

REPRODUCTIVE ETHICS

Fall 2015

Comenius Hall, 305

M/W 10:20-11:30

Professor Colleen Martell
martellc@moravian.edu
Office: Zinzendorf 102
Office Hours M/W 11:30-12:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Although a seemingly private issue, the subject of human reproduction has long been informed by public and medical trends – and is increasingly informed by political, moral, medical, and social trends due to the rapid development of reproductive technologies. This course will examine ethical questions about human reproduction from an interdisciplinary perspective. Historical and social contexts that shape our understanding of reproduction will be considered, from breastfeeding to surrogacy and from abortion to science fiction. Through philosophical and scientific readings, fiction, film and discussion we will seek to gain insight into important questions surrounding the morality of destroying, creating, and altering human life and human nature.

In addition to the above outcomes, this course fulfills U1: The Social Impact of Science requirements, and as such, student outcomes also include:

- Understanding of the scientific principles and/or technological innovations relevant to this course
- Understanding and awareness of the role that science and/or technology plays in their life
- Awareness and appreciation for the impact of science and/or technology on contemporary society

COURSE TEXTS

Jonathan Glover, *Choosing Children*

Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

Other readings will be available on Blackboard



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation and Attendance

Discussion is an integral part of this course—and the success of your learning experience depends on participating in our discussions. You must come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading, and ready to discuss the material (this includes bringing to class the book/essays we are discussing that day, having marked all the reading assignments for the day, etc.). I will assess your participation grade in this class based on the *consistency* with which you contribute to class discussion and also on the degree to which your contributions demonstrate a *genuine* and *thoughtful* engagement with the reading.

In addition, there may be in-class writing, debates, and reading quizzes as a way for you to demonstrate to me that you are not only doing careful reading, but are also engaging in thoughtful and critical thinking about the readings. **20% of final grade.**

Assignments

Cultural Analysis: Identify an artifact, article, or event that illuminates reproductive ethics in everyday life. Photograph it, or otherwise bring it to share with the class. 10 artifacts total, with at least five of them submitted prior to midterm. **10% of final grade (10 point each).**

Three Questions: Ten typed-out sets of “Three Questions,” submitted prior to the discussion of readings for that day. These should be your own questions for the author remaining in your mind after grappling with the readings for that day. These may be submitted at the beginning of any class meetings, with at least five of them being submitted prior to midterm. **10% of final grade (10 points each)**

Mid-Term Essay: Engage in a Debate

Choose one topic from course readings thus far and make a case for one side or the other. Be compelling: show that you understand other perspectives on this issue, but clearly support and defend why your claim is strong. 5-7 pages. **25% of final grade.**

Final Essay: Conference Paper or Publication

All along, I’ve been encouraging you to think of the broader community in your ethical decision-making. For your final assignment, you will imagine you’re writing for a conference or online publication. (You never have to submit this anywhere, but my goal is to help you understand the process of submission and to encourage you to think about your writing in such a way that it engages with world around you.)

Due 3 weeks before end of semester: 300-word paper proposal with two potential conferences/publication outlets. Your proposed essay must be based on one or more readings from second half of semester. **5% of final grade (50 points).**

Due week after classes end: 7-10 page conference or publication essay based on your proposal, with Works Cited page. **30% of final grade.**

Course Policies

- A. Academic Integrity: Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.
- B. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
- C. Assignments will be penalized 10% for every day they are late.

READING SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

M Aug 31 Introductions

W Sep 2 Introductions

CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF REPRODUCTION

WEEK TWO

M Sep 7 Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16 (1991). 485-501. BB

W Sep 9 Emily Martin, "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Birth." *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Beacon Press Books, 1992). 54-69. BB

WEEK THREE

M Sep 14 Stuart J. Murray, "Coming to Terms: Ethics, Motherhood, and the Cultural Science Fiction of the Gene." BB

W Sep 16 Simone de Beauvoir, "The Mother." *The Ethics of Reproductive Technology*, Kenneth D. Alpern, ed. Oxford University Press 1992. 135-146. BB

SURROGACY

WEEK FOUR

M Sep 21 John A. Robertson, "Surrogate Motherhood: Not So Novel After All." *Ethical Issues in the New Reproductive Technologies*. 169-181. BB

W Sep 23 Darlena Cunha, "The Hidden Costs of International Surrogacy." *The Atlantic*. BB.

Raksha Kumar, "Trying to tame the Wild West of surrogacy in India." *Aljazeera America*. BB

GENETICS & TECHNOLOGY

WEEK FIVE

M Sep 28 Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

W Sep 30 Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

WEEK SIX

M Oct 5 Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

W Oct 7 Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*

WEEK SEVEN

M Oct 12 NO CLASS – FALL RECESS

W Oct 14 Jodi Picoult, *My Sister's Keeper*
** MIDTERM ESSAY DUE**

WEEK EIGHT

M Oct 19 Jonathan Glover, *Choosing Children*

W Oct 21 Jonathan Glover, *Choosing Children*

WEEK NINE

M Oct 26 Jonathan Glover, *Choosing Children*

W Oct 28 Amanda Faison, "The Miracle of Molly," BB.

BREASTFEEDING

WEEK TEN

M Nov 2 Linda Blum, "Breast is Best," Introduction to *At the Breast: Ideologies of Breastfeeding and Motherhood in the Contemporary United States*. Beacon Press Books 1999. 1-19. BB

W Nov 4 Linda Blum, "From Sacred to Disembodied Motherhood: Breastfeeding with the Experts and the State," *At the Breast*. 19-62. BB

WEEK ELEVEN

M Nov 9 Jacqueline H. Wolf, "Pediatrics, Obstetrics, and Shrinking Maternal Authority" *Beyond Health, Beyond Choice: Breastfeeding Constraints and Realities*. Rutgers University Press 2012. 87-98. BB

Lubold and Roth, "The Impact of Workplace Practices on Breastfeeding Experiences and Disparities Among Women," *Beyond Health*. 157-169. BB

W Nov 11 Groleau and Sibeko, "Breastfeeding in the Margins: Navigating through the Conflicts of Social and Moral Order," *Beyond Health*. 203-214. BB

Sally Dowling, Jennie Naidoo, and David Pontin, "Breastfeeding in Public: Women's Bodies, Women's Milk," *Beyond Health*. 249-258. BB

ABORTION & FETAL TESTING

WEEK TWELVE

M Nov 16 Kristin Luker, "Introduction to *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*" and "Motherhood and Morality in America." University of California Press, 1984. BB

W Nov 18 Mary B. Mahowald, Jerry Silver, and Robert A. Ratcheson, "The Ethical Options In Transplanting Fetal Tissue." *Ethical Issues in the New Reproductive Technologies*. 283-295. BB.

WEEK THIRTEEN

M Nov 23 Thomas H. Murray, "Moral Obligations to the Not-Yet-Born." *Ethical Issues*. 227-241. BB.

W Nov 25 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

CYBORGS, SCIENCE FICTION, & THE FUTURE

WEEK FOURTEEN

M Nov 30 Screening: *The Handmaid's Tale*

W Dec 2 Screening: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Margaret Atwood, *Historical Notes on A Handmaid's Tale. The Ethics of Reproductive Technology* BB

WEEK FIFTEEN

M Dec 7 Gena Corea, "The Artificial Womb: An Escape from the 'Dark and Dangerous Place'" *Ethical Issues*, 323-333. BB

Gena Corea, "The Mother Machine" *The Ethics of Reproductive Technology*, 232-220. BB

W Dec 9 Donna Haraway "The Cyborg Manifesto," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. BB

****FINAL ESSAY DUE DEC 16****