WOMENSST 394R: Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Latin America.

Fall 2014

Cora Fernández Anderson

Class: Tuesday and Thursdays 10:00 to 11:15

Room: Bartlett 205

Office Hours: Wednesdays 9 to 12 or by appointment.

Office: Bartlett 7C

cora@wost.umass.edu

Since the 1990s Latin America has witnessed increasing societal and political debates over sexual and reproductive rights. Issues such as contraceptives, abortion, gay marriage, transgender rights, sexual education and assisted reproductive technology have risen to the top of some countries’ agendas after decades of silence, taboos, and restrictive or non-existent legislation. The course aims to provide a survey of sexual and reproductive rights in Latin America assessing the state of the regions as a whole, while at the same time highlighting the disparities that exist within it. The course analyzes the multiple factors behind the current policies focusing particularly on the role of women and gay rights movements in advancing more liberal legislation. In addition, we will look at the role of the Catholic Church in these debates and their struggles to prevent any legislative change that goes against their doctrine from happening. Among the cases we will explore are Argentina’s gay marriage and gender identity legislation, Uruguay’s decriminalization of abortion, Costa Rica’s ban on IVF technologies and Peru’s coercive sterilization program of indigenous populations.
**Goals:**
- Learn key concepts in the field of sexual and reproductive rights.
- Acquire knowledge of the general status of sexual and reproductive rights in Latin America.
- Gain an understanding of the theories that explain the different sexual and reproductive rights policies throughout the region.
- Gain skills in comparative analysis and policy making

**Readings**
There are no required books. All readings will be available through the class website in moodle.

**Requirements**

Attendance and Participation:
Your attendance and participation are essential for making this class a success. All students should come to class on time having done the readings and ready to participate in the class discussion and activities. You are allowed no more than 4 absences during the semester. If you exceed this number you will receive an F in the class unless there are documented extenuating circumstances (15% of grade).

Country reports (2):
Each student should choose one country of interest to examine throughout the semester. You are required to submit two country reports (5 pages) that examine one area of your country’s sexual and reproductive rights based on prompts that I will provide as the semester progresses. There will be five opportunities/topics from which to choose which 2 assignments you would like to complete. This assignment is meant to add concrete examples that will enrich our classroom discussion of the various themes. You will be required to present your findings to the class. (30%).

Response papers (2)
You are required to write two response papers (2-3 pages) to class readings (15%).

Final take home exam
You will be required to respond to essay questions while having access to all course materials. The prompt will be distributed at the beginning of the exam period (December 8 at 9 AM) and the exam will be due at the end of it (December 13 at noon) print in my office. (40% of grade)

**Class policies:**
- You can contact me through email and expect a response within 48 hours.
- You are responsible for citing your sources thoroughly, and all plagiarism will be handled according to college policy.
- All assignments are due print in class on the specified date. All late papers will be marked down unless there is a justified and documented extreme circumstance. Misrepresenting your state of health to the professor to obtain an extension is a violation of the honor code.
Students who need test or classroom accommodations due to a disability must be registered in advance with Disability Services and have a letter from that office confirming the needed accommodation. Please let me know as soon as possible.

**Tentative class schedule**

(I may introduce changes as the semester progresses which will be announced in class and through email)

**Class 1: September 2**

Introduction to the class. No assigned readings.

**Class 2: September 4**

Sexual and reproductive rights. What are they? Status in Latin America.


**Class 3: September 9**

From population control to reproductive rights.


**Class 4: September 11**

Cairo and Beijing Conferences.

- Cairo and Beijing declarations.
- Selections of Beijing plus 15 Latin America.

**Class 5: September 16**

Sexual rights. Global and regional status.


Recommended/optional:


**Class 6: September 18**

Overview of Latin America’s history and normative traditions.

• Mala Htun. *Sex and the State*. Chapter 2. Four Normative Traditions.

**Class 7: September 23**

The Catholic Church in Latin America. Organizing against sexual and reproductive rights.

• Primary sources: excerpts from Church’s documents on sexual and reproductive rights.
• Marysa Navarro and Maria Consuelo Mejia. 2010. “The Latin American Network of Catolicas por el Derecho a Decidir” In Elizabeth Maier and Nathalie Lebon, ed, Women’s Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean, (New Jersey: Rutgers the State University)
• Bonnie Shepard. 2006. *Running the obstacle course to sexual and reproductive health*. Chapter 1.

Recommended/optional:


**Class 8: September 25**

Social movements. What are women’s movements? Whose interests do they represent?


**Class 9: September 30**

Social movements. What are LGBT movements? Whose interests do they represent?

Class 10: October 2

Latin American feminisms


Recommended/optional


Class 11: October 7

Abortion. Regional status and the case of Uruguay.


Recommended/Optional:

• World Health Organization. “Unsafe abortion: the preventable pandemic”

First Country Report Due: status of abortion.

Class 12: October 9

Abortion. The case of Nicaragua:

• Watch documentary “Rosita.”

**Recommended:**


• Molineux, Maxine. 2001. The Politics of Abortion in Nicaragua: Revolutionary pragmatism or feminism in the realm of necessity? In *Women’s Movements in International Perspective*. Chapter 3. Pages 60-75

**October 14: Monday class schedule will be followed. No class.**

**Class 13: October 16**

Assisted Reproductive Technologies. The Case of Costa Rica.

• Martin Hevia and Carlos Herrera Vacaflor. “The Legal Status of In Vitro Fertilization in Latin America and the American Convention on Human Rights” Forthcoming in the *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*.


• Interamerican Court Ruling on the Costa Rica case.


**Class 14: October 21**

Assisted Reproductive Technologies. The case of Ecuador.

• Miriam Zoll. Cracked open.

• Elizabeth F. S. Roberts. 2006. “God’s laboratory: religious rationalities and modernity in Ecuadorian in vitro fertilization” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 30, (4)

**Class 15: October 23**

Class exercise on policy making and state regulations on Assisted Reproduction Technologies.

**Class 16: October 28**

Forced sterilization. The case of Peru.

• UNFPA. 2010 “How Universal is Access to Reproductive Health? A Review of the Evidence.” (read mainly sections on Latin America)

**Class 17: October 30**

Forced sterilization. The case of Peru (II)

- Watch “A Woman’s Womb” by Mathilde Damoiseel.

**Class 18: November 4**

Emergency contraception.


Recommended/optional


Third Country Report Due: Contraception.

**Class 19: November 6**

Emergency Contraception. The Case of Chile.

- Alejandra Brito Pena et al. 2012. “Ruling the Womb. The Sexual and Reproductive Struggle during the Bachelet Administration” Latin American Perspectives 39

**Class 20: Wednesday November 12**

Latin American LGBT movements.


Recommended/optional:


Fourth Country Report due: Same sex marriage.

Class 21: November 13

Gay marriage. The Case of Argentina.


Recommended/optional


Class 22: November 18

Gender Identity. The case of Uruguay and Argentina.

• Collection of newspaper articles on gender identity laws in Argentina and Uruguay.

Class 23: November 20

• Class exercise on Gender Identity Laws

Fifth Country Report due: Gender Identity.

Class 24: November 25

International Adoption. Regional status.

Thanksgiving break

Class 25: December 2

International Adoption. The case of Guatemala.

- Class screening of documentary “Goodbye Baby” by film director Pat Goudvis.

Class 26: December 4

Conclusions.