

**Issues in Women's Health**

**CFH PHC 6532**

**Fall 2003**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An analysis of the historical, social and political aspects of women's health from a public health perspective, including how women's roles as consumers and providers of care are shaped by public and cultural assumptions. Extensive discussions include the role of research in women's health, how women's health is multi-disciplinary in nature, and how advances in the health and social sciences have altered how women's health is viewed, and how it is studied.

**NATURE OF THE COURSE:**

This course is intended to provide graduate students with a broad range of women's health issues from a public health, feminist, socio-political and clinical perspective.

The current status of women's health in the U.S. will be assessed on several levels: within an historical perspective, in social and cultural arenas and at a personal level for each student. The course is intended to be an exercise in critical assessment of both research and service issues that affect women as a population, on a global level and on an individual level.

Because the very nature of women's health involves the issue of ethics, both in research and in clinical care, each of the course topics will be addressed through an examination of the ethical aspects of the content and its history. Special attention also will be paid to the issue of diversity in women's health, with an emphasis on marginalized and disenfranchised populations of women.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

As a result of your participation in this course, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary Women's Health Movement and its most significant contributions to women's health.
2. describe common health issues of women across the life cycle.
3. explain how the institutionalization and medicalization of health care have been barriers to women.
4. assess specific health issues for women from a population based perspective.
5. critically review the current literature to identify how evidence based research gets translated into women's health policy
6. describe how the WHM and the information gained from this course have affected you personally.

Finally, I would like to have each of you leave this course able to act as an educator and advocate for women's health by sharing information, assessing health information critically and continuing in the pursuit of your own knowledge.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Pay attention to these requirements, especially those requirements for the papers, because you will lose points for not following them.

- (1) **Special Populations Paper**, worth 20% of your grade. Due 9-18-03. This paper will address the health care issues of a special group that is considered marginalized or disadvantaged due to ethnicity, culture, sexual or religious orientation, geographic location or other characteristic that defines that group. You do not need to do a global paper about all the health problems facing a particular group, but you should address a health issue that is particular to them, and include how the "traditional" health care system either helps or exacerbates the problem.
  - Each paper should be 8-10 pages in length (not including title pages, references, etc.), double-spaced, 12 cpi.
  - APA style referencing from primary sources only (websites must be approved).
  - 8-10 references minimum per paper, including any readings on that topic from the syllabus. Be careful about your use of websites as sources: you should have a 2:1 ratio of peer-reviewed articles to websites, so choose cautiously when you include website material.
  
- (2) **2 Research Papers**, each worth 20% of your grade. The first paper is due on 10-23-03 and will be on a reproductive aspect of women's health. The 2nd paper is due on 11-20-03 and will cover a non-reproductive aspect of women's health. Topics must be approved.
  - Each paper should be 8-10 pages in length (not including title pages, references, etc.), double-spaced, 12 cpi.
  - APA style referencing from primary sources only (websites must be approved).
  - 7-8 references minimum per paper, including the required readings on that topic from the syllabus. See note above concerning peer-reviewed material and websites.
  
- (3) **Web Search Reviews**, 2 reviews, each worth 10% of your grade, each due the week before the research papers (take a look at the schedule on the next page). As an exercise in both research and critical thinking, I'd like to you submit a short 2-3 page paper that can be in the form of a table, summary, etc. that shows your efforts in critiquing web-based sources for women's health issues. Each review should be a part of your research paper, and should be an assessment of credible vs. not credible web sources. The difference may be based on academic, political or advocacy issues: why is one website that addresses a women's health issue useful/credible/helpful while another is not? The differences may have to do with who 'owns' the website, or the content within it. We'll discuss this requirement further as you get into your research topics. Expect to include 8-10 websites per paper.
  
- (4) **Interdisciplinary Paper**, worth 20% of your grade. Due 12-04-03. 8-10 pages in length. At the beginning of the semester, you will need to choose a topic that is of particular interest to you from those that are listed during the semester, and prepare a short paper and presentation that reviews the latest research on that topic. For example, a review of the WHI and the HRT studies that were recently terminated would be appropriate for discussion. The latest research on contraceptives, infertility, chronic diseases, etc. would also be appropriate topics. However, here is a small twist for this assignment: everyone who takes this course is coming from a specific discipline, such as public health, nursing, sociology, women's studies, social work etc. I would like you to research the topic thoroughly, but write about it both from your discipline, and from another. This last requirement will be a stretch, which is why this is the last assignment of the semester.

You should plan on doing a thorough search of the literature within both the health sciences and the social sciences about whatever topic you've chosen, take a look at what the popular literature says, and then be prepared to discuss this topic from a broader range than how you normally approach the papers you've written in other graduate courses. Why are we doing this? Because this is the very essence of how broad the idea of 'women's health' really is: it crosses over many disciplines, and should be approached in a broad way.

Since we are interested not only in what the literature says, but how the information is presented to consumers of health care, you should plan on presenting this topic to the rest of the class at the end of the semester – we will plan on having a discussion of the latest research at the end of the course, so be prepared to lead a short discussion. I'm hoping that this will be an invigorating and enlightening discussion, so please don't worry about how well you represent another discipline – we'll all share our knowledge together.

(5) 2 small tests (I mean small) – *up to* 5 points each.

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

- (1) The New Our Bodies, Ourselves, The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, (1998). New York: Simon & Schuster
- (2) Women's Health USA 2003 Databook, MCHB (provided)
- (3) Articles available at the Copy Center, COPH

### **GRADING:**

Research Papers

Reproductive 20 points

Non-Reproductive 20 points

Special Populations Paper 20 points

Interdisciplinary Approach Paper 20 points

Websearch Review Papers (2) 20 points

100 points total

2 small tests (and I mean small) up to 5 points extra credit

Grades will be based upon the standard 90-100=A, 80-89=B, etc. You don't want to go below a B.

### **DISABILITIES:**

Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with me privately during the first week of class to discuss accommodations. Each student must bring a current **Memorandum of Accommodations** from the Office of Student Disability Services, which is prerequisite for receiving accommodations. Accommodated examinations through the Office of Student Disability Services require two weeks notice. All course documents are available in alternate format if requested in the student's **Memorandum of Accommodations**.

WEEK	TOPICS/ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
8-28-03	Introduction to the Course History of the Women's Health Movement	OBOS Ch 25-27
9-04-03	Theoretical Review	Fee; Lindemann & Oliver; McBride & McBride; Reissman
9-11-03	Primary & Preventive Health: The Well Woman <b>Special Populations Paper Due</b>	OBOS Preface, Intro. and Ch 1-7
9-18-03	Primary & Preventive Health, con't: Mental Health, Stress, Depression	Aaron, Cornelius, Gruskin, Mays, Meyer, Walters, Williams
9-25-03	Women's Sexuality <b>Test #1</b>	OBOS Part IV: Ch 19-22 Nelson
10-02-03	Reproductive Issues: Pregnancy and Childbirth	OBOS Ch 12,13 Owen & Caudill, Westley, Rosenfield
10-09-03	Reproductive Issues: Birth Control <b>Website Review Due</b>	OBOS Ch 16-18
10-16-03	Reproductive Issues: Birth Control & Abortion <b>Reproductive Paper Due</b>	OBOS Part II Intro. and Ch 9-11 Jones-Goodwin
10-23-03	Sexually Transmissible Infections At-Risk Populations: AIDS and Women	OBOS Ch 14
10-30-03	Reproductive Cancers <b>Test #2</b> <b>Website Review Due</b>	OBOS Ch 24 Kilgore
11-06-03	Chronic Diseases <b>Non-Reproductive Paper Due</b>	Black, Taylor Christian
11-13-03	Women Growing Older: Menopause & Healthy Life Choices	OBOS Ch 23 Laskin-Siegal
11-20-03	At-Risk Populations: Violence Against Women	OBOS Ch 8 Campbell & Landenberger
11-27-03	<b>Thanksgiving – No Class</b>	OBOS Ch 15
12-04-03	<b>Class Presentations</b> <b>Interdisciplinary Paper Due</b> <b>Attendance is Mandatory</b>	

**WOMEN'S HEALTH - Fall, 2003**  
**REQUIRED READINGS**

Aaron, D., Markovic, N., Danielson, M., Honnold, J., Janosky, J., & Schmidt, N. (2001). Behavioral Risk Factors for Disease and Preventive Health Practices Among Lesbians. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*(6), 972-75.

Amaro, H., Navarro, A.M., Conron, K.J., Raj, A. (2002). Cultural Influences on Women's Sexual Health. In G. Wingood & R. DiClemente (Eds.), *Handbook of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health* (pp. 43-70). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Black, S. (2002). Diabetes, Diversity, and Disparity: What do we do with the evidence? *American Journal of Public Health, 92*(4), 543-548.

Campbell, J. & Landenberger, K. (1995). Violence against women. In Women's Health Care: A Comprehensive Handbook. Fogel & Woods, ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Cash, T.F. (2002). Women's Body Images. In G. Wingood & R. DiClemente (Eds.), *Handbook of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health* (pp. 43-70). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Cornelius, L., Smith, P., & Simpson, G. (2002). What Factors Hinder Women of Color from Obtaining Preventive Health Care. *American Journal of Public Health, 92*(4), 535-39.

Fee, E. (1983) Women and Health Care: A Comparison of Theories. From: Women and Health: The Politics of Sex in Medicine. Farmingdale, N.Y:Baywood.

Gazmararian, J.A., Bruce, F.C., Kendrick, J.S. et al. (2001) Why do women douche? Results from a Qualitative Study. *Maternal and Child Health Journal, 5*(3), 153-160.

Giachello, A.L. (1995) Cultural Diversity and Institutional Inequality.  
(in *Health Issues for Women of Color*). Thousand Oaks California: Sage

Gruskin, E., Hart, S., Gordon, N., & Ackerson, L. (2001). Patterns of Cigarette Smoking and Alcohol Use Among Lesbians and Bisexual Women Enrolled in a Large Health Maintenance Organization. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*(6), 976-979.

Hays, J., Ockene, J.K., R.L. Brunner et al. (2003). Effects of Estrogen plus Progestin on Health Related Quality of Life. *The New England Journal of Medicine, 384*(19), 1-16.

Jones Goodwin, A. (1987). Sexuality. In Ourselves Growing Older by Doress, P. & Siegal, D. (in cooperation with the Boston Women's Health Book Collective). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kilgore, M. (1996). Magic, moralism and marginalization: media coverage of cervical, ovarian and uterine cancer. In Evaluating Women's Health Messages. R. Parrot and C. Condit, ed. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publishers.

Laskin Siegal, D. (1987). Menopause: Entering Our Third Age. In Ourselves Growing Older by Doress, P. & Siegal, D. (in cooperation with the Boston Women's Health Book Collective). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Laumann, O., & Mahay, J. (2002). The Social Organization of Women's Sexuality. In G. Wingood & R. DiClemente (Eds.), *Handbook of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health* (pp. 43-70). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Lavizzo-Mourney, R.L. & Grisso, J.A. (1994). Health Care and Women of Color. (in *An Unfinished Revolution: Women and Health Care in America*) New York: United Hospital Fund.

Lindemann, S. & Oliver, E. (1982). Consciousness, liberation and health delivery systems. Journal of Medicine and Philosophy, 7. 135-52.

Mark, D.B. (2000) Editorial: Sex Bias in Cardiovascular Care: Should Women Be Treated More Like Men? . Journal of the American Women's Medical Association.  
[http://www.jamwa.org/vo383/5\\_5\\_ed.htm](http://www.jamwa.org/vo383/5_5_ed.htm)

Mays, V., Yancey, A., Cochran, S., Weber, M., & Fielding, J. (2002). Heterogeneity of Health Disparities Among African American, Hispanic, and Asian American Women: Unrecognized Influences of Sexual Orientation. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(4), 632-639.

McBride & McBride (1981). Theoretical underpinnings for women's health. Women & Health, 6 (1/2). Pg. 37-55.

Meyer, I. H. (Ed.). (2001). Editorial: Why Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Public Health? American Journal of Public Health ; 91(6), 856-858.

Nelson, E. (1996). The American experience of childbirth: toward a range of safe choices. In Evaluating Women's Health Messages. R. Parrot and C. Condit, ed. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publishers.

Owen, S. & Caudill, S. (1996). Contraception and clinical science: the place of women in reproductive technology. In Evaluating Women's Health Messages. R. Parrot and C. Condit, ed. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publishers.

Reissman, C. (1983). Women and medicalization: a new perspective. Social Policy. Summer, 1983. 3-18.

Rosenfield, A. (2001). Emergency Contraception: A Modality Whose Time Has Come. *Journal of the American Women's Medical Association*. [http://www.jamwa.org/vol53/53\\_5\\_ed.htm](http://www.jamwa.org/vol53/53_5_ed.htm)

Taylor, S., Klein, L., Lewis, B., Grunewald, R., Gurung, R., & Updegraff, J. (2000). Biobehavioral Responses to Stress in Females: Tend and Befriend, Not Fight or Flight. *Psychological Review*, 107(3), 411-429.

Walters, K., & Simoni, J. (2002). Reconceptualizing Native Women's Health: An Indigenist Stress Coping Model. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92, 520-524.

Weisman, C.S. (1997). Changing Definitions of Women's Health: Implications for Health Care and Policy. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 1(3), 179-189

Westley, E. (2001). Emergency Contraception: A Global Overview. *Journal of the American Women's Medical Association*. [http://www.jamwa.org/vol53/53\\_5\\_1a.htm?](http://www.jamwa.org/vol53/53_5_1a.htm?)

Williams, D. (2002). Racial/Ethnic Variations in Women's Health: The Social Embeddedness of Health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(4), 588-97.