



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

SPRING 2010
Tuesday & Thursday
TLC 308: 11:10-12:30

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*.

Tina Cassidy, *BIRTH: The Surprising History of How We Are Born*

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

Andrea Tone, *DEVICES & DESIRES: A History of Contraceptives in America*

BLACKBOARD:

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

"A Midwife's Tale"

"Fight for Life" (1941)

"All My Babies"

"Not Me Alone"

"Abortion Clinic (1981)

""The Business of Being Born"

"Birth: Eight Women'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 8-10 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, include the appropriate citations, 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.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

According to the Dean of Studies website, "Skidmore not only promotes intellectual honesty vigorously but severely punishes such offenses as plagiarism and cheating on exams." http://cms.skidmore.edu/dean_of_studies/integrity/index.cfm If you use someone else's ideas or words without properly citing them, you are committing plagiarism--the academic equivalent of theft. If you quote more than three consecutive words from someone else's work, you must put those words in quotation marks and properly footnote them. If you paraphrase someone else's words, or use their ideas, you need to carefully footnote your borrowing. If you borrow from a website (see above) you need to put the borrowed language in quotation marks, include the url for the appropriate page, and indicate the date you visited the page in question. If you fail to do this, you may receive a failing grade on your paper; if your offense is severe you may fail the course.

American Studies papers generally require bibliographies of all works consulted (as opposed to works cite and use footnotes rather than in-text citations; please visit the department web page to see how to do this [here is the url: http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/american_studies/writingapaper-footnoting.html](http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/american_studies/writingapaper-footnoting.html) If you have any questions about how to use footnotes (or endnotes) I will be happy to work with you to show you how to show your sources properly. One exception to this footnote policy is in book reviews (see below) where the only quotes and paraphrases are from the book you are reviewing. In that one case, you may use in-text citations simply list the author's surname and the page you are quoting. If, however, you decide to quote other reviews of the book, or other texts which are relevant, you should use the standard footnote formula.

The Dean of Studies webpage includes explicit about the ethics of academic integrity at: http://cms.skidmore.edu/dean_of_studies/integrity/ethics.cfm

The same website includes this useful checklist to be used before turning in a paper or essay: http://cms.skidmore.edu/dean_of_studies/integrity/checklist.cfm

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Tuesday, January 26 Thursday, January 28	IN-CLASS ESSAY Part I: Physiology and Human Choices Sexually Transmitted Diseases: OBOS ch. 14, 15, 16 (" ") Guest speaker: Carla Suna, NP
Tuesday, February 2	Reproductive Physiology: OBOS, ch 13, 21, 22 (Blackboard)
Thursday, February 4	Contraception & Abortion: OBOS, ch.18, 19, 20 (" ")
Tuesday, February 9	Part II: Colonial America 17th & 18th century Childbirth: Wertz, ch. 1 Cassidy, ch. 3
Thursday, February 11	The Maine Frontier: Ulrich, pp. 1-71 "A Midwife's Tale"
Tuesday, February 16	FIRST ESSAY DUE
Thursday, February 18	Women's Webs: Ulrich, pp. 72-161 "Birth: 8 Women's stories"
Tuesday, February 23	Deliveries: Ulrich, pp. 162-234 TERM PAPER TOPIC DUE
Thursday, February 25	Birth, " continued Medicalization of Childbirth, pt. 1: Ulrich, pp. 235-308 Cassidy, 4 & 5 "Birth," continued
Tuesday, March 2	
Thursday, March 4	Part III: Nineteenth Century Changes Endings: Ulrich, pp. 309-352., Tone, introduction & ch. 1
Tuesday, March 9	Bibliographic Instruction Session, Library BI room REWRITE OF FIRST ESSAY DUE
Thursday, March 11	Medicalizing Reproduction, pt 2: Wertz, ch. 2, Tone, ch. 2, PRELIMINARY TERM PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
Introduction "A Midwife's Tale" Women's Birth Experiences (Cassidy, ch. 1 & 2)	Maternal and Infant Mortality: Wertz, ch 3 & 4

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GRADES

Your final grade will reflect where you are at the end of the tenn, 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 tenn 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 tenn 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. EXCEPTION: If you have symptoms of HINI flu, please do not come to class-cuts for the flu do not count towards the three class limit.) Late work will be penalized, unless you have the flu or other serious illness or injury--out of fairness to students who submit less-than-perfect work on time, even wonderful work submitted late will receive a lower grade.

FINDING ME

My office is in TLC329; my office hours are:

Monday and Wednesday: 9:00-10:00

Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-3:00 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.