



**From Theory to Taking Action: Addressing Racism in Medicine  
February-March 2021**

**Course Overview & Syllabus**

*Course Directors:*

Camila Mateo MD, MPH, Associate Director of Anti-Racism Curriculum and Faculty Development, Instructor, Harvard Medical School, Division of General Pediatrics, Boston Children's Hospital

Gaurab Basu MD, MPH, Co-Director Center for Health Equity Education & Advocacy, Instructor Harvard Medical School, Dept of Medicine, Cambridge Health Alliance

*Course Coordinator:*

Chrissie Connors, MPH, CHEEA Program Coordinator

*Faculty:*

Maria Harsha Wusu, MD, MEd, Director of Health Equity, Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine

Joanna Perdomo, MD, Associate Program Director/Interim Director of Urban Health & Advocacy, Boston Combined Residency Program, Instructor, Harvard Medical School, General Academic Pediatrics Fellow, Boston Children's Hospital

Jennifer Kasper, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Global Health & Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Pediatrician and Director of Pediatric Racial Justice and Health Equity, Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center, Brigham and Women's Hospital

**Background:**

Racism within medical institutions in the United States is a barrier to physicians providing the best care for their patients, teaching their trainees to be excellent clinicians, conducting effective research, and creating a healthy, fair, and thriving workplace. Healthcare professionals have become increasingly aware of the critical need to create educational spaces to continually address the ways in which racism prevents us from fulfilling these and other professional responsibilities.

**Target Audience:**

This course will be geared towards U.S. based physicians engaged in medical education and/or institutional change. Participants should have some experience in studying racism and its impact on health, and be prepared to engage in making change at their home institution.

**Program Description:**

The course seeks to nurture the development of anti-racism practice and advocacy by engaging participants in theory informed practice that works towards racial/ethnic health equity from the institutional to the individual level.

The course is a 5 part educational series that will be a mix of didactic work, discussion, workshops, peer learning, and reflective space. Participants will receive a library of essential readings and resources. Course faculty will engage participants in discussions about how best to create change towards anti-racist practice in their work.

**Course Objectives include:**

- To provide a supportive space for participants to critically self reflect and navigate their own journey to understand the effects of racism on their practice openly and honestly
- To create a shared vocabulary and review different frameworks to understand how racism is a driving force behind racial/ethnic health inequities
- To understand the historical context of institutional racism in medical institutions in order to address modern perpetuations in our spheres of influence
- To apply knowledge and skills learned to current work, projects, or leadership positions at home institutions

**Course Content**

The course will begin with an exploration and discussion of racial identity and include opportunities to reflect on our own racial identities within a safe learning environment with peer colleagues. We will then present foundational definitions and frameworks to help think about the impacts of racism on society throughout US history. We will then examine more directly how racism has impacted health and healthcare delivery in the US. In our final two sessions, we will workshop participants' project ideas for addressing racism within their institutions or communities. Participants will propose a project idea prior to the start of the course. In the last two sessions participants will work with course faculty and peer colleagues to further develop the proposal and create a plan to implement it at their home institution or community. The course will also provide an opportunity to develop a community of physicians committed to addressing racism that can continue shared work after the course concludes.

## **Approach**

The course will be co-directed by skilled educators who have facilitated numerous courses on racism in medicine and have experience in creating rich, nurturing learning environments conducive to supporting the personal growth that the study of racism asks of all of us. The course will seek to develop community, relationships, and a sense of shared purpose that enables engagement in the critical and challenging work of dismantling racism. It is our explicit intention to bring people together to talk about racism in medicine, and to build community that creates a network of colleagues who can work together into the future. We approach this work humbly, with an aim to create a space where we can all learn from one another. Course participants should be ready to engage in this work of personal growth within this learning community.

## **Schedule**

Sessions for the workshop will occur Wednesdays from 1-4pm on February 10th, February 17th, February 24th, March 3rd, and March 10th.

The cohort of approximately 25 will meet from 1:00-2:50p for large group sessions with breakout groups.

From 3:00-4:00p, the cohort will break into peer groups for further reflection, peer learning and discussion.

## **Preparation**

Prior to each session, there will be preparatory work that will take about 60-90 minutes. The syllabus below will outline readings that will provide a foundation for discussion. You will also receive a library of optional readings that may serve your work into the future.

Each week, we will add pre session surveys, exercises and reflections that may not be yet listed on this syllabus. All materials will be posted on Thinkific, which will be the source of your most updated course materials.

## **Peer learning groups**

There will be 2 different groups in which course participants will be organized for peer learning.

The first will be small break out groups that occur during the course session. In these small group discussions, participants will be given discussion prompts and will report back to the larger group. These small groups will also be where much of the facilitated project based workshopping will occur during the last 2 sessions of the course.

The second group will be organized as a peer learning and reflection group. This space, from 3:00-4:00pm weekly, will offer opportunities to unpack reactions to the course material, explore one's personal journey in anti-racism work, and provide peer consultation on the steps ahead. We will provide you with prompts for discussion, but participants can also use the time to best support the interests of the members of the group.

Day 1: February 10<sup>th</sup> 2021

### **Setting the Stage: Creating space to do the work**

#### Background:

Racism is a fundamental cause of health inequities. In light of the racial reckoning happening in the United States, there has been a renewed call to acknowledge, identify, and address racism in medicine nationally. While each of us has come to this space to continue our own unique reasons, by joining this group we have committed to doing this work together and building community. We will use this session to introduce ourselves, review the course structure, establish ground rules, and create a space where we can learn from and partner with each other for the remainder of the course. The session will present definitions and frameworks that will be important for our community learning.

#### Learning Objectives:

- Establish a brave space for discussion through introductions, shared ground rules, and building community
- Create a shared vocabulary and introduce frameworks that will be used throughout the course to understand how racism operates as a driving force behind racial/ethnic health disparities

#### Preparatory Instructions:

Please watch:

David Williams: How racism is making us sick. TEDtalk (17 minutes)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_r\\_williams\\_how\\_racism\\_makes\\_us\\_sick](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick)

Please read:

Jones CP. [Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale](#). Am J Public Health. 2000;90(8):1212-1215. doi:10.2105/ajph.90.8.1212

Day 2: February 17<sup>th</sup> 2021

### **K(no)w history, k(no)w self: Reflection as a tool for shared liberation**

#### Background:

To understand where we are, we must strive to understand how we got here. This is especially true when discussing systems of oppression like racism. First, we will participate in exercises where we will reflect on racial identity questions and share our experiences. After centering on our personal identity, we will pivot to focusing on our shared identity as physicians in order to reckon with the long legacy of scientific racism perpetuated by physicians in the United States and how this legacy shapes our training and practice today.

Please be ready to meet each other with vulnerability and honesty.

Learning Objectives:

- To reflect on our own racial identity development and positionality within the system of racism.
- To review the historical context of institutional racism in medical institutions

Preparatory Instructions:

Please read the following summary of a selection of racial identity development frameworks at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cUvuTA9WKfVFglreznail102BY6LcMEDPhLzqFHkw8g/edit?usp=sharing>

Please read:

Byrd WM, Clayton LA. An American health dilemma: a history of blacks in the health system. J Natl Med Assoc. 1992;84(2):189-200.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2637749/>

Day 3: February 24<sup>th</sup> 2021

Title: “How it Manifests: Mechanisms of Racist Systems within Medicine”

Background:

During our last session we discussed historical examples of how medicine perpetuated the ideology of racism and its installation into our broader society. Today, we will build upon that scaffolding and review modern examples of racism in medicine while diving more deeply into the many mechanisms by which racism can operate within the medical institution. We will spend the second part of our session performing a structured brainstorm for learners’ proposals and prepare for the final two sessions of the series.

Learning Objectives:

- To review different frameworks to understand the contemporary mechanisms by which racism can operate within medicine
- Review potential strategies to address racism in our practice

Preparatory Instructions:

Please read:

Jones CP, Jones CY, Perry GS et al. [Addressing the Social Determinants of Children's Health: A Cliff Analogy](#). J Health Care Poor Underserved. 2009; 20(4): S1-S12.

Williams DR, Lawrence JA, Davis BA. [Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research](#). Annu. Rev. Public Health. 2019; 40:105–25.

Day 4: March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021

### **Taking Action: Project Design and Implementation**

#### Background:

Today we will start by reviewing different theoretical models that can serve to design a project focused on dismantling racism. From there we will have learners participate in a hands-on workshop where each will work through their proposal and apply our structured approach to guide effective project design as well as identify potential barriers to implementing the proposal.

#### Preparatory Instructions:

Please come ready to discuss your proposal and include 2 specific questions you would like the group to help answer.

Day 5: March 10<sup>th</sup> 2021

### **Final Gathering: The road ahead**

#### Background:

At our final session we will take time to reflect on our shared work and community by hearing where participants are in relation to their plans for implementing their proposals. We will celebrate our growth and collectively ask ourselves what are the next steps in our antiracist journey? What practices might we take with us? What lessons/practices have we learned? What does lifelong dedication to addressing racism look like in practice for each of us?

#### Preparatory Instructions:

Please prepare a short presentation of where you are with your proposal and current plans to implement your work.