

The University of Western Ontario  
London Canada

Department of Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies and School of Health Studies

September 2025 – April 2026

GSWS/HS 2244: Women and Health

**DRAFT – DATES AND OTHER DETAILS TO BE REVISED**

Tuesdays 1:30 -4:30 pm		
Location: The class location is posted on OWL Brightspace		

Instructors	Office Hours	Office Locations
Jessica Polzer, PhD, Associate Professor, GSWS <a href="mailto:jpolder@uwo.ca">jpolder@uwo.ca</a>	TBA	Lawson Hall, 3270L
Teaching Assistants	Office Hours	Location
TBA	TBA	Office hours and location will be posted on OWL Brightspace

**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, age, Indigeneity, and sexual identity;
- learn about the gendered dimensions of intersecting social and health inequities, nationally and internationally;
- broaden their understanding of women's "choices" in relation to their health and reproduction.

Through class discussion and 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 gendered constructions and experiences.

### **Required Texts and Course Packages**

There is no required text book for this course. All readings will be put on Brightspace. Students will be required to read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, which can be purchased at the campus bookstore and elsewhere.

### **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.

### **Course Philosophy: Engaged Pedagogy**

"Engaged pedagogy begins with the assumption that we learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher. As leaders and facilitators, teachers must discover what the students know and what they need to know. This discovery happens only if teachers are willing to engage students beyond a surface level. [...] When we see the classroom as a place where teacher and students can share their 'inner light' then we have a way to glimpse who we are and how we might learn together" (hooks, 2010, pp. 19-20)

In keeping with this teaching philosophy, the Instructor will strive to cultivate an inclusive learning environment so that every student has an opportunity to bring something to the class discussion.

The success of this class is 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. Making notes on readings will assist the student in their written assignments and in preparing for exams.

In this sense, learning is a *co-responsibility* that requires the active participation of all those involved – teachers, teaching assistants and students.

- It is the responsibility of the professor to come to class prepared to lecture on course material, to facilitate student discussion and their engagement with course material, and 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 attend class, 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 Brightspace.

### **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 three 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.

### **Creating and maintaining a respectful learning environment**

#### Etiquette in the Classroom

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.

#### Etiquette for Online Communication with Course Instructors and TAs

Students are welcome to direct questions concerning the course to the course instructor or TA by email. **Students must email the TA/Instructor from the UWO email accounts and put GSWS 2244 in the subject line.** Emails should address the TA/instructor appropriately – (e.g., "Hi Professor Polzer" or "Hi Florence" not "Heh prof"). We will do our best to respond as promptly as possible. If a student does not receive a response within 48 hours, a second email is acceptable as a polite reminder of the student's question or concern. Please try to make sure that your question is not already addressed in the syllabus.

### Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca)

### Policy on Use of AI

In this course, the use of AI (ChatGPT) is prohibited to generate written assignments. Spellcheckers and grammar checkers may be used. If AI use is suspected, the instructor may ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used to prepare assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. If proof cannot be provided of these materials, this will result in deduction of marks from assignments.

### Support Services

Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Services provided by the USC: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>

Accessible Education - [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html) - AE works with students with disabilities to set up appropriate academic accommodations that are then communicated to the course instructor

Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/> - This office provides safe, comfortable environment where can discuss a university-related concern confidentially. The concern can relate to any part of university life.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness at: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

For immediate help in the event of a crisis, phone 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

### University Policies

#### COVID-Related Policies

It is our collective responsibility to manage COVID-related risks and other public health risks in the classroom. oPlease consider masking if you are attending class while feeling unwell and symptomatic.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or other public health crisis that requires online course delivery, the course will proceed either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable), asynchronously (e.g., posted on Brightspace for students to view at their convenience), or using a combination of the two. The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

### **Use of Electronic Devices**

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract you and other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. You may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website – without the permission of the course instructor.

### **Academic Consideration and Accommodation Supports and Policies**

#### Students with Disabilities

Accessible Education provides supports to Western students with disabilities who require accommodation in all programs and faculties. It is important to register as soon as possible, preferably before classes begin.

[http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)

#### Academic Consideration and Accommodations for Late/Missed Assignments and Exams

It is the expectation that students will submit assignments by, and write tests and/or examinations on, the assigned dates. The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) that renders them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes.

For assignments worth less than 10% of the final grade, students may proactively request permission from the instructor (via email) to submit assignments up to two days past the assigned date so that they can manage times of intense workload. Requests for extensions must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the deadline. Students who submit assignments late without obtaining academic consideration or making a prior agreement with the Instructor will be penalized 3% for every 24-hour period past the assignment deadline.

For assignments worth more than 10% of the final grade, students must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide necessary documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor. As soon as possible, students are expected to email appropriate documentation to the Academic Counselling office at their faculty. An Academic Counsellor will discuss what accommodation is required and the accommodation request will be emailed by the AC office to the course instructor. **It is the student's responsibility to follow up with**

**professors and make the appropriate arrangements after the accommodation is approved (including revised deadlines for assignments and makeup exam dates/times).**

For medical absences, students must submit a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration. The Certificate can be found here:

<https://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/Student%20Medical%20Certificate%202024-WEB.pdf>

For non-medical absences, students must consult with an Academic Counsellor in their Faculty to determine appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

For more information, please see Western's Policy for Academic Consideration here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

### Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is provided here: <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

### **Attendance**

Attendance will be recorded. Students can miss up to one class per term without penalty. Persistent absenteeism (3 weeks or more/term) may be rendered grounds for failure in the course in accordance with the policies of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. Persistent absenteeism may result in being contacted by the instructor who may request a meeting. Continued absence after this point will be reported to the Undergraduate Chair.

### **Use of Plagiarism Checking Software: Turnitin**

All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking 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 of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **Student Code of Conduct and Scholastic Offences**

The Code of Student Conduct defines the standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provides examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this conduct, provides examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and sets out the disciplinary procedures that the University follows. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Health and Wellness**

As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. To support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's

Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration fees. Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

If you are in emotional or mental distress, refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. If you don't want to reach out to formal services, you may want to have a wellness safety plan in place with a few trusted individuals.

Getting involved in community events can be beneficial to your health. There are numerous cultural events offered at Western throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca/>) and the McIntosh Gallery (<http://mcintoshgallery.ca/>). As well, the local London community offers many cultural events that may be of interest.

### Grade Descriptions

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate, is as follows:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable.
F	below 50	Fail

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 72-76. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, the grades will be reviewed by the instructor, in consultation with the Undergraduate Chair, to see if an adjustment is necessary to bring the average in line with this expectation.

A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination must first contact their instructor to discuss. A guide for how to submit a grade appeal can be found here: <https://uwo.ca/fhs//policies/appeals.html>

### Evaluation

Engagement (2 X 10% = 20%)

Engagement includes regular attendance and thoughtful contributions during class and online. Guidance for what constitutes thoughtful contribution will be provided in class. Each term, the following will be considered in evaluating engagement:

- Attendance: Up to 5 points for consistent attendance. Attendance will be recorded each week. A rubric for attendance points will be posted on Brightspace.
- Contributions: This will be graded primarily on the basis of participation in in-class and on-line discussions. Other opportunities to contribute will also be provided and may include: responses to prompts or questions posed during lecture; brief summaries of seminars outside of class related to course themes; completion of critical thinking drills. Guidance will be posted on Brightspace.

Papers: (2 X 15% = 30%)

Term 1: Critical Media Analysis (due November 7, in class and on OWL)

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 gendered constructions of health. Students are required to select their own media piece. Detailed instructions and guidance will be provided in class and on Brightspace.

Term 2: Critical Book Review (due April 3, in class and on OWL)

For this assignment, students will read and review the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. 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 Brightspace.

**Assignments must be submitted in class and on Brightspace. Assignments will NOT be accepted by email.**

Exams: (50% total: 2 X 25%)

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.



## Class Schedule

Week #	Date	Topic
<b>MODULE 1 – THE MEDICALIZATION OF WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>		
1		The politics of “women’s health”
2		The medicalization of female sexuality
3		Women and medicalization
4		From medicalization to healthism and risk
5		The corporatization of women’s health
<b>MODULE 2 – REPRESENTING GENDER AND WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>		
6		Representations of gender and health in the biomedical sciences
<b>fall reading week (oct 12-20)</b>		
7		Representations of gender and health in popular culture
8		Appearance-related health issues in the media: Cosmetic surgery
<b>MODULE 3 – THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION</b>		
9		The politics of birth <i>Critical Media Analysis due</i>
10		Reproductive “choice”
11		Race and reproductive “choice”
12		Reproductive technologies
13		Exam Review
<b>Study Days: Dec 7,8      Exam Period: Dec 9-22</b>		
<b>MODULE 4 – DIVERSITY AND EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE</b>		
1		Critical book review – part 1
2		Intersectional approaches to health and health care
3		Indigenous women
4		Black Canadian women
5		Sexually diverse and gender nonconforming identities
<b>MODULE 5 – THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN’S HEALTH</b>		
6		Violence against women
<b>spring reading week (feb 15-23)</b>		
7		Critical book review – part 2
8		Structural violence and social suffering
<b>MODULE 6 – GENDER, WORK, AND HEALTH</b>		
9		Challenging gendered constructions of work and work safety
10		Domestic labour in the global economy
11		Globalization, gender, and health
12		Exam Review and Course Evaluations <i>Critical Book Review due</i>
<b>Study days: April 5,6      Exams: Apr 7-30</b>		

## Required Readings

All required readings are posted on Brightspace.

### TERM 1: SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER, 2025

#### MODULE 1: THE MEDICALIZATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

##### Week 1 –

##### Introduction: The politics of “women’s health”

Boscoe, M., Basen, G., Alleyne, G., Bourrier-Lacroix, B. & White, S. (2004). The women's health movement in Canada: Looking back and moving forward. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24(1), 7-13.

Nelson, J. (2015). More than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women’s Health Movement. Introduction. New York: New York University Press. pp. 1-14.

Explore the Women’s Health Movement in Canada here:

[https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1Lr77Q9Q\\_9RwH1Wm791idDuT-VAMcZw6jL3BQ2NETpcw&font=Default&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=2&height=650](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=1Lr77Q9Q_9RwH1Wm791idDuT-VAMcZw6jL3BQ2NETpcw&font=Default&lang=en&initial_zoom=2&height=650)

##### Week 2 –

##### The medicalization of female sexuality

Ehrenreich, B. & English, D. (1990). The sexual politics of sickness. In Conrad, P. & Kern, R. (Eds.), *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. St. Martin’s Press: New York. pp. 270-284 of 534. ISBN 9780312023607

Hartley, Heather & Tiefer, Leonore (2003). Taking a Biological Turn: The Push for a “Female Viagra” and the Medicalization of Women’s Sexual Problems. *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 31(1/2), 42-54.

*Film*: Orgasm, Inc. (Kanopy) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRdn8A1L1e0>

##### Week 3 –

##### Women and medicalization

Riessman, C. (2003). Women and medicalization: A new perspective. In Rose Weitz (Ed.), *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance & Behavior*. Oxford University Press: New York. pp. 46-63 of 299. ISBN 019514977-7

Tone, A. (2012). Medicalizing reproduction: The Pill and home pregnancy tests. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 49(4), 319-327.

Brubaker, S. (2007). Denied, embracing, and resisting medicalization: African American teen mothers’ perceptions of formal pregnancy and childbirth care. *Gender and Society*, 21(4), 528-552.

Film: The Pill (DVD)

#### **Week 4 – September**

##### **From medicalization to healthism and risk**

Batt, S. & Lippman, A. (2010). Preventing disease: Are pills the answer? In Anne Rochon Ford & Diane Saibil (Eds.) *The Push to Prescribe: Women and Canadian Drug Policy*. Toronto: Women's Press, pp. 47-66 of 297. ISBN 9780889614789

Dubriwny, T. (2013). The postfeminist concession: Young women, sex, and paternalism. *The Vulnerable, Empowered Woman: Feminism, Postfeminism, and Women's Health*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. pp. 107-142.

Polzer, J. & Knabe, S. (2009). Good girls do... get vaccinated: HPV, mass marketing and moral dilemmas for sexually active young women. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 63(11), 869-870.

#### **Week 5 – October**

##### **The corporatization of women's health**

King, S. Pink Ribbons Inc. (2010). The emergence of cause-related marketing and the corporatization of the breast cancer movement. In Reed, L. & Saukko, P. (Eds.) *Governing the Female Body: Gender, Health and Networks of Power*. Albany: SUNY Press. pp 85-111 of 310.

Ehrenreich, B. (2001, November). Welcome to Cancerland: A mammogram leads to a cult of pink kitsch. *Harper's*, 45-53.

Nielsen, E. (2018). Angry stories of survivorship. Chapter 3 in *Disrupting Breast Cancer Narratives: Stories of Rage and Repair*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 47-77.

Film: Pink Ribbons, Inc. (DVD)

### **MODULE 2: REPRESENTING GENDER AND WOMEN'S HEALTH**

#### **Week 6 – October**

##### **Representations of gender and health in the biomedical sciences**

Martin, Emily (1999). The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. In Hess-Biber, S., Gilmartin, C. & Lydenberg, R. (Eds.) *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. pp. 15-28 of 400. ISBN 0195125223

Smith, S. & Condit, D. (2000). Marginalizing women: Images of pregnancy in Williams Obstetrics. *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 9(2), 14-26.

**October 12-20 – fall reading week**

## Week 7 – October

### Representations of gender and health in popular culture

Roy, S. (2007). 'Taking Charge of Your Health': Discourses of Responsibility in English-Canadian Women's Magazines. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 30(3), 463-477.

Duncan, M. (1994). The politics of women's body images and practices: Foucault, the Panopticon, and Shape magazine. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 18, 48-65.

## Week 8 – October

### Appearance-related health issues in the media: Cosmetic surgery

Morgan, K. (1991). Women and the knife: Cosmetic surgery and the colonization of women's bodies, *Hypatia*, 6(3), 25-53.

Kaw, E. (1993). Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 7(1), 74-89.

Brooks, A. (2004). "Under the knife and proud of it": An analysis of the normalization of cosmetic surgery, *Critical Sociology*, 30(2), 207-239.

Passafiume, A. Gen Z's obsession with plastic surgery hits new high as experts report spike in clients under 30. *The Toronto Star*, July 19, 2023. [https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/gen-z-s-obsession-with-plastic-surgery-hits-new-high-as-experts-report-spike-in/article\\_bf4fcf3a-b621-55cc-a4bc-165f758d6089.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/gen-z-s-obsession-with-plastic-surgery-hits-new-high-as-experts-report-spike-in/article_bf4fcf3a-b621-55cc-a4bc-165f758d6089.html)

*Film*: The Perfect Vagina - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw9qKBI4D3o>

## MODULE 3: THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION

## Week 9 – November

### The politics of birth

Guest Presenter: TBA

*Critical Media Analysis paper due in class and on Brightspace*

Block, J. (2007). Introduction. In *Pushed: The Painful Truth about Childbirth and Modern Maternity Care*, DaCapo Press: Cambridge. pp. xvii-xxv, 1-43 of 316.

Wilson, K. (2019, August 7). 25 years on: What midwifery in Canada has achieved and what it still needs. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/25-years-on-what-midwifery-in-canada-has-achieved-and-what-it-still-needs-120210>

Birthing while Black and Queer. Podcast episode of Black Aspiration Project, 30 minutes. <https://blackaspirationproject.podbean.com/e/shani-robertson/>

National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACMO). Diverse pathways: Bringing Indigenous midwifery home. Please browse these websites on Indigenous midwifery: <https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/history-strategic-plan/>; <https://indigenoumidwifery.ca/indigenous-midwifery-in-canada/>

## **Week 10 – November**

### **Reproductive “choice”**

Kaufert, P. & O’Neil, J. (1990). Cooptation and control: The reconstruction of Inuit birth, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 4(4), 427-442.

Crossly, M. (2007). Childbirth, complications and the illusion of “choice”: A case study, *Feminism and Psychology*, 17(4), 543-563.

Film: The Business of Being Born (mp4)

## **Week 11 – November**

### **Race and reproductive “choice”**

Roberts, D. (2003) “The Future of Reproductive Choice for Poor Women and Women of Color” In Rose Weitz (Ed.), *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance & Behavior*. Oxford University Press: New York, pp. 282- 289 of 299. ISBN 0195149777

Lopez, I. (1998) An ethnography of the medicalization of Puerto Rican Women’s Reproduction. In Lock M. & Kaufert, PA. (Eds.) *Pragmatic Women and Body Politics*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp 240-259 of 364. ISBN 0521629292

Lombard, A. (2021). Coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women and girls. The Toronto Star, March 9.

Film: The Last Abortion Clinic - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/clinic/> (part 3, 21:00-44:00)

## **Week 12 – November**

### **Reproductive technologies**

Corea, G. (1979). The goddess and the cow. Chapter 4 in *The Mother Machine: Reproductive Technologies from Artificial Insemination to Artificial Wombs*. New York: Harper & Row. pp. 60-69 of 374. ISBN 0060913258

Rapp, R. (1998). Refusing prenatal diagnosis: The meanings of bioscience in a multicultural world. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 23(1), 45-70.

Carson, A., Webster, F., Polzer, J. and Bamford, S. (2021). The power of potential: Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and the counterstories of women who discontinue fertility treatment. *Social Science & Medicine*, Tuesday September 29, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114153>

Film: Making Babies (DVD)

## **Week 13 – December -- – Exam Review (optional)**

## TERM 2: JANUARY – APRIL, 2026

### MODULE 4: DIVERSITY AND EXPERIENCES OF HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

#### Week 1 – January 9

##### Critical book review – part 1

Skloot, R. (2010). *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Random House. (pages TBA)

#### Week 2 – January 16

##### Intersectional approaches to health and health care

Sherwin, S. (1992). Gender, race and class in the delivery of health care. In *No Longer Patient: Feminist Ethics and Health Care*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia. pp. 223-240 of 286. ISBN 0877228892

Bowleg, L. (2012). The problem with the phrase ‘women and minorities’: Intersectionality – an important theoretical framework for public health. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*(7), 1267-73.

Hankivsky, O. and Chrisoffersen, A. (2008). Intersectionality and the determinants of health: a Canadian perspective. *Critical Public Health, 18*(3): 271-283.

Film: Unnatural Causes: When the Bough Breaks (Kanopy)

#### Week 3 – January 23

##### Indigenous women

Browne, Annette J. & Fiske, Jo-Anne. (2001). First Nations Women’s Encounters with Mainstream Health Care Services. *Western Journal of Nursing Research 23*(2), 126-147.

Wakewich, P. et al. (2016). Colonial legacy and the experience of First Nations women in cervical cancer screening: a Canadian multi-community study, *Critical Public Health, 26*:4, 368-380.

Audio lecture: Talaga, T. (2018). All our Relations: Finding the Path Forward. Massey Lecture Series, CBC. Please listen to lecture 1, “We were always here”: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/the-2018-cbc-massey-lectures-all-our-relations-finding-the-path-forward-1.4763007>

Film: Unnatural Causes: Bad Sugar (Kanopy)

#### **Week 4 – January 30**

##### **Black Canadian women**

Etowa, J. et al. (2007). Determinants of Black women's health in rural and remote communities. *CJNR*, 39(3), 56-76.

Waldron, I. (2005). African Canadian Women Resisting Oppression: Embodying Emancipated Consciousness through Holistic Self-Healing Approaches to Mental Health. In *Surviving in the hour of darkness: Health and wellness of women of colour and indigenous women*. Harding, G. Sophie (Ed.) University of Calgary Press: Calgary. 13-32.

Geronimus, A. (2023). *Weathering: The Extraordinary Stress of Ordinary Life in an Unjust Society*. Back Bay Books: New York. Chapter 4: Mothers and babies in jeopardy, pp. 80-109.

Film: Remember Africville, <https://www.nfb.ca/film/remember-africville/>

#### **Week 5 – February 6**

##### **Sexually diverse and gender nonconforming identities**

McDonald, C., McIntyre, M., Anderson, B. (2003). The view from somewhere: Locating lesbian experience in women's health. *Health Care for Women International*, 24: 697-711.

Taylor, E. and Bryson, M. (2016). Cancer's margins: Trans\* and gender nonconforming people's access to knowledge, experiences of cancer health, and decision-making. *LGBT Health*, 3(1), 1-11.

Lorde, A. (1980, 1997). Breast cancer: A black lesbian feminist experience. *The Cancer Journals*. San Francisco: aunt lute books. pp. 24-54.

Film: Intersexion (Kanopy)

### **MODULE 5: THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH**

#### **Week 6 – February 13**

##### **Violence against women**

Varcoe, C. & Dick, S. (2008). The intersecting risks of violence and HIV for rural Aboriginal women in a neo-colonial Canadian context. *Journal of Aboriginal Health, January*: 42-52.

Jiwani, Y. (2005). Walking a tightrope. The many faces of violence in the lives of racialized immigrant girls and young women. *Violence Against Women*, 11(7): 846-875.

Film: Finding Dawn, [https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding\\_dawn/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn/)

**February 15-23 – spring reading week**

**Week 7– February 27**

**Critical Book Review – part 2**

Skloot, R. (2010). *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Random House. Part 2.

**Week 8 – March 6**

**Structural violence and social suffering**

Farmer, P. (2001). Invisible Women. Chapter 3 in *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*, University of California Press: Berkeley. pp. 59-93 of 419. ISBN 9780520229136

Shannon, K., Kerr, T., Allinott, S., Chettiar, J., Shoveller, J., Tyndall, M.W. (2008). Social and structural violence and power relations in mitigating HIV risk of drug-using women in survival sex work. *Social Science & Medicine* 66. 911-921.

**MODULE 6: GENDER, WORK, AND HEALTH**

**Week 9 – March 13**

**Challenging gendered constructions of work and work safety**

Breslin, C., Polzer, J., MacEachen, E., Shannon, H., & Morrongiello, B. (2007). Workplace injury or “part of the job”? Towards a gendered understanding of injuries and complaints among young workers, *Social Science & Medicine*, 64, 782-93.

Messing, K. (2021). Bent out of Shape: Shame, Solidarity and Women’s Bodies at Work. Toronto: Between the Lines. Chapter 8, Feminist ergonomic intervention with a feminist employer, pp. 127-141 and Chapter 11, Understanding women’s pain, pp. 164-171.

*Film*: Migrant Dreams, TVO, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRBhZ\\_YBfJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRBhZ_YBfJM)

**Week 10 – March 20**

**Domestic labour in the global economy**

Murray, A. Laboring Women in Globalized World. *From outrage to courage: women taking action for health and justice*. Common Courage Press: Monroe, ME: 159-192.

Liladrie, S. (2010). Do not disturb/please clean room: Hotel housekeepers in greater Toronto. *Race & Class*, 52(1), 57-69.

*Film*: Who’s Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics, [https://www.nfb.ca/film/whos\\_counting/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/whos_counting/)



## **Week 11 – March 27**

### **Globalization, gender, and health**

Parrenas, R. (2002). The care crisis in the Philippines: Children and transnational families in the new global economy. In *Global Woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. Owl Books: New York. pp. 39-54 of 328. ISBN 0805075097

Walter, N, Borgois, P. & Loinaz, M. (2004). Masculinity and undocumented labor migration: Injured latino day labourers in San Francisco, *Social Science and Medicine*, 59, 1159-1168.

Garwood, S. (2002). Working to death: Gender, labour, and violence in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. *Peace, Conflict, and Development*, 2, 1-23. Published online at: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/social-sciences/peace-conflict-and-development/issue-2/WorkingToDeath.pdf>

*Film*: Maquilapolis, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3EGupx8u18>

## **Week 12 – April 3**

### **Exam Review**

***Critical Book Review paper due in class and on Brightspace***