



**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**ANT 255: UnNatural Causes**  
**Is Inequality Making Us Sick?**  
**FALL 2021**

**Tuesdays 930-1045 (on campus) and Thursdays 930-1045 (on Zoom)**

### **What's in this document?**

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### **What can you do with a syllabus?**

- Find out basic information about the class, like what you should expect to be able to do or learn by the end of it;
- Find out what the professor's class policies are in case you have absences or need to hand work in late, etc;
- Find out the work you'll need to do to pass the class;
- Find out what support the professor is offering you in terms of student office hours, extension policies, etc;
- Find out what resources HCC offers you and who you can contact if you need help with finances, disability support, or tutoring;
- Show it to your transfer institution if they need to see what work you did at HCC in order to give you credit. \*\*This is why sometimes syllabi are written in dense, institutional-sounding language--sometimes these documents are used by administrators and parts of them have to sound standardized.

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## Who is my professor?

**Professor Vanessa Martinez**

**Medical Anthropologist, Professor, Exec Team of non-profit (The Women of Color Health Equity Collective), Researcher, Trainer and more.**

Mail Box: Social Science Division, DON 270

Telephone: 413-552-2858 (not utilized this semester)

E-mail: [vmartinez@hcc.edu](mailto:vmartinez@hcc.edu) (Please use email)

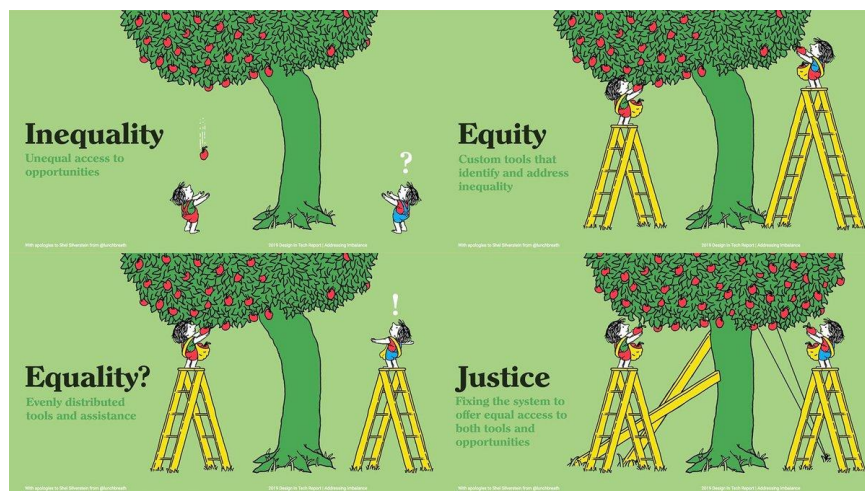
Office: Frost 270 (limited use)

Remote Office hours: TR 330-430pm [on zoom](#) or by appointment

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES (from catalog)**

New research suggests there is much more to our health than bad habits, limited health care access or unlucky genes. The social circumstance in which we are born, live and work can actually impact our physiological responses as much as germs and viruses. This course will focus on the study of human health, disease, and social suffering from a cross-cultural, equity, and policy perspective.

Prerequisite(s): ANT 101 or ANT 114 or SOC 110 or HTH 102 or permission of instructor



<https://www.greateducation.org/bridge-the-gap-equity-room/>

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## **Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI):**

Together with many other HCC educators, we are committed to working against systemic racism, bigotry, and hatred of any kind. We recognize that Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC), women, and other traditionally underrepresented groups such as people with differing abilities, people for whom English is an additional language, and people who identify as LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or allied) have been continually affected by systemic social injustice. As your instructors, we commit ourselves to educating ourselves about our biases and continually examining and improving our teaching practices, so the classroom we share with you is supportive, equitable, and empowering for all students. This includes attention to the inclusivity of the materials that we assign as well as reflection on our teaching practices.

## **COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY**

Holyoke Community College values inclusion and equal access to its programs and activities and is committed to fostering an environment of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If you are an individual with a disability that requires reasonable academic accommodations, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services (OSDDS) at any time to discuss your accommodation needs and options. The OSDDS will work collaboratively with students with disabilities to develop effective accommodation plans for implementation in the classroom. The OSDDS office is located in DON 147. For an appointment, please call 413-552-2417. The Video Phone (VP) number is 413-650-5502.

## **WHAT BOOKS DO I NEED FOR THE COURSE?**

None required. Material will be provided as links in Moodle. You will need a usable computer, stable internet and reliable transportation. I also recommend getting a binder and setting up a google drive folder for the class as well as having some pens and a notebook available for class to keep yourself organized. If you need assistance with any of these items, please reach out to me and I will help in whatever ways I can.

## **WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR THIS CLASS?**

### **Also Known As (AKA), Instructional Objectives**

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Communicate an awareness of one's social identities, beliefs and norms, and the role of social justice in making the world a better place
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of how power plays into our ability to grasp the nuanced differences between equality, equity and disparities.
- Explore the various social determinants of health and their effect on individuals and population health

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- Discuss the topic of medical anthropology, using a bio-sociocultural approach in an effort to address health as an aspect of the human condition
  - Deconstruct the concept of “health” - understanding the variety of healing worldwide
  - Understand the relationship between human suffering, health equity and society/social structures
  - Analyze the relationship between different forms of social inequality and their role in health access and outcomes; for example, what role does poor housing, poverty, food deserts, immigration, etc have on poor health?
  - Complete an individual research project on a real world health inequity issue and push themselves to include possible solutions and/or spaces for advocacy
  - Complete a service learning project advocacy plan in collaboration with a local non-profit, The Women of Color Health Equity Collective (wohec.org)



## **HOW WILL THE COURSE RUN WEEKLY?**

### **AKA, TEACHING PROCEDURES**

This course will be taught in a seminar style with Tuesdays in person on campus, socially distant, with masks and in large group discussion and Thursdays on Zoom with breakout room small group discussions and then large group processing. Students will learn using a variety of strategies including mini lectures, large group discussions, small group work, reflections, an individual research project and a service learning advocacy project.

## **HOW DOES ATTENDANCE WORK IN THIS CLASS?**

Your attendance and participation is needed to ensure that a strong community of learners is created. Attendance in the course will provide you with the necessary tools to receive the grade you desire to work toward. Arrival to class after attendance is taken may count as an absence - students should talk to me

after class or email me if you are late to ensure I mark you tardy rather than absent. After three unexcused absences, the student is at risk of receiving an Academic Withdrawal (AW). An AW may be given in order to preserve the student's GPA. Your participation in class is for the benefit of yourself, your fellow students and the professor. Your participation will be assessed through in-class or outside-class activities (described below).

**Code of Conduct:** Students in this class are expected to observe [HCC's Code of Conduct from the student handbook](#). Students who do not comply with these rules, may be dismissed from the course.

## **HOW WILL WE BE GRADED & EVALUATED?**

### **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE/ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Attendance/participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance, Preparedness and Participation in class</li> </ul>	20%
Assignments (including in-class assignments and journaling): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• journaling</li> </ul>	20%
Group Service Learning Advocacy Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus group interview question schedule</li> <li>• focus group notes</li> <li>• individual research</li> <li>• synthesis into a report</li> <li>• advocacy plan</li> <li>• advocacy plan presentation to non-profit</li> <li>• Group &amp; self reflection assessments, according to student learning outcomes</li> </ul>	50%
Mid-term & Final Self-reflection assessments to include student learning outcomes, assignments, and attendance/participation	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Service Learning Advocacy Plan Project**

This advocacy plan will meet numerous course objectives, including but not limited to, providing students with the ability to:

1. demonstrate a critical understanding of human suffering, power, privilege, and equity;
2. better understand at least one social determinant of health and its effect on individual and/or population health;

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3. analyze the relationship between different forms of social inequality and their role in health access and outcomes;
  4. communicate an awareness of one's social identities, beliefs and norms, and the role of social justice in making the world a better place; and
  5. practice interview skills and working in teams, key research skills in science and social science.

## **GRADING RUBRIC**

The assessment methods in this course will likely be different from anything you've experienced before. Students are asked to self-assess their learning in relation to the content, skill development and growth as an individual. Ultimately, that means I ask you to take ownership of your learning, self-assess and justify how you arrived at your conclusions.

## **COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS**

We will be creating community agreements as a group for how to guide our class seminar discussions of challenging, ethical and controversial materials. These will then be posted on Moodle and referred back to as necessary.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

The most common kinds of academic dishonesty are:

- Having someone else write your paper, or a section of your paper, for you
- Using another source's words without putting them in quotes, or without citing the source
- Using another source's ideas, even with the words changed, without citing the source
- Copying someone else's homework, or using words from an Internet source in your homework without crediting it
- Writing a peer's paper, or section of a paper, or homework, for that person

In most cases, the penalty for academic dishonesty will be a '0' for the assignment. If a second incident occurs, you may fail the course. If the incident is particularly severe in its dishonesty, you may be charged under HCC's Student Discipline Policy, which can result in suspension or expulsion from the college. If you are not sure of all the plagiarism rules, please ask me \*before\* you hand in an assignment. I have also posted HCC's Academic Integrity Policy on Moodle. It includes handy guides and how-to's for recognizing and then correcting plagiarism.

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## ZOOM SECURITY

Zoom is the videoconferencing platform we'll be using for class. Just as HCC takes precautions to keep students safe by preventing unauthorized people from entering our physical classrooms, so we also try to make sure that no one disrupts our virtual classrooms, a practice known as "Zoombombing." In this class, those precautions include requiring students to enter Zoom meetings only through our class Moodle site; to enter the meeting through a "waiting room" that I, your instructor, control; and to identify themselves with a name known to us. For your part, we ask that you help preserve the safety of our community by not sharing links to our class sessions. Doing so would violate the Student Code of Conduct. However, no precautions are 100% effective. If an intruder does enter our class space, we will take immediate steps to remove them and report the incident to the Dean of Students and Campus Police.

## Writing Center

We encourage you to visit the HCC Writing Center (DON 238) for help with writing in all forms - reflections, narrative, and research. Writing Center Hours: Mon-Thurs, 9-7; Fri, 9-3.

## CAPS Center

The Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS) provides free assistance to all students by offering tutors, study groups, workshops, math prep classes, learning coaches, and mentors in academic subjects including writing, math, and English as a Second Language (ESL). CAPS is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. CAPS staff are also available remotely by phone, e-mail, Zoom, and Google Hangouts. Feel free to call us at 413.552.2584 or e-mail [caps@hcc.edu](mailto:caps@hcc.edu) for assistance.



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, *Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems* (October 2014)

## \*\*\* TENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

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### ANT 255 SCHEDULE (subject to change at any time, at instructor's discretion)

The following is a list of topics and assignments anticipated to be covered in this course. Links to all readings are included here.

WEEK & DATE	THEME	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS DUE *Papers, presentations etc uploaded to moodle
WEEK 1: SEPT 7 & SEPT 9	Icebreakers, Syllabus Review, & Community Agreements  <b>Topic: Health/Medical Anthropology as Bridge Builders</b>	Due Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NONE</li> </ul> Due Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">"Introduction to the Anthropology of Health"</a> by Singer, Baer et al.</li> <li>• Watch: Mary Bassett's <a href="#">Why Your Doctor Should Care about Social Justice</a> (16 min)</li> <li>• Write Journal reflection #1</li> </ul>
WEEK 2: SEPT 14 & SEPT 16	<b>Topic: Medical/Health Anthropology and Public Health</b>	Due Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Anthropological Foundations of Public Health: The Case of COVID 19</a></li> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">What is Health Anthropology?</a></li> </ul> Due Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">"What Health Anthropologists Do?"</a> by Singer, Baer et al.</li> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">Art + Science = Medical Anthropology</a></li> </ul>
WEEK 3: SEPT 21 & SEPT 23	<b>Topic: Health, Disease, Illness and Culture</b>	Due Tuesday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">"Understanding Health, Illness and Disease"</a> by Singer, Baer et al.</li> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">Public Health – Concepts of Health and Its Determinants: By Natalie Lovesey M.D.</a></li> </ul> Due Thursday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Culture: The Missing Link in health research</a> by Singer et al.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Can Social Scientists Help Control Epidemics?</a> by Elizabeth Svoboda</li> <li>● Write: Journal Reflection #2 on Ethics</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 4: SEPT 28 &amp; SEPT 30</p>	<p><b>Topic: Cultural Humility, Ethics and Implicit Bias</b></p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Video on Cultural Humility</a></li> <li>● Read: “<a href="#">Cultural Humility versus Cultural Competence</a>” by Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia</li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">The Belmont Report</a></li> <li>● Take: one <a href="#">Implicit Bias test</a></li> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Implicit Bias and Health Disparities</a> by Dayna Bowen Matthew</li> <li>● Do: Step 1- Advocacy Service Learning Project</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 5: OCT 5 &amp; Oct 7</p>	<p><b>Topic: Social Determinants of Health &amp; Health Equity</b></p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: Chap. <a href="#">1 from The Social Determinants of Health: Looking Upstream</a> by Kathryn Strother Ratcliff</li> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Ch 2 from The Social Determinants of Health: Looking Upstream</a> by Kathryn Strother Ratcliff</li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Health Equity Animated Equity versus Equality</a> (2 min)</li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Anthropologists Addressing Health Equity by Hardy &amp; Hulen</a></li> <li>● Read: <a href="#">A Tale of Two Pandemics: a nonfiction comic</a></li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">What makes us sick Looking upstream</a></li> <li>● Write: Journal reflection #3 - Draft of an informed consent form</li> <li>● Do: Step 2- Advocacy Service Learning Project</li> </ul>

<p>WEEK 6: Oct 12 &amp; Oct 14</p>	<p><b>Topic: Maternal Health</b></p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: "<a href="#">When Kinship Is Traced Through Women, Their Health Follows</a>" by Padmanaban, Deepa.</li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">How to reduce maternal and child mortality to save our future?</a> By Sadia Malick</li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Allegories on Race and Racism</a> by Camara Phyllis Jones</li> <li>● Read: "<a href="#">The Black Stork</a>" by Harriet Washington</li> <li>● Do: Step 3- Advocacy Service Learning Project (Focus Group Questions &amp; Informed Consent)</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 7: Oct 19 &amp; Oct 21</p>	<p>Topic: Child Health</p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Exploring the Cultural and Social Context of Black Infant Mortality</a> by Brown-Speights et al.</li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">DNA is not our destiny</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Addressing inequities in child health and development: towards social justice</a></li> <li>● Write Journal Reflection #4</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 8: Oct 26 &amp; Oct 28</p>	<p>Topic: Environmental Health (the role of our social environment)</p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Place Matters</a></li> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Place Matters: From Health and Health Care Disparities to Equity and Liberation</a> by Sharrelle Barber</li> <li>● Do: Mid semester self-reflection</li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Sexual Violence against young women and girls</a></li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Coming Together - Land Use and Violence Prevention</a></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Infographic: The Shadow Pandemic - Violence Against Women and Girls and COVID-19</a></li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 9: Nov 2 &amp; Nov 4</p>	<p>Topic: Environmental Health, Food Justice and Immigration</p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Immigration as a Social Determinant of Health</a></li> <li>• Read: <a href="#">What Doctors Don't See</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">Greening the Ghetto</a> by Majora Carter</li> <li>• Write Journal Reflection #5 on this week's readings</li> <li>• Do: Step 4- Advocacy Service Learning Project (Hold Focus Groups by this date)</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 10: Nov 9 &amp; Nov 11</p>	<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">Esperanza's Story</a></li> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Promoting Mental Health Equity</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Future Directions in Understanding and Addressing Mental Health among LGBTQ Youth</a> by Jessica N. Fish</li> <li>• <a href="#">Discrimination, Mental Health, and Suicidal Ideation Among LGBTQ People of Color</a> by Megan Sutter and Paul B. Perrin</li> </ul>
<p>WEEK 11: Nov 16 &amp; Nov 18</p>	<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: <a href="#">Ring the Alarm The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America Taskforce Report</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: <a href="#">Pursuing Equity in Mental Health act passes</a></li> <li>• Write Journal Reflection #6 on this week's readings</li> <li>• Do: Step 5- Advocacy Service Learning Project (Annotated Bibliography)</li> </ul>

WEEK 12: Nov 23 & Nov 25	Mass Incarceration and Policing	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">How the Past Informs the Present in Healthcare</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">On Life Support Public Health in the Age of Mass Incarceration</a></li> <li>● Do: Step 6- Advocacy Service Learning Project</li> </ul>
WEEK 13: Nov 30 & Dec 2	Mass Incarceration and Policing	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: <a href="#">Mass Incarceration threatens health equity in America</a></li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Write: Journal Reflection #7 on this week's readings</li> </ul>
WEEK 14: Dec 8	Other Topics & Current Events	<p>Due Tuesday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will present on other health equity current events topics of interest to them</li> </ul> <p>Due Thursday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will present on other health equity current events topics of interest to them</li> <li>● Do: Step 7- Advocacy Service Learning Project (Advocacy Plan)</li> </ul>
Week 15: Dec 15	Evaluation Day	<p>Assignments Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Full semester reflection</li> <li>● Do: Step 8- Advocacy Service Learning Project (Self &amp; Group Reflections)</li> </ul>
WEEK 16 Dec 16-20	Final Exams Week Presentations	<p>Do: Step 9- Advocacy Service Learning Project - Student Group Project Presentations with Collective team members and community members if available.</p>

**Content in this course may be triggering depending on your experience. Please know I am here to support you and provide you with any resources I can. Please take care of yourself as needed.**