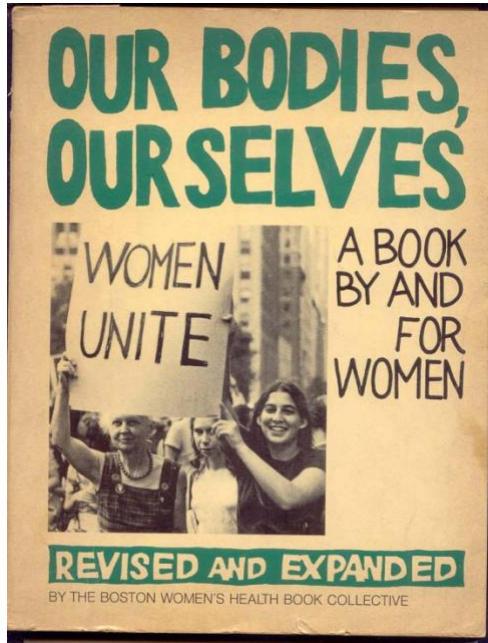


WGS 330-601: Women and Health  
Fall 2020



Welcome to Women and Health! Also known as Women, Gender, and Sexuality and Health!

This class utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to explore historical perspectives on health, marginalized populations and their access to health technologies, health policy research, and emerging topics in women's health, gender and health, and sexuality and health. The humanities, social sciences and biological sciences will inform inquiry into "hot topics" in health. Health will be dissected through a lens of gender equity. Domestic and international perspectives will be employed. You will be encouraged to identify and study topics of your own interest.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, the student will be able to demonstrate understanding in the unit assignment papers, forum discussions and the final project of the following:

- Articulate the historical, cultural, and political context of women's health in real terms and as a field of study
- Discuss the impact of public policy on health care access, particularly for those women who are marginalized in terms of race, ethnicity, language barriers, socio-economic status, or geographic location
- Understand the value and limitations of women's health research
- Provide examples of the impact of gender, race, and class in large-scale epidemics

### Instructor Info

Rachel Gelfand, PhD [rgelfan@ncsu.edu](mailto:rgelfan@ncsu.edu) (email is best way to contact me)

### Prerequisites

None. This course will fulfill 3 credit hours of the General Education Program Interdisciplinary Perspectives Requirement.

## Required Readings

Grise, Virginia. (2017) *Your Healing is Killing Me*. Plays Inverse Press. ([Amazon](#) or [Bookshop](#))

All other readings will be provided to you via Moodle as PDFs. If you are unable to order the above book, please get in touch so we can make other arrangements.

## Recommended Reading

Roberts, D. (1997). *Killing the Black Body; Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon.

Tone, A. (2001). *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America*. Hill and Wang.

Boston Women's Collective. (2011). *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Touchstone Books.

## Course Organization

This is an online course and most activities will be self-paced within a weekly schedule. There will be regular Zoom gatherings with breakout groups. Please plan accordingly.

## Grading

You'll find the due dates and particulars for all of these assignments on your weekly schedule on Moodle. Generally speaking, our weeks will run Monday morning to Sunday at 11:45pm. Don't try to cram all of the reading and writing into one day! Be planful and make a schedule for yourself on Monday that allows you to get everything done on time.

Assignments are always due on the date specified at 11:45pm (this is a Moodle convention, not mine) unless otherwise noted. Moodle is merciless so make sure you get the assignment in BEFORE 11:45pm.

## Assignments

Reading Discussion Posts—36%

Health in NC Report—12%

Health Documentary Analysis—25%

Final Project—25%

Zoom Attendance—2%

## Readings Discussion Posts

Each week you are required to write an entry into our discussion forum of 300-500 words. In this post, you will summarize what you have read and highlight connections you see between the readings. Posts should reference the reading directly when possible and posts can also succinctly connect the reading to personal experience and observations. You must also reply to one

comment in your group each week. Posts are due by Saturday at 11:45pm and Responses are due by Sunday at 11:45pm. Reply posts should be 150-200 words and continue engagement with the readings (aka—don't say, that's interesting and leave it there. Include your thoughts on how your peer's post connects to your own thoughts and experiences). There are 13 weeks with Forums and you are required to do 12 response/replies.

### Health in NC Report

In this assignment, you will research and then summarize health care resources in an NC town of your choosing. Locate and obtain what community health resources are available for local residents. How far are health facilities? How prevalent are pharmacies? What kind of health care is available? What barriers may be an issue for local residents? What inequities exist? How are inequities addressed? What is the closest COVID-19 testing site? Reports should be 1-2 pages double spaced. This is an exploratory project. Do not feel that you need to be able to answer all of the above questions—but see what you can find! It may help to call local facilities in addition to online research. Because health care facilities are very taxed at the moment, it is okay to do mostly online research. If you choose to research your own town, ask around to family or friends who have useful experience.

### Health Documentary Analysis

Choose a documentary film on topics of health and gender. Use NCSU's Kanopy, Films on Demand, or access one of the Netflix documentaries listed here:

<https://www.prevention.com/life/g25737172/netflix-health-documentaries/>

Another documentary that may be of interest is *The Business of Being Born* Available on Amazon Prime.

Your analysis should be 2-3 pages and should answer the following questions:

What is the thesis of the film and what is one example used to highlight this argument?

How does gender impact the topic of the film?

What observations do you have about structures of power and inequity?

### Final Project

This is your opportunity to research a topic of interest within the parameters of the course. In this essay, you are required to connect course readings to a contemporary or historical issue of gender, sexuality, or women's health. What topics do you wish we had time to cover? What would you like to explore further? Your research paper should have a thesis statement backed up by peer-review journal evidence. It can scientific or humanities oriented. 5-7 pages.

### Zoom Attendance

You are required to attend one Zoom meeting. I know this can be a difficult request due to busy schedules. That's why you have different times to choose from and the penalty for missing the meeting is small (the equivalent of the extra credit assignment).

### Grade Breakdown

\*\*\*Your grades will be posted by their point value. For example, if you submit a weekly assignment that receives a "B-" grade, your grade will be "8" or 8/10 (80%) \*\*\*\*\*There are NO course exams including no final exam.

For final course grades, I utilize standard NCSU +/- grading as follows:

A+ = 97% and above; A = 94-96%; A- = 90-93% B+ = 87-89%; B = 84-86%; B- = 80-83% C+ = 77-79%; C = 74-76%; C- = 70-73% D+ = 67-69%; D = 64-66%; D- = 60-63% F= 59% & lower

### Late Assignments

One good thing about an online course is that you may post your assignments at any time 24 hours a day/7 days a week. I expect you to plan ahead for life's emergencies...If you finish assignments early, you should post them early. Computers crash, websites go down, we all get sick, etc. Taking an online course means taking responsibility for your own work. If you submit late work, it is my discretion whether I will grade it. Some assignments (like your final project for example) I cannot grade late because of my quick turnaround time to get your grades in. The bottom line is: try not to be late, and if you are, email me as soon as possible to let me know when I can expect it.

### Attendance

As this is an online course, there are no policies on attendance.

### Academic Integrity

Don't cheat. Don't buy papers. Don't copy Wikipedia, change a few things, and then submit it to me. Don't take other people's work without citing them. Any of these things are (in my mind) exactly like copying off someone's paper. I will turn you in to the Academic Integrity Office and I don't want to have to do that. The NCSU Honor Pledge specifies that: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment." By simply turning in an assignment, you are indicating that you neither gave nor received unauthorized aid on the assignment. The University policy can be found here: Code of Student Conduct Policy: POL 11:35:1

### Disability

I really want this class to be accessible to everyone. If you have special needs, please let me know and I will do my very best to accommodate them. The university also wants you to know this: "Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG 02:20:1).

### A Final Word

Sometimes people misunderstand WGS so let me say right off the bat that you will likely not personally agree with everything you read in this class. I try to present different sides to the issues and the women's movements (like most all other social movements) are not monolithic. The selected readings are intended to give you a well-rounded perspective on some of today's controversial issues. They don't necessarily reflect my own political views nor do I expect that they will always reflect yours. Students from different ways of life, political affiliations, viewpoints, etc have and will succeed in this class. What I ask of you is that you keep an open-mind and critically reflect on what you read. By all means, I welcome a professional, academic deconstruction of an argument and I invite you to engage the readings, me, and your peers in this kind of debate. Ultimately, I don't grade you on how much I personally agree with you nor whether you are/are not a feminist, an activist, etc. I grade you on how well you understand the course material and can apply it in a thoughtful way.

### Respecting Other's Privacy

Students may disclose personally identifiable information to other students in the course, via electronic tools like email or web-postings, where relevant to the course. Examples include online discussions of class topics and posting of student coursework. All students are expected to respect the privacy of each other by not sharing or using such information outside the course.

### Course Schedule

## **Unit 1: Social Determinants of Health**



### *Week 1*

Introductions: Defining Sex, Gender, Health, and Bodies

Read:

“Genderbread Person”

“Bodies” from *Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions*, Wade and Ferree

“Genders, sexes, and health: what are the connections—and why does it matter?” Nancy Krieger

“What is Health?” Mildred Blaxter

Assignments: Reading Discussion Post, Introduction Post

*Week 2*

Histories of Women’s Health Movements

Read:

“Changing Sense of Selves” *Our Bodies, Ourselves*

“‘Our Bodies, Ourselves’? It’s Shelved” Jessica Valenti

“[Tip of the Iceberg](#)” Laura Szumowski (or other OBOS Recommended Resources – [Anatomy & Menstruation](#))

Assignments: Reading Discussion Post

*Week 3*

Inequities in Health

Watch: [Leaving Women’s Health to Chance](#), Paula Johnson (14 min Video at Bottom)

Read: “Debating the Cause of Health Disparities” Dorothy Roberts

Peruse: “General Health, Sexual, and Reproductive Health” *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*

Zoom Meeting 1

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts; Health in NC Report

*Week 4*

Racism is a Public Health Problem

Read:

“Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener’s Tale,” Camara Phyllis Jones

“Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Racism and Public Health” Jennifer Jee-Lyn García, PhD, and Mienah Zulfacar Sharif, MPH

“Social Determinants of Health, Violent Radicalization, and Terrorism: A Public Health Perspective,” Héctor E. Alcalá, Mienah Zulfacar Sharif, and Goleen Samar

## Unit 2: Epidemics and Poetics



### Week 5

#### Pandemics Past

Read: “The Chinese as Medical Scapegoats in San Francisco, 1870–1905,” *California History*, Spring 1978.

Listen: [Oral Histories of 1918 Pandemic in NC](#)

Watch: [United in Anger: A History of ACT-UP](#)

Optional: [Reflecting on SARS, 17 years and two flu-like epidemics later](#) Katherine Mason

“[New Pathogen, Old Politics](#),” Alex de Waal, *Boston Review*, April 3, 2020

[How Music Has Reflected Difficult Times](#), *WABE City Lights*

Assignments: Reading Discussion Posts

### Week 6

#### Pandemics Present

Read: Selections from [Feminist Resources on the Pandemic](#), Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy and Pandemic Resources Grab Bag Sheet

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts, Reflective Essay on COVID-19

Zoom Meeting 2

### Week 7

#### Taking Care and the Arts: Act 1

Read: “[History of Self-Care](#),” Aisha Harris

[Still/Here](#), Bill T. Jones (56 min)

[“The Body Cannot Hide: How Dance Has Been a Vital Response to AIDS”](#) *OUT Magazine*

Optional: [“The Most Popular Office on Campus,”](#) Isabelle Kwai

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts, Unwell Extra Credit Opportunity

*Week 8*

Taking Care and the Arts: Act 2

Read: *Your Healing is Killing Me*, Virginia Grise

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts

*Week 9*

Class, Citizenship, and the Healthcare System

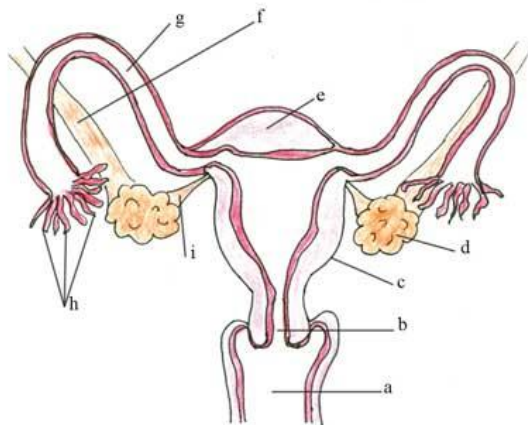
Read: [“Why Medical Bills are so Expensive in the US”](#) (15 min)

[“Native American Crisis in Health Equity”](#)

[“The Illness Experience of Undocumented Immigrants with End-Stage Renal Disease”](#)

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts, Health Documentary Analysis

### **Unit 3: Endometrium of the Mind**



*Week 10*

Framing Reproduction & Contraception

Read: “Medicalizing Reproduction: The Pill and Home Pregnancy Tests” Andrea Tone

“The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles” Emily Martin

[The Ethics of Assisted Reproductive Technologies](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts

*Week 11*

Anatomy Revisited

“[About Purportedly Gendered Body Parts](#),” Dean Spade

Choose a linked excerpt from: [Anatomy & Menstruation](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

Choose a linked excerpt from: [Pregnancy & Birth](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

Choose a linked excerpt from: [Infertility](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

*Week 12*

Hormones, Gender, and Intersex Identity

“Of Spirals and Layers” Anne Fausto-Sterling

“[Intersex 101](#)” InterACT

“[Yes, Trans Women Can Get Their Periods](#),” Sam Riedel

“[The Politics of Periods](#),” Jennifer Weiss-Wolf

“[What’s it like to Chestfeed?](#)” Britni de la Cretaz

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts

*Week 13*

Reproductive Justice

“Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism,” Loretta Ross

[History of Forced Sterilization and Current US Abuses](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

Choose a linked excerpt from: [Abortion](#), *OBOS Excerpt*

Assignment: Reading Discussion Posts

*Week 14*

Assignment: Final Research Project