Human reproductive events and experiences are made meaningful through the complex interplay of biology, culture, and society. Powerful institutions within society such as biomedicine, law, and politics, also shape the way people imagine and manage their reproductive lives, as do global economic and development trends. The anthropology of reproduction is a relatively new area of study which has drawn primarily on feminist perspectives on women's health and the body as well as theory and methods in medical anthropology. This course explores the complex relationships between reproduction, personhood, and citizenship through the study of contemporary and historical issues. Drawing primarily on the work of anthropologists, topics will include family planning and maternity care interventions in the name of colonialism and development; state and faith sanctioned uses of new reproductive and genetic technologies in realising goals of nation, citizenship and family; pregnancy and motherhood as “skills of consumption” in North America; the globalisation of the abortion debate through NGO funding policies; family planning and maternity care in contexts of poverty, violence, and migration; the implications of technology for parental and fetal personhood, and birthplace and citizenship issues worldwide.

Students will gain new knowledge in the anthropology of reproduction and deepen their knowledge of theory and methods in anthropology – especially medical anthropology and feminist anthropology -- through the study of such concepts and analytical approaches as stratified reproduction, medicalization, rites of passage, globalization, nationalism, reproductive governance, and political economy of health. Students will also develop their academic skills in critical thinking, independent research, writing, and oral presentation.

**Format:** Lectures, films, class discussion and class presentations

**Evaluation:**
- Presentation on a set of readings 10%
- On-line reading responses (six each term) 20%
- Media/Image discussion (one each term) 10%
- Fall term test 20%
- Winter term essay 20%
- Class Participation 20%

**Required Readings:** The books are available for purchase at York University Bookstore and on Reserve at the Scott Library. All other readings are available on Moodle.


**Fall Term Seminar Schedule**

**Section I: Essential Reading in the Anthropology of Reproduction**

**Sept 14: Introduction to the Anthropology of Reproduction**
Read: Syllabus

**Sept 21: Classic Debates: The Meaning of Paternity**


**Sept 28: Classic Debates: Menstrual Taboos**


**Oct 5: Classic Accounts of Childbirth**


**Oct 12: NO CLASS -- Fall Term Reading Week**

**Oct 19: Scientific Constructions of Reproductive Biologies**

Section II: Reproductive Rights and Choices

Oct 26: Midwifery in North America

Film: The Business of Being Born.
Read: MacDonald, Chapter 1, 2 and 3

Nov 2: Maternity Care and Cultural Diversity

Guest Lecture: Nicole Bennett (Registered Midwife) and Nadya Burton (Ryerson Midwifery program)

Read: MacDonald, Chapter 4


Nov 9: Childbirth as Cultural Survival

Film: Ikajurti

Nov 16: Consumer Rights and Reproductive Choice


Wendland, Claire. The Vanishing Mother. 2006. Cesarean Section and “Evidence-Based Obstetrics”. Medical Anthropology Quarterly. 21(2): 218–233

Nov 23: Technology, Personhood and the Abortion Debate

Read: Taylor, Ch 1 -4

Nov 30 : Reproduction as Consumption

Read: Taylor, Ch 5.


Dec 7: Images of Reproduction

Read: Taylor, Ch 6

- Present and discuss a still or moving image of reproduction from the media, arts, public health.
- Fall term tests handed out. Due in ONE week.
Winter Term Seminar Schedule

Section III: Reproductive Governance around the World

Jan 4: Modernising Maternity

Read: Van Hollen. Skim Intro, read Chapter 1 and 2 closely.

Jan 11: Reproduction in Zones of Poverty and Conflict

Read: Maternowska, Ch 1, 2 and 3


Jan 18: Discourses of Family Planning

Read: Maternowska, chapters 4-6

Jan 25: Population Policy in China


Feb 1: Reproducing Nations


Feb 8: Reproducing Nations, Cont’d


Feb 15: Where to be Born? Childbirth and Citizenship

Feb 22: Reading Week – NO CLASS

Mar 1: Reproductive Tourism

Film: Making Babies in India

Inhorn, Marcia and Pasquale Patrizio. 2009. Rethinking Reproductive Tourism as Reproductive Exile. Fertility and Sterility. 92(3): 904-906

Mar 8: Winter Term Essay workshop

Mar 15: “Counting down” and “Scaling up” to Millenium Development Goal 5


March 22: The Tragedy of Maternal Mortality

Film: Dead Mums Don’t Cry
Read: Van Hollen, Chapter 4, 5 and Conclusion

Mar 29 LAST CLASS!

- Images of Reproduction: Present and discuss a still or moving image of reproduction from the media, arts, public health.

- Hand in Winter Term Essays
**Supplementary Texts**


