

Reproductive Health, Politics, and Inequalities

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Office hours: Thursdays 2:00-4:00pm

Fall 2023
Thursdays 12:00-1:50pm
Social Sciences Building 402
Class #: 16943

Course Description

This course grounds the biological process of human reproduction in social processes and institutions. We will examine social scientific research on a wide range of reproductive topics, including contraception, abortion, assisted reproductive technologies, pregnancy, and birth. We will discuss how the politics of reproduction are shaped by the intersecting inequalities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, disability, and nationality. This course includes readings about reproduction around the globe with particular attention to the current US context.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Articulate theories of stratified reproduction, reproductive governance, and reproductive justice.
- Draw connections between reproduction and broader social patterns.
- Conduct a research project expanding on course readings.

This class will be challenging on several levels:

- You will be expected to keep up with a number of readings for each class meeting. These readings will be challenging not only in terms of their length and number, but also in terms of the subject matter presented and the complex theories proposed.
- We will be speaking frankly about issues of race, ethnicity, class, disability, gender, and sexuality. Some topics may be challenging; you may find the subject matter difficult to discuss. Some of these topics will be graphic, controversial, or explicit. Frank discussions and presentation of material may include things that some find offensive or that differ greatly from your own experiences, preferences, and beliefs.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to come to office hours (a one-on-one conversation outside of class) to discuss course material and assignments. You can book office hours at the following URL:

<https://calendly.com/elizaclairebrown>

Course Requirements:

All assignments should be double spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman with 1-inch margins.
All assignments should be uploaded to *bcourses*

Attendance and participation are not part of the grade. Your grade is solely based on academic mastery over the material demonstrated in exams and assignments. That said, a good seminar depends on high-quality student discussion, and you are encouraged to come to each class ready to actively participate.

Reading Memos

Due by November 30

I encourage students to submit memos throughout the course rather than waiting for the end of the semester to receive timely feedback on comprehension and writing.

40% of final grade

To assist you in preparing for discussion and your final projects, you will write 10 reflections/critiques of the week's readings—you can choose which 10 texts you want to cover. Each memo should be 250-500 words. Memos should include a brief summary of the reading and then expand to questions raised by it.

In-Class Mini-Midterm

October 5

10% of final grade

This will be an in-class handwritten short midterm (think quiz) asking a few questions on the core concepts and readings covered thus far in class, such as reproductive governance and stratified reproduction.

Final Paper Abstract and Annotated Literature Review

Due October 26

15% of final grade

Your final draft should include an introduction of the topic, background information about the topic, and an annotated bibliography of 5 texts from class and 5 original sources. Original sources should be academic books or articles related to the topic of your choosing on reproduction. Good places to search for these sources include Google Scholar and JStor. Start by looking at who is cited in class readings, or who later cited the readings that we read in class. If for example, you are writing about egg freezing as a college graduation present (see below), then you should look for an article or two about egg freezing beyond the one assigned for class.

Midterm Reflection

Due November 9

5% of final grade

Based on the feedback on your final paper abstract and preliminary literature review, submit a 250-500 word memo on how you plan on revising your paper for the final. This might mean altering your topic, revising your research question, or finding more appropriate sources for your case.

Final Paper

Due December 15

30% of final grade

The final paper is on a topic of your choosing related to reproduction. There are many topics related to reproduction that we are unable to cover in class – menstruation, menopause,

postpartum care, holistic reproductive medicine, and more. You are encouraged to focus on a topic that we did not cover directly, delve in more deeply on a topic that we discussed (e.g., the shortage of sperm donors of color), examine a historical topic we discussed with a more contemporary lens (e.g., the contemporary development of birth control methods), or interrogate an element of a broader predominant theory in sociology of reproduction (e.g., the changing targets of medicalization within reproduction). The paper should include 10 texts from class and 10 original sources. It should include background of the topic, research questions, theoretical development, a clear argument, and supporting sources. You do not need to conduct any fieldwork or statistical analyses. It should be 12-15 pages, including references.

Example of final paper topic and abstract:

Egg freezing as a graduation present?

Over the past decade, every other year or so there is an Op-Ed writer or celebrity who suggests that egg freezing is the perfect college graduation present from parents. In this paper, I explore what it would mean for people to start freezing their eggs at much younger ages than has been typical (Brown and Patrick 2018). Building on Rene Almeling's scholarship on how egg donation is framed as a gift, I argue that egg freezing can be understood as a parental gift because of gendered meanings of economic exchange. I show how this is the latest iteration on a longstanding historical practice of parents' attempting to control their children's reproduction, and of children feeling like they owe their parents a grandchild. I use the framework of stratified reproduction (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995) to speculate about the inequalities inherent in egg freezing as a college graduation present, and what the effects of this practice might be.

Rubrics for all assignments are available on *bcourses*.

Required Texts:

All readings will be posted on *bcourses*.

Course Policies

Late Work Policy

Because each part of the course builds on the other, it is important to submit all work on time. You will have one week after the posted due date of each assignment to complete and submit each assignment without penalty. After that, each week that the assignment is late will result in a reduction of 20% in the total points you can earn for the individual assignment.

Honor Code

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code. Read the entire [Berkeley Honor Code](#) for more information.

Collaboration and Independence

Reviewing lecture and reading materials can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, all assignments are to be completed independently and should be the result of one's own independent work.

Incomplete Grades

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the preliminary research paper, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing to the instructor. According to the policy of the university, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

University Resources and Policies

Accessibility

If you require course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability, contact [UC Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program \(DSP\)](#). Please notify me via email of the accommodations you would like to use.

Sexual Violence and Harassment

If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support from an advocate through the [Center for Advocacy Resources and Education \(CARE\)](#). You can also report sexual harassment, sexual violence, or gender discrimination directly to the University's Title IX Office, the Office for Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination 6 at ask ophd@berkeley.edu. Faculty can assist you in making a report or accessing resources as needed. Please note: All professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants are considered Responsible Employees under the UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment policy. This means they must notify the Title IX office following a disclosure of sexual violence or sexual harassment. For more information about mandated reporting, visit <https://svsh.berkeley.edu/responsibleemployee>

Economic, Food, and Housing Support

If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at [The Basic Needs Center](#). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [CalFresh](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please contact the [UC Berkeley Food Pantry](#).

The UC Berkeley Financial Aid Office also offers [Short-Term Emergency Loans](#), and provides a way to request a [Cost of Attendance Adjustment](#). There is also an [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#), which aims to help stabilize housing for undergraduate and graduate students in emergency financial situations by providing them with a month's rent.

Childcare

Student parents are eligible for up to 64 subsidized hours of subsidized [BackUp Childcare](#) per fiscal year. Any parenting students who cannot find childcare are welcome to bring their children to class.

Mental Health Resources

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#): Individual, group, and career counseling for students, crisis drop-in, and after hours assistance.

[Social Services \(SOS\)](#): Counseling and case management for students presenting with alcohol/drug, sexual assault/rape, relationship or other violence concerns; chronic or newly diagnosed medical conditions, pregnancy, medical withdrawals. Support and resources for family housing residents at University Village.

Course Schedule:

Please note that texts are listed in the recommended order for reading.

Thursday August 24

Class 1: What is reproduction?

- Almeling, Rene. 2015. "Reproduction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 423-442.

Thursday August 31

Class 2: Contraception

- Gordon, Linda. 2002. *The Moral Property of Women*, Chapter 1 "The Prehistory of Birth Control." Pages 13-21
- Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2002. "The power of the pill: Oral contraceptives and women's career and marriage decisions." *Journal of political Economy* 110(4): 730-770. Only read 730-738.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon. Pages 56-89
- Littlejohn, Krystale E. 2013. "'It's those Pills that are Ruining Me': Gender and the Social Meanings of Hormonal Contraceptive Side Effects." *Gender & Society* 27:843-863.

Thursday September 7

Class 3: Reproductive Governance

- Morgan, Lynn M and Elizabeth FS Roberts. 2012. "Reproductive Governance in Latin America." *Anthropology & Medicine* 19:241-254.
- Greenhalgh, Susan. 2003. "Science, Modernity, and the Making of China's One-Child Policy." *Population and Development Review* 29: 163-96
- Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon. Pages 22-55

Thursday September 14

Class 4: Abortion I: Having Abortions

- Luker, Kristin. 1975. *Taking Chances: Abortion and the Decision Not to Contracept*. Chapter 5: Toward a Theory of Contraceptive Risk-Taking. Pages 78-111.
- Madera, Melissa, Dana M. Johnson, Kathleen Broussard, Luisa Alejandra Tello-Pérez, Carol-Armelle Ze-Noah, Aleta Baldwin, Rebecca Gomperts, and Abigail RA Aiken. 2022. "Experiences seeking, sourcing, and using abortion pills at home in the United States through an online telemedicine service." *SSM-Qualitative Research in Health* 2: 100075.
- Miller, Sarah, Laura R. Wherry, and Diana Greene Foster. 2020. "What happens after an abortion denial? A review of results from the Turnaway study." In *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 110, pp. 226-230. 2014 Broadway, Suite 305, Nashville, TN 37203: American Economic Association, 2020.

Thursday September 21

Class 5: Abortion II: Providing Abortions

- Rough Translation - Ukraine: The Handoff
 - <https://www.npr.org/2023/02/02/1153779472/ukraine-the-handoff>
- Suh, Siri. 2021. *Dying to Count: Post-Abortion Care and Global Reproductive Health Politics*. Chapter 3: "We Wear White Coats, Not Uniforms": Abortion Surveillance in Hospitals. Pages 82-108
- Kimport, Katrina, Tracy A. Weitz, and Lori Freedman. 2016. "The Stratified Legitimacy of Abortions." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 57.4 (2016): 503-516.

Thursday September 28

Class 6: Stratified Reproduction

- Ginsburg, Faye, and Rayna Rapp. 1995. "Introduction: Conceiving the New World Order." In *Conceiving the New world order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. University of California Press.
- Becker, Andréa. 2023. "Stratified Reproduction, Hysterectomy, and the Social Process of Opting into Infertility." *Gender & Society*

Thursday October 5

Class 7: Sterilization

- First ~30 minutes of class for midterm
- The remainder of class we will watch and discuss *La Operación*
 - Optional reading: López, Iris Ofelia. 2008. *Matters of choice: Puerto Rican women's struggle for reproductive freedom*. Rutgers University Press. Pages 3-19

Thursday October 12

Class 8: Reproductive Technologies

- Brown, Eliza, and Mary Patrick. 2018. "Time, Anticipation, and the Life Course: Egg Freezing as Temporarily Disentangling Romance and Reproduction." *American Sociological Review* 83(5):959-982.
- Mamo, Laura. 2013. "Queering the Fertility Clinic." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 34: 227-239.
- Bell, Ann. 2009. "It's Way Out of My League: Low-Income Women's Experiences of Medicalized Infertility." *Gender and Society* 23:688-709.

Thursday October 19

Class 9: Reproduction Work and Markets

- <https://radiolab.org/podcast/birthstory-2301>
- Almeling, Rene. 2007. "Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, sperm banks, and the medical market in genetic material." *American Sociological Review* 72(3):319-340.
- Rudrappa, Sharmila. 2015. *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India*. New York University Press. Pages 1-19, 99-125.

Thursday October 26

Class 10: Reproductive Justice

- Luna, Zakiya. 2020. *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: Women of Color and the Fight for Reproductive Justice*. NYU Press. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Thursday November 2

Class 11: Pregnancy

- Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs* 16: 485-501.
- Robinson, Joan H. 2020. "What the Pregnancy Test is Testing." *The British Journal of Sociology* 71(3):460-473.
- Ivry, Tsipy. 2010. *Embodying Culture: Pregnancy in Japan and Israel*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Introduction: Pages 1-33.

Thursday November 9

CLASS CANCELLED - PROF. BROWN AT 4S CONFERENCE

Thursday November 16

Class 12: Childbirth

- Morris, Theresa, and Joan H. Robinson. 2017. "Forced and Coerced Cesarean Sections in the United States." *Contexts* 16(2):24-29.
- Bridges, Khiara. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 4: 103-143.
- Goldensher, Liora O'Donnell. 2022. "Cooperation without Consensus: Midwives' Collaborations across Political Distance." *Social Problems* 69(4):1025-1045.

Thursday November 30

Class 13: Men's Role in Reproduction

- Almeling, Rene. 2020. *Gynecology: The Missing Science of Men's Reproductive Health*. University of California Press. Pages 1-26, 73-90
- Reich, Jennifer A. 2008. "Not ready to fill his father's shoes: A masculinist discourse of abortion." *Men and Masculinities* 11(1):3-21.
- Locock, Louise and Alexander, Jo. 2006. 'Just a bystander'? Men's place in the process of fetal screening and diagnosis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 62(6):1349-1359.