

Anthro 19

The Anatomy of Deception

Course description

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, mistrust of healthcare institutions, health systems, and science is more evident than ever. This mistrust undermines public health, shapes narratives produced by political figures, and alters the way we process and understand information. Based around the book *The Anatomy of Deception* by Sara Gorman, this course explores mistrust in various forms, from medical mistrust to conspiracy theories, to how distrust undermines public institutions and alters our political landscape. By the end of this course, students will gain a deeper understanding of the roots of mistrust, and its implications for global health and American society.

Details

Monday 10am - 10:50am in
Haines 110

Instructor: Dr. Sean Prall

Office hours: Monday 11am - 12
in Haines 311

Email: sprall@ucla.edu

Course Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of the roots of mistrust
2. To examine how mistrust is measured and evaluated
3. To explore the implications of mistrust across several domains
4. To evaluate solutions to dealing with misinformation and building trust

Required Text

The Anatomy of Deception: Conspiracy Theories, Distrust, and Public Health in America by Sara Gorman. Oxford University Press, 2024. ISBN: 9780197678152. This text is available online through the UCLA library ([link](#)). Other readings will be shared as PDFs on Canvas.

Course Expectations

Attendance and participation (80%) - As part of university policy for Fiat Lux seminars, attendance is required for each class period. Students may miss only one class meeting with the instructor's approval. Students should come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to engage in class discussion.

In-class writing reflection (20%) - Each week, students will complete an in-class short written reflection to stimulate conversation around the topic and assigned reading.

Course will be graded as Pass/No Pass, as per standard Fiat Lux Seminar guidelines.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic and readings assigned
1	1/6	Introduction to the course Reading: Introduction (Pg 1-21)
2	1/13	What is medical mistrust? Reading: Chapter 1
3	1/20	No Class - MLK Holiday
4	1/27	The legacy of Tuskegee and everyday discrimination Reading: Chapter 2
5	2/3	Case Study: Medical mistrust in rural Namibia Reading: Prall et al. 2024
6	2/10	Everyday conspiracy theories Reading: Chapter 3
7	2/17	No Class - President's Day
8	2/24	Mistrust and COVID-19 Reading: Chapter 4
9	3/3	Mistrust and the erosion of democracy Reading: Chapter 5
10	3/10	Solving Mistrust - what can be done? Reading: Chapter 6, Conclusion

Additional Resources and Policy

Accommodation and Accessibility

We want to ensure that you have whatever resources and accommodations that you require to succeed in this course. If you need accommodations of any sort, please contact the Center for Accessible Education (<https://www.cae.ucla.edu/students>). CAE can be contacted at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255. When possible, students should contact the CAE within the first two weeks of the term as reasonable notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. Please notify me once you have registered with the CAE. If you require accommodations on exams, I will need a minimum of one week's notice to plan accordingly.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS supports student mental health needs as they pursue their academic goals. Their services are designed to foster the development of healthy well-being necessary for success in a complex global environment. CAPS offers a variety of services to meet student needs including: crisis counseling available by phone 24 hours a day/7 days a week 310-825-0768, emergency Intervention, individual counseling and psychotherapy, group therapy, psychiatric evaluation and treatment, psychoeducational programs and workshops, and campus mental health and wellness promotion. Please visit <http://counseling.ucla.edu> for more information.

****This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Students will be notified of any changes to the syllabus or schedule.****