

## **Politics of Reproduction**

SOCY 390/629, ER&M 360, HLTH 370, HSHM 432, WGSS 390

Spring 2016

Wednesday 2:30-4:20pm

### **Professor Rene Almeling**

Office: 493 College St., Room 309

Office hours: Wednesday 4:30-5, Thursday 4:30-5, and by appointment

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### **Course Overview**

Reproduction is a strategic site for examining the relationship between bodies and societies. In this class, we will approach reproduction as a process that is simultaneously biological and social, involving male and female bodies, family formation, and powerful social institutions such as medicine, law, and the marketplace. We will examine sociological research on a wide range of reproductive topics, including pregnancy, birth, abortion, contraception, infertility, reproductive technology, and aging. Using core sociological concepts (e.g. medicalization, kinship, commodification), we will pay particular attention to how the politics of reproduction are shaped by the intersecting inequalities of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

### **Requirements**

- Attendance and Active Participation in Class - 20%
- Weekly Response Memos - 20%  
In 250 words, summarize the main point of the week's reading and offer your own reflections. Memos are due in the Assignments section of the Classes Server by 1:30pm on the day of class. Late memos will receive no credit.
- Presentation - 15%  
Identify a topic related to reproduction but not covered in the syllabus (e.g. adoption, disabilities, menstruation, transgender pregnancy, sex selection, fetal surgery, teen pregnancy, etc.). Use Sociological Abstracts to find one journal article on that topic. Read the article carefully, and prepare a four-minute presentation on the research question, methods, and main findings. Presentations will be in class during Week 12.
- Projects - 15% each  
*Undergraduates:* Choose three projects from the list at the end of the syllabus. The first project will be due at the beginning of class in Week 5, the second in Week 9, and the third in Week 13. Late projects will be penalized one letter grade per day.  
*Graduate students:* Choose one project from the list at the end of the syllabus. The project will be due at the beginning of class in Week 13.
- Research Paper – *required for graduate students only* - 30%  
Discuss your paper topic with me by April 8th. Email your final paper by 4pm on Friday, May 6th with the subject line “Reproduction Final Paper.” Papers should be 10 pages (not including bibliography), double-spaced with 1" margins written in Times New Roman, 12-point font.

## Readings

All readings are available through course reserves on Classes\*v2. Books with excerpts longer than 50 pages are also available for 2-hour checkout at the Bass Library reserves desk.

## Cheating and Plagiarism

Students who cheat on any of the assignments will receive an F for the class, and the matter will be referred to Yale's Executive Committee (see Yale's Academic Honesty Policy). A full discussion of citing sources and avoiding plagiarism is on the Yale Writing Center Website.

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### Week 1: Introduction

*\*No reading*

### Week 2: Theoretical and Historical Approaches to Reproduction

--Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2000. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of the Body*. New York: Basic Books. Pages 1-29, 233-255.

--Solinger, Rickie. 2005. *Pregnancy and Power: A Short History of Reproductive Politics*. New York: New York University Press. Pages 1-25.

--Jordanova, Ludmilla. 1995. "Interrogating the Concept of Reproduction in the Eighteenth Century" in *Conceiving the New World Order*, edited by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 346-86.

--Almeling, Rene. 2015. "Reproduction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 423-442.

### Week 3: Pregnancy

--Ivry, Tsipy. 2010. *Embodying Culture: Pregnancy in Japan and Israel*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Pages 1-33.

--Markens, Susan, Carole Browner, and Nancy Press. 1997. "Feeding the Fetus: On Interrogating the Notion Of Maternal-Fetal Conflict." *Feminist Studies* 23:351-72.

--Han, Sallie. 2013. *Pregnancy in Practice: Expectation and Experience in the Contemporary United States*. Berghahn. Pages 59-75.

--Reed, Kate. 2009. "'It's them faulty genes again': Women, men and the gendered nature of genetic responsibility in prenatal blood screening." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 31: 343-359.

--Waggoner, Miranda R. 2013. "Motherhood preconceived: The emergence of the preconception health and health care initiative." *Journal of health politics, policy and law* 38: 345-371.

#### **Week 4: Birth in America**

- Armstrong, Elizabeth M. 2000. "Lessons in control: Prenatal education in the hospital." *Social Problems*: 583-605.
- Leavitt, Judith Walzer. 2010. *Make Room for Daddy: The Journey from Waiting Room to Birthing Room*. University of North Carolina Press. Pages ix-xi, 48-85, 284-296.
- Martin, Karin A. 2003. "Giving Birth Like a Girl." *Gender & Society* 17:54-72.
- Morris, Theresa. 2013. *Cut It Out: The C-Section Epidemic in America*. New York: New York University Press. Pages 1-28.
- Bridges, Khiara. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 103-143.

#### **Week 5: Disciplining Reproduction**

\*Undergraduate project #1 due at the beginning of class.

- Clarke, Adele. 1998. *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and 'The Problems of Sex'* Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 3-29.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2003. "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy." *Population and Development Review* 29: 163-96.
- Almeling, Rene and Miranda R. Waggoner. 2013. "More and Less than Equal: How Men Factor in the Reproductive Equation." *Gender & Society* 27:821-842.
- Paltrow, Lynn and Jeanne Flavin. 2013. "Arrests of and forced interventions on pregnant women in the United States, 1973-2005: implications for women's legal status and public health." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, Law* 38: 299-343.

#### **Week 6: Contraception and Sterilization**

- Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon. Pages 56-103.
- Van Kammen, Jessika and Nelly E. J. Oudshoorn. 2002. "Gender and Risk Assessment in Contraceptive Technologies." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 24:436-461.
- Littlejohn, Krystale E. 2013. "'It's those Pills that are Ruining Me': Gender and the Social Meanings of Hormonal Contraceptive Side Effects." *Gender & Society* 27:843-863.
- Gutmann, Matthew. 2007. *Fixing Men: Sex, Birth Control, and AIDS in Mexico*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Page 1-27, 130-164.

## **Week 7: Abortion**

--Beisel, Nicola and Tamara Kay. 2004. "Abortion, Race, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America." *American Sociological Review* 69: 498-518.

--Petchesky, Rosalind. 1987. "Fetal Images: The Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction." *Feminist Studies* 13: 263-92.

--Kligman, Gail. 1998. *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 1-18, 42-70, 148-151, and choose your own selections to read from 151-178 and 178-206.

--SisterSong. 2006. "Understanding Reproductive Justice." [www.trustblackwomen.org](http://www.trustblackwomen.org)

## **Week 8: Infertility and *In Vitro* Fertilization**

--Becker, Gay. 2000. *The Elusive Embryo: How Women and Men Approach New Reproductive Technologies*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 1-78.

--Bell, Ann. 2009. "It's Way Out of My League: Low-Income Women's Experiences of Medicalized Infertility." *Gender and Society* 23: 688-709.

--Barnes, Liberty. 2014. *Conceiving Masculinity: Male Infertility, Medicine, and Identity*. Pages 51-81.

## **Week 9: Assisting Reproduction**

\*Undergraduate project #2 due at the beginning of class.

--Almeling, Rene. 2011. *Sex Cells: The Medical Market for Eggs and Sperm*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 1-21, 52-83.

--Markens, Susan. 2007. *Surrogate Motherhood and the Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 1-20.

--Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2015. *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India*. New York University Press. Pages 1-19, 99-125.

## **Week 10: Making "Alternative" Families**

--Lewin, Ellen. 2009. *Gay Fatherhood: Narratives of Family and Citizenship in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pages 1-75.

--Mamo, Laura. 2007. *Queering Reproduction: Achieving Pregnancy in the Age of Technoscience*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pages 86-127.

--Hertz, Rosanna. 2006. *Single by Chance, Mothers by Choice: How Women are Choosing Parenthood Without Marriage and Creating the New American Family*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages xv-xviii, 3-20.

### **Week 11: Reproductive Aging**

--Friese, Carrie, Gay Becker, and Robert Nachtigall. 2006. "Rethinking the Biological Clock: Eleventh-hour moms, miracle moms, and meanings of age-related infertility." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 1550-60.

--Waldby, Catherine. 2014. "'Banking time': egg freezing and the negotiation of future fertility." *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. Pages 1-13.

--Shirani, Fiona. 2013. "The Spectre of the Wheezy Dad: Masculinity, Fatherhood and Ageing." *Sociology* 47: 1104-19.

--Dillaway, Heather E. 2005. "Menopause is the 'Good Old': Women's Thoughts about Reproductive Aging." *Gender & Society* 19:398-417.

### **Week 12: Student Presentations**

\**No memos.*

### **Week 13: Conclusion**

\**Undergraduate project #3 due at the beginning of class.*

\* *Graduate student project due at the beginning of class.*

\**No memos.*

### **Three-page Project Options**

#### *Interview*

Choose one person to interview for 30-60 minutes about some aspect of reproduction, e.g. your grandparent, a clinician, etc.

#### *Documentary*

Choose a documentary on some aspect of reproduction. You may watch the film with classmates.

#### *Lecture*

Attend a lecture on campus that addresses some aspect of reproduction. You may go with classmates.

#### *Field trip*

Go somewhere to learn about some aspect of reproduction, e.g. attend a museum exhibit, tour some facility, etc. You may go with classmates.

#### *DIY Project*

Create your own project. If you choose this option, you must write a paragraph describing what you plan to do and have it approved by the professor.

Your paper should have two section headers: Summary and Analysis. The summary should be one page long and provide a brief overview of the content (interview, lecture, documentary, etc). The analysis section should begin with a one-sentence sociological thesis statement about some aspect of the content, and the remaining two pages should draw on course readings and concepts to substantiate your argument. Include a bibliography on page 4.

Use Times New Roman, 12 point font. Double-space, paginate, and staple your paper.

### **Four-page Project Options**

#### *Media Analysis*

Review one or two websites for organizations, products, or groups related to reproduction. Or use LexisNexis to find two newspaper articles on some aspect of reproduction. Conduct a content analysis, and write up your results in a 4-page paper using course readings and concepts. Include a bibliography on a separate page. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font. Double-space, paginate, and staple your paper.