Gender & Women’s Studies/Medical History/History of Science 431
Childbirth in the United States
Spring Semester, 2009-10

Judith W. Leavitt, Ph.D.
1419 MSC
263-4560
Office Hours: 2:30-3:30 pm TR and by appointment
jwleavit@wisc.edu

Course meets: TR 1:00-2:15 pm, 1010 MSC

Course Description:

The course examines women’s childbirth experiences in the United States from the colonial period to today. It addresses throughout questions of authority and decision-making issues that remain central in women’s health policy debates today. Basic physiology of childbirth, interactions between birthing women and their attendants, changes in experiences over time, and evolving ideas about “choices” in childbirth are major themes addressed during the semester.

Course Requirements:

Enrollment for the course is kept as low as possible so that the class can be run as a seminar-discussion. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class and to take responsibility as active participants in class discussions. The success of the class depends on the time, energy, and commitment you are willing to invest. You should come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful and constructive conversation that is respectful of others in the classroom and takes seriously the issues and themes presented in the readings.

The class is conducted as a seminar-discussion, an approach that grows directly out of an appreciation of the benefits of active learning, in which the professor is a facilitator of learning rather than a dispenser of information and students actively pursue their own education rather than passively receive knowledge. The general goals of a university education focus on critical thinking being willing to explore ideas contrary to one’s own beliefs, knowing when information or data are relevant to an issue and how to seek and find that information and apply it methodologically to the problem at hand. Class time will be used to provide experiences in learning what to do with new material and to clear up problems so that students can take responsibility for learning and solving problems rather than waiting for them to be solved by the instructor. Cooperative and group learning exercises will be encouraged, with the assumption that everyone brings something valuable and unique to the class. Active discussion, expressing one’s ideas and getting reactions from other students and the instructor, has been demonstrated to make a big difference in learning, retention, and use of knowledge. Articulating an idea can be one way of getting checks and extensions of it. Thus students are required to talk about their ideas openly, listen and respond to others’ ideas, remain sensitive to the feelings of other class members, and take responsibility for moving class discussions forward.
If any problems arise, either academic or personal, that might jeopardize your performance in the course, please try to inform me of the problem before class or at the next available office hour, or by leaving a message or an email for me. If you are going to miss a class, also provide a written précis and response to the readings.

Any student who has a disability that may prevent her or him from fully demonstrating her or his abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

Graduate students must attend an additional seminar, the time of which will be arranged on the first day of class.

Students are required to familiarize themselves with the UW policies on plagiarism and to assume responsibility for honesty in all course work.

Grading:

Undergraduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBOS paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral History project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar/class leadership</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Reading: (Ordered only at Room of One’s Own)


431 Reader, available on line at My UW (referred to in syllabus by an *)

Background Reading:

Our Bodies Ourselves: Pregnancy and Birth
Ethel Sloane, Biology of Women

GRADUATE STUDENTS PLEASE MEET AFTER THE FIRST CLASS TO PLAN SEMINAR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Introduction and Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Birth Stories and Their Meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Essentials of Birth I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Essentials of Birth II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>OBOS and Childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Some Childbirth Issues (Healthy Baby Girl video)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>Some Motherhood Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Traditional Childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>A Midwife’s Tale (video)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>Under the Shadow of Maternity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Medicalization at Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25</td>
<td>Anesthesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Meddlesome Midwifery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Move to the Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Making Childbirth Safer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Doing Oral History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Mid Term Exam Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>IN CLASS MID-TERM EXAMINATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Medicalization in the Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>20th Century Hospital Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Spring Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Spring Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>20th Century Hospital Experiences and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>De-Medicalization: Natural Childbirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>De-Medicalization: Nurse Midwives, Birthing Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>De-Medicalization: Dads and Doulas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Hospital Childbirth Today (Michele Brogunier, MD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Traditional and Spiritual Midwives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Reclaiming Midwives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>Reclaiming Home Birth (Ingrid Andersson, RN, CNM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Making your own decisions and birth plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Course summaries and evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>FINAL EXAM 10:05 am-12:05 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
January 21  Birth Stories and their Meanings


Film: Stan Brakhage, *Window Water Baby Moving* (1959)

January 26-28  Essentials of Birth


(Also please review relevant sections of Ethel Sloane, *Biology of Women*, and *OBOS: Pregnancy and Childbirth*)

Gaskin video/ Rag doll and pelvis/Joseph B. DeLee film

February 2  OBOS and Childbirth


February 4  Some Childbirth Issues


Healthy Baby Girl video


**February 9  Motherhood Issues**


**February 11  Traditional Childbirth**


**February 16  A Midwife’s Tale**

Martha Ballard, Excerpts from her Diary

Film: A Midwife’s Tale (Laurie Kahn-Leavitt)

**February 18  Under the Shadow of Maternity**

REMEMBER: FIRST PAPER IS DUE IN CLASS

Letters from Jane to Elizabeth Gordon, 1846.

Letters from Bessie Huntting Rudd to Edward Payson Rudd, 1860.

Leavitt, Brought to Bed, pp. 1-35.

**February 23  Medicalization at Home**


Leavitt, Brought to Bed, pp. 36-63.


**February 25  Anesthesia**

Nettie Fowler McCormick - Anita McCormick Blaine Letters, 1890 excerpts.

Leavitt, Brought to Bed, pp. 64-141.
*Fanny Longfellow, Diary and Letters, 1844-1856, excerpts.

March 2  Meddlesome Midwifery


March 4  Move to the Hospital


March 9  Movement to Make Childbirth Safer

*Dorothy Reed Mendenhall, “Prenatal and Natal Conditions in Wisconsin,” *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 15 No.10 (March 1917) 353-369.


March 11  Doing Oral History


March 16  Midterm exam REVIEW

March 18  IN CLASS MID TERM EXAM

March 23  Medicalization in the Hospital

*Letter in Response to Author’s Query, 1983.


**March 25**

*20th Century Hospital Experiences*


Film: Joseph B. DeLee

**March 30**

Spring Recess

**April 1**

Spring Recess

**April 6**

*20th Century Hospital Experiences and Procedures*


Film: Paul De Kruif/ Chicago Maternity Center

**April 8**

*Demedicalization: Natural Childbirth Movement*


April 13  Midwives, Nurse Midwives & Birthing Centers


Film: Frontier Nursing Service

April 15  Demedicalization: Dads & Doulas

REMEMBER: ORAL HISTORY PAPER DUE IN CLASS


Film: Steve Allen Show

April 20  Hospital Childbirth Today


Michele Brogunier, MD, guest

April 22  Traditional and Spiritual Midwives


Film: All My Babies (George Stoney)

April 27  Reclaiming Midwives
Margaret Charles Smith and Linda Janet Holmes, *Listen to me Good*


Film: Miss Margaret (?)

**April 29  Reclaiming Home Birth**


Ingrid Andersson, RN, CNM, Gentle Home Birth, guest

**May 4  Making your own birth plans**

*Nina Shapiro, “Give me Drugs!” (1999), and Jean Hanff Korelitz, “Cut Me Open!” (1999), and Susan Gerhard, “Take me to a hospital!” (1999) “Salon Mothers Who Think” (Salon.com).

**May 6  Course Summaries and Evaluations**

**May 13  Final Exam, 10:05 am – 12:05 pm**
Attendance/class participation (20%)

Students’ attendance and participation in class discussions and in the business of the class (for example, on email and on any relevant out-of-class activity) will be graded, qualitatively and quantitatively, and will count as 20% of the course grade. This is important because the seminar active-learning process does not work without student active involvement in class activity.

There will be occasional pop quizzes in class, which will contribute to this grade. These quizzes will cover the reading required for that day’s discussion. If a student is absent, the quiz cannot be made up; one quiz score can be dropped.

Ours Bodies Ourselves Paper (20%)

A short paper -- 5 typed double-spaced pages -- analyzing one aspect of childbirth over at least four and preferably five editions of Our Bodies Ourselves is required. Students will select a subject related to childbirth that they want to look at; the papers should identify and analyze changes over time. The paper must be submitted EITHER before February 18 or in class that day. We will discuss this paper in detail in class.

Oral History Paper (20%)

A short paper -- approximately 5-7 typed double-spaced pages -- conducting, describing, and analyzing at least one oral history interview, preferably a family member of your grandmother’s generation (but others acceptable too), is required. The paper should give the woman’s story within the context of the time period in which she delivered her babies and connect to class readings or other literature of the same period. Students can submit the tapes or transcript as an appendix. The paper must be submitted on or before April 15. We will discuss this paper in detail in class.

Mid-term Examination (20%)

There will be an in-class blue book examination on March 18, covering all the material to that date in the syllabus and in class. Students can expect one part of the exam to be short answer and one part to be a longer essay.

Final Exam (20%)

There will be a comprehensive final exam covering all the course material. More details will be provided in class. May 13, 2010: 10:05am-12:05pm.

If you have questions about a grade, please speak first to your instructor. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Julie D’Acci, or the Associate Chair, Christina Ewig. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center will provide useful assistance and documentation.