

(79-364) The Birth of Modern Childbirth, 1600 to the Present

(A4 Mini, Spring 2017, 6 units)

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00-10:20 (Cyert Hall A70)

Dr. Katie Walsh

kpwalsh@andrew.cmu.edu

Cyert Hall 120

Office Hours:

Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30

Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30

By appointment

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.

Learning Objectives	Accompanying Assessments
Summarize and compare historical perspectives of the birthing process, especially in regards to our three central questions: with whom should women give birth, where should women give birth, and how should women give birth.	Online posts, in-class discussion, perspective paper/proposal/presentation
Identify and describe significant agents of change in the transformation(s) of childbirth, including but not limited to	Online posts, in-class discussion, perspective