

IDIS 298
International Perspectives on Women's Health

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Fall semester 2006
Course meetings: 2:20-3:30pm Mon. & Wed.
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Course overview: This course provides an overview of anthropological and sociological perspectives on the intersection of gender, culture, and health in a global context. During the semester, we will examine several theoretical approaches to the study of women and health. Some of the topics that we will explore include how poverty, race, and ethnicity affect women's health; structural inequalities in health care access; HIV/AIDS and its global impact on women; and reproductive health politics and policies. We will explore case studies from Latin America to Africa as well as consider perspectives on gender and health in our own country. We will learn to think critically about health and disease on a global scale and to interrogate our own personal and social beliefs about health and the causes of illness.

Required texts:

Doyal, Leslie. 1995. *What Makes Women Sick: Gender and the Political Economy of Women's Health*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Finkler, Kaja. 1994. *Women in Pain: Gender and Morbidity in Mexico*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hartmann, Betsy. 1995. *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control*. Boston: South End Press

Renaud, Michelle. 1997. *Women at the Crossroads: A Prostitute Community's Response to AIDS in Urban Senegal*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers.

Selected articles are on reserve at Reeves Library.

Course requirements:

Exams (60%): There will be three exams each worth 20% of your grade. Each exam will consist of two take-home essays that will cover course materials for roughly 1/3 of the class. The essays will challenge you to synthesize and analyze course material including readings, lectures, films, and discussion.

Assignments (20%):

Illness narrative (10%) This should be an experimental essay about an experienced illness – your own or a loved one's – and the process of understanding, coping with, and managing the

illness. The essay should be 5-6 pages long and is due on September 20. We will discuss illness narratives and read examples of narratives during the first section of the course.

Ethnographic interview project (10%) You will select a topic that pertains to issues we are discussing in class, devise an interview schedule, and conduct ethnographic interviews with two (2) informants that are over the age of 40. In a 5-6 page paper, you will write up the results of your interviews. You will describe important or interesting aspects of your informants' experiences, compare and contrast the perspectives of your two informants, and synthesize and interpret what you learn about your informants as anthropological subjects. The paper will be due on November 20.

Attendance and participation (20%): The course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required. As part of your participation grade, short in-class and take-home written assignments will be given periodically and graded on a check (✓) system. Specific assignments might involve writing on personal experiences, responses to course material, writing film reviews, and/or conducting internet research outside of class time. The combination of your attendance, participation, group work, and writing assignments will amount to 20% of your grade. Multiple absences from class will negatively affect your grade.

Grading:

Three essay exams	60% (20% each)
Two assignments	20% (10% each)
Class participation	20%

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is passing off others' work as your own. It can involve directly quoting passages from a text, the web, or any other document. It can also involve having a student write a paper for you or purchasing a paper from a writing service. If plagiarism is suspected, I will request drafts and notes of the written work. Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty.

Course schedule:

Aug. 28: Introduction to the course

Illness Experiences and Illness Narratives

Aug. 30: Gender and health
Doyal, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-26)

Sept. 4 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Sept. 6: Women, work, and health
Doyal, Chapters 2 & 6 (pp. 27-57, 152-175)

Sept. 11: Illness narratives

Hunt, "Strategic Suffering" (pp. 88-107)

Mathews et al. "Coming to Terms with Advanced Breast Cancer" (pp. 43-61)

Frank, "The Cost of Appearances" (pp. 66-69)

Sept. 13: Women and health in Mexico

Finkler, Preface and Introduction (pp. i-xvii, 1-10)

Sept. 18: Gender and the nature of sickness

Finkler, Chapters 2-4 (pp. 11-50)

Sept. 20: Gender, culture, and health

Finkler, Chapters 5-6 (pp. 51-88)

Illness narratives due

Sept. 25: Life's lesions

Finkler, Chapters 7-11 (pp. 89-144)

Sept. 27: Women in pain

Finkler, Chapters 12-15 (pp. 153-209)

Oct. 2: Guest speaker

Oct. 4: *Exam 1 due*

Film: TBA

Oct. 9 – NO CLASS – FALL RECESS

Gender, HIV/AIDS, and Health Inequalities

Oct. 11: Gender, sex, and health inequalities

Doyal, Chapter 3 (pp. 59-92)

Oct. 16: Women and HIV

Farmer, "Women, Poverty, and AIDS" (pp. 3-38)

Connors, "Sex, Drugs, and Structural Violence" (pp. 91-123)

Oct. 18: Society and health in Senegal

Renaud, Preface and Chapter 1 (pp. xi-xiv, 1-34)

Oct. 23: Stigma, STDs, and AIDS

Renaud, Chapters 2-3 (pp. 35-88)

Oct. 25: Local health beliefs

Renaud, Chapters 4-5 (pp. 89-122)

Oct. 30: Women's options
Renaud, Chapters 6-7 (pp. 123-167)

Nov. 1: Guest speaker

Nov. 6: *Exam 2 due*
Film: TBA

Reproductive Rights on a Global Scale

Nov. 8: Reproductive stereotypes and social control
Doyal, Chapter 5 (pp. 125-151)
Martin "The Egg and the Sperm" (pp. 29-43)

Nov. 13: Regulating reproduction
Doyal, Chapter 4 (pp. 93-123)

Nov. 15: The real population problem
Hartmann, Forward, Intro, Chaps 1-3 (3-56)

Nov. 20: The real population problem (cont.)
Hartmann, Chaps 4-5 (pp. 57-89)
Ethnographic interview project due

Nov. 22- NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Nov. 27: Population control as ideology
Hartmann, Part two (pp. 93-170)

Nov. 29: Contraceptive controversies
Hartmann, Chaps. 10-11 (pp. 173-219)

Dec. 4: Contraceptive controversies (cont.)
Hartmann, Chaps 12-14 (pp. 221-286)

Dec. 6: Rethinking the population framework
Hartmann, Part four (pp. 289-313)

Dec. 11- Women's movements for health
Doyal, Chapter 8 (pp. 197-234)
Questions distributed for final exam

Final exam due date TBA