**Course Information**

**Professor**
Miliann Kang, Associate Professor, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Program, UMass Amherst

**Office Location & Number**
Bartlett 73 (basement), 577-0710 or 545-1922 (WGSS office)

**Office Hours**
Tues, Thurs 11:30-12:30 and by appointment

**Email**
mkang@wost.umass.edu

**Class Info**
Fall 2015, Elm 230, Tues 4-6:30pm (SPIRE # 38689)

**TA Support**
Sonny Nordmarken snordmar@soc.umass.edu will serve as a grader and is available to answer questions about course assignments and grading.

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**Course Description**

Heated debates about “anchor babies,” “tiger mothers,” birthright citizenship, transnational surrogacy, international adoption, family reunification-based visa sponsorship, and the global circuits of care work all attest to the transformation of motherhood, families, reproductive labor and the boundaries of nations and citizenship in the age of neoliberalism. Constructions of gendered citizenship have been based on fulfillment of white, middle-class, hetero-normative reproductive roles and have consistently excluded queer, working-class, women of color and single mothers. This course addresses debates about contemporary motherhood and reproductive politics, going beyond narrow framings such as “abortion rights” and the media-driven “mommy wars.” Despite the persistent ideology of motherhood as a sanctified, individual exercise in love, nurturing and self-sacrifice, the reality of contemporary mothering is shaped by highly politicized debates that position mothers, families and reproduction at the interstices of the market, the state and notions of cultural and national identity.

Questions that we will interrogate throughout the semester include: How has motherhood become a battleground for questions of national identity, the role of the state, and the definitions and terms of citizenship? How have mothers themselves negotiated and challenged discourses, policies and institutions which define them as deficient, deviant or “other”? How have feminist scholarship and social movements supported or failed to support different mothers, children, families and communities?

In exploring these questions, the course will incorporate sources ranging from social science research, literature, essays, film, and art. The course draws comparisons between the U.S. and regions around the world, emphasizing transnational linkages and the processes of globalization. The course will look at a wide range of theoretical questions and empirical research, however, it is not meant as a broad or exhaustive survey. Students are encouraged to explore their own interests in-depth through a final research project that draws connections and comparisons to the course material. Much of the course materials will focus on Asia and Asian America, building on the professor’s research and areas of expertise. As the first group to be legally excluded from immigrating to the U.S. based on nationality and ethnicity, Asians and Asian Americans play a significant role in shaping notions of citizenship and belonging. Furthermore, specific prohibitions against the immigration of Asian women to prevent their bearing U.S.-born children laid the groundwork for the ongoing gendered, racialized, classed and sexual politics of exclusion even after legal restrictions were repealed. The readings for the first part of the course lay this historical and theoretical foundation but additional topics and readings will be added throughout the course in response to students’ interests and research projects.
**Readings**

**Required Texts:** Books are available at Amherst Books (please support your local independent bookstore!) and are also on reserve in the library.


2) Additional readings available on Moodle

**Goals & Organization**

1) to understand the centrality of motherhood and reproductive politics in the shaping of notions of citizenship and national identity.
2) to examine specific discourses, institutions and everyday practices regarding reproduction and how they operate in culture, politics, economics, science, medicine, law, media, literature and art.
3) to recognize the ways gendered notions of motherhood intersects with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, disability and other forms of difference, across different historical periods and geographical locations.
4) to engage with major intellectual concepts and debates in the field of interdisciplinary feminist studies.
5) to master and apply the tools of critical thinking and research— including the ability to identify gendered processes, to pose theoretical questions, to engage with contemporary issues and debates, to participate in constructive dialogue and to learn methods of investigation, criticism and advocacy.
6) to create an engaged learning environment based on feminist, anti-racist, community-based and contemplative pedagogies that support meaningful integration of course material toward goals of personal and social understanding and transformation.

**Approach to Readings and Course Material**

Your comprehension of the material will be greatly enhanced if you take the time to take notes on the author’s arguments and develop your own critical responses to them. Careful notes greatly enhance comprehension and also elevate the level of our class discussions. Reliable reading notes also makes studying and paper writing far easier than trying to reconstruct the readings “cold” the night before an assignment is due. In our class meetings, we will frequently refer to specific sections of what we have read, so please bring to class the text or articles to be discussed that day. There will be some on-line and Moodle articles. As course readers have become more and more expensive, these are now the most economical way to assemble readings for class. Please print out all articles and bring them to class. If you do not have access to a printer, OIT will print them out for you for a fee. If you find yourself having a problem with this system, you must let me know beforehand rather than using this as an excuse for incomplete work.

**Requirements**

Many of us have strong feelings about race, gender, sexuality and multiple forms of difference and the social practices and structures that shape them. This course aims to create a space that honors the sensitivity of the issues we will discuss. We will work together to build a classroom environment based on trust, confidentiality and community while at the same time challenging each other in intellectually rigorous discussions. It is fine to share personal experiences where appropriate, but strive to use these as examples.
to illustrate or raise questions about readings and course debates rather than substituting anecdotes for critical thinking.

This course follows a seminar format, which means that it is based mostly on class discussion and interactive learning exercises rather than lectures. This requires that you come prepared to think critically, articulate ideas coherently, listen attentively and respect the diversity of experiences and perspectives of your classmates. Because active class participation is so important for the success of this class, the assignments are designed to foster deeper engagement with the readings and richer discussions. The class is structured around frequent, shorter assignments and regular feedback. In other words, this is not a course that you will be able to "cram" for. In order to do well in this course, you must take time to digest and integrate the course material through consistent work over the semester. Rather than completing one section and moving on, we will weave and layer the many different strands of feminist thought, drawing connections and contrast between different authors and analytical approaches. Thus, it is important to read and master concepts in each section.

- **Class participation, Homework Assignments, Quizzes and In-class Writing (25%)** The class format is designed to encourage and reward you for keeping up with the readings and coming to class prepared with comments and questions. Class participation will include regular attendance, informed and thoughtful contributions to discussion, in-class writing, and participation in group work. I will periodically assign short (hopefully fun and creative) exercises designed to enrich understanding of the readings through applications to your current social world. I utilize frequent, short writing exercises, or what English professor Peter Elbow refers to as "low stakes writing“ as a way of helping you to synthesize the course material and to become comfortable with using writing as a way to think and generate your own analysis. There will also be periodic unannounced quizzes. Rather than penalty, these short assignments are designed to allow you to ask questions and clarify points of confusion.

- **Discussant Essay and Presentation 3-4 pages (20%)** You will sign up to be a class discussant for one class session. This will involve writing a short essay, analyzing and critiquing (not merely summarizing) the assigned readings, presenting your arguments briefly to the class (5-10 minutes), making connections to current issues, and leading discussion. Each paper should: 1) identify and critique key concepts and debates in that week’s assigned readings (you do not have to discuss all the readings equally but should address themes that emerge across readings); 2) draw connections to issues in your own research; and 3) pose questions for further reflection and discussion. In most case, you will work together with at least one other student and present on the same readings. I encourage you to meet with each other and find engaging ways to collaborate (eg. One of you can address the strengths, the other focus on the weaknesses; you can lead an exercise together, etc). You will each, however, submit, your own written essay, which you must post on MOODLE by 5pm on the day before the discussion is to take place (eg. you will post on Mon if you are to be a discussant on Tues). If you post your paper after the deadline it will not count. Other members of the class will read the discussant essay ahead of class time and will post thoughtful responses to the discussant essays (you are required to post at least 5 times during the semester). This kind of public debate gives you the opportunity to engage in conversations with both the professor and your peers. Discussants should read responses to your paper and be prepared to dialogue with students who have commented. Whether or not you post a paper that week, you should read all the papers and comments and come to class prepared to discuss them. Peer comments should be clear, respectful and constructive and refer specifically to points in the papers. It is fine to agree or disagree with others’ arguments, but these critiques must focus on intellectual debates and refrain from ad hominem attacks. Please keep a file of your comments over the semester and hand it in at the end of the semester.

- **Event Paper 2-3 pages (15%)** We are lucky to be in the Five College area, in which there are so many relevant and stimulating events. You will choose and attend an outside event related to course topics and write a short paper analyzing it by applying at last three assigned readings. On our Moodle site, there will be a place to post events that are especially relevant to this class; please feel free to notify me of any such events or opportunities that I might have missed.
Students often ask if they can attend additional events for extra credit. You will not be given direct credit for attending additional events but they will undoubtedly improve your grade by informing your class participation, your discussant essay and presentation and your written papers. The issues we cover in this class will overlap with topics emerging in the news, contemporary political debates, popular culture or other courses you are taking. I encourage you to be on the lookout for such connections, and to share them with the class when appropriate.

**Final Research Project: Prospectus, Presentation and Paper 10-15 pages (40%)** You will have a choice for the final paper to pick a topic or debate to research and conduct an interview with an individual or to focus on an organization that is working on this issue. We are not having a final exam so this final paper must demonstrate your mastery of the course readings, concepts and debates and ability to apply them to envision policies, activism and change. More detailed instructions will be given later in the semester, but you should start thinking about the topic, person and/or organization early on.

**Prospectus for Final Project: Due November 10**

- Your prospectus (3-4 double-spaced pages not including bibliography) should address the following questions: 1) What is your topic; 2) Why is it important and how does it relate to the course material? and 3) How will you design and carry out your project? In addition, you will include an annotated bibliography (annotations explaining the importance of each text for your project).

**Course Reflection (5%)** This is an opportunity for you to reflect on what you learned and your learning process in the course and share any insights.

### COURSE POLICIES

- **Academic Honesty** Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University’s policy <http://www.umass.edu/umhome/policies/honesty.html>

  *If an instructor finds that a student has violated the University’s Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor has the right to lower the student’s grade, or even to fail the student for the course. Students have the right to appeal such a grade penalty by an instructor. The University Academic Honesty Board, which must be notified by instructors of any grade penalty, reviews all student appeals. The Board may sustain or recommend modification of the penalty given by the faculty member, or may recommend sanctions exceeding those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University.*

- **Accommodations:** Please let me know as early as possible if you require accommodations due to illness or disability and make sure to coordinate with other university offices as necessary.

- **Attendance** You are expected to attend every class session and to let me know the reason for absences, if at all possible, ahead of time. If you miss class, you are still responsible for the material covered. I recommend everyone find a class partner to share notes with in case either of you miss. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. The attendance sheet will be passed out only at the beginning of class.

- **Deadlines and Late Policy** Most of the written assignments are time-sensitive, especially the discussion-leading Moodle post. Turn in all written assignments on the due date. Except with prior approval of the professor or in the case of documented emergencies, late assignments will not be accepted and/or will receive a significant penalty.

- **Proofreading and Presentation** A sloppy paper detracts significantly from your arguments. We all make honest mistakes but it is disrespectful to your professor and peers to submit hastily prepared work and your grade will reflect this. All written assignments must be properly formatted with citations.
→ **Summary of Assignments and Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Deadline/Details</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation, homework, in-class writing, quizzes</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussant (MOODLE post and in-class presentation)</td>
<td>Dates for individual sign-up</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event paper</td>
<td>Due one week after attending event</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Project</td>
<td>Prospectus and interview due Nov 10</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation Dec 3 and 10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paper due last day, Dec 10</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Reflection</td>
<td>due last day, Dec 10</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 100%

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**Course Readings and Schedule**

- I reserve the right to make changes in the schedules as I see appropriate.
- I will also post related news articles on MOODLE – please check frequently.
- Films and short video clips will be viewed in class.

**Tues Sept 8**  
Introduction, Course Overview

**Sept 15**  
**Race, Citizenship and Reproductive Politics**
Silliman, Jael Miriam et al. Chap 1 *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice*
Fujiwara, Lynn excerpts *Mothers Without Citizenship*

(Mon Sept 21 – Last Day to Drop/Add)

**Sept 22**  
**Fetal Rights and Maternal Crimes: Crack Babies, Sterilization Abuse and Incarceration**
Davis, Angela. “Reproductive Rights,” *Women, Race and Class*
Flavin, Jeanne, “Innocent Pre-born Victims” Fetal Protectionism and Pregnant Women” Chap 5 in *Our Bodies, Our Crimes: The Policing of Women’s Reproduction in America*

**Sept 29**  
**Motherhood, Work and Citizenship**
Hill Collins, Patricia. “Shifting the Center: Race, Class and Feminist Theorizing About Motherhood” in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience and Agency*
Nakano Glenn, Evelyn, Intro and Chap 1, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*

**Oct 6**  
**History of Birthright Citizenship and Contemporary Contestations over “Anchor Babies”**

**Oct 13**  
**NO CLASS – MONDAY SCHEDULE**

**Oct 20**  
**Global Politics of Care, Legality and Asylum**
Constable, Nicole. *Born Out of Place: Migrant Mothers and the Politics of International Labor*
(We will read this whole book so best to purchase it if possible)

**Oct 22** (deadline to withdraw)
Oct 27  **Queering Migration and Families**  
Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu, Intro, *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship and Border Crossings*  
Reddy, Chandan.  "Asian Diasporas, Neoliberalism and Family"

Nov 3  **Transgender Reproductive Justice**  
- Guest Lecture: Sonny Nordmarken, Sociology  
  - Paisley Currah, "Expecting Bodies: The Pregnant Man and Transgender Exclusion from the Employment Non-Discrimination Act"  
  - Sarah Elizabeth Richards, "The Next Frontier in Fertility Treatment"  

Tue Nov 10  **Tiger Mothers and Neoliberal Global Families**  
Research and Writing Workshop - Final paper prospectus due in class  
Student discussion of final papers in progress.  
Bring interview transcription or ethnographic notes on organization

Tue Nov 17  **Science, Medicine, Birthing and Reproductive Control**  
Galvez, Alyshia, excerpts *Patient Citizens, Immigrant Mothers: Mexican Women, Public Prenatal Care, and the Birth Weight Paradox*  
Richardson, Sarah S. "Maternal Bodies in the Postgenomic Order: Gender and the Explanatory Landscape of Epigenetics." In *Postgenomics: Biology After the Genome*.  
[http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/09/061009fa_fact](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/09/061009fa_fact)

Tues Nov 24  **Class Topic and Readings TBA**

Thu Nov 26  **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING**

Tues Dec 1  **Student Research Presentations**

Tues Dec 8  **Student Research Presentations**  
Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations

| Final Paper due in class on Tues Dec 8 |