

WGSS 205
MoWe 2:30-3:45pm
Classroom: South College W201

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

Feminist Health Politics Spring 2019

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 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. Until April, 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 weeks of class will be dedicated to researching, crafting, and presenting your final group projects. In March, you will be divided into groups and 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 UMass Library Course Materials (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 the Valley. **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 (25%): 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:
 - Monday, January 28
 - Wednesday, January 30
 - Monday, February 11
 - Tuesday, February 19
 - Wednesday, February 27
 - Monday, March 18
 - Wednesday, March 20

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

- Questions for Guest Speakers (5%): 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:
 - Monday, February 4
 - Wednesday, February 6
 - Wednesday, February 13
 - Monday, February 25
 - Monday, March 4
 - Wednesday, March 6
 - Monday, March 25
 - Monday, April 1

Use any 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 13
 - Wednesday, March 20
 - Wednesday, 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. **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.**
- Final Group Research Project (45%): 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 25 (5%)
- Annotated Bibliography: At least 10 scholarly sources (books, articles...), due May 1(5%)
- Completed website (20%), due May 1: 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 (5%): 10 minutes, with Q&A [April 24-May 1]
- Self-assessment (5%), May 1: based on how well you think you contributed to the group project
- Group Assessment (5%), May 1: 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 12-14, 2019. Details are here: <https://clpp.hampshire.edu/conference/2019-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.

Number grades will be translated to the final letter grades using the scale shown below:

A	93-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-92%	C	73-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	59% and below

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 emergency, 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. Assignments that are not submitted by the due date will receive a zero. If you require an extension due to health concerns or other personal/professional emergency, please be in touch with me as soon as possible.

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.

Policy on Use of Course Materials

Course materials can be shared among classmates, roommates, friends and family. They cannot be shared on social media. Recording of class sessions is not allowed barring special permission; these recordings cannot be shared on social media.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Weekly Schedule

Wednesday, January 23: Introduction

*Introduction to Class and Each Other

Monday, January 28: 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

Wednesday, 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**

Monday, February 4: 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>

Wednesday, February 6: Health Systems in Comparison

*Guest Speaker: Lawrence King, Professor of Economics, UMass Amherst

Monday, February 11: 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>

Wednesday, February 13: Race and Reproduction

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

To prepare, please watch and read:

- *Unnatural Causes: When the Bough Breaks* (2008) **Available via Kanopy through UMass library catalogue**
- Dr. Joia Crear-Perry, “Black Mamas Matter,” *Ms* magazine (January 2019): 44-45. **Available via UMass Library Course Materials**

**Response Paper 1 due

Tuesday, February 19 [Monday Schedule]: Defining Genders in Medicine

- 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**

Wednesday, February 20: Trans Health

*Guest Speaker: Elias Capello, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, UMass Amherst

To prepare, please read and watch (all links and docs on Moodle):

- Judith Butler, “Undiagnosing Gender”
- On Passing and Appearing Cis
- On Hold (only the clip starting at 18:03 to ending at 27:57)
- THEM’s video on Two Spirit

Monday, February 25: Reproductive Politics, Reproductive Justice

*Guest Speaker: Crystal Hayes, Five College Women’s Studies Research Center Research Associate

To prepare, please read:

- 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**
- Andrea Smith, “Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life: Women of Color Reproductive Justice,” *Feminist Formations* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 119-140 **Available via UMass Library Course Materials**

Wednesday, February 27: LGBTQ Health Care

- 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 UMass Library Course Reserves**

Monday, March 4: Pregnancy Loss and Feminist Politics

*Guest Speaker: Carol McMurrich, Founder, Empty Arms Bereavement Support

To prepare, please read:

- Linda Layne, “Unhappy endings: a feminist reappraisal of the women’s health movement from the vantage of pregnancy loss,” *Social Science and Medicine* 56 (2003), 1881-1891

- Helen Keane, “Foetal personhood and representation of the absent child in pregnancy loss memorialization,” *Feminist Theory* 10, no. 7 (2009): 153-171. **Available via UMass Library Course Materials**
- Mara Gordon, “A Drug That Eases Miscarriages Is Difficult For Women To Get,” *NPR* (January 10, 2019): https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/01/10/666957368/a-drug-that-eases-miscarriages-is-difficult-for-women-to-get?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20190113&utm_campaign=health&utm_term=nprnews (available on Moodle)

Optional

- Linda Layne, “‘He Was a Real Baby With Baby Things’: A Material Culture Analysis of Personhood, Parenthood and Pregnancy Loss,” *Journal of Material Culture* 5, no. 3 (2000): 321-345. **Available via UMass Library Course Materials**

****Receive Group Assignments****

Wednesday, March 6: Reproductive Labour, Reproductive Politics

*Guest Speaker: Laura Briggs, Professor of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, UMass Amherst

- Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 1-18. **Available as an ebook through UMass library catalogue**

Monday, March 11-Wednesday, March 13: SPRING BREAK!!!

Monday, March 18: Health Activism: The Politics of Knowledge

- 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

Wednesday, March 20: Medical Management of Gender and Sexuality

- Katrina Karkazis, “Introduction,” *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press), 1-27 **Available via UMass Library Course Materials**
- 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)

****Response Paper 2 due**

Monday, March 25: Disability Studies and Health

*Guest speaker: Miliann Kang, Associate Professor of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, UMass Amherst

To prepare, please read:

- Kristina Chew, "Me as a Boy: On Raising an Asian American and Autistic Son," *Amerasia Journal* Vol. 39, no. 1 (2013): 83-87 **Available via Moodle**
- Karen Soldatic and Shaun Grech, "Transnationalising Disability Studies: Rights, Justice and Impairment," *Disability Studies Quarterly* Vol. 34, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 3-17 **Available via Moodle**

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

Wednesday, March 27: CLASS CANCELLED

Monday, April 1: Beginning Research: Visit from Research Librarians

- Ellen Lutz, Librarian for Public Health

Wednesday, April 3: Beginning Research: Evaluating science and 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>
- National Academy of Sciences, "Methods and Values in Science," in Sandra Harding, ed., *Racial Economy of Science* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 341-343 **Available via UMass Library Course Reserves**
- Helen Longino, "Introduction: Good Science, Bad Science," *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3-15 ** Available via UMass Library Course Reserves **
- Massimo Pigliucci, "Science and Politics: The Case of Global Warming," *Nonsense on Stilts: How to Tell Science from Bunk* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 134-159 ** Available via UMass Library Course Reserves **

Monday, April 8: Research and Website Design

Wednesday, April 10: Research and Website Design

*******Friday, April 12-Sunday April 14: CLPP Reproductive Justice Conference at Hampshire*******

<https://clpp.hampshire.edu/conference/2019-conference>

Don't forget bonus opportunity!!!

Wednesday, April 17 [Monday schedule]: Research and Website Design

Monday, April 22: Research and Website Design

Wednesday, April 24: Presentations

Monday, April 29: Presentations

Wednesday, May 1: Presentations

**Response Paper 3 due