

# Sociology 190

## On Reproduction and Freedom

Fall 2023

Mondays 10-12

420 Social Science Building

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Sign up here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/pwgxf>

Why, and when, and how, does human reproduction – and the individuals' wombs through which it takes place -- become a matter of public concern and regulation? Why, and when, and how do public concerns with reproduction bear on the question of "freedom"? What can and does freedom mean in societies where the regulation of reproduction is a matter of public discussion, legal action, and sometimes extra-legal violence? Are there alternatives to such social arrangements? What might they look like?

This seminar will explore the interrelated meanings and politics of reproduction and freedom in comparative and historical perspective. We will examine historical connections between political economy, patriarchy, racial domination, the regulation of reproduction – and specifically, of women's wombs - and the concept and practice of "freedom." Rather than consider these questions and connections in the abstract, we will anchor our efforts to understand these connections through the study and analysis of three critical moments and places where interconnections and *entanglements* between political economy, patriarchy, racial domination, and public regulation of women's wombs were forged: the witch-hunts in early modern Europe and the colonial Americas; the free womb laws in nineteenth-century Colombia, Brazil, and Cuba; and development and use of "assisted" reproductive technologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-centuries United States.

As a Capstone seminar for Sociology majors, this course provides the opportunity to undertake an independent research project on a topic of your choice related to the central themes of the course. Detailed information about the research project will be provided in class.

### Expectations

The basic expectations and requirements of the course are:

- (1) Attend class.** Attendance is required. Participation in discussion is a core component of this course, so the attendance policy is strict. Each unexcused absence will result in a 2% lowering of your grade. Absences for legitimate reasons (such as medical issues, family emergencies, and religious observances) do not count towards this policy. It is your responsibility to inform me of the legitimate reason for an absence in a timely manner or

it will count as an unexcused absence. Depending on the situation, documentation may be requested for an unexcused absence.

- (2) Read.** You are expected to read the required texts before each class meeting. This course is a seminar, not a lecture course. This means that most of our class time will consist of moderated discussions of ideas based on or reacting to the assigned readings. In order to be a productive participant in an informed discussion, you need to be prepared. This means reading and thinking about the assigned texts before coming to class. If you are not prepared for class, you not only undermine your own learning, you also lower (or at least do not help to elevate) the overall level of the discussion, and thus detract from the learning experience of others. So please make sure to budget your time so that your reading for this class is done on time.
- (3) Participate.** Informed participation in seminar discussions is required of each student. The *quality* of participation will weigh more heavily than the *quantity* of participation. We will discuss acceptable forms, styles and levels of participation during the first week in class. Participation also includes providing peer feedback on another students' paper draft and a written comment or question in response to other students' final presentations.
- (4) Write.** There are two types of writing assignment for this course: weekly response memos and a final paper.

  - a.** Memos: The response memos are short (~ 300 word) reactions to the reading that you will post to the Discussion board on the class bcourses site each week. The memos are an opportunity to register some of your initial reactions to the reading prior to class discussion. Your memos should provide a short statement of your understanding of the main argument of each reading, and they should pose at least one question of the text. This could mean asking questions about points you did not fully understand, critiquing the author's assumptions or steps in their argument, noting divergences between the ideas of different authors, or relating what you have read to discussions from previous weeks of the seminar or current events (among other possibilities). Memos should be posted to the class website **no later than 3pm on Sundays** (to allow time for everyone to read them before the class meets on Mondays).
  - b.** Final paper: The second writing assignment for the class is a 13-15 page research paper due at the end of the semester. This will be split into 4 separate assignments: a 2-page proposal, an outline and bibliography, a full rough draft of the paper, the final paper. Details about each of these will be provided in class.
- (5) Present your research.** Each student will share their research question and main findings and arguments from their independent projects in a short oral presentation to the class. Guidelines for these presentations will be handed out in class.

**Evaluation**

15%: Attendance

15%: Participation

15%: Response memos

15%: Presentation

40%: Final Paper (10% for each of the 4 assignments – proposal, outline and bibliography, rough draft, final paper).

**Academic Honesty:** It is your responsibility to know university policies and abide by the student code of academic integrity (<http://asuc.org/honorcode/>). Don't cheat, don't help others cheat, and treat each other and the instructor respectfully.

**Regarding the use of AI:** I am very interested in exploring how AI might enhance learning. If you wish to use AI for any portion of your assignments in this class, I expect you to run this by me first, explaining what you plan to use it for, why, and how you think it will help you learn more or better or different than you otherwise would. We can discuss and decide as a class which uses of AI are acceptable and useful for our learning purposes in this seminar.

**Accommodations:** I am committed to making my class inclusive and accessible to all students. If there are ways in which you require accommodation please let me know and I will work with you. Information about disability accommodation at UC Berkeley is available at <http://dsp.berkeley.edu>.

**Required Reading**

All required reading for the course is available on bcourses.

## Course Outline

### **(8/28) Introduction**

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### **(9/4) No Class. Labor Day**

Margaret Atwood. *The Handmaids Tale*. 1985

## **Part I: capitalism, patriarchy, reproduction, and witch-hunts**

### **(9/11) political economy, family, patriarchy**

Engels and Marx. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (pp734-759).

Hopwood, Nick, Rebecca Fleming, and Lauren Kassel. 2018. "Introduction: Reproduction in History" in *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*. Cambridge U Press. Pages 3-18.

Almeling, Rene. "Reproduction" *Annual Review of Sociology*. 41: 423-43.

### **(9/18) primitive accumulation and witch-hunts**

Marx, Karl. *Capital*, Part 8, Ch26 "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation"

Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. Introduction (pp11-19) and Ch 2 (pp 61-132), "The Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women: Constructing 'Difference' in the 'Transition to Capitalism'"

### **(9/25) capitalism, colonialism, and witch-hunts**

Federici, Silvia. "The Great Witch-Hunt in Europe" Ch5 of *Caliban and the Witch*

Silverblatt. *Moon, Sun, and witches: gender ideologies and class in Inca and colonial Peru*. Introduction (xvii-xxxix), Ch 9 (159-181), Ch 10 (pp 197-207)

### **(10/2) "modernity", globalization, and witch-hunts**

Federici, Silvia. "Witch-Hunting, Globalization, and Feminist Solidarity in Africa Today" *Journal of International Women's Studies*. 10(1): 21-35, 2008.

## **\*\* Final paper proposal due**

## **Part II: capitalism, patriarchy, reproduction, and enslaved-to-free wombs**

### **(10/9) capitalism, patriarchy, and abolition demography: conceiving freedom**

Hartmann, Saidiya. "The Burdened Individuality of Freedom", ch4 in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. W.W.Norton & Company, 1997 (2022).

Cowling, Camilla. *Conceiving Freedom: women of color, gender, and the abolition of slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro*. UNC press, 2013. Introduction, Ch7 "She Was Now a Free Woman: Ex-Slave Women and the Meanings of Urban Freedom", Ch8 "My Mother Was Free-Womb, She Wasn't a Slave: Conceiving Freedom"

**(10/16)** freed wombs, criminalized women: liberal racial governmentality

Barragan, Yesenia. *Freedom's Captives: Slavery and Gradual Emancipation on the Colombian Black Pacific*. "Introduction: 'Reborn for Freedom', and ch. 4 "The Children of the Free Womb and Technologies of Gradual Emancipation Rule"

Rosa, Margarita. "Filial freedoms, ambiguous wombs: *Partus Sequitur Ventrum* and the 1871 Brazilian free womb law." *Slavery and Abolition* (2019).

Roth, Cassia. "From free womb to criminalized woman: fertility control in Brazilian slavery and freedom" *Slavery and Abolition* 38 (2): 269-286 (2017).

"The Assassination of Marielle Franco is as much about Brazil's past as its Future"

**(10/23)** reproductive governance

Morgan, Lynn and Elizabeth Roberts. 2012. "Reproductive Governance in Latin America" *Anthropology and Medicine* 19(2): 241-254.

Cardarello, Andrea. 2012. The right to have a family: 'legal trafficking of children', adoption and birth control in Brazil" *Anthropology and Medicine* 19(2): 225-240.

Paltrow, Lynn and Jeanne Flavin. 2013. "Arrests of and forced interventions on pregnant women in the United States, 1973-2005: implications for women's legal status and public health." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, Law* 38: 299-343

**\*\* outline and bibliography due**

**(10/30)** reproductive justice

Ross, Loretta and Rickie Solinger. 2017. *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*. University of California Press. Pages 1-17

Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon. [selections]

Luna, Zakiya. *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: Women of Color and the Fight for Reproductive Justice*. NYU Press 2020. (selections).

### **Part III capitalism, patriarchy, reproduction, and science**

**(11/6)** biopolitics, technoscience, and the means of reproduction

Clarke, Adele. 1998. *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and 'The Problems of Sex'*. Berkeley, University of California Press. Pages 3-29.

Murphy, Michelle. *Seizing the means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. Introduction and Ch4. Duke University Press.

**(11/13)** “assisted” reproduction and the meaning(s) of freedom

Hovav, April. 2019. "Producing Moral Palatability in the Mexican Surrogacy Market." *Gender & Society* 33:273-95.

Bell, Ann. 2009. “It's Way Out of My League: Low-Income Women's Experiences of Medicalized Infertility.” *Gender and Society* 23: 688-709.

**\*\*paper drafts due**

**(11/20) presentations**

**(11/27) presentations**

**(12/4) RRR week (no class)**

**(12/11) final paper due**