

Professor Laura Briggs
lbriggs@wost.umass.edu
South College W101
MWF 10:10-11:00 am
Office hours: W 11am-12pm and by appointment, SC W419
Fall 2019

WGSS 230: The Politics of Reproduction

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 in home countries. Children cross national borders as refugees, workers, and adoptees. The United States for decades has alternated between supporting birth control clinics internationally (initially under Republican administrations, but subsequently only under Democratic ones) and shutting those programs down.

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 care, safety.

This course will explore policy and activism related to all of these things. Some key concepts for scholars and activists have been “reproductive governance,” “stratified reproduction,” and “transnational motherhood.” “reproductive freedom” and “reproductive justice”—the joining of issues of birth control and abortion to questions of sterilization abuse and economic justice. This course will explore issues that include freedom from sterilization, high quality affordable day care, IVF, immigrant justice, social reproduction and wages for housework, welfare and neoliberalism, foreclosure and affordable housing.

Because the politics of reproduction are broad issues, constantly changing, and in the news, students will be asked to add to this syllabus based on their own research (individually or as part of a group) by doing a presentation in the last weeks of class. One of our goals is to learn from each other and the evolving public conversation.

Grading and structure of assignments

Break-down of final grade, by percent:

20~class discussion

15~1st paper (2 pp.), due Sept. 9

20~2nd paper (5 pp.), due Oct. 4

20-3rd paper (5 pp.), due Nov. 14
 25-final project, presentation, and paper, due Dec. 16

Assignments are detailed in the syllabus, below. Make sure you read the *whole* syllabus ahead of time.

All papers will be due before the class meeting and should be submitted to the online drop box in Moodle.

Required texts

Donna Haraway and Adele Clarke, eds., *Make Kin, Not Population: Reconceiving Generations* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018)

E-reserves (and all URLs or PDFs listed) 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 one book we will read together, *Make Kin, Not Population*, is on the syllabus because it so brilliantly models how intellectual disagreement can be deliberately sought out and fostered.

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.

At three random, unannounced times during the semester (determined by the instructor before the class meets), you will be given a class discussion grade. If you happen to be

absent on "your" date, you will be given one (equally unannounced) opportunity to make it up. In other words, your class discussion grade will work basically like a pop quiz grade, in order to provide incentive to keep up with readings and come to class reliably. You will be informed by email after the fact of the discussion grade for "your" class dates. (If you have to miss class for a religious observance or some other excused or excusable reason, you *must* notify me before the class meeting). A fourth discussion grade will awarded as a semester-long grade, and all four averaged together.

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) 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: What is Reproductive Justice?

Sept. 4—course overview

Sept. 6—no class, read and write the paper due Monday

Loretta Ross, "Understanding Reproductive Justice" (May 2006).

What is the history of these politics? “Historical Note” on the Reproductive Rights National Network, 1977-1982 Sophia Smith Collection.

http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/sophiasmith/mnsss482_bioghist.html

Marlene Gerber Fried, “Acknowledgements and Introduction,” *From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom: Transforming a Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1990), pp. vii-xiv.

“The Price of Our Blood: Why Ferguson Is a Reproductive Justice Issue.” Rewire.News. (August 26, 2014) <https://rewire.news/article/2014/08/26/price-blood-ferguson-reproductive-justice-issue/>.

Lynn Stephen, “Women’s Rights Are Human Rights: The Merging of Feminine and Feminist Interests among El Salvador’s Mothers of the Disappeared (CO-MADRES).” *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 4 (1995): 807-27. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/646387>.

Sept 9-2pp response paper due in Moodle: The readings offer us three distinct histories and languages to understand reproductive politics: reproductive freedom, coming from a socialist feminism that sought interracial solidarities in the context of struggles over abortion rights and involuntary sterilization in the 1970s and 80s, maternalism and women’s rights, in the context of Latin America’s mothers of the disappeared movements, and reproductive justice, emerging in the ‘90s out of African-American feminist organizing, but assuming a new force in the context of Black Lives Matter. All respond to specific political crises (and the Central American ones seem important to recall in the context of 2018-19 US policies of taking the children of Central American refugees), but they are also proposing general frameworks for thinking politics.

In your paper, make an argument about whether reproductive freedom, reproductive justice, and maternalism are the same or different political frameworks, citing to the readings.

Week 2: Are Racial Justice Movements Reproductive Justice Movements?: Thinking with the Black Panthers and the Association of American Indian Affairs

September 11- Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* preface and chapter 3, “The People’s Free Medical Clinics”

Sept. 13-Pauline Turner Strong, “What Is an Indian Family? The Indian Child Welfare Act and the Renaissance of Tribal Sovereignty.” *American Studies* 46, no. 3/4 (2005): 205-31.

Week 3: Reproductive Governance and the Current Moment

Sept 16- Lynn M. Morgan (2019) “Reproductive Governance, Redux,” *Medical Anthropology*, 38:2, 113-117.

1. Erica Green, Katie Benner, and Robert Pear, “Transgender Could Be Defined Out of Existence Under Trump,” (October 21, 2018) *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/us/politics/transgender-trump-administration-sex-definition.html>
2. Jennifer Wright, “The U.S. 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/>
3. 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
 4. Carly Cassella, "A Woman Dies Using Parsley to Induce Abortion. Protesters Are Blaming Argentina's Senate." *ScienceAlert*. (16 August 2018). <https://www.sciencealert.com/a-woman-has-died-from-self-inducing-miscarriage-after-argentina-fails-to-pass-legal-abortion>.
 5. K. K. Rebecca Lai, "Abortion Bans: 9 States Have Passed Bills to Limit the Procedure This Year." *The New York Times*, May 15, 2019, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/us/abortion-laws-states.html>.
 6. Jessica Abrahams, "Foreign Aid, Abortion, and a New Reminder of the Trump Administration's Cruelty." (July 25, 2019). [WP_SITEURL/blogs/jessica-abrahams/foreign-aid-abortion-and-a-new-reminder-of-the-trump-administrations-cruelty](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/jessica-abrahams/foreign-aid-abortion-and-a-new-reminder-of-the-trump-administrations-cruelty/).
 7. Daphney Nozizwe Conco, "Op-Ed: It's Time to Make Good on the Promise of the Termination of Pregnancy Act." *Daily Maverick*. August 12, 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-08-12-its-time-to-make-good-on-the-promise-of-the-termination-of-pregnancy-act/>.
 8. "Yvonne McCalla Sobers "Abortion: Whose Decision?," *Jamaica Gleaner* (August 11, 2019). <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/focus/20190811/yvonne-mccalla-sobers-abortion-whose-decision>.
 9. "Surrogate Pregnancy Battle Pits Progressives Against Feminists" *The New York Times* (June 12, 2019) https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/12/nyregion/surrogate-pregnancy-law-ny.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&fbclid=IwAR32VmT8_c8p4qD081GelQfFFR2-lfSdfFQkQ6_vDcnB0u0Qbp2jYvUXypM.
 10. "Denied Abortions, Latin American Child Rape Survivors Petition UN." *Al Jazeera* (30 May 2019) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/denied-abortion-latin-american-child-rape-survivors-petition-190530172120887.html>.
 11. Joyce Fegan, "I Had No Real Interest in Politics, until This' - Ireland's Accidental Abortion Activists." *The Guardian* (May 22, 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/22/ireland-abortion-vote-accidental-activists-eighth-amendment>.
 12. Katherine M. Marino, "How Mike Pompeo's New Commission on 'Unalienable Rights' Butchers History." *Washington Post* (August 15, 2019) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/08/15/how-mike-pompeos-new-commission-unalienable-rights-butchers-history/>.
- Sept. 18— Márcia Tiburi. "The Functionality of Gender Ideology in The Brazilian Political and Economic Context," In *In Spite of You: Bolsonaro and the New Brazilian Resistance*, edited by Foley Conor, 134-46. (New York: OR Books, 2019).

Sept. 20—Stephanie Hsu, “‘Transsexual Empire,’ Trans Postcoloniality: The Biomedicalization of the Trans Body and the Cultural Politics of Trans Kinship in Northeast Asia and Asian America.” S&F Online. <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/life-un-ltd-feminism-bioscience-race/transsexual-empire-trans-postcoloniality-the-biomedicalization-of-the-trans-body-and-the-cultural-politics-of-trans-kinship-in-northeast-asia-and-asian-america/>.

Week 4: Debt and Stratified Reproduction

Sept. 23—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. 25—Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), Epilogue: The Subprime

Sept. 27—Yulissa Arce, “Puerto Rican Resistance Began Long Before Rosselló,” *Truthout* (August 13, 2019). <https://truthout.org/articles/puerto-rican-resistance-began-long-before-rossello/>.

Week 5: Sterilization and Separating Families at the Border

Sept. 30—Watch film, *No Más Bebés* on Moodle.

Oct 2—Briggs, *Taking Children*, chapter 5 “The Border and Other Disasters,” forthcoming, 2020.

Oct. 4— **5pp paper due:** Use Colen’s notion of “stratified reproduction” or Morgan’s “reproductive governance” to analyze debt, sterilization, the taking of Native children, the goals of the Black Panthers, the contemporary politics of abortion, gender ideology, trans kinship, or immigrant child-taking.

Week 6: Detention, Mass Incarceration, and the Politics of Fetal and Child Harm

Oct. 7—Rachel Roth, “She Doesn’t Deserve to Be Treated Like This”: Prisons as Sites of Reproductive Injustice,” In *Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundations, Theory, Practice, Critique*, edited by Loretta J. Ross, Lynn Roberts, Erika Derkas, Whitney Peoples, and Pamela Bridgewater Touré (New York: The Feminist Press, 2017).

Oct. 9—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/10.1177/0091629513501171). 2013 January; 103(1): 17-21.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, “The Big Pipe Case.” *Reading Native American Women: Critical/Creative Representations*. Ed. Inés Hernández-Avila. (Lanham: Altamira Press 2005): 77-92.

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>.

Week 7: Overpopulation and Climate Change

Oct. 14—Indigenous People’s Day holiday, no class. (Start reading Donna Haraway and Adele Clarke, eds., *Make Kin, Not Population: Reconceiving Generations* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018))

Oct. 15—Monday schedule. Read Adele Clarke, “Introducing Making Kin Not Population” and Ruha Benjamin, “Black AfterLives Matter: Cultivating Kinfulness as Reproductive Justice”

Oct. 16—Donna Haraway, “Making Kin in the Chtulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice,” and Michelle Murphy, “Against Population, Towards Alterlife”

Oct. 18—Yu-Ling Huang and Chia-Ling Wu, “New Feminist Biopolitics for Ultra-low-fertility East Asia,” and Kim TallBear, “Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Sex and Family.”

Recommended: Banu Subramaniam, “‘Overpopulation’ is Not the Problem,” *Public Books* (November 27, 2018). <https://www.publicbooks.org/overpopulation-is-not-the-problem/>

Week 9: Black Lives and Maternal and Infant Mortality

Oct. 21—Preface and Introduction, Davis, Dána-Ain. *Reproductive Injustice: Racism, Pregnancy, and Premature Birth*. New York: NYU Press, 2019.

Oct. 23— Braam, Tamara, and Leila Hessini. "The power dynamics perpetuating unsafe abortion in Africa: A feminist perspective." *African Journal of Reproductive Health* (2004): 43-51.

Oct. 25— Ingraham, Christopher. “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/>.

Week 10: Migration and Transnational Care Chains, from Latin America to the Philippines

Oct. 28—Briggs, “Offshoring Reproduction,” in *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), 75-100. Rhacel Parreñas, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* (2005). Introduction and chapter one.

October 30—Urban Institute, *Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement*. Pdf available at <http://www.urban.org/publications/412020.html>

November 1—“ICE’s Raids Were a Win for Corporate Exploitation,” *The New Republic* (August 12, 2019). <https://newrepublic.com/article/154732/ices-raids-win-corporate-exploitation>

Week 11: ARTs and Biocapitalism

Nov. 4— Melinda Cooper and Catherine Walby, “A Clinical Theory of Value,” and “Reproductive Arbitrage,” in *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2014), pp. 3-15, 62-87.

Nov. 6— Sharmila Rudrappa, “Babies as Commodities,” *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), pp. 99-125.

Nov. 8—Pallavi Pundir, “It Will Soon Be Illegal to Get Paid as a Surrogate Mother in India,” *Vice* (6 August, 2019). https://www.vice.com/en_in/article/vb54nj/commercial-surrogacy-might-soon-be-banned-in-india

Miriam Zoll and Pamela Tsigidinos, “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

Week 12—Queer family-making

Nov. 11—holiday, no class

Nov. 13—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.

Nov. 14—No class, 5 pp. paper due on Moodle.

Week 13—Presentations

Nov. 18, 20, 22

***** Nov. 25-30 Thanksgiving Break!*****

Week 14: Presentations

Dec. 2, 4, 6

Week 15: Presentations

Dec. 9, 11

10-15pp Final Paper due December 16