CH 104- WOMEN & HEALTH
Tufts University, Fall 2014
Professor Meghan Woo, ScD, ScM
Mondays 6pm-8:30pm

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Office Hours: By appointment
Office Location: Community Health Department, 112 Packard Avenue

Course Description:

This course approaches issues related to women, gender, and health from various interdisciplinary and theoretical perspectives. Throughout the course, we will examine the role of the medical profession, public health professionals, activists, and various social institutions in constructing discourses and knowledge about women and health. The course will also emphasize the biological, social, economic, environmental, behavioral, and political factors associated with women's health as well as methodological issues in research related to women's health. We will apply these frameworks to several specific health-related concerns including eating disorders, mental health, reproductive health, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. These health issues will be presented in the context of a woman's life and across the lifecourse including adolescence, reproductive years, and aging. Readings draw on diverse disciplines and fields including public health, health policy, medicine, history, and women's studies.

Availability

I am available to meet with students through scheduled meetings. I will also hold open-door office hours in the Community Health Office building (112 Packard Ave) or a mutually agreed upon on-campus location throughout the semester as necessary. I will inform students of the time and location of these office hours as they occur.

Expectations:

Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and other assigned media. Some of the articles may require you to read them more than once. Be patient and read actively.

Your attendance is part of your participation grade. Class attendance is required; but attendance and participation are not the same thing. Education is a social enterprise, and we learn through engaging with ideas and each other. Please come to class prepared to learn and ready to engage in the material. Ask questions about concepts you are confused by and share your perspective on the issues covered. As your Professor, I will do my best to create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable participating and exchanging ideas.

Since the course meets only once per week, you may have only 1 unexcused absence before your participation grade will be lowered one grade level. Please let me know in advance if you know you will not be able to attend class or shortly after the missed class if you have some unavoidable problem.
Similarly, repeated lateness disturbs the class and may be cause for grade depreciation. Three late arrivals will equal one absence.

Please do not bring electronic equipment to class that might distract you from the discussion (or bother others). **Laptops are permitted for class-related use (i.e. note taking) only.** Anyone violating this policy will be asked to leave the classroom.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is expected that all material that you submit is your own work. Outside sources must be properly referenced, including internet pages. When in doubt, cite! Please consult the Tufts’ Plagiarism policy or ask me if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

Finally, this is a course focused on a variety of issues about which many people hold strong views. Please be respectful of other students as they express ideas that may not conform to your personal beliefs. Also, remember that questioning a line of argument or its reasoning is different from attacking someone’s personal beliefs.

I may amend the syllabus as warranted throughout the semester.

**Assignments/Grading:**

- **Weekly Reflection Papers**- At the start of every class you will submit a **1 page** reflection paper. The purpose of the reflection paper is for you to provide your personal thoughts and questions about the readings for that week. **You do not need to do any outside readings to complete your reflection paper.**

- **Discussion Lead**- For each class, two students will sign-up ahead of time to lead a discussion on the topics covered for the present class.

  As a discussion lead, your job is to help review the material and facilitate discussion. To do that, you will need to have reviewed all of the readings and thought carefully about them. Section leads will be responsible for completing a “Discussion Summary” that outlines (1) the key concepts/themes, (2) terms discussed in the readings, and (3) lists a set of questions that can help facilitate a meaningful discussion. **You do not need to do any outside readings to prepare to lead a section.** Depending on the topic, you may also be asked to help lead activities prepared by me (e.g. debates). **You must email me your Discussion Summary by Sunday at 9:00pm.** Please mark your calendar so you can submit your summary on-time. Late submissions will be factored into your grade. I will distribute Discussion Summaries during class and will post copies electronically after class.

- **Debate**- Throughout the semester there will be a series of preset group presentations on a variety of topics. The purpose of this exercise is to provide an opportunity to explore both sides of several controversial topics related to women and health. Students will gain experience arguing in favor of or in opposition to a particular side of each debate in a clear, concise, and
compelling manner. Everyone in the class will be assigned to one of two teams. All members of each team should be prepared to speak on behalf of the team’s position.

- **Midterm Exam (in class)**- The midterm exam will be held on November 3, 2014 and serves to draw together themes and elements of the course to date. It is designed to help you integrate the material and articulate your understanding of it in a coherent fashion. This exam will be a one-hour in-class test that will be a combination of short-answer and essay questions. A make-up exam will be granted only in highly unusual circumstances.

- **Final Paper**- There will be a final 10 page (maximum) paper due December 15th. Papers must be turned in- in hard copy- to the Community Health Program office by 4pm. Papers must also be uploaded to the Trunk site by that time. Your final paper should grow from your interests in the course and explore some issue raised in the course in greater detail. Your proposal is due on November 17, 2014. Papers will be deducted 1 letter grade for every day they are late.

- **Class Participation**- Your class participation will be based on evidence of your preparation of the day’s readings and on your thoughtful comments during class. Small and large group discussions will give you the opportunity to engage the material deeply with others. Issues in women’s health are dynamic on local, national, and international agendas. Please bring relevant issues that you learn outside the classroom to our discussions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>November 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 15th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Lead/Reflection Papers</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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**Week 1: September 8, 2014**

**Introduction- Issues in women and health**

- Course objectives
- Introduction: Gender, sex and health
- Biological model and the social determinants of health

**Readings:**


P.P. Rieker, C.E. Bird, “Rethinking Gender Differences in Health: Why We Need to Integrate Social and Biological Perspectives,” *Journal of Gerontology: Series B* 60B (Special Issue II), 2005: 40-47.


**Optional Readings:**


**Week 2: September 15, 2014**

**The women’s health movement and women as participants in healthcare and research**

- Historical perspective/background
- Women’s representation in research
- Power relationships- women as physicians and patients

**Readings:**


H Amaro and A de la Torre, “Public health needs and scientific opportunities in research on Latinas”, AJPH. 2002; 92(4):525-529.


Optional Readings:


**Week 3: September 22, 2014**

**The Medicalization of Reproduction**

**Guest Lecturer: Katherine Flaherty, ScD: Principal Associate, Abt Associates**

- New reproductive technologies and ethical issues
- Medicalization of childbirth
- Contraception

**Readings:**


http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/09/061009fa_fact?currentPage=all


**Optional Readings:**


Week 4: September 29, 2014

Occupational Health, Women and Families

- Health risks women face at work
- Reproductive health and occupational hazards among women workers
- Work/family balance: Can women “have it all”?

Readings:


Critique of Lean in: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg:

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/confidence-woman/

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/why-i-want-women-to-lean-in/

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/why-sandberg-matters-for-real-women/

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/more-ways-women-sabotage-themselves/

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/forget-about-mentors-women-need-sponsors/

http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/what-about-the-children/


Optional Readings:


**Week 5: October 6, 2014**

**Health Reform and Women’s Health, Reproductive Rights**

**Guest Lecturer: Kate Bicego, Consumer Assistance Program Manager, Health Care for All; NARAL Pro-Choice Board Member**

- Obamacare: implications for women’s access to coverage and care
- Medicaid’s role for women
- Pregnancy and abortion as political issues

**Readings:**


A New Frontier in the Era of Health Reform: Protecting Confidentiality for Individuals Insured as Dependents


Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Reform: Implications for Women’s Access to Coverage and Care, August 2013

http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/7987-03-health-reform-implications-for-women’s-access-to-coverage-and-care.pdf

Kaiser Family Foundation, Coverage for Abortion Services and the ACA, January 2014


Kaiser Family Foundation, Obamacare and You: If You Are a Woman..., October 2013

http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/8506-if-you-are-a-woman.pdf

NWLC Toolkit - Getting the Coverage You Deserve: What to Do If You Are Charged a Co-Payment, Deductible, or Co-Insurance for a Preventive Service


Center for Reproductive Rights, The Contraception Controversy: A Comprehensive Reply

http://reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/crr_Contraception_Controversy_041012.PDF

Optional Readings:


Raising Women’s Voices. What are women getting from health reform, the top ten list. http://www.raisingwomensvoices.net/storage/pdf_files/What%20Women%20Get%20From%20Health%20Reform%208-11%20update.pdf


Week 6: October 13, 2014

COLUMBUS DAY- NO CLASS

Week 7: October 20, 2014

Disparities in Women’s Health across Race, Ethnicity and SES

- Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic variation in women’s health
- The Weathering Hypothesis
- Understanding the social determinants of health

Readings:

In class video: California Newsreel, “Unnatural Causes: When the Bough Breaks”


**Optional Readings:**


**Week 8: October 27, 2014**

**Place and Health**

- The Latina Health Paradox
- Rural Health of women

**Readings:**

In class video: California Newsreel, “Unnatural Causes: Place Matters”


*Additional Readings TBD*

**Week 9: November 3, 2014**

**MIDTERM**

**Week 10: November 10, 2014**

**Health Concerns of Adolescent Girls**

**Guest Lecturer: Nancy Street, ScD, MSN: Associate Professor, Regis College**

- Growth and development
- Sexual activity and contraception
- Mental health

**Readings:**


Optional Readings:

S.E. Woolf, S.A. Maisto, "Gender Differences in Condom Use Behavior? The Role of Power and Partner-Type," *Sex Roles* 58, 2008:689-701.


**Week 11: November 17, 2014**

**Paper Proposals Due**

**Violence against Women**

- Intimate partner violence- prevalence and trends by race/ethnicity and SES
- Health consequences of sex trafficking for women and girls
- Interventions

**Debate #1: Should prostitution be legalized?**

**Readings:**


Optional Readings:


Week 12: November 24, 2014

Women’s Mental Health and Substance Use

Guest Speaker, Erin Dunn, ScD, MPH: Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Psychiatric and Neurodevelopmental Genetics Unit Center for Human Genetic Research, Massachusetts General Hospital

- Depression and women
- Mental health care services for women
- Women and substance abuse

Debate #2: Are the differences in depression between men and women social or biological?

Readings:

National Institute of Mental Health, “Depression: What every woman should know” (August 2000), 25pg


Optional Readings:


National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2003, Reports: “Gender differences in substance dependence and abuse” and “Female Youths and Delinquent Behaviors”

Week 13: December 1, 2014

**Debate #3: Should the HPV vaccine be compulsory for adolescent girls?**

**Female Body image and Eating disorders**

- Body image concerns of women
- Eating disorders and disordered eating
- Differences in eating disorders and body image by race and age

**Readings:**


Optional Readings:


Week 14: December 8, 2014

Women and Aging

- Hormones, aging, and women’s health

Debate #1: Do we need female Viagra?

Readings:

KN Murtagh, HB Hubert. Gender differences in physical disability among an elderly cohort. AJPH 2004;94(8):1406-1411.


N Krieger et al. "Hormone Replacement Therapy, Cancer, Controversies, and Women’s Health: Historical, Epidemiological, Biological, Clinical, and Advocacy Perspectives," *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59, no. 9 (September 2005): 740-8
