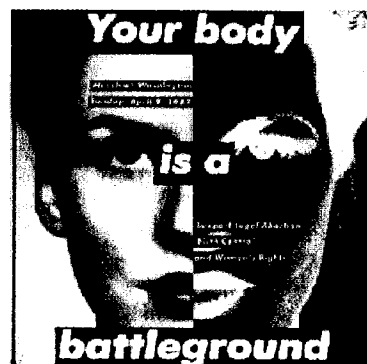


History 79-234
Body Politics: Women and Health in America

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Office Hours:
my office—MW 10:30-11:30, or by appt.
skibo coffee—M 3:00-5:00p.m.



Course Description

This course is an introduction to the history of women's health.

Women's bodies have been the site of long-standing (and sometimes deadly) political battles. This course investigates both the biology and politics of women's health, seeing the two as inextricably related. By the end of this course, you should have a firm understanding of how current debates are shaped by history. You should begin to see that history does not always march forward with inevitable progress and that biology and science are not simply objective, but often subjective, being deeply implicated in the politics and history of inequality. Throughout this course, you should formulate your own ideas about why women's bodies are such heated sites of struggle and, ideally, to develop resistance strategies to the politics that compromise women's health, freedom, and happiness.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify the components of female reproductive anatomy, describe the ovulatory and endometrial cycles, discuss their relationship, predict when ovulation will occur, and describe how various other biological actions work, including sexual differentiation.
- Identify and describe the major historical shifts in thinking about women and health.
- Explain how and why socio-cultural factors influence our understanding and experience of health, biology, sex, and science.
- To identify the major arguments of readings and to analyze those arguments (in written work and in discussion).
More specifically...
 - summarize the theses of readings.
 - identify underlying premises—particularly whether an argument is rooted in essentialist, preventative, pathological, systemic/institutional, or individualistic thinking.
 - identify the silences and absences of an argument.
 - examine how the author is defining women and health.
 - evaluate evidence.
 - connect individual readings to information presented in other readings, lecture, and discussion.
 - Having done the above, you should be able to comfortably assess the merits and/or demerits of a particular argument.
- List current debates about women's health and connect them to their historical roots.
- Locate information about women's health and, equally important, distinguish the veracity, political inflection, and reliability of different resources.
- Create your own definition of (and strategies for) women's health and well being.

Readings and Texts

The following three required books are available for purchase at the CMU bookstore (and online). In addition to these, there will be additional primary documents and secondary articles. These will be made available in class and on Blackboard (BB). All readings should be completed by the date listed on the syllabus.

- 1) Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (TBP)
- 2) Boston Women's Health Collective, *Our Bodies, Ourselves: For a New Century* (OBOS)—recommended
- 3) Nancy Worcester and Mariamne Whatley, *Women's Health: Readings on Social, Economic, and Political Issues* (WW)
- 4) Course Reader (BB)

Written Work, Attendance, and Grading

There will be no major exams or papers in this class. Rather, we will work on skills and proficiency in smaller, more continuous increments. We will do this in a variety of ways, each counting toward your final grade in the percentage outlined below. There will be four short, in-class quizzes (roughly 15 minutes each), five short, take-home papers (2-4 pages each, the lowest grade being dropped), a journal assignment, a media watch assignment, and several other smaller assignments. These will all fit seamlessly into the material, helping you understand, process, and own it. Participation and preparedness will also count toward your final grade. Attendance is mandatory. More than two absences will severely affect your final grade.

Grading

Quizzes 20%

Short Papers 40%

Participation, Preparedness, and Attendance 15%

Journal 10%

Media Watch Assignment 5%

Other Assignments 10%

The value and success of this class depends upon the willingness of its members to read, to listen, to share ideas, to challenge themselves as well as each other, and to ask questions. What you gain from this course will reflect the time and effort you put into it.

Office Hours

So that we might continue our conversations in a comfortable location, and so that we might get to know each other a bit better, I will be in the student union coffee shop for two hours every week. Everyone is free to drop in for chatting, with or without agenda, about everything and anything. In addition to this more informal time, I will also have regular office hours, in my office. I am also available by appointment.

If you have concerns or comments over the semester, please feel free to share them with me. I want you to enjoy and benefit from this course, so I welcome your thoughts, in any form.

Plagiarism

Your work must be your own. Be advised that any student plagiarizing will automatically fail the course and will be brought before the university disciplinary board.

Class Schedule

W 1/18 ★ Welcome! // Introductions

M 1/23 ★ The Politics of the Health Care System

- OBOS: Chapter 31, "The Politics of Women's Health," 719
WW: Mary Halas, "Sexism in Women's Medical Care," 4
Adriane Fugh-Berman, "Tales Out of Medical School," 56
Vanessa Gamble, "Under the Shadow of Tuskegee," 108
"Health Disparities in the United States," 92
Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate—A Political Fantasy," 195
BB: Vanessa Gamble, "On Becoming a Physician," in the *Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, new, expanded edition, ed. Evelyn White (1994)

reading/writing skill exercise due in class—finding theses

W 1/25 ★ The Women's Health Movement in Historical Perspective

- OBOS: Ch 30, "Navigating the Health Care System," 701
WW: Sheryl Burt Ruzek, et al, "The Women's Health Movement in the United States," 46
Morton Hunt, "How to Tell Your Doctor a Thing or Two," 24
Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate—A Political Fantasy," 195
Karen Johnson, "Pro: Women's Health, Developing a New Interdisciplinary Specialty," 8
Michelle Harrison, "CON: Women's Health as a Specialty," 12
Shiriki Kumanyika, et al, "Minority Women and Advocacy for Women's Health," 99
"Women's Health Events of the 20th Century," 41
BB: The West Coast Sisters, "Self-Help Clinic," 1970s &
Feminist Women's Health Center, "Brochure," 1970s, both in *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*, Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, eds. (2000)
Byllye Y. Avery, "Breathing Life Into Ourselves: The Evolution of the National Black Women's Health Project," in *Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, new, expanded edition, ed. Evelyn White (1994), 4-10
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Our Girls" lecture (1870)

reading/writing skill exercise due in class—using and citing evidence

M 1/30 ★ Uterus on the Loose! 19th Century Attitudes About Women's Reproductive Anatomy

- BB: Carol Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Women and Health in America*, 1st ed., Judith Walker Leavitt, ed. (1984)
Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English, "The Sexual Politics of Sickness," in *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women* (1978)
Dr. Edward Clarke, *Sex in Education* (1875), excerpt, in *Root of Bitterness*, 2nd ed., 330-333.
George Wythe Cook, "Puberty in the Girl," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children*, 46 (1902), 804-807

reading/writing skill exercise due in class—making connections

W 2/1 ★ 21st Century Anatomy Lessons

- OBOS: Ch 13, "Sexual Anatomy," partial, 228-242
TBP: "Introduction, the Body as Evidence" & Ch 1, "The Body's New Timetable: How the Life Course of American Girls Has Changed," xvii-25
WW: Jennifer Johnson, "Exposed at Last, The Truth About Your Clitoris," 387

M 2/6 ★ Sex Differentiation and Intersexuality

- WW: "Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health, Does Sex Matter?"
BB: "The Basis of Biological Differences," in *Biology of Women*, 4th ed., Ethel Sloane (2002), 145-67
Alice Domurat Dreger, "'Ambiguous Sex' or Ambivalent Medicine," *Hastings Center Report*, May/June 1998, 24-35
Katha Pollitt, "Are Women Morally Superior to Men?" *Nation*, 28 December 1992, 799-807
John Cloud, "His Name is Aurora," *Time*, 25 September 2000, 90-91

Recommended: Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are Not Enough," *The Sciences* (March/April 1993), 20-20, & "Letters from Readers," *The Sciences* (July/Aug 1993), 3-4
Elizabeth Reis, "Impossible Hermaphrodites: Intersex in America 1620-1960," *Journal of American History* 92:2 (2005): 411-441
Angela Moreno, "Am I a Woman or a Man?" *Mademoiselle*, March 1998, 178ff

reading/writing skill exercise due in class—identifying underlying premises

W 2/8 ★ The Biology of Menstruation

- OBOS: Chapter 13 (concluded), "Sexual Anatomy, Reproduction, and the Menstrual Cycle," 240-260
WW: Mariamne Whatley, "Male and Female Hormones Revisited," 153
BB: Michael Lemonick, "Teens Before their Time," *Time*, 30 Oct 2000, 67-74

Paper 1 due Friday in my office

M 2/13 ★ The History, Culture, and Politics of Menstruation

- TBP: Ch 2, "Sanitizing Puberty, The American Way to Menstruate," 29
WW: Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate," 195, review
Janet Lee, "Menarche and the (Hetro)Sexualization of the Female Body," 196
Teen Voices, "Don't Just Go with the Flow," 212
Andrea Eagan, "The Selling of Premenstrual Syndrome," 217
BB: Peter Kramer, "Female Troubles"
Rachel Grumman, "Kiss Your Period Goodbye," *Cosmo*, Nov. 2000, 249-251
"Using a Natural Sponge," 1976, in *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*, Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, eds. (2000)

first journal entry due in class

W 2/15 ★ Reproductive Rights in the 19th Century

- BB: Linda Gordon, "Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the United States," in *Women and Health in America*, 1st ed., Judith Walker Leavitt, ed.
Janet Farrell Brodie, "Reproductive Control and Conflict in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women and Power*, 2nd ed., Dublin and Sklar, eds.
Dorothy Roberts, Ch 1 "Reproduction in Bondage," in *Killing the Black Body: Race Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (1997), 22-55
Feminists for Life Ad, 1990s

M 2/20 ★ Margaret Sanger's Crusade to Legalize Contraception **quiz 1 in class**

- BB: Margaret Sanger, "My Fight for Birth Control" (1931), and Intro to the Document, from Alice Rossi, ed., *The Feminist Papers* (1973)
Dorothy Roberts, Ch 2, "The Dark Side of Birth Control," in *Killing the Black Body: Race Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (1997), 56-103
Letters to Women to Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review* (1917-1918)
Tetrault—Body Politics—Wimmer Revision—Page 4

Eliza Mosher, "A Protest Against Teaching Birth Control," *Medical Woman's Journal* 32 (1925), 36

W 2/22 ★ **Contraception Wars**

OBOS: Ch 18, "Birth Control," 322 (read only your assigned portion, TBA in class)

WW: Lissner, "Eight New Non-hormonal Contraceptive Methods for Men"

BB: Readings TBA

journal entries due in class

M 2/27 ★ **A Revolution in Birth Control: The History of the Pill**

BB: Patricia Robinson and Black Sisters, "Poor Black Women," 1968 and Judith Coburn, "Off the Pill," in *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*, Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, eds. (2000)

WW: Willis, "The Pill May Not Mix Well with Other Drugs." 452

W 3/1 ★ **Roe v. Wade: Origins and Outcomes**

BB: "Roe v. Wade," *Controlling Reproduction: An American History*, Andrea Tone, ed. (1996), 186-201
"Testimony on Behalf of the Human Life Amendment," & "Statement against the Human Life Bill," & "Hyde Amendment of 1977," in *Controlling Reproduction: An American History*, Andrea Tone, ed. (1996), 201-08

Other readings TBA...

Recommended: OBOS, Ch 20 "Abortion," 415

journal entries due in class

M 3/6 ★ **Reproductive Activism Since Roe: the 1980s & the 1990s**

BB: Sandra Morgen, "The Three Rs: Reagan, Retrenchment, and Operation Rescue in the 1980s," in *Into Our Own Hands: The Women's Health Movement in the U.S., 1969-1990* (2002)

Dorothy Roberts, "Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies: Women of Color, Equality, and the Right to Privacy," in *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000*, Rickie Solinger, ed. (1998), 124-55

Katha Pollitt, "'Fetal Rights': A New Assault on Feminism," in *The Politics of Women's Bodies*, Rose Weitz, ed. (1998), 278-87

W 3/8 ★ **The State of Reproductive Rights at the Turn of the Century** *quiz 2 in class*

Media Watch Assignment Begun

You will find your own readings from the popular media for this session.

Paper 2 due Friday in my office

*** Spring Break ***

M 3/20 ★ Sexuality in Historical Context

- TBP: Ch 5, "The Disappearance of Virginity," 139
- R: Carol Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in *Women and Health in America*, 1st ed., Judith Walker Leavitt, ed. (1984)
- Bert Hansen, "American Physicians' 'Discovery' of Homosexuals, 1880-1900: A New Diagnosis in a Changing Society," *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, 3rd ed., Judith Leavitt and Ronald Numbers, eds., (1997), 13-31
- Elizabeth Lumbeck, "'A New Generation of Women': Progressive Psychiatrists and the Hypersexual Female," in *Women and Health in America*, 2^d ed., Judith Walker Leavitt, ed. (1999), 229-249

W 3/22 ★ Issues in the History of Contemporary Sexuality

- WW: Tolman and Higgins, "How Being a Good Girl Can Be Bad for Girls," 389
- Marcia and Lisa Douglass, "The Orgasm Gap," 399
- Jennifer Potter, "Do Ask, Do Tell," 416
- Charles Moser, "Health Care Without Shame," 420
- Leslie Feinberg, "Trans Health Crisis," 423
- Anne Finger, "Forbidden Fruit," 426
- Jane Porcino, "Need for Intimacy," 428
- BB: bell hooks, "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace," in *The Politics of Women's Bodies*, Rose Weitz, ed. (1998), 112-122
- Sasha Cagen, "The Quirkyalone," in the *Utne Reader* (Sept/Oct 2000), 60.
- "Questions for the Heterosexual"

Recommended: Audio: "81 Words," *This American Life* radio segment on removing homosexuality from the DSM (1 hr.)

Movie: "Kinsey," available at a video store or library near you

OBOS: Section 2, Relationships and Sexuality, pp. 139-224

journal entries due in class

M 3/27 ★ Oppression as a Health Issue

- WW: Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," 79
- Audre Lorde, "There is No Hierarchy of Oppression," 83
- Sherover-Marcuse, "Unlearning Racism," 84
- Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," 85
- "Health Disparities in the United States," 92
- Witherow, "Strained Class Windows," 125
- BB: Angela Davis, "Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired," in *Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, new, expanded edition, ed. Evelyn White (1994)
- George Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness," in *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, 2nd ed., Paula Rothenberg, ed. (2005), 67-90

W 3/29 ★ Advertising and the Appearance of Health

- WW: Whatley, "The Picture of Health," 169
- Kuczynski, "Treating Disease with a Famous Face," 178
- NWHN, "'Manufacturing Need, Manufacturing 'Knowledge,'" 180
- Healthfacts, "Those Omnipresent Prescription Drug Ads," 184
- Healthfacts, "How to Read a Drug Ad," 185

Paper 3 due Friday in my office

M 4/3 ★ Body Projects: Image as Identity

- TBP: Ch 4 “Body Projects,” 95
WW: Zuckerman, “Regarding the FDA’s Approval of Saline Breast Implants”
Worcester, “Nourishing Ourselves,” 326
Worcester, “Fatphobia,” 336
Sternhall, “We’ll Always Be Fat But We Can Be Fit,” 341
Mc Affee and Lyons, “Weight and Health: Analyzing the Surgeon General’s ‘Call to Action,’” 345
- Recommended:* OBOS, Ch 1 “Body Image,” 3
OBOS, Ch 2 “Eating Well,” 19
OBOS, Ch 4, “Our Bodies in Motion,” 57

journal entries due in class

W 4/5 ★ Mental Health, Drugs, and Gender Roles

- WW: Lesley Doyal, “Hazards of Health and Home,” 137
Greaves, “What is a Theory of Women’s Smoking?” 303
Weissman, “Women and Tobacco,” 305
Sandmaier, “Alcoholics Invisible,” 308
Brower, “Are College Students Alcoholics?” 314
Kasl, “The 12 Step Controversy,” 321
NWHN, “Manufacturing Need, Manufacturing ‘Knowledge,’” 180
AMSA, “PharmFree Campaign,” 182
- BB: Excerpts from a 1941 Home Economics Textbook
- Recommended:* OBOS, Ch 3 “Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Mood-Altering Drugs,” 45
OBOS, Ch 6, “Emotional Well-Being,” 82
OBOS, Ch 7, “Environmental and Occupational Health,” 96

M 4/10 ★ Breast Cancer: A Gendered Case Study of Disease **quiz 3 in class**

- WW: Audre Lorde, “Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis,” 567
Arditti and Schreiber, “Breast Cancer: The Environmental Connection,” 571
NWHN, “Breast Cancer and Women of Color,” 557
Healthfacts, “It’s Breast Cancer Awareness Month,” 580
Healthfacts, “Surgeon Mammography Critic,” 581
Arditti, “Tamoxifen: Breast Cancer Prevention That’s Hard to Swallow,” 583
- Recommended:* Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals* (1980)
Susan Love, *Dr. Susan Love’s Breast Book* (2005)

W 4/12 ★ Sexually Transmitted Infections, and HIV/AIDS

- OBOS: Ch 14, “Safer Sex” & Ch 15, “STIs” & Ch 16, “HIV and AIDS,” 261-306
WW: Lissner, “Eight New Non-hormonal Contraceptive Methods for Men”
Suiter, “Waging War on STDs and Drugmaker Apathy,” 603
Camlin, “With of Without the Damn Thing,” 605
Piot, “A Gendered Epidemic,” 609

journal entries due in class

Paper 4 due Friday in my office

M 4/17 ★ **Violence Against Women & Women Organizing in Self-Defense**

WW: Chapter 6 (entire): Intimate Partner Violence and Health, 255-299
BB: Readings TBA

Recommended: OBOS, Ch 8 “Violence and Abuse,” 118

W 4/19 ★ **Surviving Violence in a Sexist System: Guest to Visit Class** (no assigned readings)

journal entries due in class

M 4/24 ★ **History and Politics of Pregnancy and Childbirth**

BB: Judith Leavitt, On the History of Childbirth
Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” *Signs* 16 (1991).
Naomi Wolf, “What You’d NEVER EXPECT When You’re Expecting,” *Ms.* (Oct/Nov 2001)
Mumford, “Childless by Choice,” *Isthmus* (Madison, WI), 19 July 1996

Recommended: OBOS, Childbirth, Ch 21-25

Ann Pappert, “What Price Pregnancy?” *Ms.* (June/July 2000), 43-49
Sarah Buckley, “Ultrasound: Weighing the Risks,” *Mothering* (Sept/Oct 2000)
Gaskin, “Induced and Seduced: The Dangers of Cytotec,” *Mothering* (July/Aug 2001)
Coburn, “Formula For Profit: How Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes Undermines the Health of Babies,” *Mothering* (July/Aug 2000)
Lerner, “Striking a Balance as AIDS Enters the Formula Fray,” *Ms.* (March/April 1998)
Small, “A Reasonable Sleep,” from *Our Babies, Ourselves* (1998), 109-37

W 4/26 ★ **Midwife and/or Doula to Visit Class** (no assigned readings)

Paper 5 due Friday in my office

M 5/1 ★ **Aging and Menopause** **quiz 4 in class**

WW: Macdonald, “An Open Letter to the Women’s Movement,” 530
Worcester and Whatley, “More Selling of HRT: Still Playing on the Fear Factor,” 531
Allina and Pearson, “Now the Truth is Known,” 550
Fugh-Berman, “Phytoestrogens: A New Alternative?” 554
Groopman, “Hormones for Men: Is Male Menopause a Question of Medicine or Marketing?” 557
BB: Robert A. Wilson, “A Key to Staying Young,” *Look*, 11 Jan 1966, 66
Judith Houck, “What Do These Women Want? Feminist Responses to *Feminine Forever*, 1963-1980,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Spring 2003)
Maryann Napoli, “Bone Scam,” *Ms.* (March/April 1997), 28-30

Recommended: OBOS, Growing Older, Ch 26 & 27, 525

final journal due in class, or Tuesday in my office

W 5/3 ★ **Reflections and Wrap Up—OR, Where to go from Here?** (no assigned reading)

★ * * * Congratulations!!! – and Good Health!!! * * *