



ACERH

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH ON HEALTH

SEMINAR

Friday, 18 September 2009, 1100-1200

Bob Douglas Lecture Theatre
Building 62a, Eggleston Road
The Australian National University, Canberra

State political cultures and the mortality of African Americans and American Indians

Professor Stephen Kunitz

**University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
New York USA**

The Speaker

Professor Kunitz is currently a Visiting Fellow at ACERH (ANU). His research has focused on the use of alcohol among Native Americans and others in the American Southwest, and medical and population history. His most recent book, published by Oxford University Press, is entitled *The Health of Populations: General Theories and Particular Realities* (2006).

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Abstract

African Americans and American Indians have very different relationships with the federal and state governments. African Americans were brought to the United States to provide labor, first as slaves and then after the Civil War as among the most exploited members of the working class. American Indians in North America were not enslaved. Instead, it was their land and natural resources that were expropriated. In exchange, many signed treaties in the 19th century that gave tribes a special relationship to the federal government, what has been called a government-to-government relationship. Thus whatever social and cultural differences existed among African tribes were extinguished by slavery and by incorporation into the American working class. On the other hand, for American Indians, particularly those who remain on reservations, social and cultural differences among tribes persist. The result is that African American mortality is responsive to the political cultures of the states in which they live whereas American Indian mortality bears little or no association to state policies. Instead mortality of American Indians living on and adjacent to reservations is related to historical and cultural factors that shape the experience of different Indian populations. African American mortality rates are significantly correlated with a measure of political culture but there is no such association with American Indian mortality.

Parking

A campus map for ANU can viewed on the University's web site (<http://campusmap.anu.edu.au/>). Visitors to the campus are advised to take a taxi to the venue if possible. The closest Pay Parking is at University House (pay at the meter in the quadrangle). Access to the Bob Douglas Lecture Theatre is by direct entry into Building 62a off Eggleston Road.

For enquiries about this seminar contact Ms Rowena Harvey (ACERH@anu.edu.au or +61 2 6125 3688) or Professor Jim Butler (jim.butler@anu.edu.au).