Department of Gender and Women’s Studies  
GWS103 Women & Their Bodies in Health and Disease

Fall 2009, M & W 11:00-11:50AM; Ingraham B10

Araceli Alonso, Ph.D.  
aalonso@wisc.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00PM

Teaching Assistants:  
Evgenia Fotiou, Discussion Sections 307, 304, 318, 313  
Sabra Katz-Wise, Discussion Sections 305, 320, 310, 317  
Chaitanya Lakkimsetti, Discussion Sections 308, 319, 309, 314  
Aaliya Rehman, Discussion Sections 316, 303, 302, 315  
Minjon Tholen, Discussion Sections 312, 301, 306, 311 First Year Students

Your TA is your discussion section facilitator and guide to learning the material of the course. Your TA also has the task of evaluating your work in consultation with the professor. If you have questions or concerns about your discussion section, grade, or any other important issue related to this class, please speak to your TA first. If the question is not resolved, speak to me; I am here to help you. If the question or concern is still not resolved, speak with the Chair of the Department, Julie D’Acci. She will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the Appeal Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

Course Description: This course covers basic facts about the structure and functioning of the female body. Particular attention is paid to adjustments the body makes during normal physiological events—menstruation, sexuality, reproduction, and menopause—and during disease processes. We will explore women’s mental and physical health issues in relation to women’s lives and women’s roles in society. We will also study the relationship of women as consumers, practitioners, and activists to the health system and the achievements and limitations of women’s health movements. Throughout the entire course, we will work on anti-oppression, intersectionalities, and cross-cultural perspectives for all topics covered.

Required Books:  
4. Burns, August; et.al. *Where Women Have No Doctors*. This book can be downloaded entirely at  
   http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download_wwhnd.php
Highly Recommended:
www.ourbodiesourselves.org web companion for *Our Bodies Ourselves*
www.nwhn.org National Women’s Health Network

All books for the course are available for purchase at A Room of One's Own Feminist Bookstore, 307 W. Johnson St. Books will also be on reserve at H.C. White, the Social Science Library (8th floor), and in the Campus Women’s Center.

Handouts and Additional Materials: Throughout the semester, we will use Learn@UW to post important information (handouts, additional readings, links to useful research and writing resources, etc.). In most cases, the information posted online will NOT be distributed in class. It is your responsibility to check the site for updates.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy: Students are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. If you must be absent from lecture due to illness, religious observance, or family emergency, please obtain the lecture notes from a classmate. It is your responsibility to get the notes for any lectures that you miss. If you need to be absent from discussion, please notify your TA as soon as possible. For exams, you will be held responsible for all material covered in lectures, readings and discussion sections. All required readings must be completed BEFORE lecture and discussion (except the first assigned reading, which must be completed before the second day of class. Films are considered a crucial part of the class and will be included in the midterms and the final.

Failure to attend discussion sections will affect section grades as follows:
A 0-1 absences C 5 absences
AB 2 absences   D 6 absences
B 3 absences     F 7 or more absences
BC 4 absences

Letter Grades will be based on the following scale:
A 93-100   C 70-77
AB 88-92   D 65-69
B 83-87    F under 65
BC 78-82

General Course Grading and Important Dates:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion (attendance and participation)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Mon 10/5 (in lecture)</td>
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<td>Midterm 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Mon 11/16 (in lecture)</td>
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<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>Wed 10/21 (in lecture)</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Wed 12/2 (in lecture)</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Mon 12/21 10:05-12:05PM</td>
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**Term Papers**
There will be two short analysis papers (2-3 pages) on the following assigned topics:
   - Paper 1: Women and Sexuality
   - Paper 2: Issues in the News related to GWS103
A more detailed handout with specific instructions for each assignment will be posted at Learn@UW at least one month before the paper is due.

**Late, Missed, or Incomplete Work:** Except for reasons beyond your control such as serious illness (justified by a doctor) or emergency, your grade will be reduced each day an assignment remains incomplete or not turned in. After a week, we will not accept late, incomplete, or missed work, and you will receive an "F" for that portion of your grade.

Incomplete grades will not be given EXCEPT in situations of serious illness or family emergency, which must be documented.

**Accessibility:** Please let us know if you require any alternative accommodations or if you have any accessibility concerns that may affect your performance in this course. The McBurney Resource Center ([www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu)), 1305 Linden Dr. 263-2741, TTY 263-6393, provides useful assistance and documentation for a range of needs and concerns.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism means presenting the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. It is your responsibility to learn what constitutes plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. In general, if your paper implies that you are the author, the ideas and words must be your own. If you use someone else’s exact words, they should be enclosed in quotation marks with the exact source listed. Please, refer to the Dean of Students’ web page for further information: [www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm](http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm)

Examples of Academic Misconduct include but are not limited to: cutting and pasting portions of a text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source; using another person’s ideas, words, or research and presenting it as your own by not properly crediting the originator; signing another person’s name to an attendance sheet. For more details refer again to the Dean of Students’ web page: [www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm](http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm) This Website also has useful information on what do to if you are charged with academic misconduct.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS ASSIGNMENTS

BW Biology of Women
WH Women’s Health: Readings on Social, Economic, and Political Issues (5th ed.)
UR Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice
WW Where Women Have No Doctor

Week 1
Wed 9/2 Introduction and Course Overview. SECTIONS MANDATORY.
WH “If Men Could Menstruate” 262-263

Week 2
Wed 9/9 Anatomy of the Female Reproductive System
BW “Reproductive Anatomy” 30-50
WH “Kegel Exercise” 500-501
WH “Made to Order Vaginas” 204-205
WH “The Truth About Your Clitoris” 454-456
WH “How to Stop Female Genital Mutilation” 205-207
WH “Cultural Practice or Reconstructive Surgery” 193-203
WW Chapter 4 “Understanding Our Bodies”
WW Chapter 30 “Female Genital Cutting”

Week 3
Mon 9/14 The Gynecological Exam
BW Chapter 8 “Gynecological Exam”
WH “How to Tell Your Doctor” (a Classic) 20-24
WH “The Gyne Exam” 24-27
WH “Cadavers, Dolls—Pelvic Rehearsal” 27-36
WH “Spreading My Legs” 37-38
WH “Take a Good Look” 38-40
WW Chapter 1 “Women’s Health is a Community Issue”

Wed 9/16 Sex Differences and Intersexuality
BW “Basis of Biological Differences”145-165
WH “Intersexuals” 155-158
WH “Male and Female Hormones” 167-168
WH “Intersexuals: Exploding Binary Sex Systems” 185-188

Week 4
Mon 9/21 Women and the Health Care System
BW Chapter 1 “Women & Their Health”
WH “Sexism in Women’s Medical Care” (a Classic) 4-8
WH “Diagnosing Gender Disparities in Health” 8-10
WH “PRO and CON of A Women’s Health Specialty” 10-20
WH “The Women’s Health Movement” 41-46
WW Chapter 2 “Solving Health Problems”
Wed 9/23  **Inequalities in Women’s Health and Access to the Health Care System**
WH “Health Disparities in the United States” 101-103
WH “Health at the Margins” 108-110
WH “Financially Vulnerable” 131-134
UR Chapter 3 “African American Women”
UR Chapter 6 “Native American Women Resist Genocide”
UR Chapter 9 “Organizing by Asian & Pacific Islander Women”
WW Chapter 3 “The Medical System”

**Week 5**  
**Mon 9/28**  **Sexuality, Culture, and Health**
BW Chapter 6 “Female Sexuality”
WH “Education for Sexual Intimacy & Agency” 440-446
WH “Advocates for Youth Information” 448-453
WH “Good Girl” 456-464
WH “Orgasm Gap” 466-479

**Wed 9/30**  **Sexuality, Culture, and Health (Cont.)**
WH “Trans Health Crisis” 127-130
WH “Do Ask, Do Tell” 486-489
WH “Lesbian Health” 490-492
WH “New Politics of Sexuality” 484-486

**Week 6**  
**Mon 10/5**  **EXAM 1** (in class) The exam will cover all lectures, discussion sections, hand-outs, and readings assigned through Sept 30.

**Wed 10/7**  **Sexuality Transmitted Infections and HIV**
BW “Gynecological Difficulties” 251-280
WH “Women & the Risks & Burdens of HIV” 675-676
WH “Cervical Cancer Vaccines” 686-687
WH “Hold Hype on HPV” 687-689
WH “A Gendered Epidemic: Women and the Risks and Burdens of HIV” 675-677
WW Chapter 16 “Sexually Transmitted Infections”
WW Chapter 17 “HIV/AIDS”
WW Chapter 20 “Sex Workers”

**Week 7**  
**Mon 10/12**  **Hormones and the Endocrine System**
BW “Menstrual Cycle/Hormonal Interrelationships” 63-86
Reread WH “Male and Female Hormones” 167-168
WH “Female Adolescence” 263-269
Wed 10/14  Menstrual Cycle  
BW “Hormones & Monthly Cycles” 82-88

Week 8
Mon 10/19  Issues Related to Menstruation  
BW Chapter 4 “Menstrual Problems”  
WH “Don’t Just Go with the Flow” 270-274  
WH “The Selling of PMS” (a Classic) 274-277  
WH “To Bleed or Not to Bleed” 278-279

Wed 10/21  Science of Conception & Contraception  
BW “The Basis of Biological Differences” 131-324  
WH “Eight New Nonhormonal Contraceptive Methods for Men” 544-547  
WW Chapter 13 “Family Planning”

Week 9
Mon 10/26  “The Pill”  
BW “Oral Contraceptives” 420; 422-459  
WH “A Dangerous Combination” 237-244  
WH “Acquiescence in Contraceptive Market” 538-539  
WH “Next Target: Birth Control” 539-542  
UR “History of Reproductive Oppression” 218-221

Wed 10/28  Reproductive Justice  
WH “Introduction to Chapter 10” 503-508  
WH “The Color of Choice” 509-516  
WH “Bad Baby Blues” 554-557  
WH “Reproductive Issues=Survival Issues for Asian Americans” 557-559  
UR Chapter 1 “Women of Color & Reproductive Justice”  
UR Chapter 2 “Political Context of Women of Color Organizing”

Week 10
Mon 11/2  Infertility and Reproductive Technologies  
BW Chapter 12 “Problems of Infertility”  
WH “Discovering You Are Infertile” (a Classic) 559-564  
WH “Update to Infertility” 564-565  
WH “The Colour of Loss” 566-571  
WW Chapter 14 “Infertility”

Wed 11/4  Pregnancy and Childbirth  
BW “Labor and Delivery” 355-374  
WH “Cultural Warping of Childbirth” (a Classic) 583-588  
WH “Midwifery Care” 589-592  
WH “Maternity Care” 592-593  
WH “Ideals vs. Reality in US Births” 594  
UR Chapter 7 “Mother’s Milk Project”
| Week 11 | Mon 11/9 | Pregnancy and Childbirth (Cont.)  
WW Chapter 6 “Pregnancy and Childbirth”  
WW Chapter 7 “Breastfeeding” |
|---------|---------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Wed 11/11 | Abortion and Complications of Abortion  
WH “Who Has Abortions?” 549-550  
WH “Shortage of Abortion Providers” 550-551  
WH “The Side Effects, Risks and Complications of Medical Abortions” 551-554  
WW Chapter 15 “Abortion and Complications of Abortion” |
| Week 12 | Mon 11/16 | EXAM 2 (In class) The exam will cover all lectures, discussion sections, hand-outs, and readings assigned from October 7 through November 11. |
| Wed 11/18 | Menopause & Hormone Therapy  
BW Chapter 14 “Menopause”  
WH “Menopause’s Milder Side” 635-637  
WH “Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)” 637-644  
WH “Less Hormone Therapy, Less Breast Cancer” 649-650  
WW Chapter 8 “Growing Older” |
| Week 13 | Mon 11/23 | Images of Women as a Health Issue  
WH “What is a Theory of Women Smoking and How do Societies Benefit?” 162-164  
WH “The Picture of Health” 217-225  
WH “Cosmetic Surgery Coopts Feminism” 442-424  
WH “Pressures of Perfectionism” 424-426 |
| Wed 11/25 | Violence Against Women  
WH “Continuum of Family Violence” 329  
WH “Power and Control” and “Equality Wheels” 330-331  
WH “Adolescent Battered Women” 332-335  
WH “Breaking the Silence” 335-336  
WH “Role Health Workers Can Play” 337-339  
WH “Battered Women of Color” 341-346  
WH “Same-Sex Battering” 348-353  
WH “Trans & Intersex DV” 353-357 |
Week 14
Mon 11/30  Violence Against Women (Cont.)
WW Chapter 18 Violence Against Women”
WW Chapter 19 Rape and Sexual Assault”

Wed 12/2  Mental Health
WH “Women and Mental Health” 228-294
WH “Mad Women or Mad Society: Towards a Feminist Practice with
Women Survivors of Child’s Sexual Assault” 294-300
WH “Frequency, Causes, and Risk Factors for Depression” 300-3005
WH “Depression in Wisconsin Women” 305-307
WW Chapter 27 “Mental Health”

Week 15
Mon 12/7  Cancer & The Politics of Prevention
WH “Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis” 660-664
WH “Breast Implants for Reconstruction: A Closer Look” 664-665
WH “Breast Cancer: The Environmental Connection” 665-670
WH “Screening Mammograms: When Fighting for Coverage and Quality
isn’t Enough” 673-675
WH “Cervical Cancer Vaccines in Context” 686-687

Wed 12/9  The Medicalization of Women’s Health vs. The Absolute Neglect of
Women’s Health
WH “Manufacturing Knowledge” 226-228
WH “Overdosed America” 228-229
WH “Prescription Drug Ad” 249-250
WH “Health Info on the Web” 253-255
WH “Six Steps Toward a Better Future” 255-256
WH “Getting to the Heart of the Politics of Women’s Health” 637-644
WW Chapter 31 “Use of Medicines in Women’s Health”

Week 16
Mon 12/14  Activism for the Healthy Future of Healthy Women. Wrap-up
No readings for this day. Prepare for the Final Exam.