



American Studies 230
BORN IN AMERICA
Professor M. C. Lynn

FALL 2007
Wednesday & Friday
TLC 308: 10:10-11:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will explore the changing ways in which American women have experienced contraception, abortion, pregnancy, and childbirth, from 1587 to the present. We will examine developments in technology, law, medicine, the economy, and the role and position of women and the family in society as they have influenced the reproductive lives of American women, using sources from the history of medicine, social history, literature, legal and constitutional studies, government and sociology. Issues we will consider include social childbirth and the role of the midwife in the colonial period, the masculinization of obstetrics, introduction of anesthesia, and criminalization of abortion in the nineteenth century, the struggle for reproductive freedom and the introduction of hospital birth, as well as the legalization of abortion and introduction of alternative birthing patterns in the twentieth century. By analyzing these topics, reading about them, writing about them, and thinking and discussing various aspects of each, we will work to gain a greater understanding of how social change occurs, and what studying reproduction can tell us about the evolution of American society.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available in the Skidmore Shop)

Dorothy and Richard Wertz, *LYING-IN: A History of Childbirth in America*.

Carlson, Eisenstat, & Ziporyn, *NEW HARVARD GUIDE TO WOMEN'S HEALTH*

Laurel Ulrich, ed., *A MIDWIFE'S TALE*

Andrea Tone, *CONTROLLING REPRODUCTION: AN AMERICAN HISTORY*

PHOTOCOPIED MATERIAL: (available on WebCT)

Tom Davis, SACRED WORK (excerpt)
Griswold v. Connecticut 1963 (birth control; right to privacy)
Roe v. Wade 1973 (constitutional right to abortion)
Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, 1989 (states may regulate access)
Hodgson v. Minnesota 1990 (parental notification)
Rust v. Sullivan 1991 (gag rule)
Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey 1992 (no undue burden)
Gonzalez v. Carhart 2007 (Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 1973 constitutional)
Other readings will be added during the course of the semester

FILMS

"Fight for Life" (1941)
"All My Babies"
"Not Me Alone"
"Abortion Clinic (1981)
"A Midwife's Tale"
"High Tech Babies"
"Desperately Seeking Baby"
"Birth: Eight vWomen's
Stories"

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

This course is an expository writing course, which means that we will be reading, writing, thinking, and talking about our subject throughout the semester. Writing will be used as a way of thinking about the issues involved in the course, and will be used to generate and organize class discussion. We will be doing several different kinds of writing throughout the term, including the following:

1. **Essays:** During the course of the term, you will write and submit three essays on an assigned topic related to the course. (You will also write an essay in class.) Each essay will focus on a different audience, and the appropriate strategies for reaching that audience. (Separate assignment sheets will be distributed before each essay is due.) We will use peer critiquing as well as my comments to analyze your essays, each of which will be revised at least once.
2. **Term Paper:** You will also design and carry out a research project which will culminate in a term paper 10-15 pages in length. The project should help you to develop a feasible topic, carry out research in print and on-line sources, develop an argument, identify evidence in support of your argument, organize information, write a draft, and revise the draft into a final paper.
3. **In-class writing:** At several intervals during the term, we will respond to a film or video or begin our class discussion with a writing assignment designed to stimulate class discussion, or to set up the terms of an in-class debate. These brief assignments will be turned in, but will not be graded.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This will be a class in which we will all try to learn from each other. The topics we will discuss will often be controversial, and most of them will have a clear and direct impact on many of our lives. Thus we have two mutual responsibilities: first, to listen carefully and with respect to each other, even if we disagree about an issue of law or morality; second, to prepare carefully for each class, and come ready to share ideas and insights with each other. Since we will depend on each other for ideas and insights, it is important that you prepare for and attend each of our class sessions. (If special circumstances--illness, injury, athletic competition, job interview, religious holiday, family crisis--cause you to miss a class session, I still want to hear your ideas about the topic we have discussed, via electronic mail or on paper; that way I can try to integrate your comments into future class discussions.) More than three cuts, for whatever reason, will have a negative impact on your grade.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Wednesday, September 5 Introduction" A Midwife's Tale"

Friday, September 7 Women's Birth Experiences (HGWH: "Childbirth")
IN-CLASS ESSAY

Part 1: Physiology and Human Choices

Wednesday, September 12 Reproduction: HGWH (see assignment sheet)
Sexually Transmitted Diseases: HGWH (" ") Guest
Friday, September 14 speaker: Carla Suna, NP

Wednesday, September 19 Contraception & Abortion: HGWH (" ")

Part II: Colonial America

Friday, September 21 17th & 18th century Childbirth: Wertz, ch. 1
Tone, introduction & ch. 1

Wednesday, September 26 The Maine Frontier: Ulrich, pp. 1-
71 "A Midwife's Tale"
FIRST ESSAY DUE

Friday, September 28 Women's Webs:: Ulrich, pp. 72-
161 "Birth: 8 Women's stories"
Wednesday, October 3 Deliveries: Ulrich, pp. 162-234
TERM PAPER TOPIC DUE

Friday, October 5 "Birth, " continued
Medicalization of Childbirth: Ulrich, pp. 235-308
"Birth," continued

Part III: Nineteenth Century Changes

Wednesday, October 10 Endings: Ulrich, pp. 309-352

Friday, October 12 Bibliographic Instruction Session, Library BI room
REWRITE OF FIRST ESSAY DUE

Wednesday, October 17 Medicalizing Reproduction: Wertz, ch. 2, Tone, Ch. 2
PRELIMINARY TERM PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Friday, October 19 Study Day-no class

Wednesday, October 24 Maternal and Infant Mortality: Wertz, ch 3 & 4
SECOND ESSAY DUE

Friday, October 26 Regulating Reproduction: Tone, ch. 3 & 4
" All My Babies"

Part IV: Twentieth Century Patterns

Wednesday, October 31 Hospitalizing Birth: Wertz, ch. 5
film: "Fight for Life"
TERM PAPER OUTLINE DUE

Friday, November 2 Birth Control Revolution: Tone, ch. 5

Wednesday, November 7 Natural Childbirth: Wertz, ch. 6
Film: "Not Me Alone"
REVISION OF SECOND ESSAY DUE

Friday, November 9 Government Regulation: Wertz ch. 7
TBA

Part V: Contemporary Controversies

Wednesday, Nov. 14 Reproductive Rights: Tone, ch. 6 & 7, Griswold, Roe
CONFERENCES ON TERM PAPER DRAFT THIS WEEK

Friday, November 16 The Abortion Experience: video: "Abortion Clinic"
review HGWH, Webster, Hodgson, Rust (WebCT)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Wednesday, Nov. 28 Abortion: Recent Legal Issues: Tone, ch. 6; Sacred Work,
Casey, Carhart
Guest Speaker, Dr. Thomas Davis (author of Sacred Work)
THIRD ESSAY DUE

Friday, Nov. 30 Abortion: ProChoice Perspectives
TBA Guest Speaker TBA

Wednesday, December 5 Feminist & Countercultural Critiques of Childbirth: TBA
GUEST SPEAKERS: Dan Nathan & Sue Taylor, "Giving Birth in Finland and in the US"

Friday, December 7 Infertility: TBA
video: "Desperately Seeking
Baby" **TERM PAPER DUE**

Wednesday, December 12 The Perfect Child: Wertz, ch. 8, Epilogue: TBA
Guest speakers, Kirstin and Darren Drabek
THIRD ESSAY REWRITE DUE

GRADES

Your final grade will reflect where you are at the end of the term, as well as your performance on assignments and in class during the course of the semester. Of all the grades you have earned during the semester. Class performance will be graded, as will the three essays (and revisions) and the initial and final versions of the term paper. Initial drafts will count for one-third and final drafts for two-thirds of the grade recorded for those assignments, i.e. if the first term paper draft earns a B and the second an A, your recorded grade for the paper will be an A-minus. (Missing more than three classes for whatever reason, attending class unprepared, or failing to submit comments on reading and discussion topics after an unavoidable absence will obviously have a negative impact on your grade for class performance.) Late work will be penalized, unless you are hospitalized--out of fairness to students who submit less-than-perfect work on time, even wonderful work submitted late will receive a lower grade. At your request, I will give you an indication of your grade at the midpoint of the semester, with the understanding that such a preliminary grade can rise or fall depending on the quality of the rest of your work.

FINDING ME

My office is in TLC329; my office hours are:

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00-noon, 3:30-

4:40 Wednesday: 11:30-12:30

I am eager to meet with you to discuss what we are studying together--feel free to drop in during my open office hours or make an appointment for another time--I am almost always on campus all day every weekday. You may reach me through electronic mail (my username is mcl) or call me at extension 5025. In an emergency, you can reach me at home: 587-0193.