

WGSS 205
MoWe 4:00-5:15pm
Classroom: South College W101

Office: South College W417
Office Hours: By Appointment
Contact: kleng@umass.edu

Feminist Health Politics Spring 2017

Course Description

This course serves as a broad introduction to feminist health politics. We will interrogate the concept of health from various perspectives, and think about why and how health is a crucial issue for feminists. Our course will cover a range of topics including: theories of health; the political economy of health; medicine, gender, and sexuality; health and disability; health, knowledge, and activism; and reproductive health and justice. We will consider how we define health, why health matters, and how politics, economics, social conditions, culture, and historical factors shape health. Our discussions will be enriched through numerous guest speakers from around the Valley—and the world!—who will share their expertise over the course of the term.

Course Goals

- Critically examine health, and the politics of health, from an intersectional perspective
- Explore and expand our understanding of what constitutes health, from a feminist perspective
- Consider the role of institutions, technologies, social forces, political economy, and activism in defining health and shaping health outcomes
- Hone our research skills, our ability to discern between kinds of sources, and our presentation skills

Course Structure

1. For the first eight weeks of class, we will be laser-focused on our readings and speakers. Our meetings will be a mix of lectures, discussions, and in-class exercises. During this time, evaluation will consist of quizzes based on the readings, questions prepared for speakers, and response papers (more details below).
2. The last six weeks of class will be dedicated to research on your final group projects. In March, you will be divided into groups of five, and you will work together to prepare a Tumblr/Wordpress site dedicated to providing reliable information on a subject of your choosing. Your envisioned audience ought to be high school students—think of what you might like to have known as a teenager! We will begin by working on research skills, and you will have opportunities to check in with me as needed. How you divide labour within your group is up to you (more details below).

Readings

The course readings are meant to introduce key concepts, arguments, and ideas from critical scholarship on health and feminist approaches to health. There are no readings to purchase. All of the readings are available either as ebooks through the UMass library catalog, through ereserves (linked through Moodle), or on Moodle. It is essential that you complete the readings, as discussions depend on everyone having done the work. For this reason, there will be weekly quizzes on the readings. These quizzes will be completed on Moodle in advance of our class meetings; more details on the quizzes below.

Guest Speakers

We are extremely fortunate this semester to benefit from the expertise of faculty from across UMass and around the world, thanks to the Five College Women's Studies Research Center. **Barring emergency, attendance is mandatory for guest lectures.** You will be expected to prepare and submit questions for our guests ahead of class, and complete the readings assigned for those dates to prepare you for the talks.

Evaluation

- Quizzes (30%): For each meeting that readings are assigned but no guest speaker, you will have a quiz. Thus, you will have quizzes due on the following dates:
 - Wednesday, January 25
 - Monday, January 30
 - Wednesday, February 8
 - Wednesday, February 15
 - Wednesday, February 22
 - Wednesday, March 22
 - Wednesday, March 29

You are expected to complete the quiz on Moodle by 15 minutes before the relevant class meeting at the latest. Each quiz will be 10-15 questions. The questions will be multiple choice and true/false. They cover content; they are not designed to “getcha.”

- Questions for Guest Speakers (10%): You are expected to prepare three (3) questions for each of our guest speakers in advance of our meetings, and submit these on Moodle at least 15 minutes before our class meetings. Thus, you will have questions due on the following dates:
 - Wednesday, February 1
 - Monday, February 6
 - Monday, February 13
 - Monday, February 27
 - Wednesday, March 1
 - Monday, March 6
 - Monday, March 20
 - Monday, March 27

Use the readings assigned for that meeting, as well as other relevant class materials (and of course your own personal interest!) to guide you in developing questions. Questions will be graded based on completion and effort. You are expected to use these questions to engage with speakers during Q&A.

- Response Papers (5%): You will complete three response papers (approximately one per month) wherein you will reflect on the course materials. These are meant to be informal texts, and will be graded based on completion and effort. They should be two-pages double-spaced **maximum**. Upload Response papers on the due date on Moodle by 11:55pm.
 - Wednesday, February 15
 - Wednesday, March 22
 - Monday, May 1
- Participation (20%): Participation in this class is very important, and will be assessed based on a) attendance; b) completion of any assigned homework; c) participation in class discussions and small group work; d) participation in class field trip to Hampshire College zine library on Monday, April 3. **Five percent of this grade will be based on a self-assessment, wherein you give yourself a grade out of five, and provide a paragraph explaining why you gave yourself that grade.**

As part of your participation work, please set up a Google and/or New York Times Alert on a topic related to health politics. You can use terms like “health politics,” “health economics,” “women’s health,” “LGBT health,” “US health care,” “global health care,” “maternal health,” etc... Please note that the broader the term, the more results you will receive. We will use what you encounter as part of class discussion. You may not use news exclusively culled through social media feeds.

- Final Group Research Project (35%): Your final project will be a research based website on a topic of your choosing. You will work with either Tumblr or Wordpress, and complete this project in small groups. The goal of your website is to provide information on your topic for high school students. Your group will present the website to the class at the end of term. The final project will be assessed based on the following components:
 - Proposal, due Monday, March 27
 - Completed website: Here I will consider not only the quality of content and research, but also appearance of the website—Is it easy to read? Accessible? Attractive? Too burdened with text? Uses appropriate images? (I also expect that you include works cited/bibliography somewhere on the site)
 - In-class presentation: 10 minutes, with Q&A
 - Self-assessment (out of 5), based on how well you think you contributed to the group project
 - Group Assessment (out of 5), based on how well your group mates think you contributed to the group project

As stated earlier, you will have ample time to complete the assignment, and we will complete exercises in class to help hone skills and get you going. You are of course free to meet with me at any time to discuss the projects and their development.

- Bonus opportunity!!! For an **extra 5%** on your final grade, attend the Civil Liberties and Public Policy conference on Reproductive Politics and Justice at Hampshire College from April 7-9, 2017. Details are here: <https://clpp.hampshire.edu/conference/2017-conference>. In addition to attending the conference, for the bonus you are expected to submit a response paper of **two pages maximum** within **24 hours** of attending the event.

Attendance Policy

More than two unexcused absences will result in the loss of half a grade. Every unexcused absence thereafter will result in an additional half grade deducted from your grade. If you know you cannot make it to class due to a legitimate conflict, illness, or an emergence, please be in touch in advance of class, or within 24 hours of your absence. I will be taking attendance at each class meeting.

Seating Policy

As part of your participation grade, please sit in a different seat at every class meeting.

Electronics Policy

Laptops are allowed for note-taking and relevant course-related internet work. Please refrain from using smartphones and tablets in class.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be received by their due date. There will be no extensions. Assignments that are not submitted by the due date will receive a zero.

Statement Regarding Pronouns

There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise me of your name's proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record in Spire early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Students with Disabilities

I will do my best to accommodate disabilities and specific needs. To arrange accommodation, please contact Disability Services: (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/index.html>).

Academic Dishonesty

This course follows the university guidelines for academic honesty. According to the Dean of Students Office, academic dishonesty is the attempt to secure unfair advantage for oneself or another in any academic exercise. For our course, this includes plagiarism and facilitating dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty and require further information regarding the Dean of Students' policy, please see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#A

Extra Events!

Throughout the syllabus, I have included other events happening around the Valley that are related to our class materials. It is not required that you attend these events, but highly recommended. They appear offset, in different fonts.

Should any questions arise at any time, please feel free to contact me. I aim to answer emails within 24 hours, between 9am and 8pm.

Monday, January 23: Introduction

*Introduction to Class and Each Other

Wednesday, January 25: Health: What is it, and why might we be “against” it?

From: *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*, edited by Jonathan Metzel and Anna Kirkland (New York University Press, 2010): **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**

- Jonathan Metzel, “Introduction: Why ‘Against Health’?” 1-11
- Kathleen Lebesco, “Fat Panic and the New Morality,” 72-82
- Carl Elliot, “Pharmaceutical Propaganda,” in *Against Health*, 93-104

*****Bring two (2) magazines that claim to be about “health” to class today!!!*****

Monday, January 30: [Attempting an] Understanding the Structure of the U.S. Healthcare system

- Stephen M. Davidson, *Still Broken: Understanding the U.S. Health Care System* (Stanford Business Books, 2010), 3-14, 49-68, 181-205 **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**
- United Nations Draft Resolution on Global Health and Security (2012): http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/L.36&referer=http://www.un.org/en/ga/info/draft/index.shtml&Lang=E **Available via Moodle**

- Examine: World Health Organization, “Universal Health Coverage”: http://www.who.int/universal_health_coverage/en/ **Available via Moodle**

Recommended:

- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (see especially Article 25): http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf **Available via Moodle**
- “The Economic Case for Health Care Reform,” June 2009: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cea/TheEconomicCaseforHealthCareReform> [this is the summary; the full report can be downloaded from this link] **Available via Moodle**
- Drew Altman (Kaiser Foundation), “The Health Care Plan Trump Voters Really Want,” *New York Times* [Op Ed], 5 January 2017: http://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/05/opinion/the-health-care-plan-trump-voters-really-want.html?emc=edit_ty_20170105&nl=opinion-today&nid=69742765&te=1 **Available via Moodle**

Visions for Reproductive Justice: Resistance and Rebellion, 2017 and Beyond- Moderated Discussion // Tuesday, January 31st // 7pm at the Neilson Library Browsing Room // Smith College

Join Sujatha Jesudason, Sandra Criswell and Miriam Yeung, three activists and leaders in reproductive justice, as they discuss challenges of the present political climate and share their experiences from the field. They will cover a range of topics including: building and sustaining the leadership of women of color, the role of white women in dismantling white supremacy, and cross-movement, cross-issue organizing.

Wednesday, February 1: Political Economy of Health

*Guest Speaker: Gerald Friedman, Professor of Economics, UMass Amherst

To prepare, read:

- Gerald Friedman, “The Unhappy Marriage of Economics and Health Care,” *HealthCare-Now!* <https://www.healthcare-now.org/blog/the-unhappy-marriage-of-economics-and-health-care/> [accessed 13 December 2016] **Available via Moodle**
- Gerald Friedman, “Funding a National Single-Payer System: ‘Medicare for All’ would save billions, and could be redistributive,” *Dollars & Sense* (March/April 2012): **Available via Moodle** <http://www.pnhp.org/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Dollars%20and%20Sense.pdf>

Monday, February 6: “Healthism”

*Guest Speaker: Helena Tolvhed, Researcher, Stockholm University; Five College Women’s Studies Research Center Research Associate

To prepare, read:

- Robert Crawford, “Healthism and the medicalization of everyday life,” *International Journal of Health Services* 10, no. 3 (1980): 365-388 **Available via Moodle**
- Shari L. Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs, *Body Panic: Gender, health, and the selling of fitness* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1-28. **Available via ereserves**

*Last Day Add/Drop!

Wednesday, February 8: Race, Racism, and Health

- Dorothy Roberts, “Medical Stereotyping,” “Embodying Race,” *Fatal Intervention*, 81-103, 123-146 **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**

Recommended:

- “The Health Gap,” The Guardian Live Podcast **Available via Moodle**:
<https://www.theguardian.com/membership/audio/2016/feb/18/the-health-gap-guardian-live-event>

Monday, February 13: Race and Reproduction

*Guest Speaker: Dean Robinson, Associate Professor of Political Science, UMass Amherst

To prepare, please read:

- Dorothy Roberts, “Introduction,” *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), 3-27 **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**

Wednesday, February 15: Medicine, Health, and Genders

- Anne Fausto Sterling, “Why Male and Female Are Not Enough,” *The Sciences* (March/April 1993): 20-25 **Available via Moodle**
- Anne Fausto Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (Basic Books, 2000), 78-115 **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**

**Response Paper 1 due

Monday, February 20 [Holiday—No Class]

Wednesday, February 22: Medicine, Health, Genders

- Katrina Karkazis, “Introduction,” *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press), 1-27 **Available via ereserves**
- Katrina Karkazis, “Looking at and talking about genitalia: understanding where physicians and patients get their ideas about what’s normal and what isn’t,” *Journal of Medical Ethics: Medical Humanities* 36, no. 2 (December 2010): 68-69 **Available via Moodle**

*In Class, Watch: *Diagnosing Difference* by Annalise Ophelian, 2009 (RC560.G45 D53 2009)

Monday, February 27: Intersectionality and Transgender Women’s Health

*Guest Speaker: Louis Graham, Assistant Professor, Public Health, UMass Amherst

To prepare, please read:

- Louis F. Graham, “Navigating Community Institutions: Black Transgender Women’s Experiences in Schools, the Criminal Justice System, and Churches,” *Sexual Research and Social Policy* 11 (2014): 274-287. **Available via Moodle**
- Louis F. Graham, “Interpersonal Relationships and Social Support in Transitioning Narratives of Black Transgender Women in Detroit,” *International Journal of Transgenderism* 15 (2014): 100-113 **Available via Moodle**
- Louis F. Graham, “The Killing of Transgender Women: Responding with a Different List,” *Huffington Post*, 11/20/2015:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/louis-f-graham/the-killing-of-transgende_b_8600358.html
Available via Moodle

Wednesday, March 1: LGBTQ Health Care

*Guest Speaker: Ruby Grant, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Tasmania; Five College Women's Studies Research Center Fellow

To prepare, please read:

- Steven Epstein, "Sexualizing Governance and Medicalizing Identities: The Emergence of 'State-Centered' LGBT Health Politics in the United States," *Sexualities* 6, no. 2 (2003): 131-171. **Available via ereserves**

DES, a Population Health Tragedy // Thursday, March 2nd 5:30-7:30PM // Location TBD // Mount Holyoke College

Come learn how DES (the first synthetic estrogen and endocrine disruptor) affected millions of families. This event will cover a wide range of issues: reproductive rights, advocacy and activism, drug safety, environmental issues, legal issues in RJ, and gender, sex, and sexuality. See the attached flyer for further details.

Monday, March 6: (Dis)Ability and Reproductive Justice

*Guest Speaker: Lezlie Frye, Lecturer/Associate Director of Graduate Program

To prepare, please read:

- Susan Wendell, "Towards a Feminist Theory of Disability," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2006): 243-257 **2006 version Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**
- Alison Kafer, selection from *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 161-169 **Available via Moodle**

Monday, March 8: CLASS CANCELLED

Monday, March 13-Wednesday, March 15: SPRING BREAK!!!

Monday, March 20: Trans Health and Reproductive Justice

*Guest Speaker: Elias Capello, PhD University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Anthropology

To prepare, please read:

- Alexis Light, Juno Obedin-Maliver, Jae Sevelius, and Jennifer L. Kerns, "Transgender Men Who Experienced Pregnancy After Female-to-male Gender Transitioning," *Obstetrics and Gynaecology* (2014): 1-8 **Available via Moodle**
- Britni de la Cretaz, "What It's Like to Chestfeed," *The Atlantic* (23 August 2016): <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/08/chestfeeding/497015/>
- Dr. Rad's Queer Health Show: <http://zines.radremedy.org/>

Wednesday, March 22: Reproductive Politics, Reproductive Justice

- Andrea Smith, "Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life: Women of Color Reproductive Justice," *Feminist Formations* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 119-140 **Available via ereserves**

- Loretta Ross, “Understanding Reproductive Justice,” Sister Song Reproductive Justice Collective (November 2006; updated March 2011) <http://www.trustblackwomen.org/our-work/what-is-reproductive-justice/9-what-is-reproductive-justice> ****Available via Moodle****
- Dagmar Herzog, “Abortion, Christianity, Disability: Western Europe, 1960s-1970s,” in *Sexual Revolutions*, edited by Gert Hekma and Alain Giami (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 249-263 ****Available via ereserves****

****Response Paper 2 due**

Monday, March 27: Health Activism: Alternative approaches

*Guest Speaker: Aline Gubrium, Associate Professor, Public Health, UMass Amherst

*To prepare, please read:

- Aline Gubrium and Krista Harper, “Visualizing Change: Participatory digital technologies in research and action,” *Practicing Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 3-4. ****Available via Moodle****
- Aline Gubrium, “Digital Storytelling as a Method for Engaged Scholarship in Anthropology,” *Practicing Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 5-9 ****Available via Moodle****

*****Proposals due*****

Wednesday, March 29: Health Activism: The Politics of Knowledge Alternative and Parallel Institutions

- Course Introduction, *Women and Their Bodies* (1970) ****Available via Moodle****
- Also read entry from one of the topics from the current website: <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/health-information/> and peruse the Table of Contents from the most recent edition: <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/publications/our-bodies-ourselves-2011/> ****Available via Moodle****
- Kathy Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Our Selves* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 142-168 ****Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue****
- *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community*, edited by Laura Erickson-Schroth (2014): ****Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue****
 - Preface, xi
 - Our Many Selves, 3-23

Monday, April 3: Beginning Research: Field Trip to Hampshire Zine Library

******Unless you have a ride to Hampshire, please meet at Hagis Mall bus stop at 3:45pm to take bus #38 to Hampshire******

Wednesday, April 5: Beginning Research: Discerning between types of sources

- Stanford History Education Group, “Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning”: <https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%202011.21.16.pdf>

Friday, April 7-Sunday April 9: CLPP Reproductive Justice Conference at Hampshire

<https://clpp.hampshire.edu/conference/2017-conference>

Don't forget bonus opportunity!!!

Monday, April 10: Research and Website Design

Wednesday, April 12: Research and Website Design

Tuesday, April 18 [Monday schedule]: Research and Website Design

Wednesday, April 19: Research and Website Design

Monday, April 24: Research and Website Design

Wednesday, April 26: Presentations

Monday, May 1: Presentations

**Response Paper 3 due