

WOMENSST 291

TuTh 1:00-2:15pm

Classroom: Bartlett 207

Contacts: Kirsten Leng (kleng@umass.edu)

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Office: Bartlett 11D [Leng]

Office Hours: By Appointment [Leng and Gordon]

FEMINIST HEALTH POLITICS

Spring 2016

Course Description

This course will center on three core questions:

- What is health?
- What makes health political?
- What makes health a matter of feminist politics?

To illuminate these questions, the course will also explore questions including:

- How do we define health? Who defines health? What bodies are determined to be healthy?
- Are health and disease objectively measurable conditions, or subjective states?
- Why does health matter? Why do we value particular definitions of health? How have adjudications of health affected the evaluation of forms of human life?
- Who creates knowledge about health, and whose knowledge becomes accepted?
- How does context affect health, with context understood as including (but not limited to) environmental conditions, structural, institutional and socio-economic location, and structures and political economy of health delivery?

Course Goals

- Critically examine health, and the politics of health, from an intersectional perspective
- Explore and expand our understanding of what constitutes a feminist health politics
- Engage in exploratory group discussions of, and write reflective papers about, class materials
- Consider the role of institutions, technologies, social forces, political economy, and activism in defining health and shaping health outcomes
- develop research, writing, and presentation skills
- Produce meaningful research projects on a topic relating to feminist health politics

Readings

The course readings are meant to introduce key concepts, arguments, and ideas from the critical scholarship on health, and feminist approaches to health. Many of the readings are available as ebooks through the UMass library catalog. They are also available through Moodle (ereserves), though we will distribute hard copies of ereserves readings in class a week in advance

Peer Advisor and Mentor

Michelle Gordon will serve as a peer adviser and mentor in this class, as well as a facilitator of class discussion. At times she will be leading class analysis, but can mainly be used as a resource for understanding material and constructing papers. Office hours can be scheduled when needed through email. Michelle will also be part of the grading process, though final grading decisions rest with the Professor.

Course Assessment: Written Work (70%)

The major assignment for this course will be a **research project** on a topic of your choosing. Examples of potential topics include: an examination of an institution or organization, such as the prison industrial system or the US health insurance system, and its effect on health outcomes and health politics; it may be a comparative project between different country's healthcare systems or health care politics; a historical examination of movements on behalf of women's, queer, trans* health; a critical analysis of the impact of race on health outcomes.

Leading up to the final product, you will complete a number of smaller assignments that will help you develop the project. These include:

- Research Question and Description
- Annotated Bibliography
- 2x Check-in Meeting
- Rough Draft and Workshopping

The final product can take the form of a 12-15 page (double-spaced) paper, a 30 minute presentation, or a publication or website (tumblr, wordpress, squarespace) aimed at educating the public on your topic. We will collectively determine the evaluation criteria for assessing the final project. Please note that the last weeks of class are dedicated to research, writing, workshopping your papers, and presenting.

Additionally, you will prepare a **2 page (double-spaced) report on the CLPP Reproductive Justice Conference**, held at Hampshire College April 8-10, 2016 for (5%) of your grade. It will be due in class on Tuesday, April 12.

Due Dates and Grade Breakdown:

- Research Question and Description (5%) **DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH via email at 5pm EST**
- 1st check in meeting (2.5%): **WEEK OF FEBRUARY 8-12**
- Annotated Bibliography (15%): **DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 11TH via email at 5pm EST**
- 2nd check in meeting (2.5%): **WEEK OF MARCH 21ST-25TH**
- Rough Draft (10%): **WORKSHOP IN CLASS THURSDAY, APRIL 14TH**
- **FINAL PROJECTS (30%): if WRITTEN, DUE MONDAY, MAY 9TH via email at 5pm EST**

Course Assessment: Attendance and Participation (30%)

I believe that our class meetings constitute important sites of learning and intellectual development; consequently, I take preparation for class meetings rather seriously! Attendance will be taken each class; if you have to miss a class, please be sure to email me beforehand. If you miss more than two classes, please arrange to meet with me in order to discuss how to make up the work missed. More than two unexplained absences will negatively affect participation.

Aside from attending all class meetings with the readings completed and participating actively in class discussion as much as possible, each student will submit **three (3)** questions about the reading for class discussion, for each class we will be discussing readings.

Also, each student will submit a **2-3 page (double spaced) reflection paper once a month beginning in February.** The purpose of the paper is allow you to reflect in writing about what you have been reading and we have been discussing in class. It is meant as an

opportunity to take stock of your learning. Although the reflection paper is informal writing, although full sentences are expected. Due dates are marked in the syllabus, below.

Statement Regarding 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.

Students with Disabilities

We will do our best to accommodate disabilities and specific needs. To arrange accommodation, please contact Disability Services:

(<http://www.umass.edu/disability/index.html>).

Academic Dishonesty

This course follows the university guidelines for academic honesty. According to the Dean of Students Office, academic dishonesty is the attempt to secure unfair advantage for oneself or another in any academic exercise. For our course, this includes plagiarism and facilitating dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty and require further information regarding the Dean of Students' policy, please see http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#A

Week 1 Introductions

Tues, Jan. 19 Introduction to the Course

Thurs, Jan. 21 Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), 3-20, 72-88 [ereserves]

Week 2 What is Health?

Tues, Jan. 26 Jonathan Metzel, "Introduction: Why 'Against Health'?" and Richard Klein, "What Is Health and How Do You Get It," in *Against Health: How Health Became the New Morality*, edited by Jonathan Metzel and Anna Kirkland (New York University Press, 2010), 1-25

****Available as an ebook at UMass library****

Thurs, Jan. 28 Carl Elliot, "Pharmaceutical Propaganda," and Lennard J. Davis, "Obsession: Against Mental Health," in *Against Health* (2010), 93-104, 121-133

Week 3 Medicine, Health, and the "Human" Subject

Tues, Feb. 2 Steve Epstein, *Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 30-53

Available as an ebook at UMass library

Thurs, Feb. 4 Epstein, *Inclusion* (2007), 54-74

Friday, February 5: Research Question and Description Due

Week 4 Race, Gender, Sexuality, and (Dis)ability

Tues, Feb. 9 Adrienne Asch, "Critical Race Theory, Feminism, and Disability: Reflections on Social Justice and Personal Identity," in *Gendering Disability*, edited by Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchinson (Rutgers University Press, 2004), 9-44 [ereserves]

In-Class Film: *Shameless: The Art of Disability* (available online)

Thurs, Feb. 11 Ellen Samuels, "My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9.1-2, Spring 2003: 233-255. [ereserves]

Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 301-312 [ereserves]

Week 5 Biopower and Biopolitics

Tues, Feb. 16 Class cancelled (Monday schedule)

Thurs, Feb. 18 Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze, "Introduction. Biopolitics: An Encounter," in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, edited by Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1-40. [ereserves]

Week 6 Sexual Binarism, Sexual Governance, Medicine, and Health

Tues, Feb. 23 Roen, Katrina (2005). Queer Kids: Towards ethical clinical interactions with intersex people, In Margrit Shildrick & Roxanne Mykitiuk (ed.), *Ethics of the Body: Postconventional Challenges*. MIT Press. Chapter 13, 259 - 278 [ereserves]

In-Class Film: Diagnosing Difference by Annalise Ophelian, 2009 (RC560.G45 D53 2009)

Thurs. Feb. 25 Epstein, Steven (2003): Sexualizing Governance and Medicalizing Identities: The Emergence of 'State-Centered' LGBT Health Politics in the United States. *Sexualities* 6, no. 2: 131-171. [ereserves]

***Guest Speaker: Chris Barcelos**

Reflection Paper 1 Due

Week 7 Governmentality, Activism, Health Knowledge/Politics

Tues, Mar. 1 Introduction, *Our Bodies, Our Selves* (first edition)
Kathy Davis, *The Making of Our Bodies, Our Selves* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 142-168 [ereserves]

Thurs, Mar. 3 Dean Spade, *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of the Law* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 73-93 [ereserves]
Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community, edited by Laura Erickson-Schroth (2014) *****

Week 8 Women's Health Movement

Tues, Mar. 8 Jennifer Nelson, *More than Medicine: A History of the Women's Health Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 15-56

****Available as an ebook at UMass library****

Thurs, Mar. 10 Jennifer Nelson, *More than Medicine*, 91-123

Friday, March 11: Annotated Bibliography Due

Week 9 Reproductive Health and Justice

Tues, Mar. 22 Andrea Smith, "Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life: Women of Color Reproductive Justice," *Feminist Formations* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 119-140 [ereserves]

Thurs, Mar. 24 Jennifer Nelson, *More Than Medicine* (2015), 193-220

Week 10 Race, Rights, Health, and Politics

Tues, Mar. 29 Alondra Nelson, *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 49-74

****Available as an ebook at UMass library****

Thurs, Mar. 31 Nelson, *Body and Soul* (2011), 153-188

Reflection Paper 2 Due

Week 11 Research

Tues, Apr. 5 **Workshop**

Thurs, Apr. 7 **Workshop**

Apr. 8-10 CLPP Conference: Mandatory Attendance

Week 12 Workshop

Tues, Apr. 12 *CLPP Report Due

Thurs, Apr. 14 ****workshop papers in class****

Week 13 Research/Workshop/Presentation

Tues, Apr. 19 **Presentations**

Thurs, Apr. 21 **Presentations**

Week 14 Presentations

Tues, Apr. 26 *Reflection Paper 3 Due

Monday, May 9 **FINAL RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE**

