

**Case, Anne, and Angus Deaton. *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.**

Case and Deaton create the label “Deaths of Despair” to capture the recent increases in deaths from suicide, drugs, and alcohol among middle-aged white Americans, particularly working-class white males who do not have a four-year degree. They describe how the lack of robust health insurance, capitalist structures, loss of power, warped incentives for pharmaceutical companies, and changes in economic structures are affecting this demographic in the last few years. They document the steady decline in access to opportunities, perceptions of loss of white privilege, and changes in social norms surrounding work, marriage, and family. Combining data from governmental sources with qualitative interviews, the authors paint a powerful picture of how the three different causes of death are interconnected as well as linked to mental health concerns that are not receiving sufficient support. They draw attention to rapid increases in specific geographic regions and discuss the effects of chronic pain, addiction, and social safety networks. By connecting individual stories with international datasets, the authors reveal connections across different health concerns and make an argument for interventions that are holistic and coherent.