

LAS4935/6938: Reproduction and Reproductive Justice in the Americas
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Office hours: TBD

Spring 2025
Mondays, 9:35-12:35
TBD

Course Description: In this seminar, we will think broadly about the history of reproduction and movements for reproductive justice in the Americas, examining foundational theoretical texts by feminists in the US and Latin America as well as anthropological and historical articles and monographs. Reaching back to the nineteenth century, we will explore the strategies families and women, including enslaved women, have deployed to carve out reproductive agency for themselves across the region. In the capacious spirit of the reproductive justice (RJ) framework, we will examine efforts to control fertility and terminate unwanted pregnancies, as well as campaigns to end sterilization abuse and advocate for better conditions for parenting. By reading texts on both individual women's reproductive strategies and analyses of social movements making claims for reproductive rights, students will gain an understanding of the political role that sexual discipline, eugenics, reproduction, population control, and childrearing have played in empire, slavery, and nation-building projects. We will also consider the historical forces that have structured the adoption and surrogacy markets, as well as thinking critically about the importance of reproductive justice for queer and incarcerated people. Finally, we will look to the long history of abortion rights activism to examine the recent decriminalization of abortion in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, while seeking to understand the illegality of the procedure in Brazil, El Salvador, and, as of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, a number of US states. Primary sources for this course include foundational theory and praxis texts by the founders of RJ, activist periodicals from the 1970s and '80s, poetry, visual art, and films, in addition to secondary-source historical, sociological, and anthropological texts.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Gain an understanding of the underlying theory and praxis of movements for reproductive justice in the Americas
- Learn how reproduction and reproductive control have been recruited at the service of projects of slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism
- Learn how women from the broader Americas have attempted to secure reproductive autonomy for themselves and their communities
- Understand the dynamics surrounding abortion legislation in the US and Latin America
- Develop varied research skills with the ability to critically analyze a variety of different mediums, both scholarly and cultural
- Develop and refine writing skills through the execution of three written assignments

Recommended Texts:

- *Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundations, Theory, Practice, Critique*, edited by Loretta J. Ross, Lynn Roberts, Erika Derkas, Whitney Peoples, and Pamela Bridgewater Toure (Feminist Press, 2017)

Assignments:

Grade Breakdown:

Attendance and participation: 20%

Weekly Comment: 20%

First paper (prompt, 5-7 pages): 15%

Second paper (prompt OR film review or analysis of cultural production, 5-7 pages): 15%

Final Paper proposal and bibliography: 10%

Final Paper (10-12 pages): 20%

Note: This course meets the UF 6000 word writing requirement

Each week, students will submit a brief comment or question (one paragraph maximum) that relates to the weekly readings. The comment, which should cover all readings assigned, will be posted to a collective message board in order to facilitate classroom discussion. Comments should be posted by 10am each Tuesday.

Over the course of the semester, students will be expected to submit three writing assignments. The first will be due after Week 4 and will draw on foundational RJ theory to answer one of two prompts provided by the instructor. This assignment will pertain to historical questions of reproduction and reproductive autonomy. The second assignment is more flexible and can either respond to a prompt or review a film or another work of cultural production (short stories, poetry, visual art, etc.), drawing on RJ theory and critique. The final paper will be an original research project that focuses on any aspect of the movement for reproductive justice in the Americas, but must involve analysis of primary sources and historical argumentation. The nature of these sources can be determined by the student. We will have an opportunity to workshop paper proposals, bibliographies, and paper drafts before the final assignment is due.

Attendance and participation in discussion: Please come to class having read the assigned texts and ready to participate in group discussions. If you are unable to read a particular text in a comprehensive manner, try to at least distill its main arguments. If helpful to you, prepare a list of questions in advance of each class so that our discussion will proceed dynamically. I encourage lively, rigorous debate but I ask that you engage with your peers and with me in a respectful manner. We will determine class norms collaboratively during our first meeting. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

ChatGPT and Plagiarism Policy:

The use of ChatGPT and other AI software is not appropriate for written contributions to this course. These assignments are meant to foster creative, critical, and synthetic thinking through evaluation and integration of course materials, personal experiences, discussion, independent research, and reflection. TURN IT IN and AI detection programs will be used to confirm that written work is original.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A	100 pts to	93 pts
A-	<93 pts to	90 pts
B+	<90 pts to	87 pts

B	<87 pts to	83 pts
B-	<83 pts to	80 pts
C+	<80 pts to	77 pts
C	<77 pts to	73 pts
C-	<73 pts to	70 pts
D+	<70 pts to	67 pts
D	<67 pts to	63 pts
D-	<63 pts to	60 pts
F	<60 pts to	0 pts

Course Schedule:

January 13, Week 1: Course Introduction

January 20: NO CLASS

January 27, Week 2: Theories of Reproductive Justice

- Loretta Ross, ed., *Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundation, Theory, Practice, Critique*, Introduction, “Beyond Pro-Choice versus Pro-Life: Women of Color and Reproductive Justice,” and “Conceptualizing Reproductive Justice Theory: A Manifesto for Activism,” p. 11-31; 170-232
- Laura Briggs, “Reproductive Justice: Born Transnational,” *Gender, Work, & Organization*, p. 1-7
- Lynn M. Morgan and Elizabeth F.S. Roberts, “Reproductive Governance in Latin America,” *Anthropology & Medicine*, p. 241-254

February 3, Week 3: The Origins of Reproductive Justice in the US

- Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2, p. 1-83
- Selected issues of *The Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse News* (1979, 1980)
- Watch *The Janes*, dir. by Tia Lessin and Emma Pildes

February 10, Week 4: Reproduction Under Slavery and in its Aftermath

- Camillia Cowling, *Conceiving Freedom: Women of Color, Gender, and the Abolition of Slavery in Havana and Rio de Janeiro*, Introduction, Chapters Three and Eight, p. 1-20, 71-96, 198-213
- Cassia Roth, “From Free Womb to Criminalized Woman: Fertility Control in Brazilian slavery and freedom,” *Slavery & Abolition*, p. 269-286
- Choose a primary source to read and analyze from Reproductive Histories digital archive hosted by UNH OR the History of Reproductive Health Database hosted by Yale:
<https://sites.usnh.edu/hoslac/advanced-topic-reproductive-histories/>
<https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=1125000&p=8205868>

February 17, Week 5: Imperialism, Nationalism, and Eugenics

- **FIRST PAPER DUE**

- Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and US Imperialism in Puerto Rico*, Introduction, Chapters Four and Five, p. 1-20, 109-161 (Optional: Chapter Three)
- Nancy Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*, Introduction, p. 1-20
- Alexandra Minna Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health: Race, Immigration, and Reproductive Control in Modern California," *American Journal of Public Health*, p. 1128-38

February 24, Week 6: Militant Motherhood and Maternalist Movements

- Susan Francheschet, Jennifer M. Piscopo, Gwynn Thomas, "Supermadres, Maternal Legacies and Women's Political Participation in Contemporary Latin America," *Journal of Latin American Studies*; p. 1-32
- Meghan Gibbons, "Political Motherhood in the United States and Argentina," in *Mothers Who Deliver: Feminist Interventions in Public and Interpersonal Discourse*, p. 253-78
- Tracy Crowe Morey and Cristina Santos, "Las Madres Guerreras: Testimonial Writing on Militant Motherhood in Latin America" in *Motherhood and War*, p. 61-83

March 3, Week 7: Abortion and Family Planning in the Americas 1: Religion, Medicine, and the Law

- Jane Marcus-Delgado, *The politics of abortion in Latin America: public debates, private lives*, Chapters One and Five; p. 1-26, 85-101
- Elise Andaya, *Conceiving Cuba: Reproduction, Women, and the State in Post-Soviet Cuba*, Introduction and Chapter Four, p. 1-23, 68-92

March 10, Week 8: Abortion and Family Planning in the Americas 2: Struggles for Reproductive Rights

- Mala Htun, *Sex and the State*, Chapter Six, p. 142-171 (Recommended: Skim Chapter One)
- Jane Marcus Delgado, *The Politics of Abortion in Latin America*, Chapter Four; p. 65-84
- Alba Ruibal, "Using constitutional courts to advance abortion rights in Latin America," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, p. 579-599

March 15-22: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

March 24, Week 9: Black and Indigenous Feminisms and Campaigns to Resist Forced Sterilization

- **SECOND PAPER DUE**
- Rafael de la Dehesa, "Social Medicine, feminism, and the politics of population: From transnational knowledge networks to national social movements in Brazil and Mexico," *Global Public Health*, p. 803-816
- Sônia Beatriz dos Santos, "Controlling black women's reproductive health rights: An impetus to black women's collective organizing," *Cultural Dynamics*, p. 13-30
- Ernesto Vasquez Del Aguila, "Precarious Lives: Forced sterilization and the struggle for reproductive justice in Peru," *Global Public Health*; p. 100-114

March 31, Week 10: Adoption in the Americas: Geopolitics, Race, and Family

- **FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**
- Kimberly McKee, "Adoption as a Reproductive Justice Issue," *Adoption & Culture*, p. 74-93
- Anne Collinson, "The Littlest Immigrants: Cross-Border Adoption in the Americas, Policy, and Women's History," *Journal of Women's History*, p. 132-141

- Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* Introduction; p. 1-24
- Podcast: "Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl" Radiolab Presents: More Perfect

April 7, Week 11: Surrogacy in the Americas: Geopolitics, Queerness, Disability, and Labor

- Sophie Lewis, *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family*, Chapter One (Recommended: Skim the rest of the book)
- Carolin Schurr and Elisabeth Miltz, "The affective economy of transnational surrogacy," *Environment and Planning*, p. 1626-1645
- Lucía Franco, "Colombia's surrogacy market: Buying a baby for \$4,000," *El País*: <https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-01-04/colombias-surrogacy-market-buying-a-baby-for-4000.html>

April 14: Week 12: Reproduction Under the Carceral State

- Rachel Roth, "'She Doesn't Deserve to Be Treated Like This': Prisons as Sites of Reproductive Injustice" in *Radical Reproductive Justice*, p. 285-301
- Carolyn Sufrin, "Making Mothers in Jail: Carceral Reproduction of Normative Motherhood," *Reproductive BioMedicine and Society Online*, p. 55-65
- Robert Pear, "Do Migrant Teenagers Have Abortion Rights? Two Volatile Issues Collide in Court," *The New York Times*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/29/us/politics/court-abortion-immigrants.html>
- Melissa Gira Grant, "ICE Is the New Face of America's Legacy of Forced Sterilization," *The New Republic*: <https://newrepublic.com/article/159390/immigration-detention-hysterectomy-forced-sterilization>

April 21, Week 13: Contemporary Struggles for Reproductive Autonomy

- Omar Encarnación, "Latin America's Abortion Rights Breakthrough," *Journal of Democracy*, p. 89-103
- Amy Littlefield, "How Does Reproductive Justice Win?" *The New Republic*: <https://newrepublic.com/article/167399/how-does-reproductive-justice-sex-education-universal-childcare-food-security-win>
- Elyse Ona Singer, *Lanful Sins: Abortion Rights and Reproductive Governance in Mexico*, Introduction, p. 1-31
- Optional: Watch *Clandestinas*, by Renata Correa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXuKe0W3ZOU&t=304s>)

FINAL PAPER DUE DATE TBD