

Reproductive Politics in the United States

Professor Rachel Roth
MIT Course Number: WGS.S10
Spring 2013
Undergraduate Level Course

NOTE: "I taught this course as an elective at MIT. Because students are so busy with their STEM classes, a colleague recommended I assign 50-75 pages per week. This shorter-than-usual parameter influenced my choice of readings. Other professors may want to assign longer articles or books by some of the authors whose short pieces we read."

Course Meeting Times

Seminars: 1 session / week, 3 hours / session

Prerequisites

MIT students must get the instructor's permission.

Course Overview

Throughout the semester, we will examine the ways that class, race, and sexuality affect women's experiences of reproduction, and the role of the state in shaping those experiences, now and over the course of the last century. Many of our topics fit into two broad areas: conflicts over the control of childbearing (sterilization abuse, birth control, and abortion) and conflicts over who deserves to be a mother, especially when the mothers in question face social stigma and lack political power. Other topics include the global market in reproductive services and conflicts over pregnant women's conduct and what status to accord to fetuses. Class materials will include court opinions, government documents, news stories, op-eds, first-person narratives, web sites, documentaries, and reports as well as academic scholarship.

Requirements

ACTIVITIES	PERCENTAGES
Attendance and active participation	30%
Two 4–5 page papers	30%
Final paper	40%

There is no final exam in this course.

Course Materials

 Tyler, Elaine. *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness*. Harvard University Press, 1997. ISBN: 9780674061828.

Logistics

- Please sign up for the [Daily Women's Health Policy Report](#). This will help us to keep up with news about reproductive politics and health policy.
- You may also be interested in the [Guttmacher Institute](#), which has research articles, data, and monthly updates on state policies governing reproductive health and rights.
- The class chose how to spend the last two weeks of the semester:

-  Read *Why Have Kids?: A New Mom Explores the Truth About Parenting and Happiness* by Jessica Valenti. New Harvest, 2012. ISBN: 9780547892610

OR

- Suggest topics of interest. (The Spring 2013 class chose this option and added readings on the experience of gay fathers and transgender parents.)

Academic Integrity, Collaboration, Resources

Every student is expected to do his or her own work and must turn in original papers written specifically for this course. Students are encouraged to discuss the reading outside of class. You may find it helpful to exchange drafts of your papers and give each other feedback, or to visit the Writing and Communication Center. If you get feedback from another student, acknowledge that person's contribution in your paper.

Engaging with and giving credit to the ideas, words, and research findings of others is an important part of scholarly writing and academic integrity. If you have questions about when to cite a source or what counts as plagiarism, ask!

Assignments

- Attendance and active participation—our class meetings will be devoted primarily to discussion, so everyone's informed contributions are vital.
- Two 4–5 page papers on the assigned reading, one before Spring break.
- One paper proposal.
- One 8–10 page final paper, in draft and final form.
- One presentation to the class about the final paper.

I will meet with students individually to refine paper topics and to go over drafts.

SES #	TOPICS	READINGS
1	Introduction to Course Themes and Requirements	No readings
2	Thinking about Reproduction and Politics	<p>Buy at Amazon Petchesky, Rosalind. "Beyond 'A Woman's Right to Choose' Feminist Ideas about Reproductive Rights." In <i>The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood</i>. Edited by Nancy Ehrenreich. New York University Press, 2008, pp. 106–10. ISBN: 9780814722312. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Baer, Judith A., and Leslie Goldstein. "Muller v. Oregon (1908)." In <i>The Constitutional and Legal Rights of Women: Cases in Law and Social Change</i>. Oxford University Press, 2006. ISBN: 9780195330748.</p> <p>Eastman, Crystal. "Now We Can Begin: What's Next?" (1920). Reprinted by about.com</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Cade Bambara, Toni, ed. "The Pill: Genocide or Liberation? (1969)" In <i>The Black Woman: An Anthology</i>. Washington Square Press, 2005, pp. 52–7. ISBN: 9780743476973.</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Michie, Helena, and Naomi Cahn. "Expectant Readers." In <i>Confinements: Fertility and Infertility in Contemporary Culture</i>. Rutgers University Press, 1997, pp. 24–31. ISBN: 9780813524337.</p> <p>Price, Kimala. "What is Reproductive Justice? How Women of Color Activists are Redefining the Pro-Choice Paradigm." <i>Meridians</i> 10, no. 2 (2010): 42–65.</p>

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3	Involuntary Childlessness at the Hands of the State: The History of Sterilization Abuse	<p>Documentary: "La Operacion." Directed by Ana María García. Latin American Film Project, 1982. Available on YouTube. Accessed December 16, 2013.</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Tyler, Elaine. Chapters 2, and 3 in <i>Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness</i>. Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 1–4. ISBN: 9780674061828. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Federal consent form for sterilization (PDF)</p> <p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Use of Contraception in the United States: 1982–2008 (PDF)." Series 23, no. 29. August 2010. (Sterilization Info: Figure 7, Tables 10 & 11).</p>
4	Birth Control Politics, Abortion Law	<p>Buy at Amazon McCann, Carole. "Women as Leaders in the Contraceptive Movement." In <i>Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook</i>. Vol 2. Edited by Karen O'Connor. Sage Publications, 2010, pp. 749–56. ISBN: 9781412960830. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Chesler, Ellen. "Was Planned Parenthood's Founder Racist?" <i>Salon.com</i>. November 2, 2011.</p> <p>Glover, Juleanna. "Republicans Must Support Public Financing for Contraception." <i>New York Times</i>(op-ed), December 27, 2012. Contraception fact sheet. Guttmacher Institute. August 2013.</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Shapiro, Ian, ed. "Roe v. Wade." Excerpts in <i>Abortion: The Supreme Court Decisions, 1965–2007</i>. Hackett Publishing Co., 2008. ISBN: 9780872209039.</p> <p>Buy at Amazon O'Brien, David. "Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey." Excerpts in <i>Constitutional Law and Politics, Volume Two, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties</i>. 7th ed. W. W. Norton & Company, 2008, pp. 1170–82. ISBN: 9780393930399.</p>
5	Abortion Law, Politics, and Access	<p>Documentary: <i>Jane: An Abortion Service</i>. Directed by Kirtz, Kate, and Nell Lundy. Color, 58 min. 1996. [16mm/DVD]</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Siegel, Reva. "Concurring Opinion." In <i>What Roe v. Wade Should Have Said: The Nation's Top Legal Experts Rewrite America's Most Controversial Decision</i>. Edited by Jack Balkin. New York University Press, 2007, pp. 63–85. ISBN: 9780814799864. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Ehrenreich, Nancy, ed. "Harris v. McRae." In <i>The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood</i>. New York University Press, 2008, pp. 111–5. ISBN: 9780814722312. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Fried, Marlene Gerber. "The Economics of Abortion Access in the U.S." <i>Conscience: The NewsJournal of Catholic Opinion</i>. Winter 2005–2006.</p> <p>Harris, Lynn. "Shelter from the Storm." <i>Salon.com</i>. June 9, 2004.</p> <p>Rodriguez, Pablo. "The Doctor in the Bulletproof Vest." <i>New York Times</i> (op-ed). October 28, 1998.</p> <p>Freedman, Lori, Uta Landy, et al. "Obstacles to the Integration of Abortion into Obstetrics and Gynecology Practice." <i>Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health</i> 42, no. 3 (2010): 146–51.</p> <p>Parker, Willie Parker. "A Perspective on Later Abortion...from Someone Who Does Them." <i>Conscience: The NewsJournal of</i></p>

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		<p><i>Catholic Opinion</i> XXXIII, no. 1 (2012).</p> <p>"Roe at 40: New Infographics Illustrate Key Facts about Abortion in the United States." Guttmacher Institute. January 8, 2013. 1 in 3 website. Advocates for Youth.</p> <p>Kumar, Anu. "Abortion, the States and the World Health Organization." <i>Huffington Post</i>. August 10, 2012.</p> <p>Pollitt, Katha. "Remember Savita Halappanavar." <i>The Nation</i>, November 20, 2012.</p> <p>Fried, Marlene Gerber. "Reproductive Rights Activism in the Post-Roe Era." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 103, no. 1 (2013): 10-4. (optional)</p> <p>Trust Black Women website.</p>
6	Who Counts as a Mother? Outsourcing Reproduction	<p>Documentary: Made in India: A Film About Surrogacy. Directed by Rebecca Haimowitz & Vaishali Sinha. Color, 97 min., 2010.</p> <p>Documentary: Angel For Hire. Directed by Nina Goodby and Mary Flynn. 2011.</p> <p>Straight, Susan. "Making Babies, Just to Make Ends Meet" (op-ed). <i>New York Times</i>, November 3, 2012.</p> <p>Ikemoto, Lisa Chiyemi. "Reproductive Tourism: Equality Concerns in the Global Market for Fertility Services." <i>Law and Inequality: A Journal of Theory and Practice</i> 27 (2009): 277-309.</p> <p>Pande, Amrita. "Commercial Surrogacy in India: Manufacturing a Perfect Mother-Worker." <i>Signs</i> 35, no. 4 (2010): 969-92.</p> <p>Bellafante, Gina. "Surrogate Mothers' New Niche: Bearing Babies for Gay Couples." <i>New York Times</i>, May 27, 2005.</p> <p>Cohen, Elizabeth. "Surrogate Offered \$10,000 to Abort Baby." CNN. March 6, 2013.</p>
7	Lesbian Mothers	<p>Polikoff Nancy. "Lesbian and Gay Parenting: The Last Thirty Years." <i>Montana Law Review</i>, Winter 2005.</p> <p>Rizzo, Tony. "Kansas Supreme Court Upholds Lesbian Mother's Rights." <i>The Kansas City Star</i>, February 23, 2013.</p> <p>Pluta, Rick. "Challenge To Michigan's Gay Marriage Ban Grows From Adoption Case." <i>NPR</i>. March 7, 2013.</p> <p>Goldberg, Abbie E., Jordan B. Downing, et al. "Choices, Challenges, and Tensions: Perspectives of Lesbian Prospective Adoptive Parents." <i>Adoption Quarterly</i> 10, no. 2 (2007): 33-64.</p> <p>Johnson, Katherine M. "Excluding Lesbian and Single Women? An Analysis of U.S. Fertility Clinic Websites." <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i> 35, no. 5 (2012): 394-402.</p> <p> Eskridge Jr., William N. Chapter 8 in <i>Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet</i>. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999. (Optional: assumes some knowledge of constitutional law.) ISBN: 9780674341616. [Preview with Google Books]</p>
8	Poor Single Mothers	<p>Documentary: Take it from Me. Directed by Abt, Emily. Color, 75min. 2001.</p> <p>"Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act." (PDF). 1996. Read pages 6-8.</p> <p> Mink, Gwendolyn, and Rickie Solinger. "Welfare Policy/Welfare Reform." In <i>Poverty in the United States: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics and Policy</i>. Edited by Gwendolyn</p>

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		<p>Mink and Alice O'Connor. ABC-CLIO, 2004, pp. 803–15. ISBN: 9781576075975. [Preview with Google Books]</p> <p>Solinger, Rickie. "The First Welfare Case: Money, Sex, Marriage, and White Supremacy in Selma, 1966, A Reproductive Justice Analysis." <i>Journal of Women's History</i> 22, no. 3 (2010): 13–38.</p> <p>Mink, Gwendolyn. "Violating Women: Rights Abuses in the Welfare Police State." <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences</i> 577 (2001): 79–93.</p> <p>Romero, Diana, and Liza Fuentes. "The Welfare Cap Family Policy: Fertility Restriction as Poverty Prevention (PDF)." <i>Different Takes</i> 66 (Fall 2010). PopDev Center at Hampshire College.</p> <p>Finch, Ife, and Liz Schott. "The Value of TANF Cash Benefits Continued to Erode in 2012." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 28, 2013.</p> <p>Casey, Timothy, and Laurie Maldonado. "Worst Off—Single Parent Families in the United States." Legal Momentum, December 2012.</p> <p>Mencimer, Stephanie. "The GOP's Dead-End Marriage Program." <i>Mother Jones</i>, June 25, 2012.</p>
9	Imprisoned Mothers and Mothers with Criminal Records	<p>Documentary: "When the Bough Breaks: Children of Mothers in Prison." Directed by Jill Evans Petzell and Deeds Rogers. 58 min, 2001.</p> <p> Reynolds, Tina. "Glossary of Terms." In <i>Interrupted Life: Experiences of Incarcerated Women in the United States</i>. University of California Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780520258891. (<i>Read this glossary first.</i>)</p> <p>"Incarcerated Women (PDF)." fact sheet. The Sentencing Project.</p> <p>Young, Robin, and Jeremy Hobson. "Dramatic Shift in U.S. Prison Populations." <i>Here and Now</i> on NPR. March 28, 2013.</p> <p>(WBUR interview with Marc Mauer of the Sentencing Project. WBUR has a link to Mauer's new report on the changing racial dynamics of women's imprisonment, if you are interested in learning more.)</p> <p> Flavin, Jeanne. "Bad Mothers." Chapter 7 in <i>Our Bodies, Our Crimes: The Policing of Women's Reproduction in America</i>. New York University Press, 2010, pp. 139–63, and notes on pp. 241–52. ISBN: 9780814727911.</p> <p> Escobar, Martha. "ASFA and the Impact on Imprisoned Migrant Women and Their Children." In <i>Razor Wire Women: Prisoners, Activists, Scholars, and Artists</i>. Edited by Jodie Lawston and Ashley Lucas. State University of New York Press, 2011. ISBN: 9781438435329.</p> <p>(You can skip ahead and read pp. 80–8 if pressed for time, begin reading at "Mothering from the Inside" and read the two case studies and conclusion.)</p> <p> Solinger, Rickie, Paula C. Johnson, et al. <i>Interrupted Life: Experiences of Incarcerated Women in the United States</i>. University of California Press, 2010. ISBN: 9780520258891.</p> <p>(Selections, including first-person accounts of pregnancy and mothering from prison and of advocacy work by: Kimberly Burke, Tabitha and Christy Hall, Kebby Warner, Kathy Boudin, Joanne Archibald, Sophia Sanchez, Kemba Smith)</p> <p>Kraft-Stolar, Tamar. "A Fair Chance for Families Separated by Prison." Community Blog, North Star Fund. June 30, 2010.</p>

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		<p>Hsu, Andrea. "Difficult Births: Laboring and Delivering in Shackles." <i>All Things Considered</i>, NPR. July 16, 2010.</p> <p>Shain, Karen. "Unchain My Heart: The Shackling of Pregnant Women in Prison Needs to Stop." RH Reality Check, May 11, 2012.</p> <p>———. "No More Shackles: AB 2530 IS SIGNED!" <i>Strong Families</i>, September 28, 2012.</p> <p>Massachusetts House Bill 1433, an Act to Prevent Shackling and promote safe pregnancies for female inmates</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Sudbury, Julia. "From Women Prisoners to People in Women's Prisons: Challenging the Gender Binary in Antiprison Work." In <i>Razor Wire Women: Prisoners, Activists, Scholars, and Artists</i>. Edited by Jodie Lawston and Ashley Lucas. State University of New York Press, 2011. ISBN: 9781438435329.</p>
10	The Politics of Pregnancy and the Creation of Fetal Rights	<p>Buy at Amazon Dershowitz, Alan. "Mothers' Rights vs. Babies' Rights," and "Should Pregnant Women Be Denied Alcohol?" In <i>Contrary to Popular Opinion</i>. Berkley Trade, 1994, pp. 209–11 and 219–21. ISBN: 9780425141472.</p> <p>Buy at Amazon Kennedy, Caroline, and Ellen Alderman. "In re A.C.: The Forced Cesarean Case." In <i>The Right to Privacy</i>. Vintage, 1997, pp. 95–120, and endnotes. ISBN: 9780679744344.</p> <p>Paltrow, Lynn, and Jeanne Flavin. "Arrests of and Forced Interventions on Pregnant Women in the United States, 1973–2005: Implications for Women's Legal Status and Public Health." <i>Journal of Health Policy, Politics, and Law</i> 38, no. 2 (2013): 299–343.</p> <p>O'Connor, Anahad. "Really? An Occasional Drink is Okay During Pregnancy," <i>New York Times</i>, April 22, 2013.</p>
11	Gay Fathers	<p>Buy at Amazon Stacey, Judith. "Gay Parenthood and the End of Paternity as We Knew It." Chapter 2 in <i>Unhitched: Love, Marriage, and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China</i>. New York University Press, 2011, pp. 215–20. (notes) ISBN: 9780814737859. [Preview with Google Books]</p>
12	Transgender Parents	<p>Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, et al. "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (PDF)." National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.</p> <p>Ball, Carlos Ball. "Transgender Parenthood: Gender Does Not Make a Parent." May 4, 2012.</p> <p>Chagnot, Annie. "From Humiliation to Appreciation," <i>New York Times</i>, April 18, 2013.</p>