

# **Women's Health: The Science and Politics of Well-being**

**Women's Studies/Interdisciplinary Studies 397**  
**LinC: Upper Division (U1), Social Impact of Science**

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Collier 210  
Office Hours: M/W 10:15-noon; and by appointment

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Comenius 112  
Office Hours: T/Th 10:15-11:15; and by appointment

## **Course Description**

This course resists fragmentation of women's experiences of health into separate disciplines by simultaneously considering models of women's health and health care with their socio-political implications. Recognizing differences of sexuality, class, race, age, and culture, students will gain foundational knowledge of women's health while considering the political and personal consequences of ideas, practices, and policies. Writing assignments build up to a final research paper in the student's particular area of interest.

## **Course Objectives**

- Identify historical and contemporary frameworks that shape current beliefs and practices for women's health
- Acquire self-knowledge with regard to promoting wellness and making health-related decisions
- Analyze expressions of women's sexualities and relationships
- Establish foundational knowledge regarding reproductive choices and concerns
- Increase awareness about the social construction and politics of women's health
- Integrate traditional and alternative health care ideas and practices as resources for health information
- Develop an understanding of factors affecting women's health in a global context

## Required Textbooks

Angier, N. (1999). *Women: An Intimate Geography*. Random House: New York.

Boston Women's Health Book Collective. (2005). *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for a New Era*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Selected articles will be on library reserve or available through the course website. Additional readings will be assigned by the course instructors as well as by visiting speakers throughout the semester. These readings will be made available on Blackboard, at the library (on reserve), or in class.

### Course Calendar

Wednesday, September 2 Friday, September 4	Introduction Women's health knowledge assessment in class Passion and Power (film)
Wednesday, September 9 Friday, September 11	<b>Dr. Haddad, Approaches to women's health</b> <i>OBOS</i> , chapter 31, pp. 720-747, "The politics of women's health" <b>Guest lecturer: Dr. Karen Hicks, Microfinance Program Coordinator and Sexual Health Educator, Lehigh University</b> <i>OBOS</i> , chapters 9-11, pp. 141-224, "Gender identity and sexual orientation," "Relationships with men," "Relationships with women," "Sexuality"
Wednesday, September 16 Friday, September 18	<b>Dr. Hoffman, Woman's Anatomy and Physiology</b> <i>OBOS</i> , chapter 13, pp. 227-260, "Sexual anatomy, reproduction, and the menstrual cycle" -View film: Breasts (Available on Blackboard) <b>Women's Anatomy and Physiology (continued)</b> Angier, Chapter 1 and 2; pp. 1-38, "Unscrambling the Egg: It begins with One Perfect Solar Cell" and "The Mosaic Imagination: Understanding the 'Female' Chromosome"

<b>Wednesday, September 23</b>	<b>Examination in class</b>
Friday, September 25	<p><b>Guest lecturer: Dr. Angela Corbo, Assistant Professor of Communication, DeSales University, Image of Women in the Media</b></p> <p>-<i>OBOS</i>, Chapter 1, pp. 3-18, “Body image”</p> <p>-Iris Marion Young, Throwing Like A Girl and other essays in feminist philosophy and social theory</p>
Wednesday, September 30	<p>Angier, Chapter 3, pp. 39-61, “Default Line: Is the Female Body a Passive Construct?” and Chapter 4, pp. 62-90, “The Well-Tempered Clavier: On the Evolution of the Clitoris”</p> <p>Presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1)</li> <li>2)</li> </ol>
<b>Friday, October 2</b>	<b>Discussion meeting at Granny McCarthy’s Teahouse</b>
Wednesday, October 7	<p><b>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Virginia O’Connell, Department of Sociology, Moravian College</b></p> <p>Readings TBA</p>
Friday, October 9	<p><b>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Christie Gilson, Department of Education, Moravian College</b></p> <p>-Wendell, S. Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability <i>Hypatia</i>, Feminist Ethics &amp; Medicine (Summer, 1989), 4(2), 104-124 (article consists of 21 pages)</p> <p>Published by: Indiana University Press</p> <p>-Center for Research for Women with Disabilities: <a href="http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/index.cfm">http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/index.cfm</a></p> <p>-<i>OBOS</i>, “Sex and Disability,” pp. 215-224</p>
Oct. 10-13	Fall break
Wednesday, October 14	<p><b>Guest Lecturer: Mary Sek, RN, MSN, CRNP, Coordinator of Health Services, Moravian College, Sexually Transmitted Infections</b></p> <p>-<i>OBOS</i>, Chapters 14-16, pp. 261-306, “Safer Sex”, “Sexually Transmitted Infections,” “HIV, AIDS, and Women”</p>
<b>Friday, October 16</b>	<b>Research paper proposal due in class</b>

**Friday, October 16**

-Mantell, J., Stein, Z., & Susser, I. (2008). Women in the time of AIDS: Barriers, bargains, and Benefits. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 20(2), 91-106

-Holland, J., Ramazanoglu, C., Scott, S., Sharpe, S., Thomson, R. Sex, gender and power: young women's sexuality in the shadow of AIDS, *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 12(3), 336-250. Risk and AIDS Project Manchester University Goldsmiths' College and Institute of Education, London.

**Presentation:**

**1) Laura Clauss**

**2) Alyssa Wert**

Wednesday, October 21

**Guest lecturer: Janet Murray, RN, BSN, SANE Coordinator, St. Luke's Hospital and Health Network, Assisting Victims of Rape**

-*OBOS*, Chapter 8, pp. 118-137, "Violence and Abuse"

Friday, October 23

-Wilson, K, Silberberg, M, Brown, A, & Yaggy, S. (2007) Health needs and barriers to healthcare of women who experienced intimate partner violence. *Journal of Women's Health*, 16(10), 1488-1497.

-Selections from Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive introduction*

**Presentation:**

**1) Andrea DeCarlo**

**2) Richard Rallo**

Wednesday, October 28

**Dr. Hoffman, Reproductive Choices**

-*OBOS*, Chapters 17 & 18, pp. 307-415, "Considering Parenting", and "Birth control"

Friday, October 30

-Angier, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 90-133, "Suckers and Horns: The Prodigal Uterus" and "Losing the Uterus"

**Presentation:**

**1) Isabella Kost**

**2) Beka Houska**

**Monday, November 2**

**Research paper draft due to Mrs. Ortiz in Comenius 206 by 4 p.m.**

Wednesday, November 4

**Guest Lecturer: Sandy Mesics, RN, MSN, Certified Nurse Midwife, St. Luke's School of Nursing, Birth**

-view Ricki Lake's film: The Business of Being Born (on Blackboard Website)

-OBOS, Chapters 21 & 22, pp. 417-471, "Pregnancy", "Childbirth"; Chapter 25, pp. 506-524, "Infertility and Assisted Reproduction"

Friday, November 6

TBA

**Presentation:**

**1) Brittany Pany**

**2) Stefani Trently**

Wednesday, November 11

**Drs. Hoffman and Haddad, The Science and Politics of Abortion**

-OBOS, Chapters 19 & 20, "Unexpected Pregnancy," and "Abortion"

-Selections from Catherine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*; Abortion Ethics: Rights and Responsibilities Elisabeth Porter; *Hypatia* 9(3), 66-87 (article consists of 22 pages) Published by:

Indiana University Press

Friday, November 13

TBA

**Presentation:**

**1) Elyse Giaimo**

**2) Paige Warbrick**

Wednesday, November 18

**Drs. Hoffman and Haddad, Global Perspectives on Women's Health**

-A Walk to Beautiful (film) by The Fistula Foundation

-How should the health community respond to violent political conflict? AB Zwi - PLoS Medicine, 2004; [pubmedcentral.nih.gov](http://pubmedcentral.nih.gov)

-Mary-Wynne Ashford, "The Impact of War on Women" in Barry S. Levy and Victor W. Sidel (editors, *War and Public Health*)

-UNIFEM, *Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability Progress of the World's Women*

Friday, November 20

**Presentation:**

**1) Jonna Finocchio**

**2) Caleb Spess**

Thanksgiving Recess

Wednesday, December 2

**Guest Lecturer: Pamela Adamshick, PhD, RN,  
Assistant Professor of Nursing, Moravian College,  
Girl-to-Girl Aggression**

Friday, December 4

*OBOS*, Chapter 6, pp. 82-95, “Emotional Well-Being”  
Angier, Chapter 15, pp. 287-310, “Spiking the Punch:  
In Defense of Female Aggression” and Chapter 19, pp.  
389-402, “A Call for Revolutionary Psychology”

**Presentation:**

- 1) Janine Noel**
- 2) Nina Patton**

Wednesday, December 9

**Final research paper due in class  
Course evaluations**

### **What you need to know about taking Women's Studies 397**

1. In light of the high value we place on your engagement in class, we discourage all unnecessary absences. Please contact us regarding documented absences and emergency situations.
2. We invite you to visit our office hours. Please be in touch with any questions and thoughts you may have about our work together. You may also contact us by email, [lorihoffman@moravian.edu](mailto:lorihoffman@moravian.edu) or [haddad@moravian.edu](mailto:haddad@moravian.edu).
3. Please support a culture of discussion: do not bring food to class, learn the names of other students, engage others intellectually, and take responsibility for the quality of our collective work. Course attendance does not equal participation. You are not permitted to send or receive phone calls or text messages during class time.
4. All assignments will be discussed at least two weeks in advance of a given due date. You cannot pass this class without completing all assignments. Readings not listed in the syllabus will be available one week before their scheduled discussion in class.
5. Your paper must be on time. A late paper will receive no higher than a C grade. Please contact us in case of illness or emergency.
6. Plagiarism will result in failure of the particular assignment. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See <http://moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>
7. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a learning disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

### Methods of Evaluation

Requirement	Date	Description	%/total grade
Engagement	*	Participation in class discussions	25%
Presentation	*	Outline and discussion facilitation	15%
Examination	9/23	Course material to date	15%
Research Paper Proposal	10/16	See attached form	10%
Research Paper Draft	11/13	Optional	NG
Research paper	12/9	Due on the last day of class	20%
Examination	12/16	8:30 a.m. in our usual space	15%

### Course Requirements

#### Engagement Rubric (25%)

Student engagement in class discussions will be graded according to the following rubric:

- A. Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; careful engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.
- B. Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.
- C. Incomplete or superficial readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.
- D. Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.
- F. Persistent, vegetative state; low-level trance; slightly elevated body temperature.

#### Presentation (15%)



Students schedule themselves for presentations during the course and will facilitate group discussions based on readings and other related resources. The grade for the presentation will be based on the quality and completeness of the session outline, as well as how effectively students facilitate discussion.

### **Research Paper Proposal (10%)**

The research paper proposal is to be submitted using the form provided. The proposal should be no longer than 2 pages, single-spaced, and typed.

### **Examinations (15% each)**

The exams will include essays as well as objective test items (multiple choice, fill in, matching, etc.)

### **Research Paper Draft (Optional)**

### **Final Research Paper (20%)**

The research paper is an analysis of an issue in women's health with critique of the literature from health and social sciences. The paper should include an introduction, research discussion, conclusion, and reference page.

#### **A. Introduction**

- State clearly the research problem/thesis to be addressed
- Identify the particular population to be studied (age, race, class, ethnicity, etc.)
- Provide an overview of the selected topic in women's health
- Discuss why you chose this area of study
- Describe its significance for women and society: What's at stake?
- Briefly describe your approach in this paper

#### **B. Review of Literature**

- Discuss research findings from relevant scholarly research literature
- Analyze at least 3 articles from health care or nursing journals and 3 from social science literature

#### **C. Conclusion**

- Critique the research findings from a feminist perspective
- Compare and contrast research from biomedical health and social/political science perspectives
- Describe personal insights gained through analysis of topic
- Consider policies that will enhance/improve women's well-being
- Recommend how to integrate knowledge into personal and political actions

**Women's Studies 397/Interdisciplinary Studies 397:**

**Research Paper Proposal for Women's Health**

Please complete the following form and supply the requested information. If additional explanation is required, add it after the last question. The proposal should be no longer than two pages, single spaced.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Proposed research topic:
  
2. Research question or hypothesis:
  
3. Preliminary paper title:
  
4. Define population or group of women affected:
  
5. List two sample sources from your research:
  
6. Identify contrasting viewpoints or connections:
  
7. Explain the personal relevance of this topic:

8. Explain the political relevance of this topic:
  9. Outline your approach. How will you structure your evidence and argument
- Women's Studies 397/Interdisciplinary Studies 397:**

### **Instructions for Student Presenters**

#### **In advance...**

1. Read the text carefully. Take notes.
2. Step back and consider the issues and questions that stand out to you.
3. Select three passages of the text that you find most interesting.
4. When presenting as a team, coordinate your questions and passages as well as your facilitation of the discussion.

#### **Writing the outline...**

1. Each student should prepare a separate outline.
2. Formulate three questions for the group discussion of the reading.
3. Prepare an outline: question/passage, question/passage, question/passage. You may also choose to include a brief introductory paragraph.
4. Your outline should include all appropriate information such as your name, the date, the course name, the author's name and the title of the text.

#### **On the day before class...**

1. On the day before the discussion, send the outline to the instructors by attachment. The outline must be received by 1 p.m. on the day before class.

[lorihoffman@moravian.edu](mailto:lorihoffman@moravian.edu) and [haddad@moravian.edu](mailto:haddad@moravian.edu)

2. One or both of the instructors will respond by 6 p.m. on the day before class.
3. Consider the comments and revision instructions you may receive.
4. Revise and finalize your outline.
5. Bring copies of your outline to class for each student and the instructors.

#### **In class...**

1. Be prepared to open the discussion with brief opening comments.
2. Provide the group with an interesting, attractive handout that will allow everyone to participate and also to recall the discussion and the text later on in the semester.
3. Please note that there will not always be time to address every question. What's important is to prepare a good discussion that will engage members of the class in the topic.

#### **Please note:**

- Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.
- The presentation is a required assignment.
- Outlines must be received on time. As this is an exercise in co-teaching, you must consult with the instructors in order to be able to present in class.
- Please do not miss your assigned presentation date. We are tightly scheduled and have very limited flexibility to reschedule missed presentations.

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## Self *Health* Contract

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WOST/IDIS 397 – Women’s Health: The Science and Politics of Well-being  
Fall 2008

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby commit to making specific lifestyle changes that will be healthier for me. I understand that my health behavior related to \_\_\_\_\_ is not good for me and I will address that health behavior right now, beginning \_\_\_\_\_<sub>month</sub> \_\_\_\_\_<sub>day</sub>, 2008.

These are 5 reasons why it is important for me to change my health behavior:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

These are essential changes in my health behavior that I will make:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness:** \_\_\_\_\_