

**WGSS 230: The Politics of Reproduction**  
**South College Room W201**  
**MoWe: 2:30- 3:45**  
**Fall 2017**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3:30 and by appointment

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### **Course Description**

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:**

Attendance & Participation	15 points
Reaction papers	15 points (5 out of 10)
Discussion facilitation	10 points
First short paper	15 points (Due Oct 4 <sup>th</sup> )
Second short paper	15 points (Due Nov 8 <sup>th</sup> )
Final Project	30 points (20 paper, 10 oral presentation)
Total	100 points

### **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 to 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 are mindful that we 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-minute 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-minute) 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:

- a. 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.
- b. 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) rise? 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.
- c. 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 succeed 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/](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 Schedule<sup>1</sup>

### *Week 1: Course overview*

Sept 6<sup>th</sup> ~ Gal, Susan and Gail Kligman. 2000. "Reproduction as Politics." In: *The Politics of Gender after Socialism*. Princeton University Press pp 15-36

### *Week 2: Reproductive Justice*

Sept 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Ross, Loretta & Rickie Solinger, 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. Oakland: University of California Press. [Chapter 2]

Marlene Gerber Fried, "Acknowledgements and Introduction," *From Abortion to Reproductive Freedom: Transforming a Movement* vii-xiv.

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

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

Sept 13<sup>th</sup> ~ Ross, Loretta & Rickie Solinger, 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. Oakland: University of California Press. [Chapter 3]

Denbow, Jennifer, 2015. "Introduction: The Possibility of Reproductive Autonomy" In: *Governed through Choice: Autonomy, Technology and the Politics of Reproduction*. New York: New York University Press, 1-23

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

Sept 18<sup>th</sup> ~ Connelly, Mathew, 2008. *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press. [chapter 4]

Boesten, Jelke, 2007. "Free Choice or Poverty Alleviation? Population Politics in Peru under Alberto Fujimori" In: *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 82, 3-20

Watch before class: Mathilde Damoiseil (2010) A Woman's Womb  
<http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/4623/A-Woman-s-Womb>

Sept 20<sup>th</sup> ~ Gutierrez, Elena, 2008. *Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction*. Austin: University of Texas Press (Chapters 2 & 3)

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

#### *Week 4: Abortion Rights*

Sept 25<sup>th</sup> ~ Denbow, Jennifer, 2015. "Informed Consent Laws: Ultrasound, Surveillance, and Postfeminism" in: *Governed through Choice: Autonomy, Technology and the Politics of Reproduction*. New York: New York University Press

Where the Pro-life Movement Goes Next  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/opinion/sunday/where-the-pro-life-movement-goes-next.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2F-abortion>

<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 27<sup>th</sup> ~ Abortion Rights in Mexico- Guest Speaker: Elyse Singer (Brown University)  
Singer, Elyse, 2016. "From Reproductive Rights to Responsibilization: Fashioning Liberal Subjects in Mexico City's New Public Sector Abortion Program" in: *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Vol 0 issue 0 1-19

Mexico City legalizes early term abortion  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/25/world/americas/25mexico.html>

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

Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> ~ 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”]

Black Panther Party Programs:

<http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/03/26/8-black-panther-party-programs-that-were-more-empowering-than-federal-government-programs/3/>

Oct 4<sup>th</sup> ~ Raj Patel, “Survival Pending Revolution: What the Black Panthers Can Teach the U.S. Food Movement,” in Eric Holt-Giménez, *Food Movements Unite!: Strategies to Transform Our Food System* (Oakland: Food First)

**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*

Oct 10<sup>th</sup> ~ (Monday schedule) Nadasen, Premilla, 2005. “The Origins of the Welfare Rights Movement,” *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (2014): 1-45 (Available through E-book)

Roberts, Dorothy, 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Random House. [Introduction]

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\\_but\\_clear\\_result.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20130721_Crack_baby_study_ends_with_unexpected_but_clear_result.html)

Foster care as punishment: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/21/nyregion/foster-care-nyc-jane-crow.html?mwrsm=Facebook>

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

Oct 11<sup>th</sup> ~ Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. “[M]other Love: Death without Weeping” in: *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. Spradley and McCurdy (eds). Pearson.

Fassin, Didier, 2011. “The Mystery Child and the Politics of Reproduction” in: Browner & Sargent (Eds) *Reproduction, Globalization, and the State: New Theoretical and Ethnographic Perspectives*. Durham & London: Duke University Press 239-248

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

Oct 16<sup>th</sup> ~ Sufrin, Carolyn, 2017. *Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*. Oakland: University of California Press. [Chapter 1 & 5] (Available through E-Book)

<http://www.refinery29.com/2017/08/168010/bureau-prisons-free-tampons-pads-inmates>  
Babies Behind Bars: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nErmW89\\_hr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nErmW89_hr0)

Oct 18<sup>th</sup> ~ 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 23<sup>rd</sup> ~ In class video: When the bough breaks

Mullings, Leith, 2005. "Resistance and Resilience: The Sojourner Syndrome and the Social Context of Reproduction in Central Harlem" In: *Transforming Anthropology*, Vol 13(2) 79-91

Lisa Rosenthal and Marci Lobel, 2011. "Explaining Racial Disparities in Adverse Birth Outcomes: Unique Sources of Stress for Black American Women," *Social Science and Medicine* (March 2011)

Oct 25<sup>th</sup> ~ Roberts, Dorothy. 2011. "Medical Stereotyping" in: *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Bog Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century*. (Available through E-book)

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

Oct 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Hartmann, Hendrixson & Sasser, 2016. "Population, Sustainable Development, and Gender Equality" in: Leach, Melissa (ed) *Gender Equality and Sustainable Development*. Oxon & New York: Routledge 56-81

The Guardian- July 27<sup>th</sup> 2017: Want to fight climate change, have fewer children:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/12/want-to-fight-climate-change-have-fewer-children>

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 1<sup>st</sup> ~ 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*

Nov 6<sup>th</sup> ~ Blofield, Merike, 2012. *Care Work and Class: Domestic Workers' Struggle for Equal Rights in Latin America*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

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

Maid's room: <http://angelsbarcelona.com/en/artists/daniela-ortiz/projects/habitaciones-de-servicio/534>

97 House Maids: <http://www.daniela-ortiz.com/index.php?/projects/97-house-maids/>

Nov 8<sup>th</sup> ~ Boris, Eileen & Rhacel Salazar-Parreñas (eds) 2010. *Intimate Labors: Culture, Technologies, and the Politics of Care*. [Introduction & Chapt \* Manicuring Intimacies]

Do You Want a Toxic Manicure? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M10iraYa41o>

**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: Mestizo Whitening and Queer Families*

Nov 13<sup>th</sup> ~Roberts, Elizabeth, 2012. “Yo soy Teresa la Fea/ Ugly Teresa” and “White Beauty and Gamete Donation in a Mestizo Nation” in: *God's Laboratory: Assisted Reproduction in the Andes*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Nov 15<sup>th</sup> ~ Guest Speaker: Eli Capello (Anthropology Department- Umass)

Briggs, Laura, 2017. “Gay Married, with Children” in: *How all Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Polly, Kel & Ryan G. Polly, 2014. “Parenting” in: Erickson-Schroth (ed) *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community*. New York: Oxford University Press (Available through E-Book)

Hempel, Jessi, 2016. My Brother's Pregnancy and the Making of a New American Family: <http://time.com/4475634/trans-man-pregnancy-evan/>

Capello, Eli, 2016. A Letter to my Unborn Child [https://www.buzzfeed.com/elithescienceguy/a-letter-to-my-unborn-child-27fb6?utm\\_term=.kcxddgkVVR#.wk6JJoLkkN](https://www.buzzfeed.com/elithescienceguy/a-letter-to-my-unborn-child-27fb6?utm_term=.kcxddgkVVR#.wk6JJoLkkN)

#### **No class: Thanksgiving break!**

Week 12: Presentations

Nov 27<sup>th</sup>

Nov 29<sup>th</sup>

Week 13: Presentations

Dec 4<sup>th</sup>

Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

Week 14: Presentations

Dec 11<sup>th</sup>

**Final paper due: December 18<sup>th</sup> via Moodle before midnight.**