A program of the Center for Health Humanities and Ethics
University of Virginia School of Medicine

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A Zoom Webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82470186796

A John F. Anderson Memorial Lecture

Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing, and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette

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School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University President (2020-22), American Association for the History of Medicine, Princeton, NJ

Dominique Tobbell, PhD
Professor and Director of the Eleanor Crowder Bjoring Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry
School of Nursing, UVA, moderator

This lecture describes the methods and strategies used by the tobacco industry over nearly a century to establish menthol cigarette markets in the United States. It examines the role of numerous actors in establishing and defending these markets, among them: social science consultants, marketing experts, industry insiders, and civil rights groups. It also explores the ways in which the industry racial attitudes, health beliefs about cancer, coughing, and health psychology in general, in order to (at first) market menthol brands as "health" products then (in the 1960s) to pivot toward racially focused marketing. The lecture describes how menthol markets were built using these strategies. Finally, it examines the rising tide of public health and legal criticism of these methods, which have led to the currently proposed FDA ban on menthol cigarettes.

Resources:

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Prof. Wailoo is Henry Putnam University Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University where he teaches in the Department of History and the School of Public and International Affairs. He is former Chair of the Department of History, the former Vice Dean of the School of Public and International Affairs, and current President (2020-2022) of the American Association for the History of Medicine. In 2007 Wailoo was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. In 2021, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2021, Wailoo received the Dan David Prize for his “influential body of historical scholarship focused on race, science, and health equity; on the social implications of medical innovation; and on the politics of disease.”
Wailoo is an award-winning author on drugs and drug policy; race, science, and health; and genetics and society; and he is known also for insightful public writing and media commentaries on history of medicine, pandemics and society, and medical affairs in the U.S. His books include, Pushing Cool: Big Tobacco, Racial Marketing, and the Untold Story of the Menthol Cigarette (University of Chicago Press, 2021); Pain: A Political History (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); How Cancer Crossed the Color Line (Oxford University Press, 2011); The Troubled Dream of Genetic Medicine (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health (University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Drawing Blood: Technology and Disease Identity in Twentieth Century America (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

Prof. Tobbell is the author of Pills, Power, and Policy: The Struggle for Drug Reform in Cold War America and its Consequences (University of California Press, 2012), and Health Informatics at Minnesota: The First Fifty Years (Tasora Books, 2015). Her forthcoming book, Dr. Nurse: Science, Politics, and the Transformation of American Nursing (University of Chicago Press), examines American nurses’ more expansive roles in the post-World War II era. She has taught a variety of courses on the history of 20th-century American healthcare, with an emphasis on the ways that race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability determine Americans’ experiences with and access to healthcare. A board member of the American Association for the History of Nursing, Dr. Tobbell has earned fellowships from the Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, UVA’s Miller Center, the Smithsonian’s Lemelson Center, and the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy. Originally from the United Kingdom, Dr. Tobbell earned an undergraduate degree in biochemistry from the University of Manchester, and both a Master of Art and a PhD in the history and sociology of science from the University of Pennsylvania.

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