

WS297D
WOMEN'S HEALTH IN AMERICA
FALL 2006
Pamela K. Stone
Email: pksNS@hampshire.edu
Office: Bartlett 387; ph. 577-2786

Bartlett 301
Tu/Th: 9:30-10:45
*Office Hours: Th 1-3; and by
appointment.*



COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main goal of this course is to examine the health issues/risks women face in the United States. We will examine the roles of medical research and the public health community in setting the health care agenda for women. Through the course students will gain a clearer understanding of the biology of life cycle changes, how health inequalities are generated and perpetuated, and how to think critically about their own health choices. From infancy to old age we will explore perceptions of wellness and illness across the life span focusing on such areas as: growth and development, menstruation, contraception, pregnancy and birth, menopause, osteoporosis and heart disease (to name a few). We start with women's health in antiquity and move through to contemporary times, charting the major trends in patterns of disease and poor health.

We will look at women and health in an interdisciplinary perspective asking questions about how biology and culture interact and how does culture construct perceptions of health. We will examine the ways in which gender inequality is socially constructed, and the important role that social institutions, ideology, and cultural practices play in creating and perpetuating various forms of inequality, particularly in regards to health and wellness for women. We will also look at the diversity of the health care delivery across race and class, asking such questions as: How does poverty impact women's wellness, maternal and child morbidity and mortality, breast cancer rates, understanding of heart disease in women, the effects of obesity on incidences of diabetes, and osteoporosis as a disease.

We will use a series of case studies that that will clarify the way to go about studying women's health. For example we will look at the historical underpinnings of pregnancy as an illness needing management by health care professionals versus pregnancy as a natural process that may not need as much support as it is assumed. We will also look at the increasing rates of obesity and the subsequent effects on women's wellness.

TEXTS

Women and Health in America (second edition), Judith Walzer Leavitt, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999. (referred to as WHA)

[*Available at Food For Thought Book-shop, North Pleasant Street, Amherst.*]

E- Reserves, web pages, and Handouts, as indicated

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Reading assignments must be completed by the class period for which they were assigned.
- You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due and handing them in on time. Dates of major writing assignments are in this syllabus. Absence on the day the assignment is due is no excuse for not handing in the assignment on time.
- There will always be time to provide the opportunity to talk critically and analyze issues and topics. You will be expected to have completed and thought about all of the readings for each class.
- Videos and guest lectures are part of the class material and students are responsible for knowing the material.

We will follow all university policies on issues of Academic Honesty, Grading, Attendance, Examinations, and Absences due to Religious Observance.

Written Assignments and Exams

- **Two exams:** One midterm exam, scheduled on **Thursday, Oct 12** and a final (TBA)
- **Three short exercises/assignments** including media's reporting on women's health (Sept 19); health, fitness, and body Image (Oct 5); cultural practices and women's Health (Nov 28). Each is worth 10% of your grade.
- **Attendance and participation** are factored into the final grade. Two unexcused absences or more will result in your grade being marked down. Non-attendance will result in an "F." If you have an excused absence, you must submit a two-page reflection paper based on the readings assigned for that week. This paper is due the next class day.

Grading

Final grades will be computed as follows:

Attendance and participation	20%
Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Written assignments (3 assignments- 10% each)	30%
Unannounced quizzes (Best 5 grades)	10%

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University's official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary - you can read it in full at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/rights/acad_honest.htm

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 exceed those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University. The Board may also recommend sanctions for offenders who have committed multiple violations of the Academic Honesty Policy but who have not appealed the faculty members' decisions.

Ground Rules

Despite the size of this class, I am concerned about the quality of your experience. To that end, I will try to foster as much active participation in the course as is possible. Lectures will include time for questions as they arise. Please make use of email correspondence and office hours to continue class discussions, clarify confusions or to discuss any other problems you are having with the course. Because of the class size and the nature of the subject matter, it is necessary to set some ground rules:

- I expect you to remain for the entire class period. Latecomers and those who begin to pack 5 minutes before the class period disrupt the class for everyone.
- Make up exams will only be given to students who have an exam conflict, a medical or unavoidable excuse. Ignorance of this rule will not constitute a valid excuse.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction and Models for Analysis of Women's Health

Thursday, September 7:

Introduction to the class and the Instructor; expectations; syllabus; readings...

Week 2: Ancient Women: Ancient Health

Tuesday, September 12

Evolution: Understanding women's health through evolutionary analyses?

Read: ✓Zilhman, Adrienne (1998) *Woman the Gatherer...*

✓Falk, Dean (1998) *Brain Evolution in Females...*

Thursday, September 14

Understanding women and health in the Ancient (pre)historic new world

Read: ✓Stone, Pamela and Dana Walrath (2006) *The Gendered Skeleton...*

✓Reinhard, Karl J., et al. (1994) *Trade, Contact, and Female Health...*

✍Get hand out for writing assignment #1 due Tuesday, September 19th

Week 3: Women and Health in The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century

Tuesday, September 19

A Midwifes Tale

Read: No readings due today

✍**Writing Assignment #1 Due** – see hand-out for details.

Thursday, September 21

Historic women's centered healthcare...

Read: WHA: pp. 9-64

Week 4: Women and Health in the Nineteenth Century

Tuesday, September 26:

A Historic view of Women's Morbidity

Read: WHA, pp. 65-110

Thursday, September 28:

Medicine and Illness: Women's place and narratives

Read: WHA, pp. 111-146

✍Get hand out for writing assignment #2 due Thursday, October 10th

Week 5: Body Image and Physical Fitness

Tuesday, October 3

Late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries Issues

Read: WHA, pp. 147-190

Thursday, October 5

From the 1970's forward...Media and Women's Health...

Read: Handout (Fitness Magazine Article) AND

Everyone must find one example from the popular press (magazines, newspapers, etc... that discusses women's health and fitness ... write out one paragraph that critiques this article and bring it in and be prepared to discuss it in class (you will have to turn this in at the end of class).

Week 6: Women and Health: Late Nineteenth and early to mid Twentieth Centuries

Tuesday, October 10

Sexuality

Read: WHA, pp. 191-250

☆☆Writing Assignment #2 due

Thursday, October 12

Fertility, Abortion, and Birth

Read: WHA, pp. 251-326

Week 7: Women and Health: Late Nineteenth and early to mid Twentieth Centuries

Tuesday, October 17:

Childbirth and Motherhood

Read: WHA, pp. 327-388

Thursday, October 19: MIDTERM EXAM (INCLUDES EVERYTHING UPTO OCTOBER 17TH)

Week 8: HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Tuesday, October 24

Midwives

Read: WHA, pp. 423-458

Thursday, October 26

Nurses

Read: WHA, pp. 459-506

Week 9: HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Tuesday, October 31

Physicians

Read: WHA, pp. 507-556

Thursday, November 2

Women's Health Reform and Public Health

Read: WHA, pp. 557-634

Week 10: Twentieth-Century Women

Tuesday, November 7

The Medicalized Woman.....

Read: WHA, pp. 635-681

√Martin, Emily (1992) "*Medical Metaphors...*"

Thursday, November 9

Women, Work and Health

Read: √Doyal, Lesley (1995) "*Hazards of Hearth and Home...*" &
"*Waged Work and Well-being*"...

Get hand out for writing assignment #3 due Tuesday, November 28th

Week 11: (AAA)

Tuesday November 14

Read: ***Living Down Stream***

Assignment: *work on finding an article on a similar issue effect women's health today-*
(this is part of writing assignment # 3)

Thursday, November 16

*Continue Reading ***Living Down Stream*** and working on writing assignment (NO CLASS MEETING TODAY)*

Week 12 *Thanksgiving*

Tuesday, November 21 – NO CLASS – Open office hours

Living Down Stream.... Continue working on writing assignment #3 – come to office hours if you are having problems with this or anything else regarding this class.

Thursday, November 23: Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS

Week 13: **Bodies and Health and Medicine: Today and Tomorrow**

Tuesday, November 28

Living Down Stream – Biocultural Health issues of the late 20th and early 21st Century

☆☆☆ **Writing Assignment #3 DUE** –details handed out in class on Thursday Nov. 9th

Thursday, November 30

Reproductive Technologies, Biomedicine and Family Issues

Read: Shore, Chris (1992) *Virgin Birth, Sterile Debate...* {jstor}

Week 14: **Women's Health in a new Millennium**

Tuesday, December 5

Reproductive technologies continued...contraception and public policy

Read: TBA

Thursday, December 7

Feminism, Science, Health, and Health Policies for the New Millennium

Read: ✓Schiebinger, Londa (2000) "*Has feminism Changed Science?...*"

✓Woods, Nancy F. (2000) "*US Women's Health Research Agenda...*"

Week 15: **Conclusion**

Tuesday, December 12: Wrapping-up the semester -- LAST CLASS

FINAL EXAM: TBA

please note this syllabus is subject to change.....

