

History of Race and Racism in Medicine: A Historical Campus Disorientation Tour

IHP Teaching Fund Proposal, submitted Jan. 2024

Dr. Tonya Kneff-Chang

Project Abstract

In the fall of 2021, Michigan Medicine launched its History of Race and Racism longitudinal course, which included a campus historical tour for students to apply their course knowledge and interrogate our day-to-day physical spaces. Now in its 3rd year, we are redesigning this tour to be more inclusive of the histories erased or left in the margins. Examining campus artifacts, art, and memorabilia, we will explore how racial ideologies and discriminatory practices have shaped the campus landscape. We will also explore the struggles and contributions of diverse populations, delving into the uncomfortable historical truths about our campus.

Project Description

In the fall of 2021, Michigan Medicine launched its History of Race and Racism longitudinal course for medical students. The first of its kind in the medical school, one component of the curriculum included a campus historical tour as a way for students to apply their course knowledge and engage in dialogue about what they see (and don't see). Now in its 3rd year, I propose redesigning this tour for a greater application to the history of race and racism in medicine.

A major component of teaching history is using primary sources, which are those artifacts, documents, records, testimonies from the time in which historical events occurred. One primary source that is not as often engaged is that of space and place. The buildings we learn in, the halls where we traverse, the art and imagery we see can be rich sources of primary materials, especially at the University of Michigan Medical School. Walking along the halls where medical students have labs and lectures, students can see paintings from "Great Moments in Medicine,"

an advertising campaign launched in the 1950s by Parke, Davis, & Company (known today as Pfizer). Those halls lead to the hospital, and along the way, the walls are filled with class photos dating back to 1862.

These primary sources are a treasure trove of historical information, and as the co-instructor of the History of Race and Racism in Medicine course, I offer a campus historical tour to allow students to engage with this visual history. In the course, students read out moments in medical history as they relate to race and racism, and they bring this context as we explore the hallways. As such, students are able to problematize what we see. For example, one painting depicts the discovery of treatments for scurvy. Though many medical discoveries made at this time were embedded in colonialism and slavery, as physicians and scientists who were on board 18th century slave ships used the confined spaces as their laboratories, this history is not included alongside the image (see Jim Downs. *Maladies of Empire*, 2020). Such historical context is important in questioning traditional narratives about medical achievements.

Through this grant, I would like to develop materials that would give students additional historical context for the images they see along our tour. Part of that context would include what they don't see or what is not immediately evident. For example, the medical class photos include women and people of color, but it is not evident at first glance. Having the names and stories associated with these photos would allow students to consider the narratives presented and the hidden and often invisible narratives. For example, Amanda Sanford was the first woman MD in 1871, but she was not allowed to be part of the class photo. William Henry Fitzbuteler was the first Black MD in 1872, and though his photo is part of the class photos, one would need to know where to look to find him.

Historical narratives are embedded in the spaces we occupy - the hallways, the classrooms, the buildings. Physical spaces can project visual and spatial narratives that implicate race, gender, ability, and other facets of social identity. Yet, as instructors we rarely interrogate physical space as part of our pedagogy. In addition, our physical spaces can offer a learning opportunity that is different from classroom or online discussion. Physical spaces are tangible, material and can foster new directions in critical thinking.

The objectives for the tour include: 1) Examine the history of race and racism in medicine as represented in the physical spaces, 2) Problematize traditional narratives about the campus's history and medical achievements, 3) Identify and analyze specific examples of racial injustice on campus, 4) Recognize the contributions and struggles of diverse communities, and 5) Connect historical events and figures to contemporary issues.

The primary deliverable for this redesign will include an interactive map with details and stories of people and events that are often invisible. This map will both supplement the historical tour for the course and allow students to take a self-guided tour. With all the history around the campus, it is difficult to learn everything in only a two hour block. An interactive map will make a more accessible learning experience for students and their peers.

The course is offered in the fall and winter terms, and I plan to redesign the tour during the summer in preparation for fall 2024.

Project members include:

Tonya Kneff-Chang, PhD - DEIAJ Instructional Lead, Office of Medical Student Education Role: Historical researcher & Co-facilitator of the History of Race and Racism Course Dr. Kneff-Chang will lead the research and develop the tour materials and interactive map.

Marcia Perry, MD - Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Emergency Medicine Associate Chair, DEI, Department of Emergency Medicine

Role: Co-facilitator of the History of Race and Racism Course;

Dr. Perry will advise on the tour objectives and implementation in the course

Mary Turfah - Medical student

Role: Research support assistant

Ms. Turfah will provide research and writing support for the map and tour materials.

Inclusive History Project Teaching Fund Budget Template

Expense Category	Amount	Brief explanation or justification of expense
Stipend for lead instructor	\$1,000	Stipend for course redesign grant
Student research assistants	\$1,000	Medical student Mary Turfah has been a social justice fellow for the course and would like to continue supporting the course through research during the summer
Supplies		
Equipment		
Student activities or field trips		
Honoraria for external guest speakers		
<i>Please specify additional categories below:</i>		
Total Amount Requested	\$2,000	<i>Not to exceed \$3000 for Course Redesign Grants or \$5000 for Course Development Grants</i>