Special Topics in GWS Graduate Study (GWS 950)
GENDER AND HEALTH

SPRING 2011
   Wednesdays, 1:20-3:15 PM
   Sterling 3304

INSTRUCTOR
   Jenny Higgins, PhD, MPH
   Phone: 608.890.4622; Email: jahiggins2@wisc.edu
   Office: Sterling 3414, 475 North Charter Street
   Office hours: Mondays 1:45-3:45; schedule through link on Learn@UW or
   https://tools.wisccal.wisc.edu/available/schedule/581/view.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores multiple theories, disciplines, and substantive topical areas relating
to gender and health. We will begin by engaging with a number of theoretical approaches to
gender and health, including critical discourse analysis, intersectionality, sexualities, and
masculinities. We will then apply these theoretical lenses to more specific substantive areas,
including HIV/AIDS, contraception and reproductive health, chronic disease, obesity, and
infertility. (I am open to amending some of these topics and readings according to student
interests and research areas.) Seminar participants will have the ongoing opportunity to
develop their own analysis skills and research interests, through the weekly discussions, course
research proposal, and summary-and-critique memos.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

The course consists of four main components (described in more detail below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Ongoing, every class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Two class sessions determined at the beginning of the semester (5% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Summary-Critique Memos</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Rolling dates of each student’s choosing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Final product due on March 20th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEXTS

With the exceptions of the required book listed below, all readings will be available electronically on Learn@UW. Students are required to bring hard copies or electronic copies of the readings to class. The one book required for the course is for sale at A Room of One’s Own bookstore, 315 West Gorham Street (just off State Street), 608-257-7888.

Required Books

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1 – Introduction to Class</th>
<th>1/23/13</th>
<th>Readings: None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 2 – Introductory Concepts, Part 1</th>
<th>1/30/13</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3 – Introductory Concepts, Part 2</th>
<th>2/06/13</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If you have not done so previously, please (re)read these two oldies-but-goodies:*

Assignment: You must have completed at least one memo by this date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 4 – Masculinities and Health</th>
<th>2/13/13</th>
<th>Readings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Recommended but not required:

Session 5 – Intersectionality and Health
2/20/13 Readings:

Recommended but not required:

Assignments:
Research proposal topic & 5 resources due
You must have completed at least two memos by this date.

Session 6 – Sexualities and Health
2/27/13 Readings:

**Recommended but not required:**

---

**Session 7 – HIV/AIDS, Part 1**

3/06/13

Readings:


Assignment:

*Research proposal prospectus due (includes 1-2 page overview and at least 10 resources/citations)*

**Session 8 – HIV/AIDS, Part 2**

3/13/13

Readings:


**Recommended but not required**

5. Sobo EI. Inner-City Women and Aids - the Psychosocial Benefits of Unsafe Sex. Culture


Assignment:
You must have completed at least three memos by this date.

### Session 9 – Contraception, Family Planning, and Reproductive Health

#### 3/20/13

**Readings:**


Recommended but not required:


Assignment:
Research Proposal (ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT) due

****NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27th DUE TO SPRING RECESS****

### Session 10 – Infertility

#### 4/3/13

**Readings:**


2. Gannon K, Glover L, Abel P. Masculinity, infertility, stigma and media reports. Social

****NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10th DUE TO INSTRUCTOR TRAVEL****

### Session 11 – Violence

**4/17/13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Recommended but not required**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Assignment:**

You must have completed at least four memos by this date.

### Session 12 – Cancer and Chronic Disease

**4/24/13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Recommended but not required:

Session 13 – Gender and the Obesity “Epidemic”
5/1/13
Readings:
2. [Other readings other readings to be determined]

Recommended by not required:

Session 14 – Creating a Future Agenda for Gender and Health Research, Funding, Policy
5/8/13
Readings:

Assignment:
You must have completed five memos by this date.
ASSIGNMENTS

This class requires four main tasks in addition to the reading: weekly participation (20%), two discussion facilitations (10%), five summary-critique memos (40%), a research proposal (30%). I’ve included more information about each of these items below. I will also include more information in class as the semester ensues. I believe in giving students as many tools as possible to succeed, including clear guidelines and expectations.

1) PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE (“Keeping Up, Being There, and Breaking the Silence”)

I intend for this seminar to be a feminist reading group, where we engage with each other, courteously and constructively, in a thoughtful and reflexive conversation about the relationship between gender and health as exemplified through the readings. One of your major “assignments” in this class is simply keeping up with these readings, being there each Wednesday, and “breaking the silence,” individually and collectively about many important gender and health issues. Everyone is expected to participate in these conversations, which are intended to be friendly, somewhat informal, but nonetheless terrifically engaged and thought-provoking. You will be evaluated in this course in large part on your classroom engagement over the course of the semester.

Due date: Every class
Percent of your grade: 20%

2) DISCUSSION FACILITATION

Each participant in this seminar will lead the discussion during TWO Wednesday class sessions during the semester. We will decide this schedule on the first day of class. As a discussion leader, you are expected to briefly (no more than 10-15 minutes) summarize the texts, withholding any critical comments for the classroom discussion that follows. As a part of your role as discussion leader, you should prepare and print out for each member of the class what you could consider to be the four major questions for discussion raised by the texts. Your job is to systematically cover these questions during the course of the discussion, as well as “run” the seminar more generally. Pedagogically, I want us to find the value in each text rather than only looking for faults. I also consider running the seminar to be excellent practice for future teaching.

Due date: Two class sessions selected at the beginning of the semester
Percent of your grade: 10%

3) SUMMARY-AND-CRITIQUE MEMOS

Due date: Rolling and ongoing; you choose the five weeks for which you would like to further engage with the material

---

1 I am indebted to Dr. Marcia Inhorn for this syllabus material.
Percent of your grade: 40%

Engaging with texts through writing is essential to analysis and retention. Work in the public health field often demands the reading and synthesis of a vast literature on a particular topic in a short amount of time and space. Moreover, public health practitioners are often required to summarize the literature very briefly so that it can be easily digested by colleagues, constituents, and policy-makers. This course asks you to develop your skills in synthesizing several texts in a clear, concise, but intelligent and sophisticated way.

Summary-and-critique memos represent a pithy summary of the readings for a particular topic as well as a critique and/or thematic integration of the readings. Memos can be no longer than one page (citations excluded).

Seminar participants must choose five weeks of the semester to write both a pithy summary of the readings for that day and a critique and/or synthesis of the readings. These memos are due before class begins on Wednesday. Please upload each memo to the corresponding dropbox folder in the Learn@UW site (e.g., your first memo would go in the “Memo 1” dropbox; your fifth memo would go in the “Memo 5” dropbox).

Due date: Rolling and ongoing; for each block of weeks outlined in the syllabus, you choose the topic(s) for which you would like to further engage with the material. The memo for each topic is due on day that topic is covered in class. For example, if you choose to write a memo on infertility, you would upload your memo to Learn@UW before class on Wednesday 4/3. Please upload each memo to the corresponding dropbox folder on the Learn@UW site (e.g., your first memo would go in the “Memo 1” dropbox; your fourth memo would go in the “Memo 4” dropbox).

Dates on the syllabus indicate the dates by which you must have written a certain number of memos. For example, all students must submit their first memo by February 6th, although you are more that welcome to write more than one memo before that time.

Expectations for the memos:
Substantive expectations
- Synthesis and integration of as many of the readings as possible into themes and larger arguments.
- Brief exploration of common themes among the readings, and/or ways in which the readings differ in important ways
- If applicable, brief exploration of how the readings engage with or further your own research interests

Writing and logistical expectations
- Grammatically correct writing, good paragraph structure, properly labeled (i.e., with your name, date, the week’s topic, and the memo number)
- 1 page or less (1-inch margins, 12 point font)
Appropriate citations: Cite the readings in the format of your choosing—preferably in a numbered medical citation format. It’s fine if the citations fall onto a second page of text.

Submitted before class begins into the appropriate dropfox folder on Learn@UW

You may also allude to other literature we have read for the course, as long as you are primarily engaged with the readings for that particular week.

4) RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Please note that I am also open to a literature review versus a research proposal if the student’s graduate interests would be better served.

Due Dates:
Topic and at least 5 resources due on February 20th, 1-2 prospectus and at least 10 resources due on March 6th, and FINAL PROJECT due on March 20th.

Percent of your grade: 30%

Length: 10-12 pages, double spaced (excluding references)

In this assignment, seminar participants have the opportunity to write a proposal for a research project to address some significant issue relating to gender and health—ideally, a topic that connects directly to the student’s own research/thesis/dissertation interests. The proposal should include an introduction, methods section, and discussion and implications section. Your proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Quality of the literature review (but don’t get carried away—I don’t intend for you to read 50 articles)
   a. Clarification of the remaining gaps in the literature and why your potential study is needed to fill those gaps
2. Significance of the issue you address and your rationale for why it is significant
3. Your preliminary research design (i.e., appropriate matching of methodology with research questions/gaps)
4. Overall quality of writing, analysis, and implications

Note that we will have several opportunities to discuss this assignment in class. You will also have the chance to workshop your project topic and prospective with your classmates during class-time in the weeks before the portfolio’s due date.