kpbayashi, Audrey (editor) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2nd edition, Vol. 1, pp. 347-350, Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Bourke, Lisa, Mitchell, Olivia, Shaburdin, Zubaidah, Malatzky, Christina, Anam, Mujibul, and Farmer, Jane. 2021. Building readiness for inclusive practice in mainstream health services: A preinclusion framework to deconstruct exclusion. *Social Science & Medicine* 289.
- DOPE Labs [podcast]. Episode 42: Understanding HIV, part 1. Available at: https://www.dopelabspodcast.com/podcast-episodes/lab-042-understanding-hiv?rq=HIV
- DOPE Labs [podcast]. Episode 43: Understanding HIV, part 2. Available at: https://www.dopelabspodcast.com/podcast-episodes/lab-043-understanding-hiv-part-2?rq=HIV
- Hay, Iain, (ed.) 2016. *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, 4th Edition. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Hazen, Helen, and Anthamatten, Peter (2020). *An Introduction to the Geography of Health*, Second Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Hill, Latoya, Artiga, Samantha, Haidar, Sweta. 2022. Key Facts on Health and Health Care by Race and Ethnicity. Kaiser Family Foundation. Available at: https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/report/key-facts-on-health-and-health-care-by-race-and-ethnicity/
- King, N., and Horrocks, C. 2010. *Interviews in qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Knowles, A., Westerveld, L., Strom, L. 2015. Inductive visualization: a humanistic alternative to GIS. *GeoHumanities* 1(2): 233-265.
- Mackenzie, Sonja. 2013. *Structural Intimacies:* Sexual Stories in the Black AIDS Epidemic. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Penchansky, Roy, and Thomas, John. 1981. The concept of Access: Definition and Relationship to Consumer Satisfaction. *Medical Care* 19(2): 127 140.
- Rainbow Health. 2021. LGBTQ+ Standards of Inclusion. St. Paul: Rainbow Health.

- Steiner, Andy. 2021. Building an 'oasis': How Family Tree Clinic designed its new facility around a changing patient population. *MinnPost*, December 10. Available at https://www.minnpost.com/health/2021/12/building-an-oasis-how-family-tree-clinic-designed-its-new-facility-around-a-changing-patient-population/
- Tan, Tina. 2019. <u>Principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Access, and Equity</u>. The Journal of Infectious Diseases, Volume 220 (Issue Supplement 2): S30–S32.
- Tikkanen, Roosa, Osborn, Robin, Mossialos, Elias, Djordjevic, Ana, and Wharton, George. 2020. International Healthcare System Profiles: The United States. The Commonwealth Fund. Available at: https://www.commonwealthfund.org/international-health-policy-center/countries/united-states
- Tunstall, Lee. 2018. Backgrounder: Making Sense of the U.S. Health Care System: A Primer. EvidenceNetwork.CA. Available at: https://evidencenetwork.ca/backgrounder-making-sense-of-the-u-s-health-care-system-a-primer-2/
- Yearby, Ruqaiijah, Clark, Brietta, and Figueroa, Jose. 2022. Structural Racism in Historical and Modern US Health Care Policy. *Health Affairs* 41(2): Racism & Health.

SCHEDULE

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
1	Aug 31 (W)	Introduction to the class		
	Sept 2 (F)	Access and Inclusion Meet in the Idea Lab	 American Alliance of Museums Tan 	
2	Sept 5 (M)	No Class – Labor Day		
	Sept 7 (W)	Partnership with Family Tree Clinic	 Heart of Community Engagement Steiner Hill et al. Rainbow Health pp 14-28 	
	Sept 9 (F)	Orientation to the US Health Care System	Tikkanen et al.Tunstall	
3	Sept 12 (M)	Racial disparities in healthcare systems	Yearby et al.Mackenzie	
	Sept 14 (W)	Geographies of Health	Hazen and AnthamattenBledsoe et al	Journal 1
	Sept 16 (F)	Field Trip to Family Tree Clinic	 DOPE Labs ep 42 & ep 43 Rainbow Health pp 29-33 	
4	Sept 19 (M)	Introduction to Qualitative Research	Hay Ch 1Alday-Mondaca	

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
4	Sept 21 (W)	Rigor and Qualitative Research Design	 Hay Ch 5 Hay Ch 6	
	Sept 23 (F)	No class – explore 2 interviews		Journal 2
5	Sept 26 (M)	Honing our inquiry		
	Sept 28 (W)	Understanding access and inclusion	Bourke et al.	Journal 3
	Sept 30 (F)	No class, watch film: Quiet Rage	Hay Ch 2Belmont Report	
6	Oct 3 (M)	Identifying sound ethical practices		
	Oct 5 (W)	Research project check-in & strategy		Research output examples
	Oct 7 (F)	Meeting with Family Tree Clinic: envisioning the final product		Journal 4
7	Oct 10 (M)	Analysis techniques and tools using Atlas.ti: content analysis	o <u>Atlas.ti</u> o Hay Ch 18	
	Oct 12 (W)	Analysis techniques and tools using Atlas.ti: thematic analysis	King and Horrocks	
	Oct 14 (F)	Data analysis workshop		

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
8	Oct 17 (M)	Compelling ways to communicate qualitative research	Hay Ch 20	Research and share compelling ways to communicate process and experience
	Oct 19 (W)	Research project check-in and Strategies for group work		
	Oct 21 (F)	No class - October Break		
9	Oct 24 (M)	Analyzing qualitative data		
	Oct 26 (W)	Analyzing qualitative data		
	Oct 28 (F)	Analysis techniques and tools using Atlas.ti: advanced analysis		
10	Oct 31 (M)	Theorizing social change: fostering access and inclusion	brown	Journal 5
	Nov 2 (W)	Sharing findings & reflecting on results I		
	Nov 4 (F)	Sharing findings& reflecting on results II		FTC check in
11	Nov 7 (M)	Theorizing social change: behavior and systems change	brown	
	Nov 9 (W)	Forming answers to the research question		

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
	Nov 11 (F)	Forming answers to the research question		Journal 6
12	Nov 14 (M)	Planning the final product I – primary contributions		Preliminary analysis
	Nov 16 (W)	Planning the final product II – secondary contributions		
	Nov 18 (F)	Assembling the final product		
13	Nov 21 (M)	Assembling the final product		Primary and secondary contributions
	Nov 23 (W)	No class - November Break		
	Nov 25 (F)	No class - November Break		
14	Nov 28 (M)	Internal review		
	Nov 30 (W)	Finalize a rough draft		
	Dec 2 (F)	Revising our work		
15	Dec 5 (M)	Present work to Family Tree Clinic		
	Dec 7 (W)	Debriefing feedback		
	Dec 9 (F)	Finalize product		
	Dec 16 (F)			Final reflection due by 12:30 pm