IFS 3137: Politics of Reproduction  
Florida State University  
Spring 2017  
Monday, 1-4pm, HSF 2009

Professor Miranda R. Waggoner  
Office Hours: Wed, 2-4pm, Bellamy 621  
Office Telephone: 850-644-1378  
Email: mwaggoner@fsu.edu

Course Description
Human reproduction is typically thought of as simply a natural phenomenon, yet reproduction is as profoundly social as it is merely biological. Studying the multiple aspects of reproduction offers an analytic window onto the intersection between private issues and public concerns, between individual bodies and broader patterns of social configurations. In this class, we will examine the social dimensions of reproduction, focusing particularly on what makes reproduction “political”. In doing so, we will examine how reproduction interfaces with the politics of women’s health, men’s health, child health, family formation, public policy discourse, reproductive technologies, and reproductive practices, among other topics. Furthermore, we will scrutinize how the politics of reproduction shape and are shaped by inequalities based on gender, race, class, sexuality, and citizenship, and we will consider cultural, political, and economic forces that influence reproductive experiences and discourses. In each class, we will address historical context, sociopolitical trends, and contemporary debates regarding specific themes and topics related to reproductive politics. Course material and discussions will draw from varied perspectives and interdisciplinary resources, including sociology, demography, anthropology, history, medicine, and public health. Although the course material focuses mostly on U.S. reproductive politics, we will consider other societies for comparison.

Course Objectives
By the end of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to do the following:

• Discuss the role of social, cultural, political, and economic factors in contemporary reproductive problems and politics.
• Analyze claims about reproduction in society.
• Analyze the major questions in the course using multiple disciplinary and intellectual perspectives.
• Demonstrate the relevance of ideas or findings from the course by applying them to public policy debates about, and lived experiences of, reproduction.
• Communicate arguments about how reproductive phenomena interface with micro-social and structural processes using clear, coherent prose that utilizes the conventions of standard American English.
• Discuss core ideas in the scholarly study of reproductive politics using sources from a variety of text types.

Liberal Studies for the 21st Century
The Liberal Studies for the 21st Century Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies thus offers a transformative experience. This course has been approved as meeting the Liberal Studies requirements for Social Sciences and thus is designed to help you become a critical analyst of theories and evidence about social forces and social experience. This course has also been approved as meeting the requirements for the E-Series and thus is designed to help you become a competent analytical and flexible thinker and a lifelong learner.

Required Texts
All texts for this course will be posted and available via Blackboard.

Course Requirements
Attendance and Participation
This course meets only once a week, in a seminar style that is conducive to accommodating lecture slides, film clips, and in-depth class discussion related to each week’s topic. Your consistent attendance and dynamic participation is critical to doing well in this course, especially since structured in-class discussions will comprise a major component of each class time. I expect everyone not only to listen but also to engage in the intellectual community of the class.

You are expected to attend every class. If you must miss class for a reason other than an excused absence, as stipulated by the University Attendance Policy, you must let me know in advance, and you will be required to write an additional response paper in order to make up for the class. If you have more than two unexcused absences, you will receive zero points for the attendance portion of your grade.

In order to actively participate in class discussions, you should complete all readings before the start of each class and bring your notes to class, with discussion points in mind. Additionally, we will discuss topics in class that are controversial. I fully expect students to engage in thoughtful and respectful discussions. To receive an “A” participation grade, a student will dependably engage with the course concepts and readings (through attentive and active involvement during class discussions), partake in small-group work during class when applicable, and consistently show respect to other students when discussing the course material. For every one of these aspects not met, the participation grade may be reduced by one letter grade.
**Reading Response Papers**

Five times during the course of the semester, you are required to turn in a reading response paper. You may choose your response days (starting Week 3 and beyond), allowing flexibility in planning your workload. **These papers must be turned in on Blackboard by midnight prior to the class during which we will be discussing the readings.** These short papers – no more than one single-spaced page each – should include three components. First, the paper should concisely summarize the key points of that day’s readings and reflect on how the readings relate to the politics of reproduction (note that you are not required to incorporate recommended/optional readings that are listed on the course schedule). Second, you should provide a critique or analysis of the readings in your own words. You may refer to other readings, personal examples, popular examples, or other sources to reinforce your point(s). Third, you should pose a discussion question based on the readings. Only papers that accomplish all these tasks and that are thoughtfully expressed will receive full credit.

**Paper I: “Birth Story”**

What do you know about the circumstances of your own birth and/or gestation? Interview a parent (or both parents if possible) or a caregiver who knows about the details of your birth. As an alternative, you may tell the story of a friend’s birth/gestation or struggles with infertility. You should relate details of the story to relevant course themes/topics. Guidelines on this assignment will be provided in class. The paper should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced, and will be due during Week 5.

**Paper II: Popular Culture Review**

This assignment requires you to choose a film or book that depicts a reproductive issue and write a brief review. The course material should inform your analytic lens in the paper. Guidelines on this assignment will be provided in class. The paper should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced, and will be due during Week 9.

**Research Project**

You will select a topic of your choice related to the social dimensions of reproduction. This is a chance to delve deeper into an area of reproductive politics that interests you. More details about this assignment will be passed out in class, but it will include the following components:

- **Research Project Proposal:** This short document – no more than 2 double-spaced pages – includes your topic idea, plans for completing the research project, plans for locating outside sources, and your initial argument. You should explain how your research project matters for studying reproduction in society. This paper reflects thinking-in-progress; nevertheless, it should demonstrate what you have learned, read, and discussed in the class thus far and how this knowledge is shaping your research project. Your proposal should include 5 outside references.
**Additional Note about the Proposal:** On the designated due date, you will bring your proposal to class, and we will workshop it in small groups. After you receive feedback from your classmate(s) and me, you will have an opportunity to revise your proposal before turning it in for grading.

*Research Project Final Paper:* The paper will be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, not counting references. The paper should synthesize and apply course readings, films, and discussions where relevant. Additionally, it should include several outside sources. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

Please note that I will provide feedback on your writing throughout the semester.

**Assessment**
Your final grade in this course will be based on the following:

- **Attendance** 10%
- **Participation** 10%
- **Reading Response Papers** 25% (5 papers @ 5 points each)
- **Birth Story Paper** 10%
- **Popular Culture Review Paper** 15%
- **Research Project Proposal** 5%
- **Research Project Final Paper** 25%

Grading will adhere to a standard scale, and plus/minus grading will be used for final grades. FSU does not allow a final grade of “A+”. The specific ranges are as follows:

- 93-100=A
- 90-92=A-
- 87-89=B+
- 83-86=B
- 80-82=B-
- 77-79=C+
- 73-76=C
- 70-72=C-
- 67-69=D+
- 63-66=D
- 60-62=D-
- 0-59=F

To demonstrate college-level writing competency as required by the State of Florida, the student must earn a “C-” or higher in the course, and earn at least a “C-” average on the required writing assignments. If the student does not earn a “C-” average or better on the required writing assignments, the student will not earn an overall grade of “C-” or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

**Course Policies**

*University Attendance Policy*
Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children or close family members experience serious illness.
**Academic Honor Policy**

In the academic setting it is critical that the work you present is original and that you cite outside sources rigorously and appropriately. Please see me if you have a question about plagiarism. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “…be honest and truthful and … [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy).)

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the: Student Disability Resource Center 874 Traditions Way 108 Student Services Building Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167 (850) 644-9566 (voice) (850) 644-8504 (TDD) sdrc@admin.fsu.edu [http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/)

**Free Tutoring from FSU**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services’ comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options at [http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring](http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring) or [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation of your performance in this course, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the Politics of Reproduction</th>
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<td>January 9</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no class)</th>
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<td>January 16</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Nature, Culture, Reproduction</th>
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<td>January 23</td>
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Recommended/Optional:


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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Menarche and Menstruation</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 30</td>
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Recommended/Optional:


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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Fertility Control and Intentions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February 6</strong></td>
<td><em>Paper I Due via Blackboard by Friday, February 10th, at 5pm</em></td>
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**Recommended/Optional:**

**Recommended/Optional:**

**Recommended/Optional:**

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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Pregnancy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February 13</strong></td>
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**Recommended/Optional:**

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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>New Reproductive Technologies I: Preimplantation and Prenatal Genetic Testing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>February 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guest Lecture: Emily Mann, FSU Libraries</strong></td>
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*Note: Be ready to write down an initial topic idea (or, ideas) for your research project in class (2-3 sentences; this preliminary note will count as part of your participation grade and should make our library session useful to you)*


Recommended/Optional:

<table>
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Abortion</th>
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<td>February 27</td>
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**Recommended/Optional:**


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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>New Reproductive Technologies II: Assisting Reproduction</th>
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<td>March 6</td>
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*Paper II Due via Blackboard by Friday, March 10, at 5pm*


Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2015. “Fetuses as Persons, Surrogate Mothers as Nonpersons.” Chapter 6 (pp. 126-142) in Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India. New York University Press.

Recommended/Optional:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Spring Break (no class)</th>
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<td>March 13</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>New Reproductive Technologies III: Making Families</th>
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<td>March 20</td>
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<td>*Research Proposal Draft Due in Class and on BB</td>
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Recommended/Optional:
Week 12 | Birth, Historical Context

March 27

*Research Proposal Due via Blackboard by Friday, March 31, at 5pm


Recommended/Optional:


Week 13 | Birth, Contemporary Issues

April 3


Reed, Richard. 2005. “American Fathers and Hospital Childbirth” and “Men’s Experience of Birth.” Chapter 1 (pp. 1-31) and Chapter 6 (pp. 161-210) in Birthing
**Fathers: The Transformation of Men in American Rites of Birth.** New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

**Recommended/Optional:**

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**Week 14**  
**The Politics of Reproductive Harm**  
**April 10**


**Recommended/Optional:**

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**Week 15**  
** Governing Reproduction, Controlling Populations**  
**April 17**


Recommended/Optional:

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<th>Week 16</th>
<th>Postpartum Politics</th>
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<td>April 24</td>
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Recommended/Optional:


Final paper to be turned in on Blackboard by 5pm on Monday, May 1st