SOCIOLOGY 390: GENDER AND HEALTH
Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday
2:35-3:25 pm
Burnside 1B45

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 8:30-10 am and by appointment

Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce students to major theoretical and substantive topics important to the social studies of gender and health. Students will draw on a wide range of historical and theoretical understandings of gendered identities, roles, and experiences, including feminist efforts to decouple sex and gender, to critically analyze gendered patterns of health, illness, and disease. After establishing a theoretical foundation of the course, we will explore substantive topics to understand the underlying cultural and social assumptions we have about gender and health. The course investigates theories of women’s health, the women’s health movement, the paradoxical medicalization of women’s bodies and their historical absence from dominant biomedical concerns, and the intersectionality of health concerns with gender, race, sexual identity, etc. We will discuss how men’s health too becomes medicalized and also look at the experiences of sexual minorities and the health care system. The course looks at experiences of health, the body, technologies, and medicine as well as biomedical representations of those experiences. We explore the gendered micropolitics of health care interactions and the macropolitical structures within which gender and health are shaped and transformed.

Generally, the course will be organized with lectures on Mondays and Tuesdays and conferences or films on Thursdays. You are strongly encouraged to do the readings for each day before lecture in order to reap the optimum benefit from the lectures. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Course Requirements:

1) Exams (50%): There will be two exams for this course: a midterm (15%) and a cumulative final during the exam period (35%). The midterm will be held on THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22 during the regular lecture period. The final exam will take place during the university-scheduled final exam period. Both exams will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions covering information from course readings, handouts, lectures, films, and guest lectures. Please do not ask if something will be on the final—if it is part of the class it is fair game for the exam.
2) **Conference Attendance (10%)**: You are required to attend all conferences. Attendance will be taken.

3) **Pop Quizzes (10%)**: Pop Quizzes will be administered in the middle of class 4 times throughout the semester. These will be short, multiple choice questions designed to help prepare you for the exams and to monitor class attendance. 4 of 5 of these quizzes will count towards your grade. (In other words, you may miss one pop quiz or drop one without penalty.)

   *If you miss a conference or a pop quiz, you may choose to make it up by writing a 2-page double-spaced summary of one or more of the readings from that week. You may do this one time during the semester. The assignment should be uploaded to MyCourses as soon as it is complete.*

4) **Written Assignment (30%)**

   You have a choice of two different assignments for completion of this assignment.

   **Research Paper**
   
   You may choose to write one 6-page paper on a topic covered in class or presented in the readings. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the course materials, and to use one of the theoretical approaches discussed in the introductory lectures to explore her/his topic.
   
   Additional guidelines for the paper and paper proposal will be posted on myCourses and discussed in lectures and conference sections during the semester.

   **Interview and Analysis**
   
   For this assignment, you are to interview someone about an issue pertaining to gender and health. You must have your interview topic approved by the instructor or TA. Possible topics include interviewing someone about their personal experience with: childbirth, a gender-related illness, abortion experience, infertility, eating disorder, an illness or medical experience that features a gendered dynamic, etc.

   Interview questions should be open-ended and allow for the interviewee to tell his/her story. Interviews should be audio-recorded and transcribed. You are then required to write a 4-page, double-spaced analysis of the interview. Additional guidelines for the interview assignment will be posted on myCourses and also discussed in class. It is mandatory that you get informed consent for this assignment. Details for this assignment will be discussed in depth at the first conference section.

   **All papers are due on at 11:59 pm by uploading it onto MyCourses.** Papers may be turned in any time before the due date. Papers received after the due date will be marked down one grade (e.g., B+ to a B) for each day they are late. Grading will be based on your grasp of the material as it relates to the course, ability to think critically, and the clarity of your writing (grammar, punctuation and style will count!). Please see the university's policy on plagiarism and be sure you understand it. Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. In accord with McGill University's
Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Statement on Academic Integrity:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

'L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

Required Reading:
All readings will be available on MyCourses.

Week 1- Introduction and Theory

M 8 Jan - Introduction to the Course

T 9 Jan - Theorizing Gender and Health — What is Health? What is Gender?


Th 11 Jan- Lecture cont’d.


Week 2: Sex/Gender Theory

M 15 Jan - Constructing Sex and Gender in Biomedicine - The Case of Intersexuality

Interview with Anne Fausto-Sterling.

Podcast: http://www.thelitreview.org/episode5.html

T 16 Jan – Intersex cont’d.


Th 18 Jan— FILM: Is it a Boy or a Girl? (You Tube) OR Intersexion (eVideo @ library)

Week 3: Resistance and Transformation: Early Critiques of Medicine and the Women’s Health Movement

M 22 Jan- History of Women’s Health Movement/ History of Feminism


T 23 Jan – lecture and film, She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry


Th 25 Jan – FILM: She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry cont’d

Week 4: Health Inequalities in Health and Illness

M 29 Jan – Intersectionality: Race and Class Inequalities
Guest Lecture, Dr. Nicholas King

Irwin, Andrea. “Diagnosing Gender Disparities in Health Care” (WH 2-3)
Ferguson, Sian. “Privilege 101: A Quick and Dirty Guide” (WH 42-45)
Hamilton, Jasmia and Brooke Barnhart “Women’s Health Disparities: Intersections of Gender and Other Forms of Marginalization” (WH 46-55)
T 30 Jan – Masculinities


http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/toula-foscolos/hockey-suicide-depression-masculinity_b_8170334.html

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/16/what-male-athletes-can-learn-from-women-about-concussions/?utm_term=.cc97c596b792

Th 1 Feb – Concussions and Masculinity
Film: League of Denial

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/league-of-denial/

Week 5: Gender and the Medicalization of Bodies, Health, and Ailments

M 5 Feb– Gender and Medicalization


T 6 Feb— Medicalization Examples


This American Life. “Tell Me I’m Fat.” https://www.thisamericanlife.org/episode/589/tell-me-im-fat

Th 8 Feb—CONFERENCE 1

This American Life podcast, “81 Words.”

Week 6: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Postpartum Care

M 12 Feb- FILM: The Business of Being Born


Macdonald, Margaret. 2006. “Gender Expectations: Natural Bodies and Natural Births in the New Midwifery in Canada” Medical Anthropology Quarterly. 20(2): 235-256

Miranda Welch, “Culturally Appropriate Doula Support for Queer and Trans Patients” (WH 299-305)

T 13 Feb- Finish Film+ lecture

Th 15 Feb- Pregnancy and Childbirth lecture

Week 7: MIDTERM

M 19 Feb – FILM: When the Bough Breaks

Radio series: https://www.npr.org/series/543928389/lost-mothers

T 20 Feb – MIDTERM REVIEW

Th 22 Feb – MIDTERM

Week 8: Contraception, Reproductive Rights, and Abortion

M 26 Feb – Abortion and Unintended Pregnancies GUEST LECTURER REBEKAH LEWIS


Reproductive Rights Briefing Book excerpts

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/22/i-set-up-shoutyourabortion-because-i-am-not-sorry-and-i-will-not-whisper
T 27 Feb—Contraception


Th 1 Mar — Film: When Abortion Was Illegal

MARCH 5th-9th: READING WEEK- NO CLASS

Week 9: Sexual Minority Health

M 12 Mar— Guest Lecture, Kim Seida, MA

TBD

T 13 Mar – Transgender Health- Guest Lecture, Sarah Berry, MA


Th 15 Mar - FILM

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/

Week 10: Reproductive Technologies

M 19 Mar – Assisted Reproduction


https://longestshortesttime.com/episode-104-uterus-sperm/

**T 20 Mar - Prenatal Diagnosis and Sex Selection**

Puri, S.et al. 2011. “There is such a thing as too many daughters, but not too many sons”: A qualitative study of son preference and fetal sex selection among Indian immigrants in the United States. *Social Science and Medicine.*

Article in Slate magazine – Sept. 2012

http://www.ecmaj.ca/content/184/3/E163.full

**Th 22 Mar – CONFERENCE 2**

**Week 11: Gender and Health: Examples**

**M 26 Mar - Mental Health**

https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-017-4669-x

**T 27 Mar – Cancer and the Politics of Prevention**

Adriane Fugh-Berman, “Less Hormone Therapy, Less Breast Cancer” (WH 125-126)
Cynthia Pearson, “Women Need Better Medical Tests, Not More Treatment” (WH 186)
Breast Cancer Action, “Four Critical Questions to Ask Before You Buy Pink” (WH 372-373)
Turner Willman, “Toxins in Nail Salons: When Environmental and Reproductive Justice Meet” (WH 374-376)
Cynthia Pearson, “Screening Mammograms: When Fighting for Coverage and Quality Isn’t Enough” (WH 382-384)


**Th 29 Mar - Film**

*Breast Cancer Movie- Pink Ribbons, Inc.*

**Week 12: Gender, Media, and Money**

**M 2 Apr - Body and Body Image**


T 3 Apr - Medicalization and Big Pharma


National Women’s Health Network, “The Marketing and Politics Behind the Promotion of Female Sexual Dysfunction and Its ‘Pink Viagra’” (WH 196-198)


Th 5 Apr- CONFERENCE 3

Week 13:

M 9 Apr -

T 10 Apr -

Th 12 Apr - CONFERENCE 4

Week 14: Review

M 16 Apr - Wrap-Up and Review