Welcome to UMass! First year seminars are one-credit seminars that blend academic content with a gentle and friendly introduction to the university. It affords an opportunity to settle into university life, make connections, learn about academic resources, and discover ways to become engaged on campus. In short, First year seminars are meant to enhance engagement, build connections, and create a self-guided learning model for life in the university.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

First year seminars revolve around a theme. The theme for this course is around the future of reproduction. Margaret Atwood’s book The Handmaid’s Tale and subsequent television series has become a dystopic backdrop to contemporary reproductive politics. At the same time, we read about the promises of new technologies - genetic engineering, artificial reproduction, designer babies - that open up possibilities of future worlds with “superior” peoples. How much is hype and how much real? What does the future of reproduction hold? We will discuss and debate these issues in our weekly seminars. Each week has a particular theme and readings (which are accessible via Moodle). Please do the readings before the class, so we can discuss it during the class.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE: Your attendance & participation is required for the entire session of each class. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.

Response Papers: Twice during the semester you will submit response papers. Each paper should be 2 pages in length (12 point font, 1 inch margins, double spaced). Each paper should summarize the reading(s) for that day, reflect on the readings and the class discussion on those readings. UMass has a wonderful writing center with writing tutors. For your first paper, you must consult a writing tutor (i.e., make an appointment early and work with a tutor before submitting your paper) – this takes organization, so schedule accordingly. First response paper must be during the first half of the course (before October 15) and the second one after.

Posting on Moodle: Twice during the semester you should post a current newspaper/magazine/media item that pertains to the themes of the class, and twice you should respond to another post. Collectively following current events will enhance all our learning and understanding.
III. COURSE POLICIES

Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University’s official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary (you can read it in full at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm): “If an instructor finds that a student has violated the University’s Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor has the right to lower the student’s grade, or even to fail the student for the course. Students have the right to appeal such a grade penalty by an instructor. The University Academic Honesty Board, which must be notified by instructors of any grade penalty, reviews all student appeals. The Board may sustain or recommend modification of the penalty given by the faculty member, or may recommend sanctions exceeding those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University. The Board may also recommend sanctions for offenders who have committed multiple violations of the Academic Honesty Policy but who have not appealed the faculty members’ decisions.”

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), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements:
http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf

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 and gender pronouns you prefer. Please advise me of your name’s proper pronunciation, and any name or pronoun preferences not reflected in Spire early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) classes are a place where issues of sexual violence and other sexual misconduct are discussed as a matter of course. It’s not a taboo subject, and feminists have long worked to develop theory and activism around sexualized violence, including rape, dating violence, child sexual abuse, and the like. If you want to discuss your own personal experiences of sexual violence in a class, we don’t consider that a “report” covered by Title IX (although if you want faculty help and support in reporting sexual violence, we are here to help you do that). Other available resources on campus for addressing sexual violence include both confidential and non-confidential resources—non-confidential resources will keep your concerns private but will report your concerns to the Title IX coordinator, or, the Dean of Students Office who will provide you with different options to assist you. Confidential resources will keep your concerns confidential and will provide you support, assistance in addressing safety concerns as well as other services such as providing you with an advocate. The resources can be found at www.umass.edu/titleix/

IV: SCHEDULE

Wed, September 4: Introductions

- Course Overview and Introduction to the course, and each other!
- Main goal - Class exercise on writing: different kinds of writing, and how to do it well.
Wed, September 11: The Landscape of Reproductive Politics

- What is Reproductive Justice? (Read Chapters 4-7) [https://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/courses/fileDL.php?fID=4051](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/courses/fileDL.php?fID=4051)

Wed, September 18: Politics of Abortion


Wed, September 25: Introduction to the Library

- Meet in the Dubois Library

Wed, October 2 - Malthusian Logics and Population Control

- Betsy Hartmann and Jan Selby, “Time to drop the Climate War Talk,” Common Dreams: [https://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/12/01/time-drop-climate-war-talk](https://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/12/01/time-drop-climate-war-talk)

Wed, October 9: Reproductive Technologies – Introduction

- Rajani Bhatia, “From Selecting Sexed Sperm and Embryos to Anticipating Lifestyle Sex Selection,” In Gender before Birth: Sex Selection in a Transnational Context.

Wed, Oct 16: Politics of Infertility


Wed, Oct 23: Repro Tech and Spectre of Eugenics

Wed, Oct 30: Good Mothers, Bad Mothers, Non-Mothers

- Jael Silliman, “Policing the National Body: Sex, Race, and Criminalization,” In Race, Class, Gender, edited by Pat Hill Collins and Margaret Andersen.

Wed, Nov 6: Crafting a Successful Undergraduate Experience

Does it matter what I study? Pre registration questions and answers with an academic advisor, Guest: Karen Lederer, Chief Undergraduate Advisor, WGSS

Wed, Nov 13 – Monday schedule, No Class

Wed, Nov 20 – Policing Women’s Bodies

- Video - When the bough breaks (Part of series, Unnatural Causes)

******* Wednesday , Nov 27– THANKSGIVING BREAK *******

Wed, Dec 4, Week XII: Rethinking Reproduction


Wed, December 11

- Summary and Conclusion