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South College W205  
Tues Thurs 10-11:15am  
[Office hours: W 11am-12pm on Zoom](#)  
Fall 2021

### WGSS 230/793R: The Politics of Reproduction, 2021

Reproductive politics have been key issues both transnationally and domestically. People travel internationally to contract with surrogates, or to assemble gametes for IVF or other ARTs. Workers migrate from one country to another to work and support households (their own and others'), sometimes leaving children and elders behind in home countries.

Within the United States, racially minoritized communities have fought for the ability to raise children and live in safe and sustainable communities. Some socialist feminists and women of color feminists have operated from the broadest understanding of what constitutes reproduction, including all the things necessary for households to raise children—schools, nutrition, housing, health, and safety. While this course has historically focused on these issues, with *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* on the Supreme Court docket, the question of access to safe and accessible abortion in the US is in question for the first time in generations, even as publics in Argentina and Ireland have demanded—and won—the right to legal abortion in the past few years. This year, we will focus more on reproductive health: birthing, population, sterilization, maternal and infant mortality, and the changing ways societies have thought about abortion across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some key concepts for scholars and activists have been “reproductive governance,” “stratified reproduction,” and “reproductive justice”—the joining of issues of birth control and abortion to questions of sterilization abuse and economic justice. This course will also explore issues that include freedom from sterilization, surrogacy, immigrant justice, social reproduction, and wages for housework.

#### **Grading and structure of assignments for 230**

##### Break-down of final grade, by percent:

20-class discussion

15—In-class discussion leadership

20 each—two 5pp papers, due September 24 and October 29

25—10 pp final paper, due December 15

**793R: All of the above assignments plus an extra hour meeting (time TBD). Final paper 15pp. All of the assigned reading plus the recommended reading.**

All papers should be submitted to the online drop box in Moodle.

Once during the semester, you will be responsible (either alone or with a partner) for **leading class discussion**. Do the reading with care, look for some book reviews or news articles to situate the readings and issues, and perhaps look at the recommended reading. Think about how you want to start the conversation: a quote from the reading on a slide? Some provocative questions? A short YouTube video? Become an expert, and think about how to make the class your own and share important questions with others.

### **Required texts**

All articles and book chapters will be available in Moodle.

### **Day-to-day business of the course**

Reproductive politics has not always engendered good conversation or thoughtful engagement—in fact, the usual image of the conversation includes screaming, threatening, and barely suppressed (or not suppressed) violence. That is not what we are about here. Universities provide us the privilege and pleasure of reading together and learning from each other. *Nothing* is on the syllabus because it is “right.” Our job in this class is to create an intellectual community, one in which all are enriched by each others’ readings. We will be discussing weighty, critical issues, which is why we need each other’s help to think well and to try to understand how the reading can (or fails to) speak to our situation in the world. This imposes on each of us the responsibility of coming to class with the reading done, speaking up about our insights and questions, and listening respectfully to each other (which is not to say always agreeing). It’s worth noting that these are not clear left/right or Democrat/Republican issues—the state with the best subsidized daycare is Oklahoma, where it is a Republican program.

So. You are expected to come to class with the reading done. For this class to work well, everyone needs to talk and think out loud. In order to facilitate this, we need to have the highest level of respect for each other. Your class participation grade will rest on how successfully you exhibit engagement with the material and with your classmates. This course is not a competition over who has “good” or “bad” politics (whatever we may consider those to be), it is an honest exploration of various kinds of political and intellectual positions, and the ways these have been historically constituted. Students are encouraged to bring questions, change their minds, make counter-arguments, and voice politically unpopular positions in class. While intellectual and moral passion, as well as lively disagreement (including with the instructor) are valued, *ad hominem* and *ad feminam* attacks will not be tolerated, nor will harassment, slurs, or disparagement of any group.

### **Academic Integrity, University Policies, Disability Accommodations, Late Papers**

Academic dishonesty destroys trust and the good-faith work of a course. Students who get stressed about their grades or having enough time to complete an assignment are sometimes tempted to cheat—to download sections of a paper from the Internet, to borrow quotes or ideas from other students or published sources. Don’t. It’s not worth it. Chances are good you will be caught and will fail the assignment or the course. (See the UMass policy on sanctions and procedures on Academic Honesty,

[http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#D](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#D)) Cite all your sources, all the time.

Helping someone else cheat is an offense as serious as cheating yourself. Although it is always appropriate to discuss the course material and assignments with each other, inside and outside class, it is *not* appropriate to collaborate on the writing of actual sentences.

If you have learning or other disabilities, it is my goal and that of the Disability Services to ensure that you have reasonable accommodations that minimize the impact of that disability on your learning or your ability to demonstrate what you have learned in the context of assignments. It is your choice whether to disclose your disability to me; you can simply access services through Disability Services (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/current.html>) and ask me to work with that office to provide appropriate accommodations. However, you do need to let me know that you will need accommodation at or near the beginning of the semester, well in advance of any assignments. If we agree on a modified timeline for the completion of assignments or alternative formats, you are still responsible for completing assignments in a timely way and attending class.

All students are required to have a UMass email account, which will be used for all correspondence for this course. (Students from other colleges will be assigned one once they register). Registration for this course will also provide access to Moodle, which we will use for supplementary course materials, e-reserves, extra credit opportunities, and to turn in assignments.

### **Week 1: Reproductive Justice in US and International Contexts**

Sept. 2—course overview

Discuss: [Abortion could be essential illegal in Texas](https://www.thelily.com/in-one-month-abortion-could-be-essentially-illegal-in-texas/) (<https://www.thelily.com/in-one-month-abortion-could-be-essentially-illegal-in-texas/>)

Sept. 7—Briggs, “Introduction” *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (UC Press, 2017), pp. 1-18. Loretta J. Ross, “Understanding Reproductive Justice.” SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, May 2006. [www.SisterSong.net](http://www.SisterSong.net)

**Recommended:** all of *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics*

### **Week 2: US Contexts: The Political right, enslavement, settler colonialism**

#### **The Political Right in the US**

Sept 9—Sarah Franklin and Faye Ginsburg, “Reproductive Politics in the Age of Trump and Brexit,” *Cultural Anthropology* 34:1 (2019): 3-9. Faye Ginsburg, “Introduction,” in *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (UC Press, 1998), pp. 1-22. Madeline Peltz, “Tucker Carlson’s wild new talking point is that abortion is somehow a tool of ‘corporate’ oppression,” *Media Matters* (April 28, 2019).

<https://www.mediamatters.org/tucker-carlson/tucker-carlsons-wild-new-talking-point-abortion-somehow-tool-corporate->

[oppression?fbclid=IwAR0n9mzzvWXw2VX8kditglNg4L2funELCKBhsYEazOpbPOuU0qPKJObdWRA](https://www.jstor.org/stable/44800000)

### **Legacies of Enslavement and Settler Colonialism: The Family Regulation System**

September 11~ Dorothy Roberts, “Destroying Black Families in the Name of Child Welfare,” *Shattered Bonds* pp. 2-100.

**Recommended:** Margaret Jacobs, “Introduction” in *A Generation Removed: The Fostering and Adoption of Indigenous Children in the Postwar World* (University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

### **Week 3: Stratified Reproduction and Reproductive Governance**

Sept 14– Shellee Colen, “Like a Mother to Them: Stratified Reproduction and West Indian Child Care Workers and Employers in New York,” in Ginsburg, Faye D., Rapp, Rayna R. *Conceiving the new world order: the global politics of reproduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 78-102.

Sept 16~ Lynn M. Morgan and Elizabeth FS Roberts. "Reproductive governance in Latin America." *Anthropology & medicine* 19, no. 2 (2012): 241-254.

**Recommended:** Silvia Fredericci, *Caliban and the Witch* (New York: Autonomedia, 2014)

### **Week 4: Eco-fascism and Overpopulation**

September 21– Michelle Murphy, “Introduction,” *The Economization of Life* (Duke, 2017), pp. 1-14; Adele Clarke, “Introduction,” in Donna Haraway and Adele Clarke, eds., *Making Kin, Not Population: Reconceiving Generations* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018), 3-29.

**September 23**~Bhatia, Rajani, Jade S. Sasser, Diana Ojeda, Anne Hendrixson, Sarojini Nadimpally, and Ellen E. Foley. "A feminist exploration of ‘populationism’: engaging contemporary forms of population control." *Gender, Place & Culture* 27, no. 3 (2020): 333-350.

Joel Achenbach, “Two mass killings a world apart share a common theme: ‘ecofascism,’” *Washington Post* (August 18, 2019). [https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/two-mass-murders-a-world-apart-share-a-common-theme-ecofascism/2019/08/18/0079a676-bec4-11e9-b873-63ace636af08\\_story.html?wpisrc=nl\\_rainbow&wpmm=1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/two-mass-murders-a-world-apart-share-a-common-theme-ecofascism/2019/08/18/0079a676-bec4-11e9-b873-63ace636af08_story.html?wpisrc=nl_rainbow&wpmm=1)

**Recommended:** All of Murphy, *Economization*

### **Week 5: Post-Abortion Care and Anti-Abortion Politics on the African Continent**

September 28- Siri Suh, “Introduction,” in *Dying to Count: Post-Abortion Care and Global Reproductive Health Politics in Senegal* (Routledge, 2021), pp. 1-24.

September 30–Susanne Klausen, “South Africa is Experiencing an All-Out Attack by Permissiveness: Communism, Immorality, and the Disintegration of Apartheid Culture,” in *Abortion Under Apartheid: Nationalism, Sexuality, and Women’s Reproductive Rights in South Africa* (New York: Oxford, 2015), pp. 58-82.

Watch film on Moodle: Sarah Diehl, *Abortion Democracy: Poland/South Africa* (2008)

**Recommended:** All of Suh, *Dying to Count*

### **Week 6: Island Politics**

Oct. 5— Kaima Glover, “Translator’s Introduction” and “Introduction,” in Françoise Vergès, *The Wombs of Women: Race, Capital, Feminism* (Duke, 2020), pp. xiii-xviii, 1-10.  
 Oct. 7—Briggs, “Demon Mothers in the Social Laboratory: Development, Overpopulation, and “The Pill,” 1940–1960, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (UC Press, 2002), pp. 109-141.

**Recommended:** All of Vergès, *The Wombs of Women: Race, Capital, Feminism*

### **Week 7: Migration and the Border**

Oct 12— Lina-Maria Murillo, "Birth Control, Border Control: The Movement for Contraception in El Paso, Texas 1936–1940." *Pacific Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2021): 314-344.

Watch film, *No Más Bebés* on Moodle.

Oct. 14— Rhacel Parreñas, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* (2005). Introduction and chapter one.

Jennifer Wright, “The US is Tracking Migrant Girls’ Periods to Stop Them from Getting Abortions,” *Harper’s* (April 2, 2019).

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a26985261/trump-administration-abortion-period-tracking-migrant-women/>

**Recommended:** Natalie Lira, Stern, Alexandra, Nicole Novak, Natalie Lira, Kate O’Connor, Sioban Harlow, and Sharon Kardia. “California’s Sterilization Survivors: An Estimate and Call for Redress.” *American Journal of Public Health*. Vol. 107. Issue 1. (2017), pp. 50-54.

### **Week 8: Mass Incarceration and the Politics of Maternal and Fetal Harm**

Oct. 19— Watch Film on Moodle: *Belly of the Beast*

Carolyn Sufrin, “Introduction,” *Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars* (UC Press, 2017), pp. 1-38.

Oct. 21— Jeanne Flavin, “Innocent Preborn Victims”: Fetal Protectionism and Pregnant Women, in *Our Bodies, Our Crimes* pp. 95-118.

Lynn Paltrow, “Roe v. Wade and the New Jane Crow: Reproductive Rights in the Age of Mass Incarceration” [Am J Public Health](https://doi.org/10.1177/0091631712468811). 2013 January; 103(1): 17-21.

October 11—Sarah Mervosh, “Alabama Woman Who Was Shot While Pregnant Is Charged in Fetus’s Death” *The New York Times* (June 27, 2019).

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/27/us/pregnant-woman-shot-marshae-jones.html>;

Martin, Nina. “Take a Valium, Lose Your Kid, Go to Jail.” *ProPublica*, September 23, 2015. <https://www.propublica.org/article/when-the-womb-is-a-crime-scene>.

**Recommended:** Miller, Elizabeth, Michele R. Decker, Heather L. McCauley, Daniel J. Tancredi, Rebecca R. Levenson, Jeffrey Waldman, Phyllis Schoenwald, and Jay G. Silverman. "Pregnancy coercion, intimate partner violence and unintended pregnancy." *Contraception* 81, no. 4 (2010): 316-322.

### **Week 9: Abortion Politics**

Oct. 26— Johanna Schoen, “Introduction,” *Abortion after Roe* (Durham: UNC Press, 2015), pp. 1-22.

Daniel Politi, "Abortion Is Now Legal in Argentina, but Opponents Are Making It Hard to Get," *THE NEW YORK TIMES* (March 7, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/07/world/americas/argentina-abortion-opposition.html>.

Sydney Calkin, "One year on, it's clear that the new Irish abortion services have serious limitations," *THE CONVERSATION* (Jan. 15, 2020) <http://theconversation.com/one-year-on-its-clear-that-the-new-irish-abortion-services-have-serious-limitations-129491>.

Oct. 28— Leslie Reagan, "An Open Secret," *When Abortion was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and the Law in the United States, 1867-1973* (UC Press, 1997), pp. 24-43.

Clyde Haberman, "Code Name Jane: The Women Behind a Covert Abortion Network," *New York Times* (October 14, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/14/us/illegal-abortion-janes.html>

Amy Howe, "Court to weigh in on Mississippi abortion ban intended to challenge Roe v. Wade," SCOTUSBLOG (May 17, 2021), <https://www.scotusblog.com/2021/05/court-to-weigh-in-on-mississippi-abortion-ban-intended-to-challenge-roe-v-wade/>.

Rebecca Shabad, "Women Seeking Medication Abortions Face Increase State Restrictions as FDA Weighs Action," *NBC News* (July 31, 2021). <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/women-seeking-medication-abortions-face-increasing-state-restrictions-fda-weighs-n1275199>

**Recommended:** Jefferey Bingenheimer and Patty Skuster, "The Foreseeable Harms of Trump's Global Gag Rule," *Studies in Family Planning* 48: 3 (26 July 2017): 279-290.

### **Week 10: Surrogacy and ARTs**

Nov. 2— Alexandra Holmstrom-Smith, 2021. "Free-Market Feminism: Re-Reconsidering Surrogacy," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Law and Social Change*, 24(3), p.443.

Nov. 4— Sharmila Rudrappa, "Babies as Commodities," *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), pp. 99-125.

Miriam Zoll and Pamela Tsigdinos, "Selling the Fantasy of Fertility," *New York Times* (September 11, 2013). [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/opinion/selling-the-fantasy-of-fertility.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/opinion/selling-the-fantasy-of-fertility.html?_r=0)

**Recommended:** Lucy van de Wiel, "Introduction," *Freezing Fertility: Oocyte Cryopreservation and the Gender Politics of Aging* (NYU Press, 2021), pp. 1-26.

### **Week 11: Black Lives and Maternal and Infant Mortality**

Nov. 9— "Pregnancy and Prematurity in the Afterlife of Slavery," Dána-Ain

Davis, *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth*. New York: NYU Press, 2019, 89-118.

Christopher Ingraham, "Flint's Lead-Poisoned Water Had a 'Horribly Large' Effect on Fetal Deaths, Study Finds." *Washington Post*, September 21, 2017, sec. Economic Policy. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/09/21/flints-lead-poisoned-water-had-a-horribly-large-effect-on-fetal-deaths-study-finds/>.

November 11—Veterans Day holiday, no class.

**Recommended:** "Introduction" to Davis, *Reproductive Injustice*

### **Week 12: Black birthing and the “primitive”**

Nov. 16—Deirdre Cooper Owens, “The Birth of American Gynecology,” in *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origin of American Gynecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), chapter 1.

Nov. 18—Khiara Bridges, “The Primitive Pelvis,” Racial Folklore, and Atavism in Contemporary Forms of Medical Disenfranchisement,” in *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization* (UC Press, 2011), chapter 4.

**Recommended:** Julia Oparah, “Beyond Coercion and Malign Neglect: The Struggle for Birth Justice,” in Oparah and Alicia Bonapart, *Birthing Justice: Black Women, Pregnancy, and Childbirth* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-19.

### **Week 13—Birth control and teen pregnancy**

Nov. 23—Chris Barcelos, “Introduction,” *Distributing Condoms and Hope: The Racialized Politics of Youth Sexual Health* (Oakland: UC Press, 2020), pp. 1-28.

**November 25—Thanksgiving Holiday, no class**

**Recommended:** Marcin Smietana, Charis Thompson & France Winddance Twine, *Making and breaking families – reading queer reproductions, stratified reproduction and reproductive justice together*, 7 *RBM Society* 112–130 (2018).

### **Week 14— Queer family-making**

Dec. 2~ Daniel Rivers, “In the Best Interest of the Child: Lesbian, and Gay Parenting Custody Cases 1967-1985.” *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers and Their Children in the United States since World War II* (UNC Press, 2013), chapter 3, 53-80.

Dec. 7~ Lowik, A.J., 2018. Reproducing eugenics, reproducing while trans: The state sterilization of trans people. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 14(5), pp.425-445; Blas Radi (2020) Reproductive injustice, trans rights, and eugenics, *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 28:1, DOI: [10.1080/26410397.2020.1824318](https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2020.1824318)

**Recommended:** Sandra Patton-Imani, “Family Legibility and Legitimate Citizenship,” *Queering Family Trees: Race, Reproductive Justice, and Lesbian Motherhood* (NYU Press, 2020), pp. 1-22.

**10pp Final Paper due December**