

IDIS 298
International Perspectives on Women's Health

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Fall semester 2007
Course meetings: 2:20-3:30pm Mon. & Wed.
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Course overview: This course provides an overview of anthropological, sociological, and feminist perspectives on the intersection of gender, culture, and health in a global context. The course will explore how women's health is intertwined with geography, race, ethnicity, economics, cultural ideologies, and social relations. We will look at how local political economies shape women's health, explore how social inequalities structure women's access to health care, examine case studies of women's vulnerability to diseases of poverty like cervical cancer and HIV/AIDS, consider the impacts that reproductive health policies have on women's health, and explore women's grassroots health movements. Through our case studies from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and North America, we will learn to think critically and globally about the social production of health and disease. We will also examine our own personal and culturally-determined beliefs about the causes of illness and the sources of health and healing.

Required texts:

Finkler, Kaja, *Women in Pain: Gender and Morbidity in Mexico*.

Gregg, Jessica, *Virtually Virgins: Sexual Strategies and Cervical Cancer in Recife Brazil*

Petchesky, Rosalind & Karen Judd, *Negotiating Reproductive Rights: Women's Perspectives Across Countries and Cultures*

Renaud, Michelle. *Women at the Crossroads: A Prostitute Community's Response to AIDS in Urban Senegal*.

Additional articles are on reserve at Reeves Library. These articles are identified on the course schedule below with an "(RL)" in front of the authors' names.

Course requirements:

Ethnographic interview project (20%): You will be conducting ethnographic interviews with two informants regarding a health-related topic of your choice. You will write up your results in a 5-6 page paper that links your findings with pertinent issues and themes from Module 1 and Finkler's study, *Women in Pain*. You will be provided with detailed instructions for this assignment. Your ethnographic interview project is due on Sept. 26.

Critical reading paper (20%): This 5-6 page paper will reflect on *Virtually Virgins* and *Women at the Crossroads*. The paper will explore 1) How gender ideologies and material realities affect

health and become “inscribed” upon the body and 2) The efficacy of prevention and intervention programs targeting cervical cancer and HIV/AIDS. The critical reading paper is due on Nov. 7.

Final paper (20%): Your final 5-6 page paper will reflect on the case studies presented in *Negotiating Reproductive Rights*. Drawing on a human rights and entitlement framework, you will compare women’s reproductive health experiences cross-culturally and examine the possibilities and challenges for women to contribute to health policy and grassroots movements.

News journal (10%): You will keep a journal of news articles that are pertinent to class topics and discussions. You will copy or print out each article, briefly summarize its key points, provide your opinion on the article topic, and relate it to course material/class discussion. Your journal will consist of a total of five (5) news article entries. You will be expected to collect one article for each course module. I will randomly select and review a portion of your articles at the end of every module. Your journal will be graded based upon the quality of your reflections and your ability to engage with, challenge, and critique class topics. The articles must come from a major newspaper source (i.e., New York Times, Washington Post). Your completed journals will be turned in on Dec. 5.

Country study/presentation (10%): You will be conducting research in teams of 3-4 on a selected country that we will be reading about in our course material. Your group will provide a 15 minute presentation pertaining to health and social indicators in your country (beginning Oct. 1) and will be responsible for leading class discussion on that day.

Attendance and Participation (20%) This course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required. You are to bring reading summaries/reflections to class every Monday (guidelines will be handed out in class). I will grade these summaries on a scale of 0-5 and count the highest ten grades. I will not accept handwritten summaries. The combination of your attendance, participation, group work, and response papers will amount to 20% of your grade.

Grading:

Ethnographic interview project	20%
Critical reading paper	20%
Final paper	20%
News journal	10%
Country study/presentation	10%
Attendance and participation	20%

Course Guidelines

1. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font. Please number and staple your pages. No handwritten assignments will be accepted. Please edit your work carefully and correct your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. All assignments must be handed to the instructor. No e-mailed assignments will be accepted except in the case of emergencies or with prior permission of the instructor. Any assignment that is turned in late will be docked one grade for every course period that it is late.

2. Regular attendance is required. Absences will be excused only in the case of appropriately documented emergencies, extended leave, or school-sponsored commitments. If an emergency should arise, please notify me prior to an assignment's due date and not after it is due. If you need to miss a class, please notify me in advance. Two late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence. Multiple absences from class will negatively affect your grade.

3. The grade scale for this class is as follows: 93-100=A; 90-92.9=A-; 87-89.9=B+; 83-86.9=B; 80-82.9=B-; 77-79.9=C+; 73-76.9=C; 70-72.9=C-; 67-69.9=D+; 63-66.9=D; 60-62.9=D-; less than 60=F. Note that it is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignment and for the final course grade.

4. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course should contact Learning Services (x 1510). Accommodations will be provided once authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is passing off others' work as your own. The Moravian handbook states, "All work that students submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be their own original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructors" (p. 26). Plagiarism 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. Any case of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Affairs Office. Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty (see Moravian handbook).

Course schedule:

Module 1: Theoretical Points of Departure

Aug. 27: Introduction to the course

Aug. 29: Science, medicine, and metaphors of the body
Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, pp. 15-67

Sept. 3: NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

Sept 5: Material realities and women's health
(RL) Doyal, *Hazards of hearth and home*, pp. 27-58
(RL) Doyal, *Waged work and well-being*, pp. 152-175

Sept 10: Health care and health policy
(RL) Kumar, *Gender and health*, pp. 17-31
(RL) Gallagher & Ferrante, *Medicalization*, pp. 332-345
(RL) MacCormack, *Risk, prevention, and international health policy*, pp. 326-337

Module 2: Women's Health and "Life's Lesions:" The Case of Mexico

Sept. 12: Gender and sickness

Finkler, Preface and Chaps. 1-3 (pp. i-xvii, 1-39)

Sept. 17: Mexican society

Finkler, Chaps. 4-6 (pp. 40-87)

Sept. 19: Women's narratives I

Finkler, Chaps 7-9 (pp. 91-134)

Sept. 24: Women's narratives II

Finkler, Chaps. 10-13 (pp. 135-176)

Sept. 26: Women's narratives III

Finkler, Chaps. 14-17 (pp. 177-209)

Ethnographic interview project due

Module 3: Culture, Health, and Cervical Cancer: The case of Brazil

Oct. 1: Culture and gender in a Brazilian shantytown

Gregg, Chaps. 1-3 (pp. 1-39)

Film: Andre's Life

Oct. 3: Cervical cancer and risk

Gregg, Chaps. 4 & 5 (pp. 40-75)

Oct.: 8: HAPPY FALL RECESS!

Oct. 10: Social roles and sexuality

Gregg, Chaps. 6 -8 (pp. 76-117)

Oct. 15: Living and dying with cancer

Gregg, Chaps. 9-11 (pp. 118-159)

Module 4: Health Inequalities and HIV/AIDS in Africa

Oct. 17: Society and health in Senegal

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

Oct. 22: Stigma, STDs, and AIDS

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

Film: India: The Sex Workers

Oct. 24: Local health beliefs

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

Oct. 29: Women's options
Renaud, Chapters 6-7 (pp. 123-167)

Oct. 31: Structural inequalities
(RL) Farmer, Women, Poverty, and AIDS (pp. 3-38)
(RL) Conners, Sex, Drugs, and Structural Violence (pp. 91-123)

Nov. 5: Film: Speaking Out: Women, AIDS and Hope in Mali
Critical comparison paper due

Module 5: Reproductive Health in Cross-Cultural Comparison

Nov. 7: Regulating reproduction
(RL) Doyal, Chap. 4 (pp. 93-124)

Nov. 12: Egyptian women's reproductive lives
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 3 (pp. 69-107)

Nov. 14: Malaysian women's reproductive negotiations
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 4 (pp. 108-144)

Nov. 19: Mexican women's reproductive rights
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 5 (pp. 145-179)

Nov. 21: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Nov. 26: Women's sexuality and fertility in Nigeria
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 6 (pp. 180-216)

Nov. 28: TBA

Dec. 3: Women's reproductive Health in the U.S.
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 8 (pp. 256-294)

Dec. 5: Cross-country comparisons
Petchesky & Judd, Chapter 9 (pp. 295-323)

Dec. 10: Grassroots health movements
Schneider, Radical Remedies (Blackboard)

Final paper due on exam day