Members of impoverished communities constantly fight to raise their children in safe and healthy environments, however infant mortality is more prevalent among Indigenous and African American families. In Peru, women were targeted for unwanted sterilization during the 1990s, as were women of Mexican Origin in California during the 1970s. These scenarios are telling us stories about giving birth, raising children, or concerns about fertility and access to contraceptives that are embedded in relations of power and material conditions that are constantly negotiated. In this course, we are going to look at a broader understanding of reproduction, influenced by the work on reproductive justice. As Loretta Ross (2017) explains, reproductive justice brings together reproductive rights and social justice for thinking and transforming people’s reproductive experiences. Its main goal is to make conditions for parenting and giving birth safer and dignified for everyone. Two major objectives of this course are to analyze what makes reproduction political and to expand our understanding of this debate beyond the United States. This course will provide a transnational approach to reproductive justice to understand how, for instance, debates about abortion, reproductive technologies, and domestic work play out in different contexts.

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 conversation in the news.

Grading and assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction papers</td>
<td>15 (5 out of 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion facilitation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>First short paper</td>
<td>15 (Due Oct 4th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second short paper</td>
<td>15 (Due Nov 8th)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30 (20 paper, 10 oral presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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The everyday life of this course:

Attendance and Participation:
I will run this course like a seminar. Students are expected to come to class with the readings done and ready contribute to our conversations. Your participation grade will be based on how you demonstrate an engagement with the material and with the rest of the class. We mindful that will discuss critical and sensitive issues throughout the semester and this means we need an intellectual community for exploring and analyzing the readings, for understanding their main insights and shortcomings. We are here to help each other, to seriously engage with the material and to understand the intellectual and political positions of the authors. Students are encouraged to discuss insights and questions, as well as to listen respectfully to each other. I understand not everybody is eager to talk, while others can speak for hours. That is fine and I don’t pretend everybody to be the same. I want students to feel comfortable to intervene in the class as much as possible, though. Our discussions are not a competition for who exhibits the best politics, but rather a space for sharing and building in community. Dissent and disagreement are part of academic life, but personal attacks to each other will not be tolerated.

There is a mandatory meeting with me during the semester. This will be a moment to get to know each one of you a little better. I will circulate a signing sheet where you can put your name down for a time/day slot that works for your schedule.

Absences will only be excused per the University policy http://www.umass.edu/registrar/students/policies-and-practices/class-absence-policy). Absences that fall outside of the university policy will not be excused, even if you notify me ahead of time. Missing class does not excuse you from having to complete any missed work. Missed work due to an excused absence must be made up within one week from the date(s) of the missed work.

Discussion Facilitation:

Once a week, on Wednesdays, a group of students will be in charge of presenting the readings and leading the class discussion. This assignment involves:

a. Meeting with the members of your group to prepare a 25-minutes presentation to provide an overview of key concepts in the reading(s) and main arguments of the author(s). Each student should focus on a different aspect of the reading(s).

b. Preparing a 2-page handout that includes: i) a summary of the reading(s), ii) the groups’ reflections on the reading(s), and iii) a set of discussion questions (at least five).

c. Presenting at least one form of audiovisual media to supplement the handout (a YouTube video, a newspaper story, a protest song etc.).

d. Sharing your questions and facilitating discussion (40-minutes) in a creative way. The groups should stimulate class discussion. Techniques may include small group discussions or debates.

Note: The focus will be the material for that day but students are encouraged to make connections with the readings for Monday. The weeks we have a guest speaker, the presentation will take place on Monday.

What is a reaction paper?

This is a place where you write about your thoughts on the material we are covering each week. The document should cover the following:
The first paragraph should summarize the main points of the readings. Make sure you provide a comprehensive summary and the core argument(s) of the readings.

In the second paragraph, you should critically engage with the central ideas, concepts, and arguments of the authors. Here are some questions you should keep in mind when you write this paragraph: Do you agree or disagree with the main argument that the author(s) raise? Why? What are the strengths and weakness of the arguments? What is your own interpretation of the arguments in the readings? You can also try to make connections between the readings (even from different weeks), identify gaps or contrast arguments from different authors.

Come up with one or two questions that we will explore during our weekly discussions.

We have 10 response papers (I am counting 10 weeks with readings assigned) in total and you must write five out of ten. After that, I will mark your grade down. Reaction papers are due before class meetings: Sundays and Tuesdays before 5 pm on Moodle. They should be one page, single space, 1x1 inch margins, 12-size font.

Short papers:

These should be four to five-page, 1.5 spacing, 12 fonts, 1x1 margins. You will find the prompts for the papers in the syllabus.

Final Project:

The goal is to facilitate student’s engagement with a topic of their interest related to reproductive justice. The project could be done individually or in pairs, depending on your preference. You can either choose one of the topics we covered in the syllabus and expand on it, or find another issue related to the course topic you would like to work on. We will have a session to discuss your initial ideas for the project. The final grade comprises two things: an oral presentation (10%) and a final paper (20%) of 10-15 pages long.

Email etiquette:

All correspondence between me and you should be done through UMASS email account. Under subject write WGSS 230 so I can easily identify your messages. Thanks to labour movements including women factory workers, the work day is circumscribed to particular hours. This means I won’t be able to reply to your emails in the middle of the night. If you are expecting a quick response from me, email me during the day and I will try to reply as quick as possible within the next 24 hours.

Pronoun Statement:

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 on Spire early in the semester. I will make changes on my records accordingly.
**Academic Honesty and Disability Services**

The goal of building a learning community necessarily requires building trust in each other. Cheating goes against this spirit. To put it simple, don’t cheat. It is not worth it and it is stressful for everyone. There are so many reasons why students cheat on their assignments, from pressure to success in the class, to running out of time for completing the assignments, or thinking that it won’t bring any repercussions. Taking a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire paper from any source without using proper citation, handing in someone else’s writing as your own, or handing in something you have written for another course counts as plagiarism. Please see the UMass Academic Honesty website for definitions of plagiarism and how to avoid doing it:
http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

**Disability Services**

Students who wish to request accommodations for this class must be affiliated with disability services. You need to make sure they contact me at the beginning of the semester to inform me about any kind of accommodations you need. If you try to do this at the end of the semester, it won’t apply it retroactively. This means that if you haven’t done the work for the class a note from disability services at the end of the semester won’t solve the problem. Be proactive and advocate for yourself from the beginning. For more information, you can visit the following website:
http://www.umass.edu/disability

**Weekly Schedule¹**

*Week 1: Course overview*


*Week 2: Reproductive Justice*


In class video: Listen Up! New Voices for Reproductive Justice: https://vimeo.com/46305934

¹ Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. I will inform of any changes in class and via Moodle.


**Week 3: Population Control, Sterilization Abuses, and the Right to have Children**


Watch before class: Mathilde Damoisel (2010) A Woman’s Womb
http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/4623/A-Woman-s-Womb


If interested, you can also watch the movie No Mas Bebes (2015)

**Week 4: Abortion Rights**


Where the Pro-life Movement Goes Next

https://rewire.news/article/2013/04/25/why-we-are-and-must-remain-for-choice/
https://rewire.news/article/2013/05/08/understanding-reproductive-justice-a-response-to-obrien/

Sept 27th ~ Abortion Rights in Mexico- Guest Speaker: Elyse Singer (Brown University)


Mexico City legalizes early term abortion

**Week 5: The Black Panthers are not Just about Guns: The Party’s Food, Child Care and Health Care Programs**

Black Panther Party Programs:  
http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/03/26/8-black-panther-party-programs-that-were-more-empowering-than-federal-government-programs/3/


**First short paper:** Reproductive History: This paper is based on an interview (or a series of informal conversations) to a friend, a relative or a stranger. You should inquire about this person’s reproductive experiences and how they perceive them in relation to larger social, economic, political and cultural relationships. A transcription of the interview is not an acceptable final product. You must analyze the content of the interview/conversations in the light of the readings we have covered so far (at least 3 references)

**Week 6: ‘Bad’ Mothers**


Fitzgerald, Susan, 2013. “‘Crack baby’ Study Ends with Unexpected but Clear Results”  
http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20130721__Crack_baby__study_ends_with_unexpected_b ut_clear_result.html

Foster care as punishment:  

Listen to podcast: “A Welfare Check: For Mothers in Time of Family Stress or Emergency”  
https://www.revealnews.org/episodes/a-welfare-check/


**Week 7: The Carceral System and Care: Disturbing Entanglements**

Babies Behind Bars: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nErnW89_hr0

Oct 18th ~ Sufrin, Carolyn, 2017. *Jailcare* [Chapter 6]

Check the following website: Prison Birth Project: http://theprisonbirthproject.org
Other forms to get into jail:
https://www.facebook.com/reproductiverights/videos/10154826735398872/

**Week 8: Black lives and Infant mortality**

Oct 23rd ~ In class video: When the bough breaks


**Week 9: Overpopulation and Climate Change: The Revival of an Old Discourse**


The Guardian- Neoliberalism and fighting climate change as individuals: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/true-north/2017/jul/17/neoliberalism-has-conned-us-into-fighting-climate-change-as-individuals

Nov 1st~ Guest speaker: Betsy Hartmann (Hampshire College)

Visit the website of the Gates Foundation and Sierra Club: How do they frame the debate around population growth (or overpopulation), climate change, and birth control? Take notes.

**Week 10: Domestic work, Intimate Labor, and Migration**

Please visit these websites that feature the visual work of Daniela Ortiz, a Peruvian artist who illustrates the lives of domestic workers in Peru.


Do You Want a Toxic Manicure? [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M10iraYa4Io](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M10iraYa4Io)

**Second short paper:** Write about an aspect of reproductive justice, caring labor, or raising children that you had not thought about very much before this course. Can you develop an analysis of what activism or advocacy in relation to this issue should look like?

**Week 11: Expanding the Meanings of Reproduction: Meztizo Whitening and Queer Families**


Nov 15th ~ Guest Speaker: Eli Capello (Anthropology Department- Umass)


**No class: Thanksgiving break!**

**Week 12: Presentations**

Nov 27th

Nov 29th

**Week 13: Presentations**

Dec 4th
Dec 6th

Week 14: Presentations

Dec 11th

Final paper due: December 18th via Moodle before midnight.