

DRAFT – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**The University of Western Ontario
London Canada**

Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research

September 2015 – April 2016

WS 2244: Women and Health

Thursdays 4:30 – 7:30 pm

AHB – 1B02

Instructor and TA Information

Instructor	Office Hours		Location
Jessica Polzer (fall term)	TBA		Lawson Hall, TBA
Andrea Allen (winter term)	TBA		Lawson Hall, TBA
Teaching Assistant	Office Hours	Location	
TBA	TBA	TBA	

Women and Health: Course Perspective & Organization

This course takes a critical, interdisciplinary approach to understanding women's health. The course is organized into six modules with each module covering a topic area that is relevant to women and health. The topics covered in this course are:

Module 1:	The Medicalization of Women's Health
Module 2:	Representing Gender and Women's Health
Module 3:	The Politics of Reproduction
Module 4:	Diversity and Women's Experiences of Health Care
Module 5:	The Social Determinants of Women's Health
Module 6:	Women, Work and Health

Course Objectives

Through engagement with course materials and facilitated in-class discussions, students will:

- gain a critical awareness of the social and political forces that shape women's health;
- articulate the links between constructions of gender and health, with a particular focus on women and women's bodies;
- consider how medical and popular knowledge about health is implicated in the social reproduction of gender difference and gender roles;
- develop a deeper understanding of how women's experiences of health and health care vary according to social position, including social class, "race"/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.
- learn about the gendered dimensions of health inequities, both nationally and internationally;
- broaden their understanding of women's "choices" in relation to their health and reproduction.

Through the completion of written assignments and papers, students will also gain a number of practical skills. Specifically, students will:

- (i) develop their ability to read and analyze scholarly texts closely and rigorously;
- (ii) learn to question and analyze critically how women's health issues are framed in the popular media;
- (iii) gain experience developing and applying a critical perspective to issues in women's health;
- (iv) participate in informed discussions and critical dialogues about issues relevant to women's health in an interdisciplinary group setting; and
- (v) develop greater reflexivity (self-awareness) of their own understandings of health, its determinants and its relationship to gender.

Required Texts and Course Packages

There is no required text book for this course. All readings will be put on OWL (Sakai).

Expectations

The success of this class is largely dependent on the Instructor *and* the students coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings. The Instructor will come to each class prepared to give a lecture and an overview of the key themes and background that are relevant to the week's topic, and to facilitate group discussions. Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to class each week, to bring notes they have made on the readings to class, and to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis.

Prerequisites

The prerequisite for this course is registration in second year or higher. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as the basis for appeal. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Policies

Policy on Missed/Late Assignments

It is the expectation that students in Women's Studies classes will submit assignments by, and sit tests and/or examinations on, the assigned dates. In the event that this expectation cannot be met, students are advised that the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research follows the policies and practices of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Science.

Late assignments will only be accepted without penalty if a prior agreement with the Instructor has been made, or if a valid medical certificate is provided. Students who submit assignments late without making a prior agreement with the Instructor, or without a valid medical certificate, will be penalized 3% for every 24-hour period past the assignment deadline. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10%

or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

Assignments not submitted in class must be submitted in the WS drop-box, opposite the main office (SH 2319). Assignments turned into the WS drop-box on the weekend will be date stamped on the following Monday. Assignments will NOT be accepted by email.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be recorded. Persistent absenteeism may be rendered grounds for failure in the course in accordance with the policy of the Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research.

Turnitin

Students may be required to submit written assignments and papers to Turnitin for textual similarity review. Turnitin.com is commercial plagiarism detection software under licence to the University of Western Ontario. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com (see <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf>). Detailed instructions for submitting papers to turnitin.com will be provided in class.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate Policy. Students should direct their attention specifically to the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web sites:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/schloff.pdf>

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf>

Expectations & Responsibilities: Learning occurs in a social environment and is a collaborative experience that requires the active participation of all those involved – teachers, teaching assistants and students. Successful learning happens when the professor, the assistants and the students uphold their respective roles and responsibilities. In this sense, learning is a *co-responsibility* that depends on the instructor, teaching assistants *and* the students coming to class prepared. It is the responsibility of the professor to come to class prepared to lecture on course material. It is also the professor's responsibility to address and respond to student's questions about course material in class and during specified office hours. It is the responsibility of the teaching assistants to assist the professor in the preparation and grading of exams and papers, and to address students' questions about course material during the year and before the final exam. It is the responsibility of students to prepare for class by completing required course readings before class, to attend class regularly and listen to the lectures, take notes in class, and to ask questions about course material in class and on WebCT. Students are expected to purchase a dictionary or use an online dictionary (e.g. www.dictionary.com) if they need help understanding the required course readings.

Classroom Etiquette: Creating and maintaining a respectful and productive learning environment

In order to maintain a respectful and productive learning environment, it is essential that students arrive at class ready to listen and attend to lectures and films. Disrespectful and disruptive behaviour during class will not be tolerated and will affect one's participation grade. Disrespectful and disruptive behaviour includes the following: texting or talking on mobile phones, chatting on or browsing Facebook or other social media sites, persistent talking during lectures or films, wearing headphones, emailing, and/or surfing the Internet for non-class purposes. Students observed to be engaging in this behaviour during class will be asked to stop. If disruptive behaviour persists, the professor will use her discretion and judgment in deciding how best to deal with the situation. On the first day of class, all students in the class will be invited to share their views on this policy. Student viewpoints will be considered in deciding upon appropriate consequences for disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Email Etiquette

Students should direct all email concerning the course to their assigned TA using OWL mail. The TA will field questions and will forward those questions or concerns to the Instructor as she sees fit. Responses to students' emails will be made as promptly as possible. If a student does not receive a response from the TA within 48 hours, a second email is acceptable as a polite reminder of the student's question or concern.

Evaluation

Participation (10% total: 2 X 5%): Participation includes regular attendance and thoughtful contribution to group discussion in class. The Rubric for Online Discussions, below, provides guidance as to what counts as a "thoughtful contribution". Attendance will be recorded each week.

Online Discussions: (10% total: 2 X 5%)

The class will be split into five groups. Groups will be assigned by the course instructor. Starting in week two of each term, each of the members of one group will be responsible for engaging in an online discussion about the assigned readings. This discussion will be open only to that group's members. For each group, discussions will take place during the week prior to the assigned class, and all contributions posted up to and including the Tuesday before the assigned class will be graded. Group members can draw on their online discussions to help stimulate discussion in class and this will count towards their participation grade. Online discussions will be graded according to the following rubric:

Rubric for Online Discussions

Grade Range	0	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5
Demonstration of Understanding	-	Posting shows limited understanding of core concepts and ideas	Posting shows adequate understanding	Posting shows good understanding and some evidence of close reading of text	Posting shows very good to excellent understanding and clear evidence of close reading of text
Contribution to Discussion	-	Limited engagement with other students	Attempts to engage with other students (e.g. by responding to posts)	Shows evidence of reading and responding to other students' postings Extends discussion (e.g. by applying course concepts to new areas)	Substantial engagement with other students' postings Extends discussion productively and creatively Synthesizes ideas across readings and/or modules
Quality of Writing	-	Content is not clear or coherent	Ideas are expressed clearly; demonstrates some ability to communicate effectively	Ideas are expressed clearly and explored in depth; demonstrates ability to communicate effectively	Ideas are expressed clearly and explored in depth; demonstrates ability to communicate effectively and persuasively
Minimum # of contributions	0	1	1	2	2

Papers: (2 X 15% = 30%)

Term 1: Mini-Project on Medicalization (due date TBA, in class)

The objective of this mini-project is to cultivate students' research and critical analysis skills. Students will be responsible for choosing a case study in medicalization that involves considerations of sex and/or gender. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class and on OWL.

Term 2: Critical essay (due date TBA, in class)

The objective of this paper is for students to engage critically with and analyze one of the topics in the course that is of particular interest to them. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class. Students should also consult the "How to write a critical essay" paper posted on OWL for further guidance.

Exams: (2 X 25% = 50%)

The December exam will cover material from September to December. The April exam will cover material from January to April. Dates and locations of exams TBA. All material covered in class (including regular and guest lectures, films and other learning materials) are testable.

Class Schedule

Week #	Date	Topic	Group
MODULE 1 – THE MEDICALIZATION OF WOMEN’S HEALTH			
1	Sept 10	The politics of “women’s health”	
2	Sept 17	The medicalization of female sexuality	
3	Sept 24	Women and medicalization	
4	Oct 1	From medicalization to healthism	
5	Oct 8	The corporatization of women’s health	
MODULE 2 – REPRESENTING GENDER AND WOMEN’S HEALTH			
6	Oct 15	Representations of gender and health in the biomedical sciences	
7	Oct 22	Representations of gender and health in popular culture	
	Oct 29	STUDY DAY	
8	Nov 5	Appearance-related health issues in the media: Cosmetic surgery	
MODULE 3 – THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION			
9	Nov 12	Reproductive “choice”	
10	Nov 19	Race and reproductive “choice”	
11	Nov 26	Reproductive technologies	
12	Dec 3	Exam review (optional)	
MODULE 4 – DIVERSITY AND WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH CARE			
1	Jan 7	Introduction to second semester; “How to write a critical essay”	
2	Jan 14	Diversity, citizenship, and health care	
3	Jan 21	Aboriginal women and the Canadian health care system	
4	Jan 28	More on women's experiences of health care systems and services	
5	Feb 4	“Alternative” health care	
MODULE 5 – THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN’S HEALTH			
6	Feb 11	Social determinants of health and gender	
reading week (feb 15-19)			
7	Feb 25	Marginalized women and health experiences	
8	March 3	Case study: Women and Violence	
MODULE 6 – WOMEN, WORK AND HEALTH			
9	March 10	Women working in health care	
10	March 17	Women as caregivers	
11	Mar 24	Working women, conditions, and health care ramifications	
12	Mar 31	Case study: Chinese immigrant women in the United States Exam review (optional)	