The CHRS weekly seminar series features speakers who discuss critical issues in applying social science perspectives to health. It covers cross-disciplinary topics and includes a combination of presentations, "work in progress" seminars, and thematic seminars. This year’s thematic seminars focus on topics related to CHRS working groups: Community Disruption and Health; Global Health; and Social Determinants and Structural Interventions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE SERIES OR WORKING GROUPS, CONTACT CHRS@american.edu

January 27 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
Stéphane Helleringer, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

“A Preliminary Assessment of the Demographic Impact of the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa”
Prior outbreaks of Ebola have caused ≈1,600 deaths between 1976 and 2013. However, close to 30,000 Ebola cases have been reported since 2014, due to an outbreak that originated in a remote area of Guinea in West Africa. Public health research on Ebola has focused on identifying the modes of EVD transmission and related risk factors, and testing new preventive or curative interventions. The impact of EVD on mortality at the population level has garnered much less attention. We investigate the magnitude of Ebola as a cause of death in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea and we measure its impact on life expectancy. We also describe ongoing efforts to measure the downstream effects of the outbreak on population health and wellbeing.

February 3
Carolyn C. Cannuscio, ScD, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health, Section on Public Health, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania

“Transforming the Life Stories of Homeless Youths, Through Art”
Dr. Carolyn Cannuscio is a social epidemiologist who works at the intersection of public health and public art. Her scholarship emphasizes citizen engagement as a key to understanding and ameliorating urban health disparities. For several years, she has collaborated with the Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia, using a range of artistic forms to explore the life experiences of homeless youth. In this seminar, she will discuss the recently completed collaborative project journey2home, probing the opportunities and limitations for arts-based collaboration to advance research, public health practice, and potentially the life aspirations of marginalized young people.

February 10 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
Co-sponsored by the DC Center for AIDS Research, Highly Impacted Populations Scientific Working Group
Thespina (Nina) Yamanis, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, School of International Service, American University

“Experiences of Undocumented Latino Sexual Minorities Applying for Legal Relief: Challenges and Opportunities for Enhancing Access to Immigration Legal Services and Health Care”
This paper uses my Adelante project’s formative, qualitative data (11 in-depth interviews so far with recipients of immigration-related legal services and 5 key informant interviews). We are using these formative data to help develop the protocol for the pilot combined legal-health intervention.

February 17
Work in Progress
Tracy Perkins, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Howard University

“Environmental Justice in the Golden State: The Evolution of a Movement”
Tracy Perkins will talk through her current book project, which analyzes the political evolution of the environmental justice movement in California since its origins in the 1980s. She focuses on the opportunities and limitations presented by the activists’professionalization and increased engagement with the state over time.
February 24 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
Co-sponsored by the DC Center for AIDS Research, Highly Impacted Populations Scientific Working Group
Clare Barrington, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Health Behavior and Health Education, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
“TBA”

March 2 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Sangeetha Madhaven, PhD, Associate Professor of Demography and Sociology, Department of African-American Studies and Associate Director, Maryland Population Research Center, University of Maryland, College Park
“Family Dynamism over the Life Course and Nutritional Status of Adolescents in Urban South Africa”
Despite its status as the wealthiest country in sub-Saharan Africa, poor nutrition has long been a public health problem in South Africa, particularly for the Black African population. No research to date has examined the relationship between family dynamism over the life course and nutritional outcomes. Using longitudinal data from the Birth to Twenty + Cohort Study in the Johannesburg-Soweto area, this analysis examines the role of cumulative transitions in maternal union status and fathers’ provision of support on the odds of being overweight/obese and underweight at age 15 for a sample of 1557 adolescents.

March 16 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Alan Kraut, PhD, University Professor, Department of History, American University
“Healers and Foreign Bodies: the Role of Doctors and Nurses in the Assimilation of Immigrants and Refugees in the United States, 1890-1945”
In eras of mass migration, such as the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, American physicians and nurses were called upon to care for many foreign-born patients whose diseases and definitions of therapy were often markedly different from those with which they were familiar. Often, these healers became cultural mediators and played significant roles in the process of integrating newcomers into American society and culture. This presentation treats one dimension of a much larger project on the role of the body in the negotiation between native and newcomer as the latter seek opportunity and inclusion in American life.

March 23
Rayshawn Ray, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Maryland, College Park
“BLACK WOMAN NARRATIVE INTERRUPTED: Debunking Mainstream Narratives about Physical Activity and Weight”
For three years, I conducted interviews, focus groups, ethnographic observations, and surveys to determine why Black women are more likely to be obese and less physically active than other groups. Drawing upon the intersectionality framework, I discuss how the interactive effect of race and gender can be costly for middle class Blacks in ways it is not for middle class Whites and the important role that primary care providers can play in ameliorating the dearth of physical activity in the U.S. I argue that being physically active is a privilege rooted in how race, place, gender, and body image converge differently on Black women’s propensity to be physically active than other raced and gendered groups.

March 30 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Kristin Turney, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of California, Irvine
“Beyond Incarceration: The Consequences of Criminal Justice Contact for Mental Health”
In this paper, we use the stress process paradigm, along with nationally representative data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), to examine the relationship between criminal justice contact—defined as arrest, conviction, and incarceration—and mental health. First, we find that arrest and conviction are more commonly experienced than incarceration and that, similar to incarceration, arrest and conviction are concentrated among race/ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged individuals. Second, we document that arrest, conviction, and incarceration have similarly deleterious consequences for mental health. Third, the association between criminal justice contact and mental health is concentrated among those residing in contextually disadvantaged areas during adolescence. Taken together, these results suggest that the consequences of criminal justice system contact for mental health have been vastly underestimated.
April 6
Ernesto Castaneda, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, American University

“Health Disparities within Urban Hispanic Subpopulations”
This presentation will describe different health outcomes for Hispanic subpopulations in a Hispanic-majority border city. Health outcomes are compared across immigrant generation, length of residence for new migrants, cross-border mobility, and housing status using original survey data.

April 13
Work in Progress
Michael Bader, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, American University

“Initial Results from the Inaugural DC Area Study (DCAS)”
The pilot DCAS sampled D.C. area residents in two understudied types of neighborhoods (multiethnically integrated neighborhoods and Latino enclaves) and asked them about their health, neighborhood conditions, crime and organizations, and their thoughts on governance. Mike Bader will present the preliminary results from this pilot and plans for future research.

April 20 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
Co-sponsored by the DC Center for AIDS Research, Social and Behavioral Sciences Core
Kirsten Stoebenau, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Center on Health, Risk and Society, American University

“An Exploratory Analysis of Change in the Meaning and Timing of Marriage in West Nile, Uganda”
This talk will draw from qualitative data exploring marital practices for women and men across three generations in Northwest Uganda. The talk will consider how social change in marriage intersects with the development goal of ending child marriage, as well as discuss the implications of these changes for women’s sexual and reproductive health.

April 27 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
David R. Schaefer, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Human Evolution & Social Change, Arizona State University

“Networks and Health Behind Bars”
This project investigates the social networks of prison inmates and their associations with several health outcomes. The talk will discuss (1) an ongoing study examining the complete network of a prison unit over time, and (2) a planned study of network dynamics and behavior change within a prison therapeutic community targeting inmates with substance use problems.

May 4 – THEMATIC SEMINAR
Work in Progress
Co-sponsored by the DC Center for AIDS Research, Social and Behavioral Sciences Core
Nicole Angotti, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, American University; Monica Biradavolu, PhD, Scholar in Residence, Department of Sociology, American University; Kim Blankenship, PhD, Professor, Department of Sociology, American University; Rachel Sullivan Robinson, PhD, Associate Professor, School of International Service and Affiliate Professor, Department of Sociology, American University; Gay Young, PhD, Professor, Department of Sociology, American University

“Collective Action to Address Health Challenges: The Case of HIV/AIDS”
We hope to get feedback for a session being prepared for the August 2016 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association. The purpose of the ASA session is to discuss some of the conditions under which collective action can successfully address health, and the challenges of approaching health through collective action. Papers will focus on HIV/AIDS. The goal of this session will be to analyze how collective action has impacted the experience of, and response to, HIV/AIDS, primarily in Global South contexts. We will consider: the challenges of purposive efforts to foster collective action in the context of health interventions and the question of how varying levels of collective solidarity felt by members of populations affected by HIV, particularly female sex workers, influence HIV outcomes.