

# GWS 103: Women & Their Bodies in Health and Disease

**Gender & Women's Studies**  
**Fall 2017**

**1310 Sterling Hall**  
**Monday and Wednesday 8:50-9:40**

## Professor:

**Jenny Higgins, PhD, MPH**

Email: [jenny.a.higgins@wisc.edu](mailto:jenny.a.higgins@wisc.edu)

Office Phone: 608-890-4622

Address: 3309 Sterling Hall, 475 North Charter St

Website: [jennyhiggins.net](http://jennyhiggins.net)

Office hours: Mondays 1-2 PM, Wednesdays 11-12 PM

Please schedule an appointment through Canvas or the "office hours and appointments" tab at [jennyhiggins.net](http://jennyhiggins.net)



**WISCONSIN**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Doula, childbirth educator,  
and lactation consultant  
Kimberly Dudrin

## Teaching Assistants:

Emi Frerichs | [frerichs@wisc.edu](mailto:frerichs@wisc.edu) | sections 302, 303, 311

Grace Morrison | [g Morrison@wisc.edu](mailto:g Morrison@wisc.edu) | sections 307, 308, 312

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Learn all about  
women's+  
health in the  
largest GWS  
health class in  
the country.

## Whom is this course for?

1

**Community Builders**

Get to know your section and build relationships, friendships, and community.

2

**Science Enthusiasts**

Learn physiological and biological process of female-assigned bodies + other bodies.

3

**Critical Thinkers**

Examine social influences and intersectional identities that affect health.

## Required Texts

1. Boston Women's Health Collective and Judy Norsigian (editors), 2011:

***Our Bodies, Ourselves***

Simon & Schuster

ISBN-13:978-1439190661

2. Cabell Gathman, 2016:

***Women, Health, and Healthcare:  
Readings on Social and Political Issues***

Kendall-Hunt

ISBN-13: 978-1524904166

Books are available for purchase at *A Room of One's Own* bookstore at 315 Gorham Street, just off State Street.

Six copies of each are on reserve at College Library. One copy of each is on reserve at the Astronomy Library in Sterling Hall.

## Grades and Due Dates

**Discussion (attendance & participation):  
20% of total grade**

**Exams: 16.7% each, for 50% total**

**Exam 1:** Mon 10/9 during lecture

**Exam 2:** Weds 11/8 during lecture

**Exam 3:** Tues 12/19 during finals

**Assignments: 15% each, for 30% total.**

**Assignment 1** (interview):

due Sun 10/15 on Canvas

**Assignment 2** (charting):

due Sun 11/19 on Canvas

You can enhance your grade with regular attendance and a small bonus through Top Hat (see below)

## What are the Course Learning Goals?

By the end of this course, we want you to be able to...

1. Understand and describe physiological processes and phenomena relating to health (for example, menstruation, menopause) and ill health (for example, cancer, maternal mortality).
2. Recognize that bodies are located in a social context that influences health and illness.
  - Understand and analyze the dramatic interplay between physiological processes and social processes.
  - Contextualize health within the social and cultural influences on people's lives.
  - Evaluate how multiple kinds of social inequalities (e.g., race, ethnicity, social class, sexual identity, gender identity) shape health and health disparities.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of women's health movements and roles that female-assigned and women-identified people play as health-care consumers, activists, and practitioners.
4. Become more active patients and better-educated healthcare consumers.

# Course Policies and Procedures

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. If you must miss lecture due to illness, religious observance, or family emergency, obtain the lecture notes from a classmate and, if necessary, meet with your TA. **Lecture notes and Powerpoint slides will not be posted online or shared.**

If you must be absent from discussion section, please notify your TA as soon as possible. Each student receives ONE "freebie" absence at discussion section without penalty. **Each additional discussion absence will result in deduction of 2 percentage points of your semester grade** (for example, an 88% AB would become an 86% B).

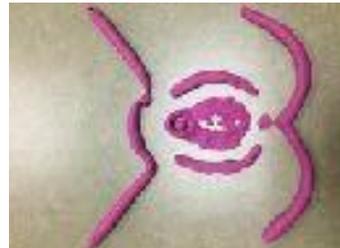
Participating in discussion section each week is an easy way to improve your grade; it's also a wonderful way to enhance your learning. In the spirit of creating community within individual discussion sections, there will be no make-up opportunities available for missed sections, and you may not attend a different discussion section in order to make up an absence. **Students may attend their designated section only.**

Religious Holidays: Absences due to religious holidays will not be penalized. However, you must inform your TA at least **two weeks in advance** if you are missing a discussions section for religious reasons. You are responsible for finding out what happened that day and for turning in assignments.

## Laptop & Cell Phone Policy for Lectures

Computers are allowed in lecture only for notetaking and Top Hat purposes, and only if approved by Dr. Higgins. See Dr. Higgins to get on the Approved Laptop List. If you use a laptop, you **MUST** sit in one of the first six rows of the classroom. These rules help ensure an optimal learning environment for everyone. Laptop privileges may be revoked.

Phones are to be used **ONLY** for Top Hat. If no Top Hat questions are on the lecture screen, please put your phone away. Texting or using your phone outside of Top Hat during class is **NOT** allowed. Thanks for helping us create a good learning environment for all.



# Course Policies and Procedures

## Extra Credit & Honors Credit

We strongly encourage students to attend campus and community events relating to women's health. But—alas—we cannot offer extra credit for your participation in such events. Students will have the opportunity to earn one (1) percentage point of extra credit toward their final grade by responding to 80% of Top Hat questions over the course of the semester.

Unfortunately, this version of GWS 103 is not available for honors credit.

## Late, Missed, or Incomplete Work

**Assignments submitted to Canvas after the specified due date and time will be deducted five percentage points (5%) per 24 hours.** For example, if an assignment is one day late, the highest possible grade a student could earn would be a 95 versus 100. If the assignment is two days late, the highest possible grade would be a 90.

**We will not accept assignment more than five days after the due date.** After five days, you will receive a zero (F) for that portion of your grade.

## Top Hat Information and Instructions

**What is top hat?** Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) is a platform that helps us engage students during class. It allows you to submit answers to in-class questions using your phone, tablet, or laptop. Some of you have used iClickers in the past; Top Hat is a similar classroom response system that's now supported by UW-Madison.

**Why do we use Top Hat?** A terrific way to engage learning in large classes is to gather real-time input from all students present. Sometimes questions will ask for your opinion; sometimes they will review material I've covered. Although these questions sometimes have right answers (which I will share), there are no penalties for answering questions incorrectly. The point is to stop, think, and engage with the material. Your answers also help me figure out if I need to review a topic.

**How do I purchase and register Top Hat?** You should have received a Top Hat invitation by email. But if you didn't receive this email, you may also register by visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/015475>. Note: our course's Join Code is 015475.

**How will Top Hat benefit me?** I hear from students that Top Hat questions posed during class help them synthesize and retain the material. Research backs this up: in-class electronic polling improves student learning and performance. **And if you answer 80% of the Top Hat questions across the entire semester, you will earn a 1% bonus on your final grade.**

## Disability Access

We want to work with any and all students with disabilities in this class. You deserve to be here. In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations in GWS 103, students must first be registered with the McBurney Disability Resource Center. **Students who have or think they may have a disability are invited to contact the McBurney Center for a confidential discussion** at 608-263-2741 (phone), 608-225-7956 (text), or mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu (email).

If you've already registered with the McBurney Center, and if you wish to request any accommodations on the basis of disability, you should schedule an office appointment with teaching team member Grace Morrison within the first two weeks of the semester (by Friday, September 22nd). You may visit Grace during her office hours (Mondays 9:55-10:55 AM, Fridays 1-2 PM, Sterling 3417) or by appointment, Sterling 3417), or, if necessary, email her at gmorrison@wisc.edu. If you'd rather speak with me (Professor Higgins), you may make an appointment using my office hours scheduler (see page 1 of the syllabus). Please bring a copy of your service plan/VISA to your meeting with either Grace or me.

We are unlikely to honor exam accommodation requests made within 72 hours of any exam. Advanced planning on your part helps us create an accessible classroom environment for all.

## Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

### Where do I get my books?

You can purchase or rent required course texts at A Room of One's Own Bookstore (316 Gorham Street, just off of State Street). You can also access library copies of the texts at the reserve desk of College Library (Helen C White) or the Astronomy Library (Sterling Hall). Finally, you can stop by any TA's office hours (Sterling 3417) to read copies of the texts.

### What if I'm absent on the day of an exam?

We do not offer make-up exams, so students receive a zero for that portion of their grade if they miss an exam. Please plan accordingly. If your travels require your absence on 10/9, 11/8, or 12/19, then you may wish to drop the course.

### Are there sections the first week of the course? Do I have to attend every section?

Yes, there are sections the first week: please attend or you will be dropped from the course (ug!). Check out the attendance policy on page 3 for more details on missing a discussion section.

### Do I need to check Canvas often?

Absolutely. Canvas has all assigned readings not available in the texts. Canvas will also list all grades, provide course announcements and updates, and allow you to turn in assignments. It is imperative and YOUR RESPONSIBILITY that you check Canvas regularly.

### Should I do the readings before lecture?

Yes! Having completed the readings before lecture will GREATLY help your understanding of course material. You must also complete all assigned readings before you attend discussion section.

**Will we get more information on the assignments?** Of course! I'll talk about the assignments in lecture; we'll also provide handouts on Canvas with detailed instructions as the due dates get closer. Your TAs will also check in about assignments.

### What's the grading scheme?

A = 93-100 AB = 88-92 B = 83-87 BC=78-82  
C = 70-77 D = 63-69 F = under 63

## Get to Know Your Professor: Dr. Jenny Higgins

For about 20 years, in a variety of settings, I've been working to improve people's sexual and reproductive health. I'm trained in both public health and gender and women's studies. Here at UW-Madison, I spend half my time in the department of Gender and Women's Studies, and the other half in the department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the School of Medicine and Public Health. I love my research, especially on contraception. Teaching is also an incredibly important part of my job, and it's a privilege to connect with students through GWS 103—a wonderful course with a rich history.



I enjoy life in Madison with my sweetie, Bobby, and our 6 year-old son, Atticus, who will be in first grade this fall. We live near Camp Randall Stadium with our beloved black-and-white cat, StellaLuna MoonPie. My favorite treat: mini peppermint patties. I have two with my coffee every morning.

## Where To Go With Course Concerns

If you have questions or concerns about your section, grade, or other important issue related to this class, **please speak to your teaching assistant first**. If the question is not resolved, please speak to me. If the question or concern is still not resolved, or if you do not feel comfortable speaking with me directly about your concern, make an appointment with the Chair of the Gender & Women's Studies Department, Dr. Aili Tripp, by emailing [atripp@wisc.edu](mailto:atripp@wisc.edu).

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is critical. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation: it undermines trust and honesty between you and me, degrades the value of your degree, and defrauds those who may eventually depend upon your knowledge and integrity. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an exam (copying from another student's paper, continuing to work on an exam after the time has expired), copying the work of someone else, submitting for credit work done by someone else, stealing exams or course materials, tampering with the grade records, or knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above. **Unfortunately, we have had to fail a number of prior GWS 103 students due to academic dishonesty.** Our use of TurnItIn in particular has located a number of plagiarized assignments from former 103 students.

If you present the words or ideas of others without giving them proper credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. Learn what constitutes plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. Refer to the Dean of Students' webpage for more information: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/>

# Course Reading Schedule

**Week 1**

Mon 9/4 Labor Day: NO CLASS

Wed 9/6 **Introduction and Course Overview**  
**All discussions meet this week (9/6, 9/7, 9/8).**

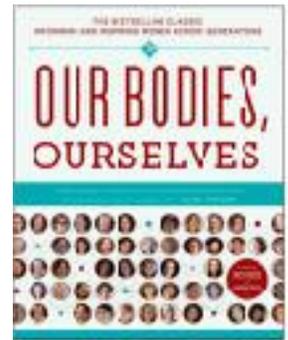
**Week 2**

Mon 9/11 **Introduction and Course Overview, continued**  
 Canvas PDF reading: "If Men Could Menstruate"  
 OBOS Chapter 4 (72-79)

Wed 9/13 **The Female Reproductive System**  
 \*\*Canvas PDF reading: "Reproductive Anatomy" (51-76)  
 WH "Spreading My Legs" (39-40)  
 WH "The Truth about Your Clitoris" (95-97)  
 WH "Kegel Exercise" (172)  
 WH "Take a Good Look" (92-94)

Discussion section assignment for this week: Carefully read over the syllabus. Print and sign GWS 103 learning agreement (last page) to bring to your TA.

**OBOS:**



**WH:**



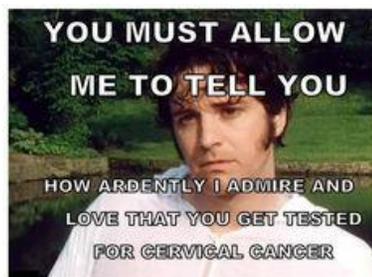
**Week 3**

Mon 9/18 **Sex Differences and Intersexuality**  
 Canvas PDF reading: "Sex Determination" (237-241)  
 WH "Male and Female Hormones (117-118)  
 OBOS "Ch. 1" (14-15, box)

Wed 9/20 **Sex Differences and Intersexuality, continued**  
 Canvas PDF reading: "Intersexuals: Exploding Binary Sex Systems"  
 Canvas PDF reading: "Cultural Practice of Reconstructive Surgery"  
 Canvas PDF reading: "Intersex Genitalia Illustrated and Explained" (98-106)  
 WH "Five Myths That Hurt Intersex People (107-108)  
 WH "Trans and Intersex Children: Forced Sex Changes, Chemical Castration, and Self-Determination" (109-112)

**Be sure to register in Top Hat by Friday 9/22 if you want the end-of-the-semester bonus.**

**For McBurney accommodations, be sure to Grace or Jenny by 9/22 (see "Disability Access" section on page 5).**



# Course Reading Schedule

## Week 4

Mon 9/25

### Sexuality, Culture, and Health

\*\*OBOS Chapter 7 (153-180)

WH "Education for Sexual Intimacy & Agency" (132-139)

WH "Sexual Health Education" (141-146)

WH "The Gender Orgasm Gap" (165-166)

Wed 9/27

### Sexuality, Culture, and Health (continued)

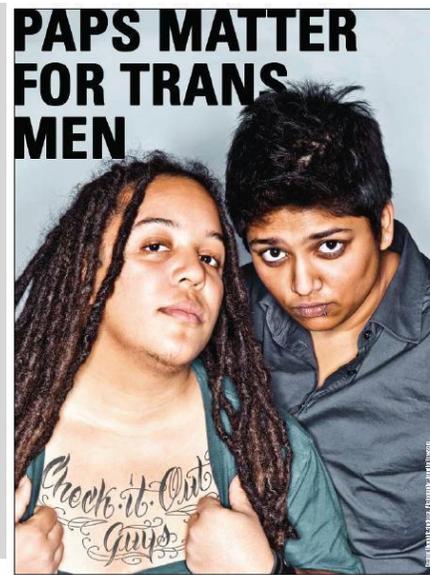
OBOS Chapter 5 (140-152)

WH "Adolescent Sexual Health" (150-154)

WH "How Being a Good Girl Can Be Bad for Girls" (155-164)

WH "Reasons Why There's Orgasm Inequity" (167-171)

Canvas reading: "Contraceptive Jelly on Toast"



If you've ever been sexually active (in any way) and have a condom, you need regular Paps. Check out our website for more information and tips on how to make getting a Paps easier.



checkitoutguys.ca

## Week 5

Mon 10/2

### Intersecting Inequalities in Women's Health

OBOS Chapter 4" (80-96)

Canvas readings: "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" AND "There is No Hierarchy of Oppression"

WH "Diagnosing Gender Disparities" (2-3)

WH "Privilege 101: A Quick and Dirty Guide" (42-45)

WH "Women's Health Disparities" (46-55)

WH "Primary Health Care and the LGBTQIA+ Patient Experience" (75-80)

Canvas reading: "Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person"

Wed 10/4

### Access to the Health Care System

WH "Under the Shadow of Tuskegee" (62-67)

WH "Financially Vulnerable" (58-61)

WH "Immigrant Women's Health" (71-74)

WH "#Black Lives Matter" (68-70)

WH Transgender and Trans Health 101" (81-87)

## Week 6

Mon 10/9

**EXAM 1** (in class). The exam will cover all lectures, discussion sections, hand-outs, and readings assigned through 10/4.

Wed 10/11

### Sexually Transmitted Infections, Including HIV/AIDS

OBOS Chapter 11 (274-307)

WH "Access to Health Care for Women living with HIV" (32-35)

Canvas "Women & the Risks & Burdens of HIV"

WH "Cervical Cancer Vaccines" (379-381)

WH "The New HPV Vaccine" (379-381)

**ASSIGNMENT 1 (Interview assignment) due on Canvas no later than 11:55 PM, Sunday 10/15. Your TA may also request a hard copy; please follow your TA's guidance.**

## Course Reading Schedule

### Week 7

- Mon 10/16 **Hormones and the Endocrine System; the Menstrual Cycle**  
Canvas reading: "The Reproductive Cycle" (77-96) Reread WH "Male and Female Hormones"  
Canvas "Puberty and Growing Up"  
Watch Part 1 ("Ovulation, Fertile Days, and Getting Pregnant") and Part II ("Fertility Signs, Hormones, Ovulation, and Fertile Days") on the following website: <http://www.fertilityfriend.com/videos.html>
- Wed 10/18 **Issues Related to Menstruation**  
View Professor Alonso's video about calendars and the menstrual cycle on Canvas  
OBOS Chapter 22 (Endometriosis, 624-626)  
WH "Period Problems" (120-122)  
WH "No, I Won't Ask About Your Period. Yes, You Can Tell Me" (123-124)  
Canvas reading: "Don't Just Go With the Flow"  
Canvas reading: "The Selling of PMS (a classic)"

### Week 8

- Mon 10/23 **Science of Conception & Contraception**  
OBOS Chapter 9 (201-256)  
WH "Contraceptive Options and Decision Making" (212-222)  
Canvas reading: "Eight New Nonhormonal Contraceptive Methods for Men"
- Wed 10/25 **Reproductive Justice | Infertility and Reproductive Technologies**  
WH "The Color of Choice" (202-209)  
WH "The Need for Different Voices" (210-211)  
Canvas reading: "Reproductive Issues are Essential for Asian Americans" WH "Billboards, Women of Color, Politics" (260-262)  
Canvas reading: "The Colour of Loss"  
Canvas reading: "Update to Infertility"



## Course Reading Schedule

### Week 9

- Mon 10/30 **More on Contraception**  
 WH "A Dangerous Combination" (187-195)  
 WH "State of Birth Control Coverage" (230-239)  
 WH "Challenges to Contraceptive Coverage Rule" (240-242)  
 WH "The Battle for Reproductive Justice" (243-244)  
 WH "Accessibility of Plan B within the Indian Health Service (245-259)
- Wed 11/1 **Images of Women as a Health Issue**  
 WH "Making a Way Outa No Way" (389-403)  
 WH "A Doctor Walks into a Bar" (409-410)  
 WH "The Picture of Health" (173-183)  
 WH "Weight Bias and Healthcare" (389-392)  
 WH "Fat People Deserve Dignity and Societal Change" (404-408)

### Week 10

- Mon 11/6 **Film: "Dreamworlds 3" (will be covered on exam 2)**
- Wed 11/8 **EXAM 2** (in class). The exam will cover all lectures, readings, discussion sections, and hand-outs assigned from 10/11 through 11/6.

### Week 11

- Mon 11/13 **Pregnancy and Childbirth**  
 OBOS Chapter 15 (383-392, 396-397) & Chapter 16 (398-428)  
 WH "Birth Trends in the United States" (281-291)  
 WH "Hard Labor" (292-298)  
 WH "Culturally Appropriate Doula Support for Queer and Trans Patients" (299-305)  
 Canvas reading: "Position Statement: Shackling/Restraint of Pregnant Women"
- Wed 11/15 **Pregnancy and Childbirth, continued**  
 WH "Ideal vs. Reality in US Births" (280-291)  
 WH "Position Statement: Transgender/Transsexual/Gender Variant Health Care" (88-90)  
 WH "Black Teen Mom Manifesto: For Your Child" (317-320)  
 Canvas reading: "How Do Socioeconomic Factors Affect Disparities"

**Assignment 2 (Charting Analysis) due electronically no later than 11:55 pm, Sunday, 11/19.**  
**Your TA may also request a hard copy; please follow the guidance of your individual TA.**

## Course Reading Schedule

### Week 12

Mon 11/20 **Abortion and Complications of Abortion**  
 OBOS Chapter 13 (316-337, stop at "History")  
 WH "State Facts About Abortions" (266-267)  
 WH "I Set up #ShoutYourAbortion" (272-273)  
 WH "What Kind of Mother is Eight Months Pregnant and Wants an Abortion" (268-271)  
 WH "Induced Abortion in the United States Fact Sheet" (263-265)

Wed 11/22 **Film: "I Had an Abortion."** We will make this film available on Canvas for students who wish to leave early for Thanksgiving.

**No sections meet this week (11/22, 11/23, or 11/24).**

### Week 13

Mon 11/27 **The Medicalization vs. Neglect of Women's Health**  
 Canvas reading: "Six Steps Toward a Better Future"  
 Canvas reading: "Prescription Drug Ad"  
 WH "Marketing and Politics (196-198)  
 WH "I Tried Bleach and Failed" (199-200)  
 WH "Finding Good Health Information on the Web" (184-185)  
 WH "Women Need Better Medical Tests, Not More Treatment" (186)

Wed 11/29 **Cancer & The Politics of Prevention**  
 Canvas reading: "Cancers and Other Diseases of the Reproductive System" (171-198)  
 WH "Sick Woman Theory" (364-371)  
 WH "Critical Questions Before you Buy Pink" (372-373)  
 WH "Toxins in Nail Salons" (374-376)  
 Canvas reading: "Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis"

### Week 14

Mon 12/4 **Gender-Based Violence**  
 OBOS Chapter 24 (695, box)  
 OBOS Chapter 24 705-707, medical considerations)  
 WH "Violence against Native Women: Battering" (329)  
 WH "Power and Control Wheel: People with Disabilities" (327)  
 WH "Breaking the Silence" (322-323)  
 WH "The Ashley Treatment and Who Tells the Story" (324-326)  
 WH "End Violence on Campus Power and Control Wheel" (330)  
 WH 2014 Report on Intimate Partner Violence" (331-333)

## Course Reading Schedule

Wed 12/6

### **Mental Health & Violence**

WH "Black Teen Mom Manifesto: Secession Procedures" (334-336)

WH "Mad Women or Mad Society: Towards a Feminist Practice with Women Survivors of Chile's Sexual Assault" (338-344)

### **Week 15**

Mon 12/11

### **Mental Health**

WH "Selfies and Health: Self-Care and Self-Representation" (354-361)

Canvas reading: "Women and Mental Health" (a classic)

WH "Frequency, Causes, and Risk Factors for Depression" (345-349)

WH "Depression in Wisconsin Women" (350-351)

WH "The Wage Gap Correlates with Anxiety and Depression" (352-353)

Wed 12/13

### **Wrap Up & Review**

#### **Activism for the Healthy Future of Women**

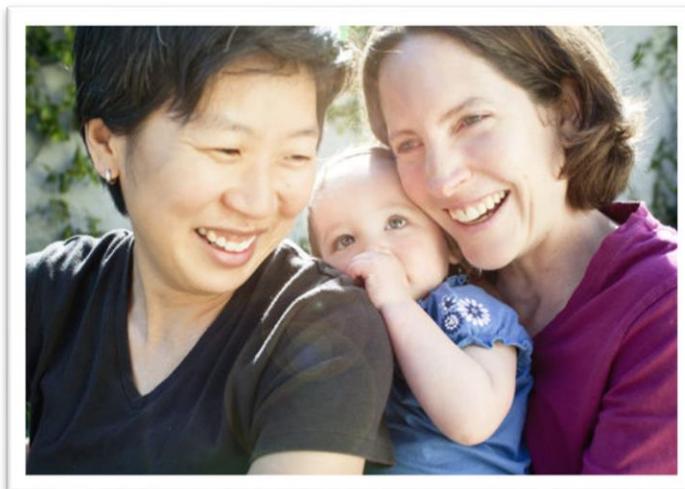
No readings for this day.

**No discussions meet this week.**

**The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday 12/19 at 5:05 PM.**

**We will announce room locations well in advance.**

The final will cover material from 11/13 to the end of the semester.



I, \_\_\_\_\_ [*printed name*],  
have read the attached syllabus. I understand the objectives,  
requirements, deadlines, and grading criteria of the course.

Signed,

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*Signature*

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*Date*

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*Section number and TA name*