

REPRODUCTIVE POLITICS AND TECHNOLOGIES

21A.660/SP.400
MIT FALL 2007

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office hours: W 1:30-3:30 or by appointment

MW 11-12:30
16-220

This course begins from the premise that human reproductive events (conception, contraception, abortion, childbirth, fertility treatment, etc.) are not simply given by biological nature, but are made meaningful through cultural beliefs and shaped by social, medical, and political institutions. Through cross-cultural case studies, we will examine how reproductive experiences are impacted by health-related ideas and medical technologies, and by national and international population policies that are often implemented through controlling the bodies of women. We will explore how pregnancy, birth, and controlling fertility provide sites for gender formation, the reproduction of social inequalities, international “development” agendas, and state regulation of national populations.

Classes will combine lecture and discussion. Each class is keyed to a set of readings, and it is crucial that students keep up with the readings and be prepared to discuss them in class. Class participation — regular attendance and participation in discussion — will count strongly towards the final grade.

Requirements:

Participation. You *must* attend class and participate in discussions; this part of the course, including 4 Reading Responses (see below), will account for 20% of the final grade. Writing Reading Responses will help you feel prepared to speak up in class; if a student does not volunteer, she or he may be called upon to speak.

Reading Responses consist of a paragraph or two describing your reaction to one or more readings for a given session. Do not summarize, but rather give us your response to the reading. These should take no more than 30 minutes to write. Reading responses will be factored into the overall evaluation of your performance. You will be encouraged to post these on the course Stellar site (using the Forum function) prior to the class for which they are due to share your thoughts with your classmates.

Argumentative Essays. You will write 3 papers: 5 pgs (20% of final grade), 5 pgs (20% of final grade), 8-10 pages (40% of final grade). The first two essays will address a topic, to be handed out in class, based on course readings. The final paper, combining research and analysis, will give you an opportunity to explore in depth some aspect of reproductive health, experience, politics, and/or technology of your own choosing. It will be based on library research that you will conduct on a topic approved by the instructor.

Presentation. Students will give an oral presentation of the third paper, time limit to be determined on the basis of enrollment. Presentations are factored into the participation grade. Rehearsing is advisable.

Library Research

In researching your final paper, please consider making an appointment with the Anthropology Librarian, Michelle Baildon (baildon@mit.edu), MIT Humanities Library, Room 14S-222.

Writing Center

There is no writing tutor assigned to this course, but free, one-on-one, professional advice is available to you at the **Writing and Communication Center (12-132)**. You can get advice about any issue — from thinking of a topic to revising a draft, from deepening your ideas to overcoming writer's block, from punctuation to professionalism. Go to <http://web.mit.edu/writing> and click on the yellow sunburst. If you cannot find an open appointment slot, do not despair. There are always cancellations on the day of the appointment. Click on the Wait List (the blue strip that says "*Is the time that you want already reserved?*"). Whenever a cancellation occurs, you will be automatically notified by email. Because several people might receive that same message, go online ASAP to schedule that open spot; 96% of clients who want an appointment end up with one if they use the Wait List. Alternatively, you can try the Online Tutor at <http://web.mit.edu/writing/Center/onlinetutor.html>. The Center's hours are Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.; Friday 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; and Sundays, 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Required Books (available at the Coop):

Rayna Rapp (2000) *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America*. New York: Routledge.

M. Catherine Maternowska (2006) *Reproducing Inequities: Poverty and the Politics of Population in Haiti*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002) *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. Berkeley: University of California.

Sarah Franklin and Celia Roberts (2006) *Born and Made: An Ethnography of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

The remainder of the readings will be found on the course Stellar site — <http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/21A/sp07/21A.660/index.html> — for you to download.

The readings assigned for a class session follow the date and title of the session.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

PART I: WAYS OF KNOWING REPRODUCTION

Sept. 5 Introduction

Sept. 10 Social Meaning and Lived Experience of Motherhood

Ma Hongnan (with Ed Rosenberg) (1998) Learning Womanhood in China. *Anthropology and Humanism* 23(1):5-29.

Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg (1994) Plundered Kitchens and Empty Wombs: Fear of Infertility in the Cameroonian Grasslands. *Social Science and Medicine* 39: 463-474.

Barbara Kath Rothman (1989) Motherhood in a Technological Society. In *Recreating Motherhood*. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 27-38.

Sept. 12 Medicalization of Childbirth

Judith Walzer Leavitt (1980) Birthing and Anesthesia: The Debate over Twilight Sleep. *Signs* 6: 147-164.

Adrienne Rich (1976) Alienated Labor. In *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. Norton. Pp. 156-185.

Robbie Davis-Floyd (1993) The Technocratic Model of Birth. In *Feminist Theory in the Study of Folklore*, Linda Pershing and M. Jane Young, eds. University of Illinois. Pp. 297-326.

[optional: Atul Gawande (2006) The Score: How Childbirth Went Industrial. *The New Yorker*, October 9, pp. 59-67.]

reading response due

Sept. 17 Authoritative versus Experiential Knowledge

Carolyn Sargent and Grace Bascope (1996) Ways of Knowing about Birth in Three Cultures. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 10(2): 213-236.

Emily Abel and Carol Browner (1998) Selective Compliance with Biomedical Authority and the Uses of Experiential Knowledge. In *Pragmatic Women and Body Politics*. Margaret Lock and Patricia Kaufert, eds. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 310-326.

Susan Irwin and Brigitte Jordan (1987) Knowledge, Practice, and Power: Court-Ordered Cesarean Sections. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(3): 319-334.

Sept. 19 Pain, Pragmatism, and Birth "Choices" Cross-Culturally

Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer (2000) Pluralism and Pragmatism: Knowledge and Practice of Birth in Morocco. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14(2): 180-201.

Cecilia Van Hollen (2003) Invoking Vali: Painful Technologies of Modern Birth in South India. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 17(1): 49-77.

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

Sept. 24 NO CLASS

Sept. 26 The Liminal State of Pregnancy

Lucile Newman (1966) The Couvade: A Reply to Kupferer. *American Anthropologist* 68(1): 153-156.

Laury Oaks (2001) The New Rules of Pregnancy. In *Smoking and Pregnancy: The Politics of Fetal Protection*. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 19-52.

Elaine Gale Gerber (2002) Deconstructing Pregnancy: RU486, Seeing "Eggs," and the Ambiguity of Very Early Conceptions. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16(1): 92-108.

reading response due

Oct. 1 Fetal Imaginaries

Janelle S. Taylor (1998) Image of Contradiction: Obstetrical Ultrasound in American Culture. In *Reproducing Reproduction: Kinship, Power, and Technological Innovation*. Sarah Franklin and Helena Ragoné, eds. University of Pennsylvania Press. Pp. 15-45.

Lynn M. Morgan (2000) Magic and a Little Bit of Science: Technoscience, Ethnoscience, and the Social Construction of the Fetus. In *Bodies of Technologies: Women's Involvement with Reproductive Medicine*. Ann Rudinow Saetnan, Nelly Oudshoorn, and Marta Kirejczyk, eds. Pp. 355-367.

Rayna Rapp (2000) Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America. Routledge. Chapter 2: pp. 23-52.

Oct. 3 Prenatal Diagnostic Testing

Rayna Rapp (2000) Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America. Routledge. Chapters 1, 3-5; pp. 1-22; 53-128.

Oct. 8 NO CLASS

Oct. 10 *view in class*: The Last Abortion Clinic [professor will be away]

Rayna Rapp (2000) Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America. Routledge. Chapters 6, 7, 9.

Oct. 15 Moral Pioneers or Culture Brokers? situating agency and ethics in reproductive decision-making

finish reading Rapp (skipping chapter 8) and continue discussing amniocentesis in US alongside:

Tine M. Gammeltoft (2007) Prenatal Diagnosis in Postwar Vietnam: Power,

Subjectivity, and Citizenship. *American Anthropologist* 109(1): 153-163.

Tsipy Ivry (2006) At the Back Stage of Prenatal Care: Japanese Ob-Gyns Negotiating Prenatal Diagnosis. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(4): 441-468.

FIRST PAPER DUE: critical book review of *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus*

PART II: CONTROLLING BIRTHS, BODIES, FAMILY SIZE, AND POPULATIONS

Oct. 17 Histories of Birth Control and Eugenics

Janet Farrell Brodie (1994) A Story of Love and Family Limitation: "X" for Sexual Intercourse + Epilogue. In *Contraception and Abortion in 19th-Century America*. Pp. 9-37; 289-294.

Linda Gordon (1974) Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of the Birth Control Movement, and Social Purity and Eugenics. In *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America*. Penguin Books. Pp. 95-135.

Dorothy Roberts (1997) The Dark Side of Birth Control. In *Killing the Black Body*. Vintage Books. Pp. 56-103.

Oct. 22 Developing Contraceptives

Adele E. Clarke (2000) Maverick Reproductive Scientists and the Production of Contraceptives, 1915-2000+. In *Bodies of Technologies: Women's Involvement with Reproductive Medicine*. Ann Rudinow Saetnan, Nelly Oudshoorn, and Marta Kirejczyk, eds. Pp. 37-89.

Angela Wall (1999) Biting the Magic Bullet: Reproductive Freedom and the Promise of Norplant. In *Playing Dolly: Technocultural Formations, Fantasies, and Fictions of Assisted Reproduction*. E. Ann Kaplan and Susan Squier, eds. New York: Routledge. Pp. 57-79.

view in class: The Pill

Oct. 24 Why Users Matter: Disciplining Subjects through Contraceptive Technologies

Nelly Oudshoorn (2003) Clinical Trials as a Cultural Niche in Which to Configure the Gender Identities of Users: The Case of Male Contraceptive Development. In *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technology*. Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch, eds. MIT Press. Pp. 209-227.

L.L. Wynn and James Trussell (2006) The Social Life of Emergency Contraception in the United States: Disciplining Pharmaceutical Use, Disciplining Sexuality, and Constructing Zygotic Bodies. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(3): 297-320.

Oct. 29 Understanding Abortion Practice and Politics

Rosalind Pollack Petchesky (1984) Women's Consciousness and the Abortion

Decision. In *Abortion and Women's Choice: The State, Sexuality, and Reproductive Freedom*. Northeastern. Pp. 368-387.

Faye Ginsburg (1987) *Procreation Stories: Reproduction, Nurture, and Procreation in Life Narratives of Abortion Activists*. *American Ethnologist* 14: 623-636.

Heather Paxson (2002) *Rationalizing Sex: Family Planning and the Making of Modern Lovers in Urban Greece*. *American Ethnologist* 29(2): 307-344.

take a look at "in the news" stories of recent Supreme Court decisions

reading response due

Oct. 31 Family Planning Ideal and Reality: The case study of Mexico

Mary S. Thompson (2000) *Family Planning or Reproductive Health? Interpreting Policy and Providing Family Planning Services in Highland Chiapas, Mexico*. In *Contraception Across Cultures: Technologies, Choices, Constraints*. Andrew Russell, Elisa J. Sobo and Mary Thompson, eds. Oxford: Berg. Pp. 221-243.

Matthew Gutmann (2005) *Scoring Men: Vasectomies and the Totemic Illusion of Male Sexuality in Oaxaca*. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 29(1): 79-101.

Jennifer S. Hirsch (2003) *Fertility Decline, Contraceptive Choice, and Mexican Companionate Marriages*. In *A Courtship After Marriage: Sexuality and Love in Mexican Transnational Families*. University of California Press. Pp. 231-264.

see "in the news" stories about Mexico City's recent legalization of abortion

PART III: REPRODUCTION AS POLITICS

Nov. 5 Anthropology and Demography: Population Planning and its Limits

Susan Greenhalgh (1995) *Anthropology Theorizes Reproduction: Integrating Practice, Political Economic, and Feminist Perspectives*. In *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Susan Greenhalgh, ed. Pp. 3-28.

Susan Greenhalgh (2003) *Planned Births, Unplanned Persons: "Population" in the Making of Chinese Modernity*. *American Ethnologist* 30(2): 196-215.

Nov. 7 The Population "Implosion" in Europe

Gail Kligman (1995) *Political Demography: The Banning of Abortion in Ceausescu's Romania*. In *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, eds. University of California Press. Pp. 234-255.

Carrie B. Douglass (2005) *Introduction to Barren States: The Population "Implosion" in Europe*. Oxford: Berg. Pp. 1-19.

Elizabeth Krause (2005) "Toys and Perfume": Imploding Italy's Population Paradox and Motherly Myths. *Barren States: The Population "Implosion" in Europe*. Oxford: Berg. Pp. 159-182.

Nov. 12 NO CLASS

Nov. 14 Toward a Political Economy of Fertility

M. Catherine Maternowska, 2006, *Reproducing Inequities: Poverty and the Politics of Population in Haiti*. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 1-102.

SECOND PAPER DUE

Nov. 19 Poverty, Politics and Reproductive Agency

M. Catherine Maternowska, 2006, *Reproducing Inequities: Poverty and the Politics of Population in Haiti*. Rutgers University Press. Pp. 103-157.

Nov. 21 Rationalizing Populations through National Family Planning Policies

Kathryn Robinson (2001) *Government Agency, Women's Agency: Feminisms, Fertility, and Population Control*. In *Borders of Being: Citizenship, Fertility, and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*. Margaret Jolly and Kalpana Ram, eds. University of Michigan Press. Pp. 36-57.

Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002) *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 23-80.

view in class: Something Like a War

reading response due

Nov. 26 Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Women

Rhoda Kanaaneh (2002) *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 1-22; 81-228.

FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Nov. 28 Searching for Motherhood: The Social Construction of Infertility

Lisa Handwerker (1995) *The Hen that Can't Lay an Egg: Conceptions of Female Infertility in Modern China*. In *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Marcia Inhorn (2000) *Missing Motherhood: Infertility, Technology, and Poverty in Egyptian Women's Lives*. In *Ideologies and Technologies of Motherhood: Race, Class, Sexuality, Nationalism*. Helena Ragoné and France Winddance Twine, eds. Routledge. Pp. 139-168.

Dec. 3 Treating Childlessness: In Vitro Fertilization

Margarete Sandelowski (1991) Compelled to Try: The Never-Enough Quality of Conceptive Technology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 5:29-47.

Charis M. Cussins (1998) Ontological Choreography: Agency for Women Patients in an Infertility Clinic. In *Differences in Medicine: Unraveling Practices, Techniques, and Bodies*. Marc Berg and Annemarie Mol, eds. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 166-201.

Heather Paxson (2006) Reproduction as Spiritual Kin Work: Orthodoxy, IVF, and the Moral Economy of Motherhood in Greece. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 30: 481-505.

Dec. 5 Implications for Identity and Kinship in Reproductive Technologies

Cori Hayden (1995) Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reformulating Biology in Lesbian Kinship. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(1): 41-63.

Heléna Ragone (1999) The Gift of Life: Surrogate Motherhood, Gamete Donation, and Constructions of Altruism. In *Transformative Motherhood: On Giving and Getting in a Consumer Culture*. Linda L. Layne, ed. New York: New York University Press. Pp. 65-88.

Gay Becker (2002) Deciding Whether to Tell Children about Donor Insemination. In *Interpreting Infertility: Childlessness, Gender and New Reproductive Technology in Global Perspective*. Marcia Inhorn and Frank van Balen, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 119-133.

NY Times articles on donor egg and sperm

Dec. 10 Reproductive Futures

Sarah Franklin and Celia Roberts (2006) *Born and Made: An Ethnography of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Selected Chapters TBA.

Dec. 12 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPER DUE