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Course Description
The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn renewed attention to racial health disparities. However, such disparities are not new and stem from a confluence of social, political, economic, and environmental factors. This course will use the tools of history to explore how racial health disparities have been understood, why they persist, and how we might better address these health care inequities. In doing so, it will examine the shifting ways racial categories have been used to differentiate bodies; explain, diagnose, and treat disease; and shape the American medical profession.

Learning Objectives
1. Understand how the concept of race has been framed and used in medical science and practice
2. Understand how ideas about race have impacted medical education and the medical profession
3. Identify the historical factors that have shaped racial health disparities in the US

Course Calendar
Week 1: Racializing Bodies
Readings: Selections from Hippocrates, On Airs, Waters, and Places (c. 400 BCE); B. Rush, Observations intended to favour a supposition that the black color (as it is called) of the Negroes is derived from the leprosy (1760-1813); M. Rich, “The curse of civilised woman: race, gender and the pain of childbirth in nineteenth-century American medicine” (2016).

Week 2: Defining Race and Disease

Week 3: Race in Diagnosis and Therapeutics

Week 4: Race and Medical Research

Week 5: Race and the Medical Profession
Guest Lecture: Dr. Michelle Williams, PhD, RN (Cedars-Sinai)

Week 6: Race, Risk, and Health Disparities
Guest Lecture: Dr. Jennifer Harris, MD (Cedars-Sinai)

[Syllabus subject to change]