

## **WGS 321F/621FG: Gender, Sickness, and Health Fall 2014**

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Office Hours: MF 12:45 pm – 1:45 pm or by appointment

Office Location: Tribble Hall A115

Course Meeting Time: MF 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

Course Meeting Location: Tribble Hall A4

### **Course Overview**

Gender and health intersect in many different ways. Historically, men and women have played different roles in the healthcare field and women patients have been treated differently by medical professionals. In addition, the roles men and women are expected to play in society influence their health; for example, boys may engage in risky behavior in order to live up to standards of masculinity. Medicine can also be used to enforce gender norms; for example, women who do not conform to traditional standards of femininity may be diagnosed with a mental disorder.

This course will examine the intersections of gender, medicine, health, and illness, with a focus on the U.S. context. We will cover topics such as reproduction, mental illness, breast cancer, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS. We will explore numerous questions like:

- How have women and men interacted differently with the field of medicine, as healers, patients, and participants in medical research?
- How do social and cultural norms about gender influence the definition of illness categories?
- What role does medicine play in enforcing gender norms?
- How does gender as a social role, in concert with other social categories such as race, sexuality, and class, affect health status and health outcomes?

### **Course Goals**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- 1) Analyze the influence of gender norms on the definition of illness categories
- 2) Understand and explain how gender as a social role influences health outcomes
- 3) Demonstrate skill in the areas of critical reading, research, writing, and oral expression

### **Course Texts**

1. Lorde, Audre (2006). *The Cancer Journals: Special Edition*. Aunt Lute Books.
2. Clare, Eli (2009). *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation: South End Classics Edition*. South End Press.
3. All other readings will be available on the course website.

## Assignments

Reading Responses (3): 30%  
Reading Quizzes: 10%  
Pop Culture Presentation: 10%  
Midterm Group Project: 15%  
Final Paper: 20%  
Class Participation: 15%

**Reading Responses:** You will be asked to write three 2-3 page responses on our readings this semester. For each response, you will choose one assigned reading to discuss. You will select a quotation from the reading, briefly situate the quotation in the context of the reading, and then analyze the quotation. Additional guidelines will be distributed. At the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned to a group. Members of Group 1 will turn in their responses on **September 12<sup>th</sup>, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and October 31<sup>st</sup>**. Members of Group 2 will turn in their responses on **September 19<sup>th</sup>, October 10<sup>th</sup>, and November 7<sup>th</sup>**. Members of Group 3 will turn in their responses on **September 26<sup>nd</sup>, October 24<sup>th</sup>, and November 21<sup>st</sup>**.

**Reading Quizzes:** It is impossible to have a discussion if students aren't doing the readings. Yet, I have found that because students have so much to do, many don't read for class unless they are encouraged to do so. To provide some encouragement, at least once a week, I will give a short "pop" quiz on the readings. The quiz will assess your understanding of the author's main arguments. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. There will be no make-up quizzes if you are absent.

**Pop Culture Presentation:** At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for one pop culture presentation. For this presentation, you will be asked to choose a "text" from the media or popular culture, such as a movie or TV clip, news article, or music video, and explicitly relate the text you have chosen to at least one reading from the course. Additional guidelines will be distributed.

**Midterm Group Project:** For the midterm project, you will work in small groups to develop a health promotion campaign about an assigned health-related issue. As a group, you will be asked to develop a flyer, poster, or billboard and a radio or TV advertisement. As a group, you will present your campaign to the class on **October 13<sup>th</sup>**. Additional guidelines will be distributed.

**Final Paper:** For the final paper, you will be asked to choose a question of interest to you related to the course, and to answer this question drawing on course readings and outside research. Over the course of the semester, you will complete the following: preliminary question (**October 20<sup>th</sup>**), annotated bibliography (**November 17<sup>th</sup>**), outline (**December 1<sup>st</sup>**), informal presentation to class (**December 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>**), final paper (**due date to be determined**). The final paper length for undergraduates will be 8-12 pages. The final paper length for graduate students will be 15-20 pages. Additional guidelines will be distributed.

**Participation:** This course is primarily a discussion-based course. Your participation is essential. Quality participation includes both contributing thoughtfully to the discussion and listening and responding respectfully to others. It is important that you not only complete and struggle with the reading for the day, but that you give yourself sufficient opportunity to digest the texts and ponder the ideas and implications of the day's readings. Please expect to be called on at any time.

## **Policies**

**Absences:** Attendance is required. Each student is allowed three (3) absences with no penalties. For each additional absence, the student's participation grade will be lowered by 0.5 points. Three (3) late arrivals will be counted as one absence. If you must miss class, I do appreciate knowing when and why you are absent, but notifying me doesn't "excuse" the absence.

**Late Work:** All work is due at the beginning of class on the due date listed. Late work will not be accepted.

**Submitting Assignments:** All written assignments must be submitted in the following format:

1. Must be typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font, black ink
2. Pages must be stapled if a hard copy is submitted
3. Must be submitted as a Word document (.doc or .docx) if submitted electronically

**Technology in the Classroom:** Please do not answer your phone or text in class unless there is a genuine emergency (e.g. an immediate family member is sick). You may bring a laptop, but only for taking notes or accessing material relevant to the class discussion. Please do not use your laptop to check your email, surf the Internet, update your Facebook status, or shop online. I know that it is hard to avoid doing these things, so occasionally I will ask everyone with a laptop to turn their screen to face me; if I see that you are using your laptop for non-course related activities, you will not be allowed to use a laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.

**Help and Resources:** If you have any questions or concerns at any point, please email me or come to my office hours. Also, please take advantage of the following resources:

- For assistance with your writing, visit the Writing Center (<http://college.wfu.edu/writingcenter/>)
- For assistance with organization, time management and study strategies, visit the Learning Assistance Center (<http://lac.wfu.edu/>)
- For assistance with research or with citing sources, please visit the Reference Desk at the Z. Smith Reynolds Library (<http://zsr.wfu.edu/>)

**Academic Integrity:** As signatories to the Wake Forest Honor Code, you are required to uphold academic honesty in all aspects of this course. Please familiarize yourself with the details of the Honor Code. In addition, please make sure that you understand what counts as plagiarism (see below).

**Definition of Plagiarism:** If you use another person's words or ideas in your own work without appropriately acknowledging them, you are committing plagiarism. According to the Purdue Online Writing Lab, "There are some actions that can almost unquestionably be labeled plagiarism. Some of these include buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper (including, of course, copying an entire paper or article from the Web); hiring someone to write your paper for you; and copying large sections of text from a source without quotation marks or proper citation. But then there are actions that are usually in more of a gray area. Some of these include using the words of a source too closely when paraphrasing (where quotation marks should have been used) or building on someone's ideas without citing their spoken or written work" (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>). If you any questions at any point about plagiarism or other issues related to academic integrity, please ask me.

**Special Needs:** If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929) within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Revisions to Syllabus:** I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed. Revisions will be posted on the course website.

## Course Schedule

8/29: Introductions

9/1: Introductions

- Judith Lorber and Lisa Jean Moore. 2002. "Gender and the Social Construction of Illness: Overview" from *Gender and the Social Construction of Illness*.

### *Module 1: Men and Women in Medicine*

9/5: Men and Women as Healers

- Ehrenreich and English. 2005. "Witches, Healers, and Gentleman Doctors." *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts Advice to Women*.
- Ehrenreich and English. 2005. "Science and the Ascent of the Experts." *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts Advice to Women*.

9/8: Men and Women as Healers

- Judith Lorber and Lisa Jean Moore. 2002. "Hierarchies in Health Care: Patients, Professionals, and Gender." *Gender and the Social Construction of Illness*.
- Levinson and Lurie. 2004. "When Most Doctors Are Women: What Lies Ahead?" *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 141(6): 471-4.

9/12: Women and Men as Patients

- Readings TBD

### **Group 1 Reading Response 1 Due**

9/15: Women and Men as Subjects of Medical Research

- Epstein, Steve. 2007. "Sex Differences and the New Politics of Women's Health." *Inclusion: The Politics of Differences in Medical Research*.

9/19: Women as Healthcare Activists

- Heather Stephenson and Kiki Zeldes. 2008. "Write a Chapter and Change the World: How the Boston Women's Health Book Collective Transformed Women's Health Then—and Now." *American Journal of Public Health*. 98(10): 1741-1745.
- Tuana, Nancy. 2006. "The Speculum of Ignorance: The Women's Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance" *Hypatia*. 21(3): 1-19.

### **Group 2 Reading Response 1 Due**

### *Module 2: Gender as a Social Determinant of Health*

9/22: Theoretical Tools

- Nancy Krieger. 2003. "Genders, Sexes, and Health: What Are the Connections—and Why Does It Matter?" *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 32: 652-657.
- WH Courtenay. 2000. "Constructions of Masculinity and their Influence on Men's Well-Being: a Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science & Medicine*. 50: 1385-1401.

9/26: Case Study: HIV/AIDS

- Sally Zierler and Nancy Krieger. 1997. Reframing women's risk: social inequalities and HIV infection. *Annual review of public health*. 18(1): 401-436.

**Group 3 Reading Response 1 Due**

9/29: Bone Health

- Anne Fausto-Sterling. 2005. The Bare Bones of Sex: Part 1—Sex and Gender. *Signs*. 30(2): 1491-1527.

*Module 3: Gender and the Politics of Diagnosis*

10/3: Some Theoretical Tools

- Catherine Kohler Riessman. 1983. "Women and Medicalization: A New Perspective." *Social Policy*. 14(1): 3-18.
- Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs*. 16(3): 485-501.

**Group 1 Reading Response 2 Due**

10/6: Case Study: Weight

- Susan Bordo. 1994. "Whose Body Is This? Feminism, Medicine, and the Conceptualization of Eating Disorders" from *Unbearable Weight*. pp. 45-69.
- Annemarie Jutel. 2001. "Does size really matter? Weight and values in public health." *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*. 44(2): 283-296.

10/10: Case Study: Breast Cancer

- Ann Robertson. 2000. "Embodying Risk, Embodying Political Rationality: Women's Accounts of Risks for Breast Cancer." *Health, Risk & Society*. 2(2): 219-235.
- Samantha King. 2004. "Pink Ribbons Inc: Breast Cancer Activism and the Politics of Philanthropy." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. 17(4): 473-492.

**Group 2 Reading Response 2 Due**

10/13: Midterm Group Presentations

**Health Promotion Campaigns Due**

10/17: Fall Break – NO CLASS

10/20: Interlude: The Cancer Journals

- Audre Lorde. 1980. Introduction, I: The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action, II: Breast Cancer: A Black Lesbian Feminist Experience (pages 7-55). *The Cancer Journals*.

**Preliminary Question for Final Paper Due**

10/24: Interlude: The Cancer Journals

- Audre Lorde. 1980. III: Breast Cancer: Power Vs. Prosthesis (pages 56-79). *The Cancer Journals*.

**Group 3 Reading Response 2 Due**

10/27: Case Study: Reproduction

- Dorothy Roberts. 1998. "From Norplant to the Contraceptive Vaccine: The New Frontier of Population Control" *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*.
- Nelly Oudshoorn. 2004. "Astronauts in the Sperm World: The Renegotiation of Masculine Identities in Discourses on Male Contraceptives." *Men and Masculinities*. 6(4): 349-367.

10/31: Case Study: Reproduction

- Emily Martin. 1988. "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause." *International Journal of Health Services*. 18(2): 237-54.
- Paula A. Treichler. 1990. "Medicine, and the Meaning of Childbirth," in *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*. Eds. Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth. pp. 113-138.

**Group 1 Reading Response 3 Due**

11/3: Case Study: Reproduction

- Ann Bell. 2009. "It's way out of my league: Low-income women's experiences of medicalized infertility." *Gender & Society*. 23: 688-709.
- Laury Oaks. 2000. "Smoke-Filled Wombs and Fragile Fetuses: The Social Politics of Fetal Representation." *Signs*. 26(1): 63-108.

11/7: Case Study: Mental Illness

- Ronald Bayer, 1987. "Politics, Science, and the Problem of Psychiatric Nomenclature: A Case Study of the American Psychiatric Association Referendum on Homosexuality." *Scientific Controversies: Case Studies in the Resolution and Closure of Disputes in Science and Technology*.
- Metz, Jonathan. 2009. "A Racialized Disease." *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*.

**Group 2 Reading Response 3 Due**

11/10: Case Study: Mental Illness

- Elaine S. Abelson. 1989. "The Invention of Kleptomania." *Signs*. 15(1): 123-143.
- Clare Shaw and Gillian Proctor. 2005. "Women at the Margins: A Critique of the Diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder." *Feminism and Psychology*. 15(4): 483-490.

11/14: Instructor at Conference – NO CLASS

11/17: Case Study: Transgender and Intersex

- Dean Spade. 2003. "Resisting Medicine, Re/modeling Gender." *Berkeley Women's LJ*. 18: 15-37
- Chase, C. 1998. Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 4(2): 189-211.

- Ellen Feder and Katrina Karkazis. 2008. “What's in a name? The controversy over ‘disorders of sex development’.” *Hastings Center Report*. 38(5): 33-36.

**Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper Due**

11/21: Epilogue: *Exile and Pride*

- Eli Clare. 2009. Preface, A Note About Gender, The Mountain, Part I: Place (pages ix – 76). *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation*.

**Group 3 Reading Response 3 Due**

11/24: Epilogue: *Exile and Pride*

- Eli Clare. 2009. Part II: Bodies (pages 81 – 160). *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation*.

11/28: Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS

12/1: Presentations on Final Papers

**Outline of Final Paper Due**

12/5: Presentations on Final Papers

**Due Date for Final Paper TBD**