

As we begin this new decade and new year, I want us to collectively acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. And, I would like us to pay our respects to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

Instructor: Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa

Tue and Thu: 9:30-11:00am

Office Hours: By appointment (online, or telephone)

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE AND RACE **Spring 2021**

Course Description

Access to reproductive care is the most significant indicator of social inequality. The rights to have children, or not, and parent are deeply stratified across societies. And childhood inequalities have persistent, life-long health effects. In this course we will examine reproductive outcomes for women in order to study social justice.

[Reproductive justice](#) is defined “as the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.” Building from Loretta Ross, SisterSong, and National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, our working definition of reproduction justice for this course encompasses diverse families’ rights to reproduction, processes of becoming pregnant and giving birth, the right to give birth to a child with disabilities, the right to prenatal care, neonatal care, and child care. Taking our cue from reproductive justice activists and scholars, our class readings and discussions will consider the complete physical and mental well-being of women (broadly defined), children, and their families which can *potentially* be achieved when they have the economic, social and political power, and resources to make healthy decisions about their sexuality, and reproduction.

Reproductive justice is a goal which is almost always out of reach because resources are unevenly distributed, based on race, gender, sexuality, abilities/ disabilities, citizenship, and social class. As a result, developing and developed nations are racked with social inequality when it comes to reproductive matters. From slavery, access to birth control, stratified reproduction, sex selective abortions, and new reproductive technologies, this course will focus on difficult topics; but, no answers will be provided. The expectation is that you will learn, and answer for yourself what you mean by reproductive justice, and how you think it can be achieved. My aim is that we will emerge at the end of the semester with an open mind regarding women’s and children’s health, and a more complicated, empathetic understanding of what reproductive justice means. You will, hopefully, take the term reproductive justice into your own linguistic repertoire, and from there, attempt to make it a part of your worldview and everyday life.

NOTE: This course carries flags for Cultural Diversity in the U.S., Ethics, and Writing.

Readings

Readings are on Canvas (marked with asterix), or online and accessible through our library resources.

Special Accommodations

Students with special needs should present a letter from the Services for Students with Disabilities Office. We can jointly make accommodations so that you can get all you want out of this class.

Your rights and responsibilities in the classroom

Responsibilities

1. Complete **all** reading assignments; you get more out of lectures and discussions if you are prepared.
2. Participate actively in class; ask questions, raise doubts, disagree with others politely. Take responsibility for your own, and others’ learning experience.
3. Attend class regularly. If you are going to miss class, let me know in advance. Missed classes affect your grade (see below).
4. Please do not indulge in academic mis-conduct, which includes plagiarism (from books; internet sources including online articles and papers; and, articles).

5. Missed e/ late submissions on assignments: **I will not accept late submissions.**
6. If you have any doubts or questions regarding reading materials, lecture, or class discussions, please contact me. I am not good at answering emails, but I am available over the telephone.
7. Please turn off your phones when in class.
8. Please print out all your readings. We refer to readings often, and having a hard copy is absolutely essential for a good class.

Rights

1. You have the right to express respectfully your perspectives regarding the readings, and be heard. Censorship of classmates is strongly discouraged.
 2. You have the right to receive answers, and guidance on where to get further information.
 3. The right to a fair grade, which does not mean an A.
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Course expectations and grading

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken every time we meet; you may miss up with 2 classes without affecting your grade. After that, every class you miss drops your grade by ½ a grade, until you earn an F.

Participation and Current Events Discussion: 10%

I encourage active participation in class. By participation I do not want you to monopolize discussion, but make remarks that draw people into talking about the issues you want to discuss. Respectful disagreement is an excellent way to learn.

My hope is that you are up on current events, and read newspapers/ listen to the radio and otherwise keep up with happenings around the world. Current news is filled with reproductive politics. As part of your course grade please bring in news items and direct our attention to the suitable website that are relevant to the course. We will start each day with a 5-10 minute discussion on current developments in reproductive justice matters not just in the U.S., but also in other parts of the world (in previous classes we talked about the Zika virus, the criminalization of miscarriage in Guatemala, etc).

Take home exams (two): 35% each

I encourage group work on exams. Please share notes, develop outlines together, and learn from each other. However, each of you will write up your answers individually and turn in individuals exams. We will peer evaluate your exams in class. You have the opportunity to re-write and resubmit the first exam.

Life History: 20%

Please conduct one life history with an older person or a friend. Summarize the person's thoughts, and experiences. In the second section of your paper provide an introspection on your own reproductive ideals for yourself. In the third section compare and contrast your thoughts to the person you've spoken with, and think through what might influence these differences. Up to 8 double spaced pages.

Please write up 500 words on the project, and share (right after spring break) with the instructor and with classmates to develop effective strategies to writing your final paper.

Peer reviews and re-writes:

You will peer-review each others' work in class on a regular basis. You have the opportunity to re-write the first exam based on instructor feedback. The Life History paper will receive feedback from the instructor and peers at a draft stage.

Title IX on UT-Austin, and Senate Bill 212

As an employee of the University of Texas at Austin, I am a mandatory reporter of any incident of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault and misconduct that students, staff and faculty share with me. I have the duty to report incidents involving any of the following: faculty, staff, any student (including a student identified as a "boyfriend" or "partner" or similar), anyone visiting campus (including guest speakers, visiting professors, visiting scholars), and

alumni. I also have to report second hand incidents that I learn about; for example, overhearing a conversation about an incident of sexual violence involving someone else, and any of the persons mentioned above.

If you need to talk with someone who can maintain confidentiality, please contact University Health Services (512-471-4955 or 512-475-6877) or the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center (512-471-3515 or 512-471-2255). I strongly recommend that you make use of these services for any needed support and that you report any Title IX incidents to the [Title IX Office](#).” For more information, please see <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>

Course Schedule

Jan 19 and 21
Introductions

Documentary film to be watched in class, *Fragile: Destined By Birth*, <https://amz.onl/iot3cpE>

Jan 26 and 29
Knowledge is Political: Intro to the Female Body

1. Michelle Murphy. 2004. “Immodest Witnessing: The Epistemology of Vaginal Self-Examination in the U.S. Feminist Self-Help Movement.” *Feminist Studies*, 30 (1): 115-147.
 2. Terri Kapsalis, 1997. Excerpts from *Public Privates: Performing Gynecology from Both Ends of the Speculum*. Duke University Press.
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Feb 2 and 4
Stratified Reproduction and Birth Control as Reproductive Harm

1. Shellee Colen, 1995. “Like a Mother to Them: Stratified Reproduction and West Indian Child Care Workers and their Employers in New York,” *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Edited by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=KiILFy6TKCgC&oi=fnd&pg=PA78&dq=shellee+colen+s+stratified+reproduction&ots=IaxELR5rfl&sig=ZXL1J-6vxvY-F61AtVSr4isD60M#v=onepage&q=shellee%20colen%20stratified%20reproduction&f=false>
 2. Chapters “From Norplant to the Contraceptive Vaccine,” and “The Dark Side of Birth Control” from Dorothy Roberts’ 1997 *Killing the Black Body*.
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Feb 9 and 11
Abortion Politics

1. Ch. “Are mothers persons?” from Susan Bordo’s 1995 *Unbearable Weight*.
 2. Loretta Ross, 2006. “Understanding Reproductive Justice: Transforming the Pro-Choice Movement.” *Off Our Backs*, Vol. 36 (4):14-19
 3. Documentary film: *62 Days*
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Feb 16 and 18
Abortion politics (continued): When reproduction becomes a crime

1. Dorothy Roberts, 1991. “Punishing drug addicts who have babies: Women of color, equality, and the right of privacy.” Faculty Scholarship. Paper 1370. http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty_scholarship/1370
 2. Sex selective abortions, excerpts from Nivedita Menon’s *Justice Interruptus*.
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Feb 23 and 26
Eugenics

1. Exerpts from Cohen's *Imbiciles*.
 2. Documentary film to be watched in class *The Lynchburg Story* (83 minutes)
 3. Genevieve Field, "Should parents of children with severe disabilities be allowed to stop their growth?" *NYT*, March 22, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/magazine/should-parents-of-severely-disabled-children-be-allowed-to-stop-their-growth.html>
 4. Documentary film to be watched in class: *Mimi and Dona*
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Mar 1 and 3
Population control in India

1. Excerpt from Erhlich's 1968 *Population Bomb*.
 2. Excerpt from Rudrappa's *Discounted Life*.
 3. Documentary film to watch in class, *Something Like a War*
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Mar 8 and 10
Population control in the U.S.

1. Bonnie Mass. 1977. "Puerto Rico: A case of population control." *Latin American Perspectives*. 4 (4).
2. Briggs, Laura. 1998. "Discourses of "forced sterilization" in Puerto Rico: The Problem with the Speaking Subaltern." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 10 (2).
3. Documentary film to be watched in class, *Dawnland*.

YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR FIRST EXAM ON MARCH 8, 2021

Mar 15 and 17 SPRING BREAKSPRING BREAKSPRING BREAK

Mar 22, In class peer reviews of exams.

Mar 24, Discussion of life histories.

Please turn in the final version of your 1st exam on Friday, March 25.

Mar 29 and Apr 1
Population control in China

1. Gabe Wang, 1996. "China's Population Control Policy," *China Report* 32(2).
 2. Kathleen Davis. 2006. "Brides, Bruises and the Border: The trafficking of North Korean women into China." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 26 (1): 131-141.
 3. Documentary Film: *One Child Nation*.
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Apr 6 and 8
Sterilization abuse in the U.S

1. Novak et. al, 2018. "Disproportionate Sterilization of Latinos Under California's Eugenic Sterilization Program, 1920-1945." *AM J PUBLIC HEALTH*, May2018; 108(5): 611-613.
 2. Whatcott, Jess. 2018. "No selves to consent: Women's prisons, sterilization, and the biopolitics of informed consent." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2018-Vol.44 (1), p.131-153.
 3. Documentary film to be watched in class, *No Mas Bebés*.
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Apr 13 and 15
Adoption

1. Excerpts from Arissa Oh's 2015 *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption*.
 2. Documentary film to watch in class, *First Person Plural*
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Apr 20 and 22
Global Surrogacy

1. Sharmila Rudrappa, 2012. India's Reproductive Assembly Line. *Contexts*. 11 (2).
 2. Documentary film to watch in class: *Google Baby*
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Apr 27 and 29
On Breast milk

1. Documentary film: *Milk, The Politics of Infant Feeding*.
2. Cassia Roth, 2018. "Black Nurse, White Milk: Breastfeeding, slavery, and abolition in 19th century Brazil." *Journal of Human Lactation*. 34 (4): 804-808.
3. Victoria Langland. 2019. "Expressing Motherhood: Wet Nursing and Human Milk Banking in Brazil." *Journal of Human Lactation*. 35 (2): 354-361.
4. Stephanie Jones-Rogers. 2017. "She could... spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner: white mothers and enslaved wet nurses' invisible labor in American slave markets." *A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*. 38 (2): 33-355.

YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR FINAL EXAM ON APRIL 29

May 4, Peer review of exams in class

May 6, Discussions of life histories and wrap-up

TURN IN FINAL EXAMS AND LIFE HISTORIES ON MAY 7, 2021

Semester schedule at a glance

Week	Date	Topic	Important dates
1	Jan 19 Jan 21	Intro. Documentary to be watched in class. <i>Fragile: Destined by Birth</i>	
2	Jan 26 Jan 28	Gynecological self-exams The speculum, Anarcha, Betsey, Lucy, and Marion Sims	
3	Feb 2 Feb 4	Stratified reproduction Birth control as racial harm—Dorothy Roberts’ readings	
4	Feb 9 Feb 11	Abortion politics: Are Mothers Persons? Doc film, 62 Days	
5	Feb 16 Feb 18	Sex Selective Abortions When reproduction becomes a crime, Dorothy Roberts’ reading.	
6	Feb 23 Feb 25	Eugenics, Documentary film: <i>Lynchburg Story</i> Eugenics (cont.), Documentary film: <i>Mimi and Dona</i>	
7	Mar 1 Mar 3	Population Control: India Documentary film: <i>Something Like a War</i>	
8	Mar 8 Mar 10	Sterilization abuse in the U.S. Documentary film: <i>Dawnland</i>	You’ll receive your first exam on Mar 8
9	Mar 16 Mar 18	Spring break Spring break	
10	Mar 22 Mar 24	Peer review of first exam, and discussion of life histories Documentary film:	Bring exam to class Final draft of 1 st exam due Mar 25.
11	Mar 29 Mar 31	Population control in China Documentary Film: <i>One Child Nation</i>	
12	Apr 6 Apr 8	Sterilization abuse in the U.S. Documentary film, <i>No Mas Bebés</i>	
13	Apr 13 Apr 15	Adoption (Cold War origins of Korean international adoption) Documentary film— <i>first person plural</i>	
14	Apr 20 Apr 22	Surrogacy Documentary film, <i>Google Baby</i>	
15	Apr 27 Apr 29	On breastmilk politics, Film: <i>Milk, The Politics of Infant Feeding</i> Race and breastmilk (mostly on Brazil)	You will receive final exam
	May 4 May 6	Discussions on life histories Peer review of final exams	Life histories and final due on May 7

Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. “Environmental Reproductive Justice: Intersections in an American Indian Community Impacted by Environmental Contamination.” *Environmental Sociology*. Published online September 30 2017. DOI: 10.1080/23251042.2017.1381898