

The University of Western Ontario  
London Canada

Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research and School of Health Studies

September 2018 – April 2019

<b>HS/WS 2244: Women and Health</b>
Wednesdays 4:30 – 7:30 pm
Location TBA

Instructors	Office Hours	Location
Jessica Polzer	Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00	Lawson Hall, 3255
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 Experiences of Health and Health Care
Module 5:	The Social Determinants of Women's Health
Module 6:	Gender, 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 identification, 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 and popular 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). Students will be required to read a book assigned by the instructor and write a critical book review. Time will be provided in class to facilitate this process.

### **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.

### **Recognition of First Nations Territory**

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

## 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 policies on accommodation see:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg111.html>

Assignments not submitted in class must be submitted in the WS drop-box, by the main office. 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. 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 site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2016/pg113.html>

**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 students' 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 exams. 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 OWL. Students are expected to purchase a dictionary or use an online dictionary (e.g. [www.dictionary.com](http://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 – This evaluation scheme may change in 2018-19**

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 and Discussion Starter: (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 Monday before the assigned class will be graded. Group members are required to draw on their online discussions to stimulate discussion in class. This will typically happen at the beginning of class before the lecture. Guidelines for effective discussion stimulation and facilitation will be provided in class. Students must participate in both the online discussions and the in-class discussion starters. The online discussions and discussion starters will be graded according to the rubric below.

Papers: (2 X 15% = 30%)

Term 1: Critical Media Analysis (due November 14, in class)

The objective of this paper is to test students' understandings of key course concepts and cultivate students' close reading and critical analysis skills. Students will be asked to compose a critical analysis of a news media article or other media piece that focuses on women's health or gender and health. Students are required to select their own media piece. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class and on OWL.

Term 2: Critical Book Review (due March 27, in class)

For this assignment, students will read and review a book selected by the course instructor. Students will critically reflect on the themes of the book and relate them to relevant course concepts. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class and on OWL.

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 are set by the Registrar's Office. All material covered in class (including regular and guest lectures, films and other learning materials) is testable.

### Rubric for Online Discussions and Discussion Starters

Grade Range	0	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5
<b>Demonstration of Understanding</b>	-	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
<b>Contribution to Discussion</b>	-	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
<b>Quality of Writing</b>	-	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
<b>Minimum # of contributions</b>	0	1	1	2	3
<b>Quality of Discussion Starter</b>	-	Unclear and inconcise oral presentation  Limited understanding of core concepts and ideas  Ineffective stimulation of class discussion	Clear and concise oral presentation  Adequate understanding of core concepts and ideas  Somewhat effective stimulation of class discussion	Clear and concise oral presentation  Good understanding of core concepts and ideas with some evidence of close reading  Very effective stimulation of class discussion	Clear and concise oral presentation  Very good to excellent understanding of core concepts and ideas with clear evidence of close reading  Extremely effective oral presentation of core concepts and ideas and stimulation of class discussion; creative application of core concepts

### Class Schedule

Week #	Date	Topic	Group
<b>MODULE 1 – THE MEDICALIZATION OF WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>			
1	Sept 12	The politics of “women’s health”	-
2	Sept 19	The medicalization of female sexuality	1
3	Sept 26	Women and medicalization	2
4	Oct 3	From medicalization to healthism	3
<b>fall reading week (oct 9-13)</b>			
5	Oct 17	The corporatization of women’s health	4
<b>MODULE 2 – REPRESENTING GENDER AND WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>			
6	Oct 24	Representations of gender and health in the biomedical sciences	5
7	Oct 31	Representations of gender and health in popular culture	6
8	Nov 7	Appearance-related health issues in the media: Cosmetic surgery	7
<b>MODULE 3 – THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION</b>			
9	Nov 14	Reproductive “choice” <span style="float: right;"><b>paper 1 due</b></span>	8
10	Nov 21	The politics of birth	9
11	Nov 28	Race and reproductive “choice”	10
12	Dec 5	Reproductive technologies	-
<b>MODULE 4 – DIVERSITY AND EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE</b>			
1	Jan 9	Critical book review – part 1	-
2	Jan 16	Intersectional approaches to health care	1
3	Jan 23	Aboriginal women’s experiences of health care	2
4	Jan 30	African-Canadian women’s experiences of health care	3
5	Feb 6	Sexual identification and experiences of health care	4
<b>MODULE 5 – THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>			
6	Feb 13	Violence against women	5
<b>spring reading week (feb 15-19)</b>			
7	Feb 27	Critical book review – part 2	-
8	March 6	HIV/AIDS and structural violence	6
9	March 13	Intimate partner violence	7
<b>MODULE 6 – GENDER, WORK, AND HEALTH</b>			
10	March 20	Gender, health, and service work	8
11	Mar 27	Domestic labour in the global economy <span style="float: right;"><b>paper 2 due</b></span>	9
12	Apr 3	Globalization, gender, and health	10