In this reading-intensive, “writing flag” seminar, students will explore the experience of American women, in sickness and in health. Students will learn about medical and biological views of woman and women’s health and the social context of those views. For the majority of humankind, health and illness exist in a social (and historical context). We will strive to understand how the views of medical science and social science intersected with women’s experience.

Because there is no such thing as a universal “woman’s experience,” it is important that we pay attention to how class, race, and ethnicity influenced women’s circumstances and the ways health and ill-health were experienced and understood.

We will consider these occurrences or issues in women’s lives and how these events affected women’s health (or illness) or affected particular understandings of women’s health:
- Menarche and Menstruation
- Sexuality
- Fertility and Birth Control
- Childbirth
- Disease, specifically Breast Cancer
- Mental Illness
- Aging and Menopause

**Assigned Reading:**

- **Margaret Smith/Linda Holmes, Listen to Me Good.** UCP, 1996.
- **Elaine Tyler May, America and the Pill:** A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation. Basic Books, 2010
- **Additional articles will be posted on Canvas or available online.**

**Grading:**

- 60% of the course grade will be based on writing assignments.* Your writing assignments will be graded according to this criteria:
  1) Clarity of expression, or, adherence to generally accepted canons of grammar and punctuation
2) Quality of analysis
3) Organization
• 40% of the course grade will be based on class participation. You should read and consider the assigned readings before class. You should share your thoughts and questions about the readings in class. The class participation grade will be based upon
  1) Participation in large group (whole class, 21 students) discussion
  2) Participation in small group discussions
  3) Performance on occasional short, in-class quizzes about the reading assignments.
• I will use the plus/minus grading system in grading your essays and in reporting your final course grade.

*Writing Assignments
• One 2-3 page essay due on 9/22 about some aspect of the history of menarche, menstruation or female sexuality.
• One 2-3 page essay due 10-/15 on some aspect of the history of birth control, abortion, or female sexuality
• 10-12 page essay of research and analysis. See instructions on page 7.

Be sure that you note the policies and resources listed on pages 8-9.

Class Schedule with Reading and Writing Assignments

Th 8/25  Introduction

Tu 8/30  Biology, Sex, and Culture


Menarche and Menstruation

Th 9/1
Tu 9/6


Th 9/8

Tu 9/13

**Start Thinking about First Essay, due Th 9/22**

2-3 page essay on one of the following topics:
1. How did 19th century views about menarche and menstruation reflect contemporary ideas about womanhood?
2. Compare the menarche rituals of the Oglala Sioux with those of 19th or 20th century white women.
3. How did the experience of menarche and menstruation change between 1850 and 1950?
4. What, according to Nancy Cott, was “passionlessness”? Why was “passionlessness” fashionable (or, at least, expected) for 19th century middle- and upper-class American women? Though Degler wrote his article before Cott, what does he have to say about the sexuality of white middle- and upper-class American women?
5. Consider 19th or early 20th century sexual “pathologies” among women in America?
6. Compare sexual practices and norms among slave women with the expectations or experiences of white middle-class American women?

**Sexuality**

Th 9/15

Carl Degler, “What Ought to Be and What Was: Women’s Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century,” Access from UT Libraries SCOUT

Tu 9/20

Elizabeth Lunbeck, “A New Generation of Women”**: Progressive Psychiatrists
And the Hypersexual Female.” Feminist Studies, 10:3, Oct. 1987. Use title to access via SCOUT


**Th 9/22**  NO Class. **Work on your essay.** If you have questions about punctuation or footnotes, or other aspects of writing, the University Writing Center has lots of answers in the online handouts: http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts/ Also, you can also make an appointment to speak with a member of the UWC staff: http://uwc.utexas.edu/appointments-new/

**First Essay Due by midnight; submit via Turnitin/Canvas.**
2-3 page essay; see page

**Birth Control and Abortion**

**Tu 9/27**


**Th 9/29** Documentary video: “Margaret Sanger”

**Tu 10/4**
Angela Davis, “Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights,” Race, Poverty, And the Environment, 4:2, July 1993. Access via SCOUT.


**Start thinking about 2nd Essay**
2-3 pages on some aspect or controversy regarding birth control, abortion, or female sexuality. Due, Friday, 10/15, midnight.

**Th 10/6**
Elaine Tyler May, America + the Pill, Introduction through chapter 4.
Tu 10/11
Eugenics and Involuntary Sterilization: Overview by Seaholm


Th 10/13
Criminalization of Abortion, overview by Seaholm


Shirley Chisholm, “Facing the Abortion Question,” on Canvas.

Saturday, 10/22, midnight: Submit 2nd Essay via Turnitin/Canvas

Childbirth

Tu 10/18 Begin reading Wertz and Wertz, Lying-In

Th 10/20
Wertz & Wertz, chapters 2-5

Tu 10/25
Wertz & Wertz, chapter 6-8.


Th 10/27
Documentary Video: “The Business of Being Born”

Tu 11/1
Listen to me Good, Smith/Holmes. You should read all of this, but it is quite short.

Mental Health

Th 11/3
Nancy Tomes, “Historical Perspectives on Women and Mental Illness,” from
Women, Health, and Medicine in America, ed. Rima Apple, on Canvas.


Tu 11/8

Seaholm talks about your final essay: research and writing.

Menopause and the Reproductive Cancers

Th 11/10

Tu 11/15
Barron Lerner, MD, The Breast Cancer Wars, chapters 1-5.

Th 11/17
Lerner, chapters 6-9

Tu 11/22
Lerner, chapters 10-13

Th 11/24 Thanksgiving Holidays 11/24 – 11/27

Tu 11/29
Summary discussions; Discussions about final essays.

Th 12/1
Peer Review of Final Essays: Bring first draft of at least 5 pages.

12/8 FINAL ESSAY DUE. Submit via Turnitin/Canvas.

Final Essay: 10-12 essay, research and analysis. Due 12/8
Assignment details on next page.
YOU ARE THE HISTORIAN

Study and interpret popular culture articles and/or advertisements about one or two topics related to women’s health

In your final essay, you should present your analysis of changing (or unchanging) attitudes, perceptions, or practices regarding one or two particular women’s health issues. You will do this by studying the literature of popular print culture. Your task is to compare and contrast the discussion you find in one decade with that of a later decade.

For example:
1. Compare articles about menstruation or premenstrual tension found in women’s magazines from the 1950s with articles found in women’s magazines from the 1980s, or later.
2. Compare articles about childbirth found in women’s magazines of the 1960s with articles found in women’s magazines of the 21st century.
3. Compare articles about female sexuality, or about sexual dysfunction found in women’s magazines of the 1940s/1950s with articles about female sexuality written in the late 20th century.
4. Other topics could include breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, abortion, breastfeeding, mental illness, etc.

Your essay and your conclusion must be based on findings/analysis of at least six (6) articles (letters to the editor, advertisers, etc.)

Possible sources include but are not limited to the following:

- Woman’s Day
- Family Circle
- Redbook
- Ladies’ Home Journal
- Cosmopolitan
- Ebony
- Essence
- Harper’s Bazaar
- McCall’s
- Vogue
- Seventeen
- People
- Prevention
- Ms. Magazine
- Time Magazine
- Newsweek
- New York Times
- US News and World Report
- Saturday Evening Post
- Esquire
- Us
- Self
- Oprah
- Teen

You may consult scholarly sources, but be sure to identify your use of these sources in your footnotes and bibliography. The point of this assignment is not to interpret or repeat the interpretations of scholars or historians. You are the historian: you are the scholar who is studying and interpreting the past.
### Behavioral Concern Advice Line, BCAL: 512-232-5050

If you observe students, faculty, or staff to be troubled and you fear the possibility of self harm, or if you observe menacing behavior and fear the possibility of harm to others, call BCAL. Your confidentiality, as you express your concern, will be maintained.

### Academic Dishonesty:

Don’t sacrifice your integrity to save time or to get a better grade. Be aware that you may not consult any books, notes, or electronic devices during exams. Also, be sure that you understand plagiarism. Cheating on tests of plagiarizing sources in essays will result in a **F** on the assignment, and you will be reported to Student Judicial Services.

Visit [this link](http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/the-university/#universitycodeofconduct)

### Accommodations for students with disabilities:

I will honor accommodations recommended by Services for Students with Disabilities.

### Religious Holidays:

If you must miss a class, an examination, or a deadline in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to make-up the work. You must, however, let me know of your planned absence 14 days prior to the holy day.

### Emergency Evacuation:

Read this information from the Office of Campus Safety and Security: [http://www.utexas.edu/safety/](http://www.utexas.edu/safety/)

Observe these recommendations:

- UT buildings must be evacuated when a fire alarm is activated.
- Note the exit doors of each classroom.
- If you will need assistance in evacuation, let me know in writing at the first of the semester.
- In case of evacuation, please follow my instructions.

### Q Drop Policy:

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you’ll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: [http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop](http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop)

### Make-up Exams:

If you are unable to take an exam on the scheduled day, you must talk with me about why you missed the exam within one week.

See next page for important information re university resources.
University Resources for Students

The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning
- Sanger Learning and Career Center: www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc
- University Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/
- ITS: http://www.utexas.edu/its/
- Counselling and Mental Health Center: http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html
- Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/
- Libraries: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/
- Canvas: https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials

University Health Center
- Appointments
- 24/7 Nurse Advice Line, 512-475-6877 (NURS)

Counseling and Mental Health Center, 512-471-4515
- Individual counseling
- Support groups
- Time management
- 24/7 Crisis Line: 512-471-2255
- Psychiatric services