

## **Equity Frameworks I Technology and Society**

### **Course Information**

This course invites students to strengthen their understanding of the role that proficiency in STEM fields, as well as other frames that create cultural hierarchy, play in our society and the roles and responsibilities embedded within the practice of associated professions. Through readings, video, group projects and discussion, this course develops capacity for understanding and critiquing how technological decision-making can perpetuate - as well as constructively rebalance - disparities in power, resource access and health in U.S. society. 3 credits.

### **Faculty Information**

Karen Merritt, PhD, MPH | Instructor | 207-266-0413 (cell); email: karen.merritt@maine.edu

### **Course Structure**

This course is offered in asynchronous on-line format. Readings, discussion postings, group and individual projects and lecture will be via Brightspace. Time commitment is approximately 10 hours/week.

### **Instructional Materials and Methods**

Discussion content will be made available weekly in Brightspace;

Textbook: DIY Detroit: Making Do in a City Without Services (Kinder; 2016)

### **Course Goals**

Students' knowledge and skills will be developed in relation to the following course outcomes:

- Identifying and articulating the benefits and boundaries of technological frameworks in society;
- Identifying ethical issues involved in the practice and application of technological proficiency;
- Discussing the role of STEM proficiency in their lives and how it shapes and affects public and private roles;
- Demonstrating understanding and the ability to discuss concepts of power and hierarchy in cultural exploration; and
- Demonstrating skills of effective cultural analysis and communication.

### **Instructional Objectives**

Through readings, class discussion and video, students will gain broad understanding of:

- major socio-cultural trends and movements that have shaped the current U.S. landscape;
- the impact of these trends and movements on creating access disparities within communities;

- the link between disparities in access and disparities in health that are apparent as functions of race and socio-economic status in this country.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will gain skills in identifying, describing and critically analyzing the social and cultural impacts of technical decisions in our society.

Students will develop ‘nested understanding’ of how power and technology create differences in health and health access as a function of race and socio-economic status in our society.

Students will gain skills in interpreting, presenting and explaining mapped content in ways that guide viewers/readers to see underlying patterns and relationships in that content.

### **Course Content and Expectations**

Weekly Class Content (see weekly topic list below) - Brightspace presentation

Weekly Readings | Discussion Group | Rotating responsibility to create question framework for online discussion

Biweekly Video Discussion Group - 6 videos over the semester | Discussion guidance provided

Semester Reading | Project - DIY Detroit: Making Do in a City Without Services (Kinder; 2016)

### **Course Topics and Grading**

<u>Week(s)</u>	<u>Topics</u>
1	Introduction   Course Structure
2	Technological Centering and the Myth of Equal Access
3-4	Socio-Technical Understanding   Frameworks and Omissions
5-6	20th Century History - Seeing The Cycle and Marginalization of Communities
7	RootShock and Serial Forced Displacement
8	Social Determinants of Health - Seeing Inequity and Inequality
9	Break Week
10-11	Narrative Challenges and Bias - Solving without Understanding
12-13	Recontextualizing Power: The False Metric of Reasonableness
14	ReDesign, Remediate and (Re)-Question: Who is The Work For?
15	Finals Week (no exam)   Final written project due

#### Grading:

- Readings Discussion Group Participation - 25%
- Readings Discussion Group Coordination | Leadership (rotating) - 5%
- Video Discussion Group Participation - 25%
- DIY Detroit - Midterm Assignment - 10%
- DIY Detroit - Final Project - 25%
- Attendance | Engagement - 10%