Course Name/Number: Cultural Competence in Personalized Medicine (BIO 3700)

Mode of Delivery: Fall 2020, online via Zoom, MW, 11:15AM-12:05PM

Credits: 2

Grading Basis: A-F

Enrollment Cap: 25 students

Course Description: The ability to work effectively across areas of cultural difference is an essential component of quality healthcare. As we continue to work to reduce healthcare disparities and improve access to treatment to those who have traditionally been underserved, our ability as providers to navigate intercultural communication sensitively will only become more important. This course will explore issues of culture (broadly defined to include areas of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability level, religion, and others) relevant to the practice of personalized medicine. Personalized medicine is the practice of using genomic information to predict risk, inform diagnosis, and plan treatment for medical issues ranging from diabetes to cancer to mental health conditions. Examples of the intersections of culture and personalized medicine include assessing the research on which the recommendations are based for minority representation, incorporating religious beliefs and traditions into treatment or prevention recommendations, and identifying systemic barriers to access for underrepresented communities. Students will cultivate a better understanding of their own intersectional identity, build language to effectively address cultural differences in healthcare interactions, and conduct a research project focused on a population of interest. This course is open to all students interested in cultural competence in healthcare professions, as the lessons we learn will translate to all allied health fields.

Major Assignments (Grading Weight):

Exams (50%)
There will be 2 exams worth a total of 50% of your final grade. These exams will focus on understanding and applying the terminology, models, and strategies we cover in class and/or in the readings. The exam format will be a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Cultural Autobiography (30%)
In this 8-page paper you will explore your own cultural identity and the history of how your sense of it evolved using the theories and lenses discussed in class. We will consider culture in a broad sense, and you will discuss your identities in both singular and intersectional contexts. The central goal of this assignment is to help you articulate your worldview in a structured format to facilitate understanding of dynamics between you and future patients.

Informational Interview Assignment (20%)
For this assignment you will conduct an interview with a medical professional about the ways in which she incorporates cultural competence into her practice. You will then write a short essay (2-3 pages) where you will summarize what you learned and compare it to what we have covered in class.