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Fall 2016~WGSS 230: The Politics of Reproduction

For decades, racially minoritized communities have fought for the ability to raise children and live in safe and sustainable communities. At the same time, socialist feminists and women of color feminists have struggled for “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 the broadest understanding of reproductive justice, including all the things necessary for households to raise children—schools, nutrition, housing, health care, safety. It will explore activism that demanded such things, from the “survival programs” of Black Panther Party and abortion “under community control” of the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party in the 1970s to SisterSong and Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice in the 1990s to #BLM and Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement in the present. We 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 conversation in the news.

Grading and structure of assignments

Break-down of final grade, by percent:

20~class discussion

15~1st paper (2 pp.), due 9/14/16

20~2nd paper (5 pp.), due 10/5/16

20~3rd paper (5 pp.), due 11/16/16

25~final project, presentation, and 10-15pp research paper, due 12/19/16

All papers will be due before the class meeting and should be submitted to the online drop box in Moodle. If you need an extension for some reason, please make arrangements before the due date. I am happy to accept re-writes on the short papers (2 and 5 pp) as long as they are turned in before the last day of classes *and* you visit the writing tutor, Elise Swinford.

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

Required texts

Sharmila Rudrappa, *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India* (New York: NYU Press, 2015)

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. 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 as 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 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. That and 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.

On Title IX and mandated reporting:

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/.

On names and pronouns:

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 by the record in Spire early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Week-by-Week Schedule

Week 1: What is Reproductive Justice?

Sept. 7—course overview

Sept. 12—Loretta Ross, What is Reproductive Justice?

<http://www.trustblackwomen.org/our-work/what-is-reproductive-justice/9-what-is-reproductive-justice>

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

Rickie Solinger, “Choice is a moving target,” *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the United States* 3-36.

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

Dani McClain, “The Murder of Black Youth is a Reproductive Justice Issue,” *The Nation* (August 13, 2013).

Week 2: Abortions Under Community Control

Sept 14—Jennifer Nelson, “Abortions under Community Control’: Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction among New York City’s Young Lords,” *Journal of Women’s History* 13:1 (Spring 2001): 157-180.

2pp response paper: develop an argument about the struggle over abortion in the Young Lords Party: how are these the same as or different from reproductive justice politics?

Week 3: Black Panther Party, Food, Child Care, and Health Care Programs

Sept. 19— 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. 21— 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)

Week 4: Foreclosure and Housing

Sept. 26—Rhonda Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality*. Introduction and Chapter 6.

Sept. 28— from Laura Gottesdiener, *A Dream Foreclosed: Black America and the Fight for a Place to Call home* (Zuccotti Park Press). 45-111.

Week 5: Foster Care: Who loses children and why?

Oct 3—Dorothy Roberts, “Destroying Black Families in the Name of Child Welfare,” *Shattered Bonds* 2-100.

Oct. 5— **5pp paper due:** Write about an aspect of reproductive justice or 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 6: Welfare Mothers and other “Bad Mothers”

Oct. 11 (*Monday schedule)— Premilla Nadasen, “The Origins of the Welfare Rights Movement,” *Welfare Warriors: The Welfare Rights Movement in the United States* (2014): 1-45.

Oct. 12— Ross Douthat, “The Parent Trap,” *The New York Times* (July 19, 2014)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/opinion/sunday/ross-douthat-the-parent-trap.html>

Kim Brooks, “The day I left my son in the car,” *Slate* (June 3, 2014),

http://www.salon.com/2014/06/03/the_day_i_left_my_son_in_the_car/

Ada Calhoun, “The Criminalization of Bad Mothers,” *New York Times* (April 25, 2012).

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/magazine/the-criminalization-of-bad-mothers.html?pagewanted=all&_r=2&_ga=2.111111111.111111111.111111111.111111111

Lynn Paltrow, “Roe v. Wade and the New Jane Crow: Reproductive Rights in the Age of Mass Incarceration”

Nina Martin, “When the Womb is a Crime Scene”

Week 7: Schools

Oct. 17— Ta-Nahisi Coates, Chapter 1, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Random House, 2015). Pp. 4-73.

Oct. 19— Journey for Justice Alliance, *Death by a Thousand Cuts: Voices from America's Affected Communities of Color* (May 2014); OCR, “Data Snapshot: School Discipline” (March 2014). <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>

Week 8: Black Lives and Infant Mortality

Oct. 24— read *all* of the website, including the policy papers: “A Vision for Black Lives Platform” <https://policy.m4bl.org/>

Oct. 26— Lisa Rosenthal and Marci Lobel, “Explaining Racial Disparities in Adverse Birth Outcomes: Unique Sources of Stress for Black American Women,” *Social Science and Medicine* (March 2011); Leith Mullings and Alaka Wali, *Stress and Resilience: The Social*

Context of Reproduction in Central Harlem (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2001). chapter 6.

Week 9: Immigration

Oct. 31—Rhacel Parreñas, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* (2005). Introduction and chapter one.

Nov. 2—Urban Institute, *Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement*. Pdf available at <http://www.urban.org/publications/412020.html>

Week 10: IVF

Nov. 7—Sharmila Rudrappa, *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), intro and part 1 (chapters 1-3)

and 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

Nov. 9—Rudrappa, *Discounted Life*, part 2 (chapters 4-7) and conclusion

Week 11—Queer families

Nov. 14— Daniel Rivers, *Radical Relations: Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers and Their Children in the United States since World War II* (UNC Press, 2013), chapter 3, 53-80.

Wed. Nov. 16— Developing the Research Paper/presentation

5 pp paper due: Make an argument about how one of the following questions touches on reproduction: prisons, im/migration, IVF, transnational surrogacy, schools, welfare, foster care, or adoption.

*****Thanksgiving Break!*****

Week 12: Presentations

Nov. 28

Nov. 30

Week 12: Presentations

Dec. 5

Dec. 7

Week 14: Presentations

Dec. 12

Dec. 14

10-15pp Final Paper due December 19, 2016