**Course Description**

At-home births, epidurals, and C-sections: women's experiences with childbirth vary widely. Many of these differing experiences stem from societal developments that occurred in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Amidst these changes, the ritual of childbirth was transformed. Women went from giving birth at home with a midwife, surrounded by female friends and relatives, to giving birth in a hospital with male practitioners. This transformation was never unilateral or complete. Women today continue to experience aspects of an at-home birth in a twenty-first century hospital. This course will examine the varied ways that this transformation has unfolded in the United States and Britain from 1600 to the Present.

Throughout this course, we will use primary sources to examine the historical arguments pertaining to three central questions: 1.) where should women give birth? 2.) with whom should women give birth? and 3.) how should women give birth? Students will use these arguments to identify significant historical trends and agents of change, and ultimately to develop an informed perspective on the transformation(s) of childbirth. Student performance in the course will be assessed using various types of written assignments (online posts, online discussion boards, final paper), in-class discussion, and an oral presentation. This course has no prerequisites, and aims to bring together students from a wide variety of academic disciplines.

**Required Texts**

I have created an online course reserves site through Hunt Library. A link to this site will be posted on our Canvas course site. Please notify me if you are unable to access any of the assigned materials. In addition to the assigned readings, you will be asked to locate and read primary sources using databases accessible through CMU’s Hunt Library. Again, links to these databases will be provided through Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Accompanying Assessments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summarize and compare historical perspectives of the birthing process, especially</td>
<td>Online posts, in-class discussion, perspective paper/proposal/presentation</td>
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<td>in regards to our three central questions: with whom should women give birth,</td>
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<td>where should women give birth, and how should women give birth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify and describe significant agents of change in the transformation(s) of</td>
<td>Online posts, in-class discussion, perspective</td>
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<td>childbirth, including but not limited to</td>
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childbirth practitioners, prevailing ideologies, governmental structures, and other societal factors.  

| Analyze significant trends or transformations in the history of childbirth using primary and secondary sources. | Online posts, in-class discussion, perspective paper/proposal/presentation |
| Integrate primary and secondary sources to develop an historical perspective (i.e., measuring/describing change over time) about with whom and where women should give birth. | Perspective paper/proposal/presentation |
| Find and interpret primary sources that support, refute, or extend historical arguments that pertain to the history of childbirth. | All graded components |

**Final Grade Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Component</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Posts (10 @ 3 pts each)</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Reflection Posts (5 @ 10 pts each)</td>
<td>50 points</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Post Comments (5 @ 3 pts each)</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Perspective Paper Proposal  
*Due: 4/11* | 10 points | 5% |
| Perspective Paper  
*Due: 5/9* | 40 points | 21% |
| Perspective Paper Presentation  
*Due: 4/18* | 20 points | 11% |
| In-Class Discussion (12 @ 2 pts each) | 24 points | 13% |
| **TOTAL** | **189 points** | **100%** |

**Grading Scale**
Your course assignments as well as your final grade will be determined based on the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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</table>
Graded Components

Discussion Board Posts

Discussion board posts are an opportunity for you to influence and shape our in-class discussion by raising questions or considerations from the assigned readings. Each day's class will have a separate discussion thread on Canvas, and you should post your response by 8PM every Monday and Wednesday night (i.e., the night before our class meets). I will notify you of any changes to this schedule. Everyone is responsible for making one post per class session. If you'd like to make additional posts, please feel free. You are welcome to comment on your classmates' posts, though this is not required. We will use the questions and considerations raised on the discussion board to help generate and advance our in-class discussion.

Unless otherwise specified, the content of your post should raise an issue from that day's assigned readings that you would like to discuss in class. I've listed several post prompts below, but feel free to generate your own ideas as well.

- “This article/book seems to connect to a previous article/book that we’ve read in the following ways…”
- “The information presented in this article/book seems very similar or different to something else we’ve read, and here’s how…”
- “This topic/issue/reading seems especially relevant to historical transformations of childbirth because…”
- “I don’t understand or agree with the author’s argument about _____ because…”

Reflection Posts & Comments

Our Canvas site will feature a separate “reflection” discussion board. This discussion board is a place for you to reflect on the week’s readings and in-class discussions. Additionally, this is a place for you to start building your perspective paper. Unless otherwise specified, online posts are due every Saturday by 8PM. Each online post should be approximately 500 words and address the central question of the week (i.e., where should women give birth, with whom should women give birth, how should women give birth). You will complete five reflection posts, and there will be a separate Canvas thread for each of these posts.

Within the context of the central question, your post should include the following:

- A brief summary of the historical arguments presented that week
- An historical example (i.e., from a primary source) from a CMU-supported online database that supports, refutes, or extends one of the historical arguments raised in the reading. Your post should include a description of the primary source that you used as well as your interpretation of the source (i.e., what is it saying and how does that pertain to our course?).
- At least one question that you would like to explore further pertaining to the arguments addressed in your post.

When it comes to finding a primary source in a CMU-supported online database, you can choose to search for a particular source (e.g., one mentioned in one of the assigned secondary sources) or you might choose to search for particular key words (e.g., “midwives”) and then see what turns up. You can limit your search by time period, and you should consider whether you want to stay within the time period we are discussing or go outside of it. If you go outside of it, consider that you may be unaware of the historical context for understanding it. The decision is yours! Remember that you must make a connection between the source your find and the arguments we’ve discussed in class.
In addition to writing your own post, you will comment on at least two of your classmates’ posts. You will be organized into groups of five, and each week you are responsible for commenting on at least two of your group members’ posts. You are welcome to view and comment on other posts outside of your group, but this is not required. Remember: these posts are opportunities for you to discover additional primary sources that you can use in your final paper, so make as much use of them as possible. These comments are due every Sunday by 8PM. While there is no word-limit requirement to your comments, they should demonstrate a significant level of engagement with your classmates’ posts. Some ways in which you could choose to engage with your classmates' posts are:

- **Discuss how your classmates’ primary source connects with a primary source that you’ve found.**
- **Ask a question that your classmates’ posts raise for you.**
- **Supplement your classmates’ summary of the historical arguments from that week.**

You will receive feedback from me on your online posts via our Canvas coursesite. Each week, I will likely select 1-2 of the primary sources you find to discuss during class.

### Historical Perspective Proposal, Paper, and Presentation

The perspective paper is an opportunity for you to synthesize two of our questions: with whom and where should women give birth? This synthesis will include additional primary sources, and aims to measure/describe change over time. Your weekly online posts are smaller versions of this assignment, and you may draw on your posts and your classmates’ online posts in constructing your paper. You can essentially treat the online posts as a way of crowdsourcing primary sources for your final paper. In your final paper, you should:

- **Describe significant changes/trends to the historical responses to the two central questions.**
- **Discuss key historical arguments that respond to the two central questions (e.g., women should deliver with a midwife because ____).**
- **Identify factors or agents that influenced these changes/trends in these responses.**
- **Use at least five additional primary sources (i.e., ones that are not part of your regularly assigned readings) as evidence of the trend/change you identify. Only three of these additional sources can come from online posts; two of the sources must be “new” for the final paper. Your proposal should also include citations of secondary sources since they provide the framework for your primary sources.**
- **Discuss how you have implemented feedback you’ve received on your proposal and/or presentation.**

You will submit a brief **proposal** (750-1000 words) of your paper by the beginning of class on **April 11th**. This proposal should include an identification of most of the key arguments and patterns that you will discuss in your final paper. Additionally, your proposal should describe at least two of the primary sources you will include in your final paper. You will receive feedback on these proposals from myself and your classmates and you should use this feedback in further developing your historical perspective paper.

In addition to your final paper, you will create a **5-minute presentation** that summarizes your paper’s key points, including brief descriptions of the primary sources you intend to use. There is tremendous value in being able to explain your work in a concise, digestible manner, and this presentation aims to accomplish that goal. You may also find that thinking about your presentation helps you better articulate the ideas in your perspective paper. You will present your paper to the class on either **April 18**, and your classmates and I will provide you with feedback for you to
consider when writing your final draft. In other words, these presentations are a “rough draft” of your final paper. I encourage you to use the feedback that you receive during these session to further revise your paper before you submit the final version (approx. 8-10 pages, double-spaced) by noon on May 9th. Your final paper should include a Works Cited page, the all sources (primary and secondary) should be cited in your paper. Additional information about citations will be discussed during class.

In-Class Participation
Class discussion is an essential part of our course. It's an opportunity for you to practice synthesizing ideas from the assigned readings, and to participate in a dialogue with people who are thinking about a similar topic. Given the wide variety of backgrounds represented in our class, I trust that our class discussions will generate many questions and represent diverse perspectives. Your in-class contributions will be assessed daily on the on a two-point scale:

- 0 = absent
- 1 = present but not respectfully participating in class discussion or small-group activities (e.g., dominating class discussion, distracting yourself and other students with or without the use of a mobile device, not participating in class discussion, etc.)
- 2 = present and respectfully participating in class discussion and small-group activities

Level 2 participation does not merely consist of “talking a lot.” It also involves listening to your classmates, engaging with their ideas, and asking questions of them and me. When we break into small groups during class, an active participant ensures that the group stays on-topic, allows for participation from everyone in the group, and works to develop a deliverable (if applicable). During week 3 of the course, you’ll be given a participation check-in (i.e., how am I doing so far?) on your class participation. This check-in allows you the opportunity to receive feedback and improve upon your class participation. Given that our class only meets for 7 weeks, attendance at every class session is required and essential to success in the course.

Course Policies
Flex Days/Late Work
Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course syllabus and course schedule (and posted in Canvas). Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on those days. However, I recognize that sometimes “life happens.” In these instances, you may use your allotted two flex days. These days allow you to submit an assignment up to two days late without penalty. You can use these days for any assignment and for any reason. You do not need to provide me with the reason: simply email me and tell me how many of your flex days you would like to use.

Once you’ve exhausted your flex days, then point deductions will occur for any assignment submitted after the deadline. An assignment submitted 24 hours of the due date will only be eligible for 80% of the maximum number of point allotted. Assignments submitted more than 24 hours after the due date will not be accepted. If you experience extenuating circumstances (e.g., you are hospitalized) that prohibit you from submitting your assignments on time, please let me know. I will evaluate these instances on a case-by-case basis.

Re-grade Policy
If you would like me to review a graded assignment, I am more than willing to do so. All requests for re-grades must be submitted within one week of the graded assignments being returned. After requesting a re-grade, please schedule an appointment with me to discuss your assignment and grade. Please allow me a minimum of 48 hours between your request for a re-grade and our meeting. Exceptions to this policy may apply in the case of the final perspective paper due to
deadlines for CMU grade submissions.

**Attendance and Participation**
Within the first week of our course, please look ahead and see if you need to miss class for any excusable reason (religious observance, job interview, university-sanctioned event, etc.) and notify me as soon as possible. We may be able to make alternative arrangements for completing assignments. Everyone is permitted one absence without the deduction of points. If you do not use this absence, then the extra points you earn will be added to your lowest score when computing your final grade (i.e., extra credit). If there are extenuating circumstances that require you to miss more than one class session, please come and discuss this issue with me in advance of your absence(s).

**Learning Accommodations**
If you have a disability and require accommodations, please contact Catherine Getchell, Director of Disability Resources at getchell@cmu.edu or 412-268-6121. If you have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate.

**Mobile Devices**
Unless explicitly asked to use mobile devices, please refrain from using them during our class sessions. The majority of our sessions will consist of class discussion and various content-related activities that do not require mobile devices. Research shows that mobile devices not only distract the user but also those within view of the mobile device. Additionally, research also shows that students gain a better conceptual understanding of course material when they take longhand notes (i.e., with pen and paper) rather than on a laptop. [Sana et al. (2013). “Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. Computers & Education 62: 24-31; Mueller and Oppenheimer (2014). “The pen is mightier than the keyboard: advantages of longhand over laptop note taking” Psychological Science 25(6): 1159-1168.]

**Academic Integrity**
Any work that you submit should be your own work (i.e., not borrowed/copied from any other source, including our assigned readings and your classmates). When using other people’s ideas to substantiate your own, please properly cite the original source. We will review proper citation procedures in class, and you should ask for clarification whenever needed. I encourage you to rely on your classmates’ online posts posts – especially their primary sources – when writing your final paper, but you should be expressing your own ideas and not theirs.

Any act of cheating or plagiarism will be treated in accordance with Carnegie Mellon’s Policy on Academic Integrity, which can be found here: http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/academic-integrity.html. Depending upon the individual violation, students could face penalties ranging from failing the assignment to failing the class.

**Units and Quality Points**
Carnegie Mellon has adopted the method of assigning a number of “units” for each course to represent the quantity of work required of students. For the average student, one unit represents one work-hour of time per week throughout the semester. The number of units in each course is fixed by the faculty member in consultation with the college offering the course. Three units are the equivalent of one traditional semester credit hour.
Hence, a 9 unit semester-long course should require 9 hours of student engagement, on average, including class time; if the instructor requires 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of recitation, they can expect students to spend 5 hours outside of class engaging in class work. For mini courses that run for only seven weeks, the conversion from units to number of hours per week during the mini involves multiplying by 2. For example, a 6 unit mini course should on average involve 12 hours of student engagement; if the instructor requires 3 hours of lecture and 3 hours of lab, they can expect the students to spend 6 hours outside of class.

Take care of yourself
Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax. Despite what you might hear, using your time to take care of yourself will actually help you achieve your academic goals more than spending too much time studying.

All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Take the time to learn about all that’s available and take advantage of it. Ask for support sooner rather than later – this always helps.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or difficult feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for assistance connecting to the support that can help. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here for you: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/. Over 25% of students reach out to CaPS some time during their time at CMU.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, call someone immediately, day or night:
CaPS: 412-268-2922
Resolve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226
If the situation is life threatening, call the Police:
  On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323
  Off campus: 911
COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings listed for each day are those that we will be discussing that day. Therefore, you should complete the readings before coming to class (i.e., the readings listed for each day are due at the start of that day's class).

With Whom Should Women Give Birth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments and Events</th>
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| 3/21  | • Class, course, and Canvas introductions  
    **Topics:** Midwives, male practitioners, women's experiences in childbirth, introduction to "ceremony of childbirth" |
| 3/23  | ***Librarian Sue Collins will visit class and introduce us to databases you can use to complete your weekly reflection posts and final paper.  
    **To prepare for class, please read**  
   **Secondary Sources**  
   **Primary/Secondary Sources**  
   **Topics:** "ceremony of childbirth" in London and Maine, man-midwives v. midwives  
   **Before next class**  
    • *Online Reflection Posts Post 1 due 3/25 by 8PM*  
    • *Comments on reflection online posts posts due 3/26 by 8PM* |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Period:</th>
<th>To prepare for class, please read</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
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**Primary Sources/Secondary Sources**  

**Topics:** (male) general practitioners in 19th-century U.S., “granny midwives”, professionalization of midwives in England, mothers’ experiences in childbirth (working class, upper class, enslaved), infant and maternal mortality rates in U.S. and England

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<th>To prepare for class, please read</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/30</td>
<td>1930-1970s</td>
<td><strong>Secondary Sources</strong></td>
<td>• Tania McIntosh, <em>A Social History of Maternity and Childbirth: Key Themes in Maternity Care</em> (London: Routledge, 2012), Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary/Secondary Sources**  
• Mary Breckinridge, *Wide Neighborhoods: A Story of the Frontier Nursing Service* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1952), Chapter 31  
• “Frontier Nursing Service Brings Health to Kentucky Mountaineers” in *Life* 2, no. 24 (14 June 1937).  
• Paul de Kruif, "Forgotten Mothers" in *The Ladies’ Home Journal* 53 (December 1936)  

**Topics:** district midwives in London, obstetricians, nurse-midwives in the U.S. and England, maternity experiences in U.S. (rural and urban environments)

**Before next class**  
• *Online Reflection Posts Post 2 due 4/1 by 8PM*  
• *Comments on reflection online posts due 4/2 by 8PM*
Where Should Women Give Birth?

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments and Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td><strong>Secondary Sources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary Sources</strong></td>
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|      | • *An Account of the Middlesex Hospital, for the Reception of Sick and Lame, and for Lying-in Married Women, in Windmill-Street, Tottenham-Court Road* (London, 1761)  
• “Rats in the Hospital”, *Harper’s Weekly* 4 (1860)  
• Royal College of Midwives, “The Midwife’s Tale Oral History Collection Videos” [Esther Silvertone 2 and Alice Forrest] |
|      | **Topics:** early lying-in hospitals in the U.S. and England, hospital births for the “rich” and the “poor” |

| 4/6  | **Secondary Sources**  |
• Angela Danzi, *From Home to Hospital: Jewish and Italian American Women and Childbirth, 1920-1940*, Chapter 6 |
|      | **Secondary/Primary Sources** |
|      | • M.F. Ashley Montagu, “Babies Should be Born at Home!” *Ladies Home Journal* (August 1955)  
• “Choice in the Maternity Service” (London, June 1, 1964) |
|      | **Topics:** increased hospital birth |
|      | **Before next class**  |
|      | • Online Reflection Posts Post 3 due 4/8 by 8PM  
• Comments on reflection online posts posts due 4/9 by 8PM |
### 4/11
- Perspective Paper Proposals due (in-class peer review)
- ECF-PG from Eberly Center (Megan Sanders)

### 4/13

**Secondary/Primary Sources**
- Beverly Beech (2012), "The benefits of home birth: evidence of safety, effectiveness and women’s experiences". *Occasional paper for Association for Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)*

**Primary Sources**

**Topics:** the backlash against hospital births

**Before next class**
- Online Reflection Posts Post 4 due 4/15 by 8PM
- Comments on reflection online posts due 4/16 by 8PM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments and Events</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Perspective Paper Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>NO CLASS (SPRING CARNIVAL)</td>
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**How Should Women Give Birth?**

**Date** | **Assignments and Events**
---|---
4/25 | ***In-class panel discussion with Julie Mckechnie, CNM, MSN, and Sheila Ramgopal, MD***

**Time Period:** Present Day

**To prepare for class, please review [specific sections TBA]:**
- "Midwifery Evidence-Based Practice" (American College of Nurse-Midwives)
- "Certification and Procedural Credentialing" (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
- "Joint Statement on Practice Relations" (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Before next class</th>
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</table>
| 4/27  | **Secondary Sources**  
- Donald Caton, *What a Blessing She Had Chloroform: The Medical and Social Response to the Pain of Childbirth from 1800 to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), Chapters 8  
- Steve Ainsworth, “Upfront: the Birth of the Epidural” (Royal College of Midwives website)  

**Primary Source**  
- “Twilight Sleep Is a Subject of a New Investigation” *New York Times* (January 31, 1915)  

**Topics:** pain relief in childbirth (Twilight sleep and epidurals) |

| 5/2   | **Secondary Sources**  
- (optional) "Cesarean Section – A Brief History", Parts 1-4 (U.S. National Library of Medicine website)  

**Topics:** epidurals, Lamaze, and Caesarean sections, and “students’ choice” |

| 5/4   | **In-class panel discussion with Ruth Mankoff, CNM, and Ann McCarthy, CNM, MSN, and Jatolloa Davis, CNM, MSN.**  
**Time Period:** Present Day  
**To prepare for class, please review:**  
- The Midwife Center for Birth & Women's Health (website). See “Pregnancy & Childbirth” – “Choosing the Midwife Center”, “What to Expect”, “Birth Options”, and “The Center”  
- "National Birth Center Study II" (American Association of Birth Centers)  

**Before next class:**  
- **By 9AM on 5/3, please post a question (on our Canvas Discussion Board) that you would like to ask our panelists on 5/4.**
Final Papers Due: by noon on Tuesday, May 9