

WMST 489-502/SOCI 489-505/POLS 306-507
Reproduction and the Politics of Motherhood
TR, 9:35-10:50
BLOC 203

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Office hours: T, 11-12:30; R, 2:30-3:45, and by appointment

This course is designed to introduce you to some of the central controversies surrounding reproduction and motherhood. We begin with conception: what are the ethical and political dilemmas presented by increasingly sophisticated reproductive technology? To what degree are infertility treatment, surrogacy, and adoption governed by science, economics, and politics? We will discuss the notion of “risk” in pregnancy by analyzing debates surrounding fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal rights, childbirth, and breastfeeding. We then spend considerable time thinking about various contradictions that women confront once their children are born, especially the tensions that develop between work and family. We end by reflecting on the prospects for “reconstructive feminism.” Although much of the material we read speaks largely to white, middle-class women, we will pay particular attention to how controversies regarding reproduction and motherhood are shaped by race and socioeconomic status. We will also be concerned with the relationship between various forms of science and public policy and with the clashes between the so-called public and private spheres. Our goal will be to situate debates in their social and political contexts and to understand the cultural forces shaping public conversations about mothering.

The course has been conceptualized largely as a seminar, and its success depends on every student’s commitment to participating. *You are expected to complete all of the required readings before each class.* Grades will be based on unannounced quizzes (40%), an annotated bibliography (30%), and a 10-page research paper (30%). Guidelines for the bibliography and paper will be distributed early in the semester.

General Information

If you do not use your neo e-mail address, you should go to <http://neo.tamu.edu/> and arrange to have all messages forwarded to the account you read regularly. You are responsible for all information that I and the university send via neo.

Cell phones, pagers, and anything else that beeps, rattles, whistles, sings, or otherwise makes noise must be turned off before you enter the classroom. If you must have your phone on, please use the “vibrate” mode so as not to disturb the rest of the class. You will be asked to leave if you fail to comply with this rule.

You do not need to contact me if you miss a class, but you are responsible for the material covered. I will be happy to discuss this material with you in my office, but under *no* circumstances will I loan my notes to students.

Academic dishonesty involves acts other than plagiarism. For more information, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor>) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

Readings

The following books are required for the course. They are available on Evans paper reserve and may also be purchased at the MSC bookstore:

- Elizabeth A. Armstrong, *Conceiving Risk, Bearing Responsibility: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and the Diagnosis of Moral Disorder*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Alison Clarke-Stewart and Virginia D. Allhusen, (eds.), *What We Know About Childcare*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood: Why The Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, New York: Owl Books, 2001.
- Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, New York: Vintage, 1997.
- Deborah Spar, *The Baby Business: How Money, Science, and Politics Drive the Commerce of Conception*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006.
- Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

The following articles, also required, are available on electronic reserve:

- Leo R. Chavez, "A Glass Half Empty: Latina Reproduction and Public Discourse," *Human Organization*, 63:2 (Summer 2004), 173-88.
- Cynthia R. Daniels, "Between Fathers and Fetuses: The Social Construction of Male Reproduction and the Politics of Fetal Harm," *Signs*, 22:3 (1997), 589-616.
- Bernice Hausman, "Risky Business: Framing Childbirth in Hospital Settings," *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 26:1 (2005), 23-38.
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, "'I'm Here, But I'm There': The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood," *Gender and Society*, 11:5 (October 1997), 548-71.
- Anne Drapkin Lyerly, "Shame, Gender, Birth," *Hypatia*, 21:3 (2006), 101-18.

Schedule and Required Readings

Week One: Introduction to Course and The Baby Market

August 29:
introduction to course

August 31:

- Debra Spar, *The Baby Business*, 2006, preface and chapter one, ix-xix, 1-30.

Week Two: The Reproductive-Industrial Complex: Fertility and Surrogacy

September 5:

- Spar, *The Baby Business*, chapter two, 31-68.

September 7:

- Spar, *The Baby Business*, chapter three, 69-96.

Week Three: The Black Market: Race and Reproduction

September 12

- Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, 1997, introduction and chapter one, 3-55.

September 14:

- Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, chapter six, 246-93.

Week Four: Controlling Reproduction and Adoption

September 19:

- Leo R. Chavez, "A Glass Half Empty: Latina Reproduction and Public Discourse," *Human Organization*, 63:2 (Summer 2004), 173-88.
- Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, chapter five, 202-44.

September 21:

- Spar, *The Baby Business*, chapter six, 159-94.

Week Five: The Social Construction of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

September 26:

- Elizabeth Armstrong, *Conceiving Risk, Bearing Responsibility*, 2003, chapter one, 1-22.

September 28:

- Armstrong, *Conceiving Risk*, chapter three, 68-105.

Week 6: The Politics of Risk

October 3:

- Armstrong, *Conceiving Risk*, chapter four, 106-56.

October 5:

- Armstrong, *Conceiving Risk*, chapters five and six, 157-212.

Week Seven: Fetal Rights

October 10:

- Cynthia R. Daniels, "Between Fathers and Fetuses: The Social Construction of Male Reproduction and the Politics of Fetal Harm," *Signs*, 22:3 (1997), 589-616.
- Katha Pollitt, "'Fetal Rights': A New Assault on Feminism," in Ladd-Taylor and Umanksy (eds.), *Bad Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America*, 1998, 285-98.

October 12:

- Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, chapter four, 150-201.

Week Eight: Childbirth and Breastfeeding

October 17:

- Bernice Hausman, "Risky Business: Framing Childbirth in Hospital Settings," *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 26:1 (2005), 23-38.
- Anne Drapkin Lyerly, "Shame, Gender, Birth," *Hypatia*, 21:3 (2006), 101-18.

October 19:

- Joan Wolf, "Is Breast Really Best? Risk and Total Motherhood in the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign," manuscript.

Week Nine: Day Care and Child Care

October 24:

Alison Clarke-Stewart and Virginia D. Allhusen, *What We Know About Childcare*, 2005, 9-26, 83-111, 150-64.

October 26:

- Clarke-Stewart and Allhusen, *What We Know About Childcare*, 206-18.
- Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, “‘I’m Here, But I’m There’: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood,” *Gender and Society*, 11:5 (October 1997), 548-71.

Week Ten: Domesticity and Reconstructive Feminism

October 31:

- Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender*, 2000, chapter one (13-39).

November 2:

- Williams, *Unbending Gender*, chapter two (40-63).

****ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE BY 4PM, NOVEMBER 3, ACADEMIC 306****

Week Eleven:

November 7: TBA

November 9: extended office hours

Week Twelve: The “Mommy Tax” and Mothers’ “Choices”

November 14:

- Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood*, 2001, chapters four and five (65-109).

November 16:

- Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood*, chapter thirteen and conclusion (233-74).

Week Thirteen: Mothers and Ideal Workers in the Market

November 21:

- Williams, *Unbending Gender*, chapter three (64-113).

November 23: THANKSGIVING

Week Fourteen: Mothers and Ideal Workers in the Family

November 28:

- Williams, *Unbending Gender*, chapter four (114-41).

November 30: wrap-up

PAPERS ARE DUE BY 4PM, DECEMBER 1, ACADEMIC 306. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!