

Strategy Focus: Identify other significant aspects of an individual's or group's social position, and explore the implications of that position as it relates to health issues

# Dynamics of Difference: Racism and Health

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WGS 220 Week 4



March 28, 1974

John Klementz

# NEXT WEEK IS ON ZOOM

We have a birth professional joining us!

Wednesday 7:30p: Emily Silver, IBCLC

Friday 10:00a: Catherine Johnson, Birth Doula

Friday 11:00a: Khadijah Bansfield, Doula, CBE,  
Student Midwife

***ON CANVAS: Take 5 minutes, submit a question/something you'd like to learn more about to the form in my announcement!***

# Agenda

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- How to establish your research topic (& more about the final project)
- Intersectionality
- The levels of racism
- Under the shadow of Tuskegee: medical racism today

DUE *Sept 27*:  
Critical Analysis

# Final project timeline

## And then:

DUE *Oct 3*:  
Establishing your  
Research Topic

DUE *Oct 31*:  
Thesis and Outline

DUE *Dec 5*:  
Infographic

*Dec 7*: Infographic  
Presentations

# Establishing your Research Topic

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Brief introduction to a US-based topic (what would an uninformed read need to know to be able to follow your argument?) **3-4 sentences**

***Focus should be on women, and have implications for health***

- ▣ Needs to include research on the topic
  - ▣ 2 scholarly articles published since 2011 (last 10 years)
  - ▣ Sources must be US-based
  - ▣ Cite sources in APA-format, in-text and references

Include a research question **1 sentence**

- ▣ Introduction should provide context for this question

# What is a research question?



A single sentence question that describes your research focus

***How does \_\_\_\_ affect \_\_\_\_?***

*How does racism affect the premature birth rate among Latinas?*

***How does \_\_\_\_ lead to \_\_\_\_?***

*How does transphobia lead to discrimination among trans women in medical settings?*

**Aim for “why” and “how” questions!**

# Examples of student research questions last semester:

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How does being a sex worker impact access and quality of healthcare for women?

How is the sexual health of women affected by stealthing, the act of nonconsensually removing a condom during intercourse?

How and why does immigration status affect the mental health of undocumented immigrant women?

**QUESTIONS?**



# Racism and Health

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What does it mean to say **race is a social construct?**

How do we see this in the systems meant to keep us healthy?

# Why Equitable Access to Vaginal Birth Requires Abolition of Race-Based Medicine

Nicholas Rubashkin, MD, PhD

“In 2007, the NIH-funded Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units (MFMU) Network published results for what would become the most widely used VBAC calculator in the United States.<sup>4</sup>...

...Greater body mass index (BMI) and age both decreased the predicted probability of successful VBAC, whereas prior vaginal birth and self-identification as a White woman increased the predicted probability. Specifically, women who self-identified as Black or Hispanic had half the odds of having VBAC as White women.<sup>4</sup>...

...Because the VBAC calculator naturalized racial differences, it's likely that certain uses of the calculator contributed to cesarean overuse among Black and Hispanic women and that this overuse is a form of obstetric racism.”

# Is It Time For A Race Reckoning In Kidney Medicine?

December 28, 2020 · 10:03 AM ET



MARIA GODOY



“...Doctors and labs will routinely apply what's called a "race correction" or "race adjustment" to their estimated GFR number so that Black patients with chronic kidney disease end up with higher values.

Critics say the practice is based on flawed scientific assumptions tinged with racism. And because higher filtration rates suggest better kidney function, critics argue that correcting for race may delay critical referrals to specialists, potentially leading to worse outcomes.

...

“Mendu co-authored a [study published this fall](#) that found that if the race correction were removed, up to 1 out of every 3 Black patients would be reclassified as having a more severe stage of chronic kidney disease...”

# The Three Levels of Racism

Institutionalized

Personally  
mediated

Internalized

# Group Activity

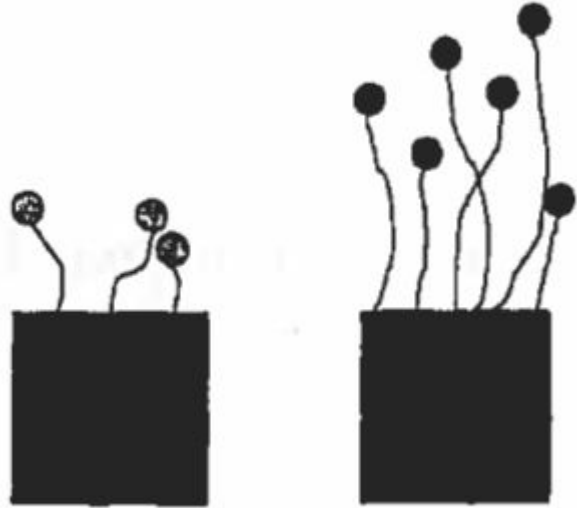
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For your topic (specific level of racism), be able to:

- ▣ Define it
- ▣ Discuss qualities/characteristics of it
- ▣ Give 2 examples (not from the reading)

SHARE OUT

# Institutionalized Racism



Differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race

- Normative
- Sometimes legalized
- Often manifests itself as inherited disadvantage

“...the initial historical insult of **separating the seed into the 2 different types of soil**; the **contemporary structural factors** of the flower boxes, which keep the soils separate; and the **acts of omission in not addressing the differences** between the soils over the years. The normative aspects of institutionalized racism are illustrated by the initial preference of the gardener for red over pink. Indeed, her assumption that **red is intrinsically better than pink may contribute to a blindness about the difference between the soils.**”

Jones, 2000



HUD analysis from 1998: . **“Homeowners in High-Income Black Neighborhoods Are Twice as Likely as Homeowners in Low-Income White Neighborhoods to have Subprime Loans”**

[https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/un-equal\\_full.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/un-equal_full.pdf)

“Detroit remains among the most segregated cities in the nation today, **precisely because of redlining practices that largely blocked Black families from federally-backed mortgages and drove them into neighborhoods with sub-par amenities”**

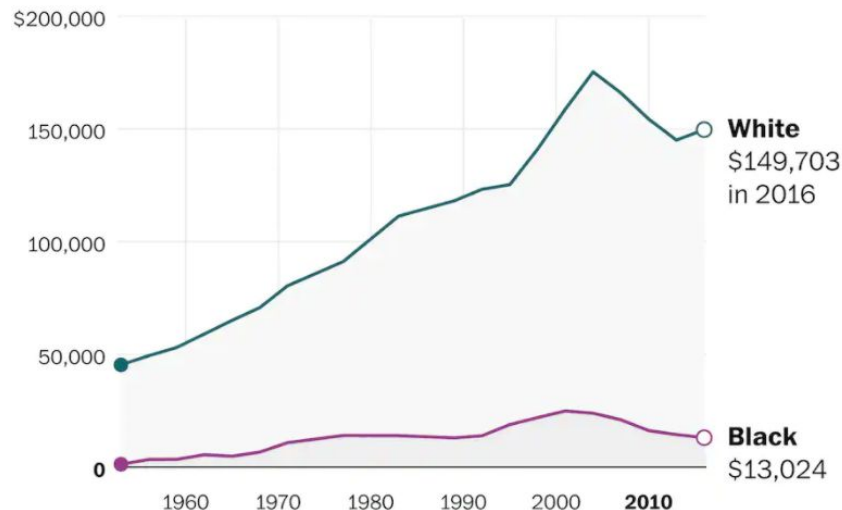
<https://www.brookings.edu/essay/homeowne-rship-racial-segregation-and-policies-for-racial-wealth-equity/> (2021 report)

# The black-white economic divide is as wide as it was in 1968

14 charts show how deep the economic gap is and how little it has changed in decades. The covid-19 recession is also hitting black families and business owners far harder than whites.

## White wealth surges; black wealth stagnates

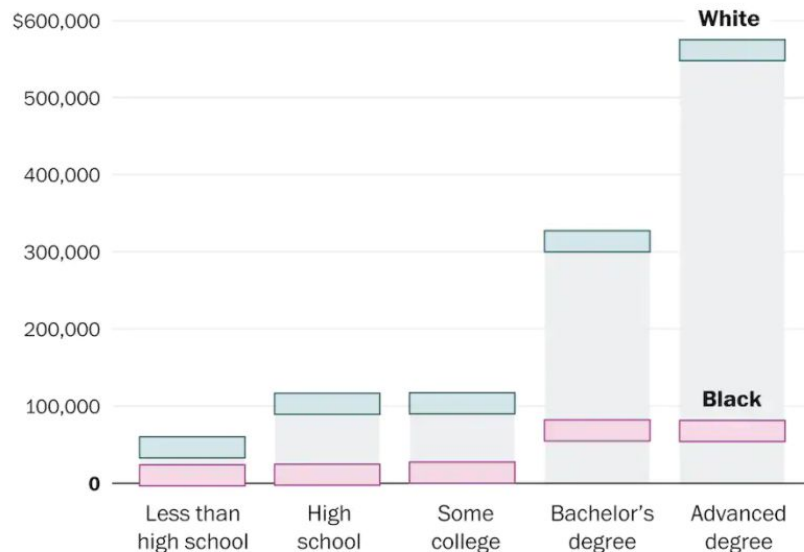
Median household wealth, adjusted for inflation



Source: Historical Survey of Consumer Finances via Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and University of Bonn economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick and Ulrike I. Steins  
THE WASHINGTON POST

## At every education level, black wealth lags

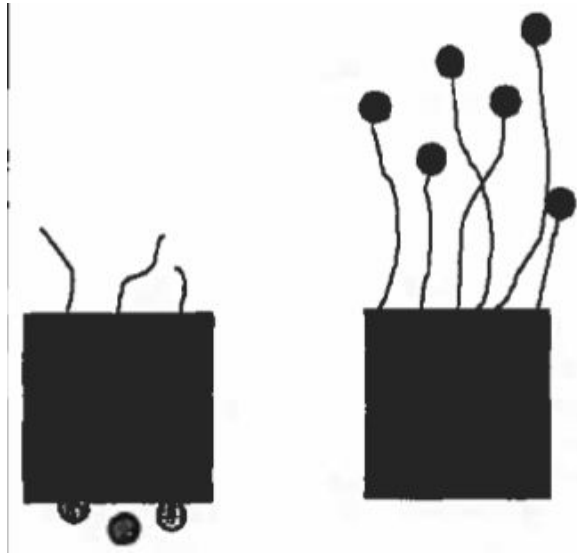
Median household wealth by race and education level, 2016



Source: Federal Reserve  
THE WASHINGTON POST



# Personally Mediated Racism



Prejudice and discrimination

- *Prejudice* means differential assumptions
- *Discrimination* means differential action towards others according to their race

“... the gardener, disdaining the pink flowers because they look so poor and scraggly, **plucks the pink blossoms off before they can even go to seed**. Or when a seed from a pink flower has been blown into the rich soil, and **she plucks it out before it can establish itself.**”

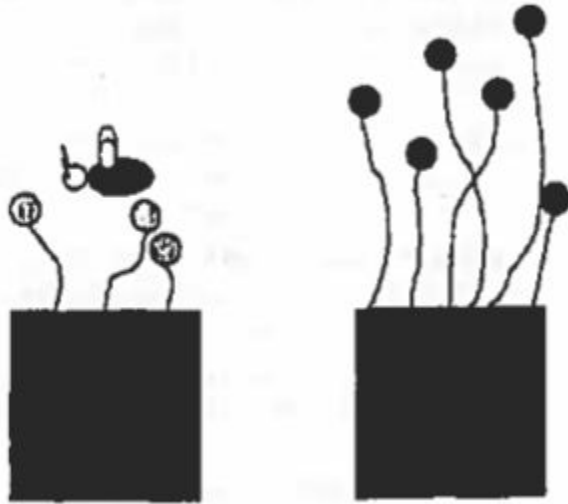
Jones, 2000

# Personally Mediated Racism

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- Can be intentional as well as unintentional
- Manifests as a lack of respect (poor or no service)
- Suspicion (“shopkeeper’s vigilance” or “purse clutching”)
- Devaluation (surprise at competence)
- Scapegoating
- Dehumanization

# Internalized Racism



Acceptance by members of the stigmatized races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth

- Embracing of whiteness
- Self-devaluation
- Hopelessness

“...when a bee comes along to pollinate the pink flowers and the pink flowers say, “Stop! Don’t bring me any of that pink pollen—I prefer the red!” The pink flowers **have internalized the belief that red is better than pink**, because they look across at the other flower box and see the red flowers strong and flourishing.”

Jones, 2000

# Who is the gardener?

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According to Jones (2000), those who have:

- Power to decide
- Power to act
- Control of resources

Government, institutions, those with more privilege or power over others...



**What does Jones identify as the most fundamental level of racism to be addressed?**

***How does she say this level of racism has had an effect on COVID-19 risk? (from Jones, 2020)***

# Intersectionality

## From the Kimberlé Crenshaw TedTalk:

What were your major takeaways from the talk?

How did she define intersectionality?

# Brief review of intersectionality

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**A Black feminist theory** from the discipline of legal studies used to examine the ways in which ***Black women's lives are impacted by interlocking systems of oppression*** (sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, transphobia, ageism, etc.). Though Black women are the “analytical starting point[s]” of intersectionality, ***this theory is useful for everyone.***

“Many of our social justice problems like racism and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice.”

—Crenshaw, 2016

Originally coined in 1989 in Crenshaw's article “Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex,” published in The University of Chicago Legal Forum

# What does intersectionality do?

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1. Frames the relationship between race and gender
2. Describes women of color's location within overlapping systems of subordination
3. Exposes intragroup differences, demonstrating how members of the same identity group can have varying amounts of power
4. Draws connections between various structures of power (patriarchy + racism)



# Under the shadow of Tuskegee & Medical racisms today

What are some of the historical events that Gamble describes in the reading?

What argument is Gamble making using these historical examples?

How does Gamble still see medical racism as a modern issue?

# Where do we see the levels of racism identified by Gamble (1997)?

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Institutionalized?

Personally Mediated?

Internalized?



These historical examples clearly demonstrate that African Americans' distrust of the medical profession has a longer history than the public revelations of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. There is a collective memory among African Americans about their exploitation by the medical establishment. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study has emerged as the most prominent example of medical racism because it confirms, if not authenticates, long-held and deeply entrenched beliefs within the Black community.

– Gamble, 1997, p. 1775



“Back a few years ago, I was having excruciating abdominal pain, and I wound up at a hospital in my area,” she recalled. “The first thing that they began to ask me was how many sexual partners I’d had. I was married and owned my own house. But immediately, in looking at me, they said, ‘Oh, she just has pelvic inflammatory disease.’” Perhaps because of her nursing background, Georges recognized the implications of the questioning. She had come face to face with the stereotype of Black women as sexually promiscuous.

– Gamble, 1997, p. 1776

# Years of medical abuse make Black Americans less likely to trust the coronavirus vaccine

Reckoning with our past is crucial to getting buy-in for the vaccine



By **Dan Royles**

Dan Royles is an assistant professor of history at Florida International University and the author of "To Make the Wounded Whole: The African American Struggle against HIV/AIDS."

Dec. 15, 2020 at 6:00 a.m. EST

It has been almost 11 months since the first case of covid-19 was identified in the United States. In that time, more than 300,000 Americans have died from the virus, and our daily lives have changed dramatically as we try to limit its spread. Promising results from several vaccine trials and an approved vaccine gives us some hope the end is in sight, but a major problem remains: not all Americans trust these vaccines will be safe and effective.

# Trustworthiness before Trust — Covid-19 Vaccine Trials and the Black Community

Rueben C. Warren, D.D.S., Dr.P.H., M.Div., Lachlan Forrow, M.D., David Augustin Hodge, Sr., D.Min., Ph.D., and Robert D. Truog, M.D.

Though we applaud these efforts, we fear that once again the responsibility for addressing the sequelae of centuries of racism is falling on Black people themselves. Our country has yet to comprehend adequately that overcoming racism is not primarily the responsibility of Black people; the racist ideas and practices that constitute today's "structural racism" were created, and have been sustained, primarily by White people. It would be wrong, as well as ineffective, to ask Black communities to simply be more trusting. Clinicians, investigators, and pharmaceutical companies must provide convincing evidence — sufficient to overcome the extensive historical evidence to the contrary — that they are, in fact, trustworthy.

**ANN ARBOR November, 2014:**

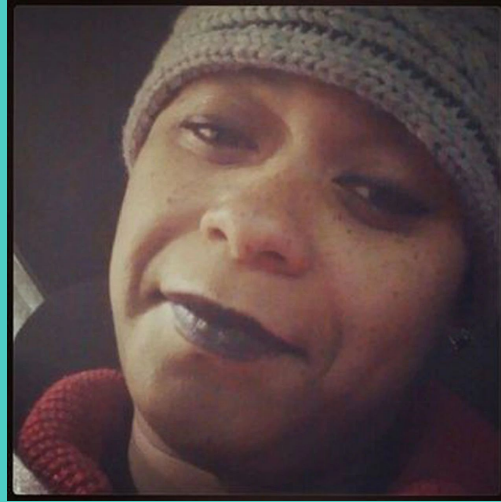
Police operators received a 911 call from Victor Stephens, Rosser's boyfriend, who said that the two were fighting and requested police officers to escort her from his house. When officers arrived, Stephens said that Rosser, who reportedly suffered from a mental illness, was brandishing a fish knife. Officers simultaneously tased and shot her. She died from a chest wound. **No officers were charged**, and a state prosecutor recorded the death as **"justifiable homicide."**

**Assessing Police Reform in Ann Arbor Five Years After Aura Rosser's Murder**

**SAY HER NAME**

## **Remembering Aura Rosser**

**Aura Rosser** (family photo)



**Aura Rain Rosser** was born in the Lansing area in Michigan, but eventually graduated from Cass Tech in Detroit in 1992. **She was a resident of Ann Arbor, an aspiring artist, and a mother of three children.** Rosser moved to the Ann Arbor area to reside closer to rehab facilities since she lived with addiction. But, according to her sister, Shae Ward, **Aura was "very artistic and deeply into painting with oils and acrylics."** **"She's a culture-type of gal,"** Ward called Rosser in the aftermath of her death. **"She was a really sweet girl. Wild. Outgoing. Articulate."**

# Recommendations for further reading:



## Books:

- Killing the Black Body - Dorothy Roberts
- Women, Race, & Class - Angela Davis
- Radical Reproductive Justice - Ross, Derkas, Peoples, Roberts & Bridgewater

## Classes:

- WGS 323 - Black Feminist Thought and Practice
- WGS 250 - Race, Gender and Nation
- WGS 322 - Black Feminist Approaches to Health
- WGS 341 - Special Topics in LGBTQ Studies (Section 001 - Black Queer Histories)
- PUBHLTH320 - The History of Racism in the U.S. Healthcare System
- PUBHLTH308 - Black American Health

## Videos: :

[How racism makes us sick](#)



**Fill out your post-class reflections here:**



**Reminders:**

Critical Analysis due Sept 26th  
Establishing your research topic due  
Oct. 3rd

**Reading for next week (all posted on Canvas!)**

Badahur: What it's like to be a midwife or doula fighting black maternal mortality

Cohen: Weathering and delayed births

Latty: Adoption is a feminist issue