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Course description

In this course, students will develop an understanding of the impact of policies and the provision of services on the health disparities in reproductive health care. Within a framework of reproductive justice, students will examine the background and development of family planning, prenatal care, HIV/AIDS and abortion services in the United States as they relate to gender roles, attitudes about sexuality, institutional racism and health care service delivery. Students will develop analytical skills as well as the latest techniques for health education as they examine the most challenging issues and current research in the field of reproductive health.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Define healthy sexuality and describe its relationship to reproductive health care
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the critical issues related to reproductive health care in the United States
3. Exhibit health education skills associated with reproductive health care
4. Describe the impact of U.S. public policies on the provision of reproductive health care

PRIMARY READINGS


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Required reading prior to class
2. Regular attendance and class participation
3. **Term paper:** Each student will be asked to submit a brief description of the proposed topic for the final paper no later than the class on October 1. The final paper topic should deal with a pressing issue/problem/question or controversy in the field of reproductive health. This description should include:
   • the problem statement,
what makes this an important issue in women’s health,
what are the controversial aspects and the different perspectives on the issue, and
what are some resources for research on the different positions on this issue.

Potential sources of information, i.e. internet sites, books, journal articles

The final paper should include:

1) the significance of the issue/problem/question,
2) the background information,
3) a brief narrative about what is known about the issue/problem/question, and the different perspectives on the issue,
4) an analysis of the issue from the evidence presented.

Only one person can choose a specific problem or question. If more than one person chooses a topic, you may be asked to find another one. The paper should be well researched, but not more than 10 pages in length, not including the bibliography. The paper is due no later than December 3. In addition, you will be asked to make a 5 to 10 minute presentation on the major findings in your paper in one of the last classes in the semester.

4. **Class Presentation:** Students are expected to present a summary of their paper within 7-10 minutes (depending on class size) on December 10. The presentation should briefly state the topic, what is controversial about the topic, a discussion and conclusion. It is suggested that students practice their presentation before class to be certain of conforming to the time constraints. The presentation shouldn’t be read, however students can and should use overheads to stress the main points.

5. **Journal/Newspaper Article(s):** In addition to the assigned reading, each student is expected to find one journal article taken from one of the journals suggested below or a series of newspaper articles on a class topic and bring a short (one page) typed discussion of the content. These articles should identify current research related to the class topic. The student should be prepared to discuss the article and its relevance to the readings for the class.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Class Participation: 25%
Class participation is very important. Students who have not done the readings and participated actively in class will be graded accordingly. The instructor must be informed if a student is going to miss a class.

Journal/newspaper article(s): 25%

Paper: 30%

Presentation: 20%
COURSE OUTLINE

I. September 10: Introduction to Course: Overview and Definitions

II. September 17: Poverty, Gender and Reproductive Health
   Readings:
   - Solinger, Chs. 1 and 6

III. September 24: Human Sexuality
   Readings:
   - Chapter 1: The language of sex pp.11-18 and Chapter 2: The invention of sexuality pp.19-44.

IV. October 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health Over the Life cycle
   Readings:
   - Geronimus, A. Teenage childbearing and personal responsibility

V. October 15: Unintended Pregnancy
   Reading:

VI. October 22: Interviewing and Counseling – Basic Principles and Techniques
Reading:
Garrity JM, Castle MA. *A Physician’s guide to patient-centered care: Providing support to women during first-trimester abortion procedures*. Planned Parenthood of New York City. 1996

VII. October 29: Family Planning – Background and Politics
Readings:
http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/fulfill.html

VIII. November 5: Family Planning – Contraceptive Methods
Reading:
http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3429402./html

IX. November 12: Abortion – Background and Politics
Readings:
Solinger, Ch. 2

X. November 19: Abortion – Options
Readings:
XI. November 21: Pregnancy and childbirth
Readings:
The Boston Women’s Health Book Collective Childbearing in Our bodies, our selves. pp.417-525.

XII. November 26: Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS
Readings:

XIII December 3: Violence and Reproductive Health
Readings:

XIV December 10: Issues in Reproductive Health
Discussion of paper topics
New York University

PERSPECTIVES ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

Professor: Dr. Vicki Breitbart

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Chavkin W, Breitbart V. Substance abuse and maternity: The U.S. as case study. *Addiction* 1997; 92(2)


Garrity J, Castle M. *A physician’s guide to patient-centered counseling: providing support to women during first-trimester abortion procedures*. New York: Planned Parenthood of New York City; 1996


Meston CM, Buss DM. *Why humans have sex.* *Arch Sex Behav* (2007) 36:477-507


Suggested Journals include: