SPECIAL TOPICS IN GENDER & HEALTH (GWS 533)
GENDER AND REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH:
PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES

SPRING 2011
Wednesdays, 2:25-5:25 pm
Sterling 3425

INSTRUCTOR
Jenny Higgins, PhD, MPH
Phone: 608.890.4622; Email: jahiggins2@wisc.edu
Office: Sterling 3414, 475 North Charter Street
Office hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:30 PM; schedule through link on Learn@UW or
https://tools.wisccal.wisc.edu/available/schedule/581/view.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores several theoretical lenses, disciplinary approaches, and substantive
 topical areas relating to reproductive and sexual health. We will begin the course by
 investigating the development of “sexual health” as a phenomenon in public health research,
 policy, and programs, looking back to feminist responses to population control policies of the
 1970s. The subsequent weeks of the semester will cover substantive topical areas in the field
 (e.g., adolescent sexual development, contraception, and HIV/AIDS). Course materials will
 expose students to the epidemiological and data-driven aspects of these topics (e.g.,
 prevalence, trends, definitions) as well as the feminist socio-cultural critiques of the empirical
 research. For example, we will read a CDC report on the proportion of HIV cases transmitted
 through sexual contact among “MSM” (men who have sex with men), while also reading social
 scientists’ critiques of “MSM” as an overly-reductive category in public health. We will read
 empirical pieces on the prevalence and trends of “unintended pregnancy” in the US, while also
 engaging with literature that questions the usefulness of “intended” and “unintended” to real
 women’s and men’s pregnancies and births. When appropriate, we will read a historical
 analysis or formative piece of work on a particular topic. In course assignments, students will
 have several opportunities to synthesize both the epidemiological and socio-cultural aspects of
 course topics and an additional topic of their choosing. Although most materials focus on the
 US, several weeks offer international comparisons, and we will endeavor to adopt a cross-
cultural perspective throughout the course.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students who successfully complete this course will:
- Understand the evolution of “sexual health” as a concept in the public health field.
- Be familiar with the epidemiologic data on various topics relating to sexual health, both domestically and internationally.
- Identify and engage with feminist socio-cultural critiques of the classic epidemiologic and medical research in the field.
- Synthesize aspects of both the empirical and socio-cultural literature in order to articulate how to best address public health policies and programs aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health.
- Through independent project work, be able to locate, review, and critique both the medical literature and the social science literature on topics relating to reproductive and sexual health.

PREREQUISITES
Students enrolled in this course must be GWS majors, and must have taken GWS 100, 101, and/or 103. Any exceptions must be cleared with the professor before the start of the semester.

A NOTE ON COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROFESSOR
My usual policy is to respond to class emails during designated “email office hours”: 3:00-4:00 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays and 11:30-12:30 pm on Thursdays. I will do my best to stay on top of class related emails, but I anticipate that some messages will slip under the radar. If you have sent me an email but have not heard back from me within 48 hours days, you are welcome to send me a follow-up email.

Please do not rely entirely upon email to communicate with me.¹ Emails are fine for short questions, but discussions of papers and exams should take place during in-person meetings. I welcome you to office hours, and suggest you plan ahead to make appointments for the busy weeks before deadlines. Questions about grades will only be discussed during office hours or appointments, not over email or in class.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY
Student grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Ongoing, every class</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Summary-Critique Memos</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Rolling dates of each student’s choosing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-Medical Portfolio</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Final product due on March 21st</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>May 14th</td>
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Final grades will be assessed in the following manner:

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¹ Thanks to Dr. Ellen Samuels of the Gender and Women’s Studies Department for sharing this syllabus material.
A=93-100    B=83-87    C=70-77
AB=88-92    BC=78-82    D=65-69    F=under 65

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Readings, Assignments, and Examinations
This course will involve reading primarily from journals and policy briefs but also from one required textbook. Articles will be available on Learn@UW. Throughout the semester, I will use Learn@UW to post ALL important information (syllabi, readings, handouts, additional material, links to useful research and writing resources, etc.). Be sure to check the class site throughout the week for relevant announcements and updates.

The one book required for the course (Promises I Can Keep) is for sale at the UW Bookstore. It will also be on reserve at Texts are also on reserve at the College Library (Helen C. White).

Participation
Because the discussion of readings is a major component of this course, you will be graded on your preparation for and involvement in class. This approach asks that you engage fully with the material and explore your own beliefs about the topics covered. Expressing one’s ideas and getting reactions from others can help you evaluate your own opinions and ultimately sharpen your thinking. Although I set the grading criteria, you assign your own participation grade daily (though I reserve the right to change these grades). Please note that the most valuable participation does not necessarily come from the student who speaks the most. Students who do not listen to their classmates or who do not make room for various viewpoints and speakers will not earn the highest participation grades.

During class, I may call on students who do not have their hands raised. I will do this for several reasons. First, some students need to be invited into the conversation. By calling on students who are not volunteering their ideas, I am issuing that invitation. Second, I want all students in the class to shoulder the responsibility of moving the class forward by summarizing and analyzing course readings, by connecting the readings to established themes and concerns of the course, by engaging with and responding to the contributions of the other students, and by taking intellectual risks; I am unwilling to let any student abdicate this responsibility by letting the other students do all the heavy lifting in class. Third, I see the classroom as a place for actively working through questions that have no right answer. As a result, contributing to class discussion is not always about what you know when you walk into class. I also want to tap into what you struggle with and what you are confused by; I want to know what you think, wonder, guess, fear, believe, and hope. There is no wrong answer to many of the questions I pose, and your willingness to share where you are with an issue will help us all. I do not call on people with the aim of embarrassing them. Finally, I believe that insightful participation is a skill that all students need to develop, just as they develop their analysis and writing skills.

2 Thanks to Dr. Judith Houck of the Gender and Women’s Studies department for sharing a version of this syllabus material.
Attendance

Attendance in this class is required and essential for our community learning process. Students will receive one “freebie” class per semester in which they can miss a class without penalty. Unless cleared by the professor two weeks beforehand, each additional absence will result in deduction of five (5) percentage points of your semester grade (for example, a 90% AB would become an 85% B).

Lecture notes and Powerpoint slides will not be posted online or shared. If you must miss class, please obtain notes from a classmate or meet with me to discuss what you missed.

Religious Holidays: Absences due to religious holidays will not be penalized. However, you must inform me at least two weeks in advance if you are missing a class for religious reasons, and you are responsible for finding out what happened in class that day and for turning in assignments.

Classroom Conduct

Please respect your fellow students’ right to a quiet and non-distracting learning environment. Cell phone use, websurfing, texting, IMing, and other distractions of modern life are NOT allowed during class.

Use of cell phones: Cell phones are prohibited in class. Please turn your phone off as soon as you enter the classroom.

Use of computers: Computers are allowed in class only for the purpose of note-taking and only if approved by Dr. Higgins. See Dr. Higgins after class to get on the Approved Laptop List. If you use a laptop computer during class, you must sit in the front row of the classroom. Laptop privileges may be revoked at any time.

Late, Missed, or Incomplete Work

Assignments handed in or emailed after the specified due date and time will be deducted 5 percentage points per 24 hours. For example, if an assignment is passed in one day late, the highest possible grade that the student could earn would be a 95 rather than an 100; it the assignment is two dates late, the highest possible grade would be an 90. I will not accept assignments more than five days after the original due date. After five days, you will receive an "F" for that portion of your grade. Incomplete final grades will not be given EXCEPT in situations of serious illness or family emergency, which must be documented.

COURSE READINGS

Required Books

Highly Recommended (not required):

A NOTE ABOUT EXTRA CREDIT & HONORS CREDIT
Although I strongly encourage students to attend campus and community events relating to reproductive and sexual health, I fear cannot offer extra credit for your participation in such events. I also regret that this class cannot be used to earn honors credits.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Where to Take Concerns about the Course
If you have questions or concerns about course content, your grade, or any other important issue related to this class, by all means, speak to me. If the question or concern is still not resolved, or if you do not feel comfortable speaking with me directly about your concern, make an appointment with the Chair of the Gender & Women’s Studies Department, Dr. Jane Collins, by emailing jcollins@ssc.wisc.edu. She will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the Appeals Procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is critical to maintaining fair and knowledge based learning at UW-Madison. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation and degrades the value of your degree.
If you present the words or ideas of others without giving them proper credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. It is your responsibility to learn what constitutes plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. Please refer to the Dean of Students’ web page for further information: www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm

In consultation with the Dean of Students office, I will deal harshly with violations of academic misconduct in GWS 533. The work in this course is challenging. Doing your own work will enhance your sense of accomplishment when the semester comes to a close.

**Disability Access**

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations in GWS 533, students must first be registered with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/). Students who have or think they may have a disability are invited to contact the McBurney Center for a confidential discussion at 608-263-2741 (phone), 608-225-7956 (text), or by email at mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu.

If you have already registered with the McBurney Center, and if you wish to request any accommodations on the basis of disability, you should schedule an office appointment with me within the first two weeks of the semester (by Friday, February 3rd). Please schedule this office appointment through the online scheduling assistant (see page 1) or, if necessary, by email. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please **do not** approach me before or after class to discuss your accommodation needs. You should bring a copy of your service plan to our meeting.

Please note that I am unlikely to honor an accommodation request made within 72 hours of an assignment or exam. Advanced planning on your part enables both of us to create an accessible classroom environment. Please do not delay in contacting me regarding your accommodation requests.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1 – Introduction to Class</th>
<th>1/25/12</th>
<th>Readings: None</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete student information form (in class)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 2 – From “Population Control” to “Reproductive Rights” to “Sexual Health”: The Evolution of a Concept within Public Health</th>
<th>2/01/12</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 3 – Sexual Development and Adolescent Sexual Health</th>
<th>2/08/12</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 4 – Unintended Pregnancy, Part 1: Definitions, Trends, and Concepts in Transition</th>
<th>2/15/12</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Finer LB, Henshaw SK. Disparities in rates of unintended pregnancy in the</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Finer LB, Henshaw SK. Disparities in rates of unintended pregnancy in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Luker KC. A reminder that human behavior frequently refuses to conform to models created by researchers. Family Planning Perspectives 1999;31(5):248-249.

Session 5 – Unintended Pregnancy, Part 2: Promises I Can Keep and the Lived Contexts of (Unintended?) Pregnancy

2/22/12 Readings:

Assignment: Socio-Medical topic & 5 resources due

Session 6 – Contraception

2/29/12 Readings:
4. Summary table of contraceptive efficacy:
http://www.contraceptivetechology.org/table.html


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<th>Session 7 – Condoms</th>
<th>3/07/12</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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Assignment: Socio-Medical prospectus due (includes 1-2 page overview and at least 10 resources/citations)

Activity: Small group prospectus workshop

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<tr>
<th>Session 8 – Abortion</th>
<th>3/14/12</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
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### Session 9 – Birth and Maternal Mortality

**3/21/12**

**Readings:**


**Assignment:**

**Socio-Medical Portfolio (ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT) due**

### Session 10 – Sexual Violence

**3/28/12**

**Readings:**


****NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4th DUE TO SPRING RECESS****

### Session 11 – HIV/AIDS

**4/11/12**

**Readings:**

5. Dworkin SL. Who is epidemiologically fathomable in the HIV/AIDS epidemic? Gender, sexuality, and intersectionality in public health. Culture Health &

Session 12 – (Hetero) Men, Reproduction, and Sexual Health

4/18/12 Readings:

Session 13 – LGBTQ Sexual Health

4/25/12 Readings:
1. CDC. HIV among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control; 2010.


****NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 2\textsuperscript{nd} DUE TO INSTRUCTOR TRAVEL****

### Session 14 – Sexual Pleasure and the Promotion of Sexual Well-being

**5/9/12**

**Readings:**


**FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, MAY 14\textsuperscript{th}, 12:25-2:25 PM**
ASSIGNMENTS

This class requires four main tasks in addition to the reading: weekly participation, five summary-critique memos, a socio-medical portfolio on a topic of your choosing, and a final exam. I’ve included more information about each of these items below. I will also include more information in class as the semester ensues. I believe in giving students as many tools as possible to succeed, including clear guidelines and expectations.

1) PARTICIPATION

Due date: Every class (except for one “freebie”)
Percent of your grade: 20%

Students are required to assign themselves a participation grade after each class based on the rubric below. I will review these grades and adjust them as I see fit.

How to Grade Your Participation (based out of a maximum of 10 points)

1) Attendance points

   3
   If you show up on time and stay the whole class period, you earn full credit.
   If not, adjust accordingly.

2) Attention points

   2
   If you pay attention to the conversation, give yourself full credit.
   If you read a magazine, do a crossword puzzle, or take a nap, adjust accordingly.

3) Preparation points

   2
   If you read all the readings, give yourself full credit. If not, adjust accordingly.

4) Participation

Participation points gauge several aspects of course involvement. They reflect whether you have understood the basic issues, engaged with the material, volunteered your opinions, and listened to your classmates. Choose the category (and the point assignment) that best fits your situation.

Category A—no participation
   0
   did not participate in discussion

Category B—good participation
   1
   answered a question when directly asked
volunteered an item for a board list or close-ended question

Category C–better participation
asked a question
participated in small groups discussion
voluntarily offered an interpretation of an event or reading
voluntarily responded to a classmate’s comment
voluntarily offered a summary of a reading

The discussion format is based upon the notion that students can and do learn from each other. To acknowledge this, **one discussion point will be assigned by your peers.** After every discussion, you will indicate which two people you believe contributed the most value to discussion that day and explain why. Please note that this is not a reward for sheer quantity. Instead, perhaps someone asked one question that you made you rethink an issue. Perhaps somebody brought two disparate strains together in a way that enlivened discussion. So carefully consider which of your classmates helped you engage and analyze the material. I will compile these points after each class. If at least two of your classmates indicated that you made a particularly valuable contribution, you will receive an additional point on your participation grade for that day.

2) SUMMARY-AND-CRITIQUE MEMOS

**Due date:** Rolling and ongoing; you choose the five weeks for which you would like to further engage with the material

**Percent of your grade:** 20%

Engaging with the readings through writing is essential to success in this class. Work in the public health field often demands the reading and synthesis of a vast literature on a particular topic in a short amount of time and space. Moreover, public health practitioners are often required to summarize the literature very briefly so that it can be easily digested by colleagues, constituents, and policy-makers. This course asks you to develop your skills in synthesizing several texts in a clear, concise, but intelligent and sophisticated way. Doing so will also greatly help you retain the material for the final exam and for your engagement with the world long after this class is over.

Students must choose five weeks of the semester to write both a pithy summary of the readings for that day and a critique and/or synthesis of the readings. These memos are due before class begins on Wednesday. Students must upload each memo to the corresponding dropbox folder in the Learn@UW site (e.g., the student’s first memo would go in the “Memo 1” dropbox; the student’s fifth memo would go in the “Memo 5” dropbox).

In one page or less, please attempt to do the following in each memo:
Summarize the main epidemiologic prevalence and trends of the topic (if applicable).
Summarize or engage with the socio-cultural context of the issue—that is, the lived experience of this health phenomenon in the real world.
Comment on any relevant policy or program implications of the combined texts.
Touch on as many of the readings for that day as possible.

Questions to consider:
- What epidemiologic or empirical information do the readings provide about the topic at hand (e.g., rates, trends, disparities, etc.)?
- What do the readings indicate, if anything, about the evolution of this concept or changes in this issue over time?
- How do the readings agree with and speak to each other? Disagree with each other?
- How do the readings tie into larger themes of the course?

You may also allude to other literature we have read for the course, as long as you are primarily engaged with the readings for that particular week.

Expectations for the summaries:
- Grammatically correct writing
- Good paragraph structure (e.g., thesis statement, supporting evidence, smooth transition sentences between paragraphs if the memo includes more than one paragraph)
- Skillful synthesis of the readings, but also integration of the writing. Example of poor work: “The articles for this week discuss various aspects of unintended pregnancy.” Example of more thoughtful, engaged writing: “Although policy makers have been concerned with the problem of unintended pregnancy for decades, some researchers have questioned the very meanings of ‘unintended’ and whether these meanings have salience for real women and men.”
- Properly labeled (i.e., with your name, date, the week’s topic, and the memo number)
- 1 page or less (1-inch margins, 12 point font)
- Appropriate citations: Cite the readings in the format of your choosing—preferably in a numbered medical citation format. It’s acceptable if the citations fall onto a second page of text.
- Submitted before class begins into the appropriate dropfox folder on Learn@UW
3) SOCIO-MEDICAL PORTFOLIO

Due Dates:
Topic and at least 5 resources due on February 22nd, 1-2 prospectus and at least 10 resources due on March 7th, and FINAL PROJECT due on March 21st.
Percent of your grade: 30%

This assignment provides an opportunity for you to further explore a topic of your choosing within the sexual and reproductive health field, and to examine this topic within a gendered, socio-cultural lens. The assignment comprises three important aspects:

1) A review the epidemiologic data and/or medical and empirical literature about a the topic;
2) An exploration the literature that provides a greater socio-cultural context for the topic and/or offers criticism of the public health/scientific literature or approach;
3) A set of recommendations for research, policy, and programs on that topic.

Topics may include those already included on the syllabus, but must be further specified (e.g., condom use in Japan (where condom use is far more prevalent than in the West). Topics not on the syllabus but that fall under the rubric of sexual and reproductive health are also warmly welcomed. At your request, I can provide a list of a number of potential topics.

Socio-medical portfolios must include a minimum of 10 citations. You may use the citation style of your choosing as long as you can identify what style it is (e.g., American Psychological Association (APA), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), or a particular journal’s style) and as long as you use the style consistently throughout the paper.

Other portfolio requirements:
- 6 pages maximum, double spaced, 1-inch margins
- Grammatically correct writing
- Good paragraph structure (e.g., thesis statement, supporting evidence, smooth transition sentences between paragraphs)
- Properly labeled (i.e., with your name, date, the portfolio’s title)
- 10 or more citations in a specific and consistent citation style
- Submitted before class on March 21st begins into the appropriate dropfox folder on Learn@UW

Note that we will have several opportunities to discuss this assignment in class. You will also have the chance to workshop your project topic and prospective with your classmates during class-time in the weeks before the portfolio’s due date.
4) FINAL EXAM

Due Date: May 14th (exam scheduled for 12:25-2:25 pm)
Percentage of your grade: 30%

The final exam, which will be open book, will give you the chance to reflect on what you have learned over the course of the semester and synthesize the material in new ways. You will have the opportunity to showcase your engagement with the class texts and then to push further, critically and analytically. The exam also provides a reward for those who have continually engaged with the reading over the course of the semester.

The final will allow you select from various prompts or questions provided. That is, you won’t be forced to answer every single prompt. A choice of questions means that you will not be required to have mastery of all subjects in the class, but you will be expected to write with both clarity and sophistication about a majority of the topics.

I will provide more information in advance of the final, with in-class preparation and review sessions.
LEARNING CONTRACT AGREEMENT

I, _________________________________ [printed name],
have read the attached syllabus and understand the objectives, requirements, deadlines, and grading criteria of the course.

Signed,

__________________________
Signature

__________________________
Date