

As we begin this new year, we collectively acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. And, we 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.

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE AND RACE

Spring 2023

Course Description

Access to reproductive care is the most significant indicator of social inequality. The rights to have children (or not), and parent children are deeply stratified across societies. 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 the 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 and child care. Taking our cue from reproductive justice activists and scholars, we 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.

A large part of the focus in this course is on reproductive matters faced by cis-gendered, straight women. This is a short-coming and a problem, but my hope is that you will learn from the readings and each other, and think through the questions of difference and inequality that are at the heart of reproductive injustices.

Reproductive justice 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 inequalities 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 hope is that you will find answers for yourself about 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 health, and a more complicated, empathetic understanding of what reproductive justice means. You will, hopefully, attempt to make reproductive a part of your worldview and everyday life.

Readings

Readings are on Canvas.

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. 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 your readings. We refer to readings often, and having a hard copy is 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

I encourage active participation in class. By participation you will not monopolize discussion, but make remarks that draw people into talking about issues you want to discuss. Respectful disagreement is a good 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 in the US and other parts of the world.

Four assignments, take-home (you have 6 days to work on them)

Your grade is based on four written assignments you will work on over the course of the semester. I encourage group work—share notes, and thoughts, and work on your papers individually. You will have the opportunity to peer-review each other's work on a regular basis. You will also have the opportunity to re-write one assignment, with instructor and peer guidance.

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 incidents of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault and misconduct that students, staff and faculty share with me. This is mandated by Texas law, and university rules. I have to report incidents involving any of the following: faculty, staff, student (including a student identified as a “boyfriend” or “partner” or similar), anyone visiting campus (including guest speakers, visiting professors and scholars), and alumni.

I also have to report secondhand 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 support, and you report any Title IX incidents to the [Title IX Office](https://titleix.utexas.edu/). For information, please see <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>

Course Schedule

Introductions: What is reproductive justice, Jan 9 and 11

- Loretta Ross and Ricki Salinger. 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. On RJ history.
 - Documentary film to be watched in class, *The Chicago Maternity Center Story*. 1976. (59 minutes).
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Knowledge is Political, (Jan 16, No class. MLK Day) Jan 18

- Michelle Murphy. 2004. "Immodest Witnessing." *Feminist Studies*, 30 (1): 115-147
 - Doc. to watch in class, *Taking Our Bodies Back: The Women's Health Movement*, 1974. (33 min).
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Creating Knowledge is Political, Jan 23 and 25

- K. McKittrick. 2010. "Science quarrels sculpture: The politics of reading Sarah Baartman. *Mosaic*.
 - R. Dudley, 2021. "The role of feminist health humanities scholarship and Black women's artistry in re-shaping the origin narrative of US gynecology. *Humanities*. Vol. 10 (1).
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The historical legacies of American motherhood: Slavery. Jan 30 and Feb 1

- H. Spillers. "Mother's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book." *Diacritics*, Summer, 1987.
 - D. Roberts. "Reproduction in Bondage," Ch. 1. *Killing the Black Body*. 1999.
 - A. Cooper. 2017. "'Away I goin' to find my mama': Self-emancipation, migration, and kinship in refugee camps in the Civil War era." *The Journal of African American History*. Vol. 102 (4).
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Tuesday Feb, 7. Please email your 1st essays to me (25 points). No readings for Feb 6.

Abortion Politics, Feb 6 (no readings) and 8

- Documentary film to be watched in class, *Jane, An Abortion Service*, 2010. (58 minutes).
 - Ch. "Are mothers persons?" from Susan Bordo's 1995 *Unbearable Weight*.
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Abortion politics (continued): When reproduction becomes a crime, Feb 13 and 15

- Dorothy Roberts, 1991. "Punishing drug addicts who have babies: Women of color, equality, and the right of privacy." Faculty Scholarship. Paper 1370.
 - Documentary film to watch in class, *Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa*, 2021. (13 minutes).
 - N. Menon, "Abortion: When pro-choice is anti-women." Ch. 2 from *Recovering Subversion*. 2004.
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Tuesday Feb 21. Please email me your second assignment (25 points). No readings for Feb 20.

Eugenics, Feb 20 and 22

- Documentary film to be watched in class *In the shadow of the Reich: Nazi medicine*, 1997 (53 min).
 - **Suggested reading.** Klautke, E. 2016. “‘The Germans are beating us at our own game’: American eugenics and the German sterilization law of 1933.” *History of Human Sciences*. Vol. 29(3): 25-43.
 - Rayna Rapp, “Accounting for amniocentesis,” Ch. 2 in *Testing women, testing the fetus*.
 - 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>
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Disability Rights, Feb 27 and March 1

- Barclay, J. 2014. “Mothering the ‘useless’: Black motherhood, disability, and slavery. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*. Vol 2 (2): 115-140.
 - Barclay, J. 2021. “Reimagined community: Disability and the making of slave families, communities, and culture.” Ch. 2 from *The Mark of Slavery: Disability, Race and Gender in Antebellum America*.
 - Documentary film to be watched in class: *Mimi and Dona*, 2015 (57 minutes).
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Population control, March 6 and 8

- Paul Erlich. 1968. *Population Bomb*. Intro. chapter.
 - Documentary film to watch in class, *What Paul Erlich missed (and still does)*...
 - Greenhalgh. 1996. “The social construction of population science” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 38 (1): 26-66.
 - S. Rudrappa, “Reproductive Interventions,” Ch. 1 from *Discounted Life*. 2015.
 - Documentary film to watch in class, *Something Like a War*. 2008. (52 minutes).
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Spring Break March 13 – 19, 2023

Population control, US, March 20 and 22

- Please watch over break available as a library resource, *La Operacion*, 2007. (40 minutes). https://search.lib.utexas.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991058013647906011&context=L&vid=01UTA_U_INST:SEARCH&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,la%20operacion&offset=0
 - 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).
 - Novak et. al, 2018. “Disproportionate Sterilization of Latinos Under California’s Eugenic Sterilization Program, 1920-1945.” *Am J Public Health*, 108(5): 611-613.
 - Documentary to watch in class, *No Mas Bebés*.
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Tuesday March 28. Please email me your third assignment (25 points). No readings for March 27.

Indigenous Origins of Environmental Reproductive Justice in the US, March 27 and 29

- Documentary film to be watched in class, *Ama*. 2019 (74 minutes).
 - National Women's Law Center, If you really care about environmental justice, you should care about reproductive justice. Fact Sheet.
 - Hoover, E. 2018. "Environmental Reproductive Justice: Intersections in an American Indian Community Impacted by Environmental Contamination." *Environ Soc*.
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Environmental Reproductive Justice, April 3 and 5

- E.A. Mosley, C.K. Bouse, and Kelli Stidham Hall, 2015. "Water, human rights, and reproductive justice: Implications for women in Detroit and Monrovia." *Environmental Justice*. 8 (3): 78-85.
 - Rachel A. Vaughn. 2017. "'Choosing' wisely: Paralleling Food Sovereignty and Reproductive Justice." *Frontiers*, Vol 38 (3): 22-46.
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Boarding schools, foster care, and adoption as reproductive justice issues, April 10 and 12

- Navia, Henderson, and Levi. "Uncovering colonial legacies: Voices of indigenous youth and child welfare (dis)placements." *Anthro. & Ed. Q.* 49 (2): 146-164.
 - D. Roberts, 2012. "Prisons, foster care, and the systemic punishment of Black mothers." *UCLA Law Review*. 59. 1474.
 - Documentary to watch in class, *First Person Plural*.
 - **Suggested**, Chs. Intro, 1, 2 and 5. Arissa Oh. *To Save the Children of Korea: The Cold War Origins of International Adoption*. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/lib/utxa/reader.action?docID=3568943>
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Tuesday April 18. Please email me your fourth assignment (25 points). No readings for April 17.

Surrogacy, Apr 18 and 20

- Documentary film to watch in class, *Google Baby*. 2009. 76 minutes.
 - Sharmila Rudrappa, 2012. India's Reproductive Assembly Line. *Contexts*. 11 (2).
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Wrap-up, April 24

Last class day. No readings.
