

# GERARDO OTERO

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## Obesity and the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Neoliberal Diet as Root Cause

Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to register.



**Lecture will be held on Zoom  
November 5, 2020, 9:30-10:45 am**

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 is making it clear that the most vulnerable to dying from this pandemic in North America are those people with “co-morbidities” such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and other maladies exacerbated by being overweight or obese (Stokes, et al. 2020). Otero argues that the root cause of this co-morbidity is what he terms “the neoliberal diet” (Otero 2018). This energy-dense, industrial, ultra-processed and cheap diet, popularly known as junk food, is directly or indirectly implicated in making working class humans vulnerable. After providing an overview of the neoliberal diet, he will offer a cross-national comparison of how income inequality accounts for the working classes’ greater risk of exposure to the neoliberal diet in Mexico and the United States to show that eating energy-dense food is much less about individual choice than about having more or less economic access to healthy and nutritious food. Otero will conclude by emphasizing the causal relation between the neoliberal diet and COVID-19 vulnerabilities, and point to state action to overcome this.