PARTIAL SYLLABUS

Reproductive Health: Race, Gender, and Inequality
Fall 2016
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This syllabus is intended to give a sense of course content and structure on the public Ex College website. Interested Tufts students may request the full syllabus.

Sessions

Week 1: Course Overview
During this session, we will discuss the course content, structure, and expectations. We will then engage in a structured values clarification exercise to support students in privately identifying and taking ownership of their personal attitudes toward reproductive health issues.

Week 2: The Politics of Privacy in US Law and Public Health
This session will explore the notion of privacy as it influences law and policy pertaining to sexuality and reproduction. We will discuss how the right to privacy operates in tension with notions of the public good. What forces shape health? Who is responsible for health—the state or the individual person? What challenges, if any, arise when we demand public accountability for supporting population health, while preserving individual rights to privacy and bodily autonomy?

Readings:


Week 3: Race and Reproductive Politics from Colonialism to the Civil War
This session will explore the foundational role that concepts of racial difference have played in shaping public policy goals regarding, political discourse about, and lived experiences of reproductive health from colonial days to the end of formal slavery in the United States.
Readings


Week 4: Race and Reproductive Politics from Reconstruction to Eugenics

Week 5: Long-Acting Reversible Contraception: Convenience vs. Coercion
Long-acting reversible contraceptives are the safest, most effective methods of birth control, but must be both inserted and removed by a clinician, creating potential barriers to discontinuing use. This session will explore how legacies of racism, ableism, and class oppression in public health campaigns to promote birth control have impacted women’s experiences of accessing these contraceptives today.

Week 6: Insurance Coverage of Contraception and Religious Liberty

Week 7: The Consent Process for Women Seeking Sterilization through Medicaid: Protection or Paternalism?

Week 8: Abortion Access Before and after Legalization

Week 9: Abortion Stigma

Week 10: The Ethics, Politics, and Lived Experience of Prenatal Genetic Testing

Week 11: Inequality in Utero: Health Disparities at Birth
This session centers on understanding how racial discrimination and poverty physiologically affect pregnant women and their fetuses, resulting in poorer health outcomes at birth. We will discuss this phenomenon broadly and at the local level, reflecting on birth disparities in the Boston area.

Readings


Week 12
Conclusion and Student Presentations
Deliverables and Grading

Students will produce the following deliverables for this course:

• Two brief (2-3 page) reflection papers (15% of grade)
  - Students will have a choice of weeks in which to hand in these reflections.
• One longer paper (7-10 pages) offering an in-depth exploration of a contemporary case study of interest (50% of grade). This can be a deliverable that serves multiple purposes (eg undergraduate thesis chapter, grant proposal, part of a paper for another course) if applicable permissions are sought and documented.
• A presentation to the class on the longer paper (10% of grade)

The remaining 25% of the grade will be based on substantive participation in the course discussions each week.

1