SOC 201A/WS 370A: Women and Health

 12:40-2:10 MW

Fall 2011

**Instructor:** Alicia Suarez

**Office:** Asbury Hall 305

**Office hours:** 2:30-3:30 M W; F 1-2 (or by appointment)

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

 In this course, we will focus on the intersection of health, illness, and gender. This course combines classic and contemporary feminist and sociological ideologies to explore how health and illness have been defined and experienced for different women across historical time and space. There is considerable attention to how conceptualization of women (and their bodies) as inferior has led to the medicalization of women’s bodies. We will especially highlight the role of women’s health movements in shaping how women’s health is understood, embodied and contested. We start the course addressing theoretical frames for understanding gender and health. We then assess contemporary women’s health status. The course then loosely follows a life course approach in that we explore women’s experiences with menstruation, sexuality, reproductive technologies, childbirth, and menopause.

**COURSE GOALS**

1. To appreciate the contribution of early feminists and sociologists to our understanding of women’s health.
2. To recognize how patriarchy shapes understandings and experiences of women and health along with structural inequalities of race and social class.
3. To understand the historical and contemporary impact of social movements on women’s health.
4. To explore the power of medicalization, and increasingly biotechnology, in defining women’s bodies.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Annandale, Ellen. 2009. *Women’s Health and Social Change.* London: Routledge.

Block, Jennifer. 2007. *Pushed.* Cambridge, Ma: DaCapo.

Figert, Anne E. 1996. *Women and the Ownership of PMS.* New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Maines, Rachel P. 1999. *The Technology of Orgasm.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The required articles are available on Library Reserves on Moodle.

### EVALUATION

There will be 3 short answer/essay exams in the course that covers course readings, videos, and issues raised in class. You will be given 5 dates and will turn in, at the beginning of class, a reaction papers on assigned readings for 4 of those 5 dates. See handout for more information. You will also do 1 out of 4 possible interview research projects/papers. See handout for more information. Late papers will get points deducted. Participation is also a required aspect of this course.

**Grading:**

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| **Exam 1** |  **60 points** |
| **Exam 2** |  **60 points** |
| **Exam 3** |  **60 points** |
| **Participation** |  **50 points** |
| **Reaction Papers** |  **60 points** |
| **Interview Research and Papers** |  **60 points** |
| **Total** | **350 points** |

I will follow the usual DePauw University grading system whereby:

A or A- reflects, “achievement of exceptionally high merit.”

 B+, B, B- reflects, “achievement at a level superior to the basic level.”

 C+, C, C- reflects, “basic achievement.”

D+, D, D- reflects, “achievement which falls short of satisfying the quantitative and qualitative requirements yet warrants credit.”

Remember, you do not start the course with an A and lose points. You essentially start with zero points and *earn* your grades along the way. Please meet with me if at any time you have questions about your grades. **Do not wait until the end of the semester**.

### OTHER POLICIES

**Attendance and Participation:** I expect you to attend class prepared on time and ready to *engage* with the material and the class community. Simply showing up to class having skimmed the readings is insufficient. If everyone does this, we will have a boring class (and you will have to listen to me the whole time). If only a few people are prepared, we will only know their opinions and miss out on the full classroom experience of everyone participating. Another reason for you to come to class is that you will be tested on material that is presented only in class lecture/ discussion. If you want to be familiar with this material, you must be in class. Thus, if you want to do well in this class, you will very quickly learn that daily attendance and participation is essential.

In addition, we must be watchful to not take up too much “airtime” and allow for *everyone* to share. Talking *a lot* is generally *not* a good way of actively participating. Instead, carefully listening to others and clearly and concisely expressing your input is the best strategy. Remember to address each other when talking rather than directing your comments to me (unless they are solely intended for me!) Of course, no texting or surfing the web is allowed during class. If you consistently are looking at websites, checking email, etc. I will ask you to not bring your laptop to class.

**Classroom Etiquette:** In order to have a positive and safe learning environment, we as a class will have to agree to disagree at times. Some of us may have strong feelings and/or reactions to class materials, readings, etc. Expressing these reactions is encouraged as long as this is done in a respectful manner. Hostile and/or disrespectful behavior is not allowed. In addition, we must be watchful to not take up too much “airtime” and allow for *everyone* to share. Talking *a lot* is generally *not* a good way of actively participating. Instead, carefully listening to others and clearly and concisely expressing your input is the best strategy. Remember to address each other when talking rather than directing your comments to me (unless they are solely intended for me!)

**Communication:** Please come and visit me during office hours. I am there waiting for you to discuss readings, lecture, grading, exams, classroom behaviors, sociology, etc. If you cannot come to scheduled office hours, please let me know and we will work something else out. The best way to reach me is through e-mail. I will communicate with the class through email. I expect each of you to check your email on a *daily* basis.

**Late work/Make-up Work:** All papers are due at the beginning of class and all exams will be taken in class on the schedule day, unless, I receive *in advance*, an official notification that you will be off-campus on official university business or some other *legitimate and verifiable* excused absence. There will be NO EXTRA CREDIT assignments available to anyone.

**Academic Dishonesty/Misconduct:** I take academic dishonesty or misconduct extremely seriously as surely you do as well. Please be familiar with the DePauw University Academic Integrity Policy available in the *Student Handbook.* Any student violating this policy will be subject to a range of disciplinary actions.

**Students with Disabilities:** DePauw University offers accommodations to students with disabilities. It is your responsibility to contact the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator: Pamela Roberts, 302 Harrison Hall to request accommodations.

### SCHEDULE

Readings must be completed *prior* to class on the due date. We may get off schedule and I will make adjustments accordingly in the event that this occurs.

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| 8/24 (W) | Introduction to Class |
| **Theorizing about Women and Health** |
| 8/29 (M) | Annandale Intro- Ch. 1Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. “The Yellow Wallpaper.” (**DePauw Web Access E-Book**)Wells, Susan. 2008. “Our Bodies, Ourselves: Reading the Written Body.” *Signs* 33:697-723.  |
| 8/31 (W) | Annandale Ch. 2; Ch. 5Conrad, Peter. 2005. “The Shifting Engines of Medicalization.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:3-14.  |
| **Women and Health Status** |
| 9/5 (M) | Gorman, Bridget K. and Jen'nan Ghazal Read. 2006. “Gender Disparities in Adult Health: An Examination of Three Measures of Morbidity.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47:95-110. Annandale Ch. 3 |
| 9/7 (W) | Klawiter, Maren. 2004. “Breast Cancer in Two Regimes: The Impact of Social Movements on Illness Experience.” *Sociology of Health and Illness* 26:845-874. Annandale Ch. 7 |
| **Menstruation** |
| 9/12 (M) | Fingerson, Laura. 2005. “Agency and the Body in Adolescent Menstrual Talk.” *Childhood* 12:91-110. Figert Ch. 1-3 |
| 9/14 (W) | Figert Ch. 4-5 |
| 9/19 (M) | McCabe, Janice. 2005. “Who Are the Experts? Medicalization in Teen Magazine Advice Columns.” *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth* 11:153-191. Figert Ch. 6-7 |
| 9/21 (W) | Figert Ch. 8-9 |
| 9/26 (M) | **Film: *Red Moon*****Menstruation paper due** |
| 9/28 (W) | **Exam 1** |
| **Sexuality** |
| 10/3 (M) | Maines ch. 1-2 |
| 10/5 (W) | Cacchioni, Thea. 2007. “Heterosexuality and 'the Labour of Love': A Contribution to Recent Debates on Female Sexual Dysfunction.” *Sexualities* 10:299-320. Maines ch. 3 |
| 10/10 (M) | Hartley, Heather and Leonore Tiefer. 2003. “Taking a Biological Turn: The Push for a "Female Viagra" and the Medicalization of Women's Sexual Problems.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 31:42-54. Maines Ch. 4 |
| 10/12 (W) | Braun, Virginia. 2005. “In Search of (Better) Sexual Pleasure: Female Genital 'Cosmetic' Surgery.” *Sexualities* 8: 407-424. Maines Ch. 5 |
| 10/24 (M) | **Film: Orgasm, Inc.** **Sexuality paper due** |
| **Reproductive Technologies** |
| 10/26 (W) | Hardon, Anita. 2006. “Contesting Contraceptive Innovation -- Reinventing the Script.”*Social Science & Medicine* 62: 614-627.Annandale Ch. 4 |
| 10/31 (M) | Friese, Carrie, Gay Becker and Robert D. Nachtigall. 2006. “Rethinking the biological clock: Eleventh-hour moms, miracle moms and meanings of age-related infertility.” *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 1550-1560. |
| 11/2 (W) | **Exam 2** |
| **Childbirth** |
| 11/7 (M) | Block Introduction -Ch. 1**Film: *Business of Being Born*** |
| 11/9 (W) | Block Ch. 2-3 |
| 11/14 (M) | Beckett, Katherine. 2005. “Choosing Cesarean: Feminism and the Politics of Childbirth in the United States.” *Feminist Theory* 6: 251-275. Block Ch. 4 |
| 11/16 (W) | Block Ch. 5 **Speaker panel: Birth Doulas** |
| 11/21 (M) | Block Ch. 6-7 |
| 11/28 (M) | Layne, Linda L. 2003. “Unhappy Endings: A Feminist Reappraisal of the Women's Health Movement from the Vantage of Pregnancy Loss.” *Social Science and Medicine* 56: 1881-1891. Block Ch. 8**Speaker panel: Home Birth Mothers****Childbirth paper due** |
| **Menopause** |
| 11/30 (W) | Dillaway, Heather E. 2005. “Menopause Is the "Good Old": Women's Thoughts about Reproductive Aging.” *Gender and Society* 19: 398-417. Morris, Margaret E. and Anthea Symonds. 2004. “'We've Been Trained to Put Up with It': Real Women and the Menopause.” *Critical Public Health* 14: 311-323. |
| 12/5 (M) | Murtagh, Madeleine J. and Julie Hepworth. 2003. “Menopause as a Long-Term Risk to Health: Implications of General Practitioner Accounts of Prevention for Women's Choice and Decision-Making.” *Sociology of Health and Illness* 25:185-207.**Speaker panel: Menopause** |
| 12/7 (W) | Wrap up**Menopause paper due** |
| 12/15 (Th) | **Exam 3**8:30-11:30am |