

WGS 1421 Medical Management of the Female Body

Wednesdays, 12:45 – 2:45 pm, Sever Hall 212

Prof. Sarah Richardson

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Boylston Hall G-34

Office hours: TBA, in-person and zoom options, via online sign-up

Course overview

This upper-level seminar examines how Western medical knowledge, practices, and institutions define female health and normality and manage diseased and gender-variant female bodies. We will explore how medicine conceives of the female body as a medical problem or mystery and consider how race, class, and sexuality inflect medical conceptions of the female body. Topics include "female maladies," medicalization of childbirth and the pregnant body, medical management of transgender and intersex bodies, medical conceptions of ideal body weight and fitness, gender norms and cosmetic surgery, women and disability, and pharmaceutical marketing toward women. Limited enrollment; Instructor's permission and application required.

Course readings

All readings will be posted on the course website in PDF form or as web links. Please bring them to class along with your reading notes.

Course requirements

20%	Attendance and participation: Vigorous, attentive, and constructive participation in class discussion and respectful listening; demonstration of deep reading and thoughtful, engaged approach to course readings and concepts; 100% attendance expected except for illness; more than 2 absences for any reason, including illness, may result in being dropped from the class.
20%	In-class presentation: 15-minute PowerPoint presentation outlining key concepts from the day's readings, framing discussion questions, and effectively using images, multimedia, and textual analysis. See guidelines. Advance consultation with the professor is required.
20%	Discussion board postings: Weekly 1-page (500 word) reading response posting on the course discussion board by Sunday at 12 midnight before each class (must meet guidelines provided in handout for length and content), and active contribution to the discussion board by responding to others. You may skip 1 posting. On the day of your presentation, please post your PowerPoint as your reading response.
40%	Research paper of 15 pages: 1-page thought piece due Oct. 1 ; 4-page paper proposal due Oct. 22 ; paper draft of at least 10 pages due Nov. 23 for peer review; final paper due Dec. 10 . Meeting with the professor is required.

Class schedule

Date	Topic
Aug. 27	<p>Welcome, Introductions, and Course Overview Friday, Aug. 27, 12 pm – 1 pm ET https://harvard.zoom.us/j/9858854878 <i>Session will be recorded for those who cannot attend.</i></p> <p>Inhorn, "Defining Women's Health: A Dozen Messages from More than 150 Ethnographies" Epstein, "The Rise of Resistance: Framing the Critique of the Standard Human"</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> http://awomanisnotapreexistingcondition.com/ http://www.nwhn.org</p>
Sept. 8	<p>Women's Maladies Today and Yesterday Poovey, "'Scenes of an Indelicate Character': The Medical 'Treatment' of Victorian Women" Ware, "Suffering and the Social Construction of Illness: The Delegation of Illness Experience in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome" Zita, "The Premenstrual Syndrome: 'Dis-easing' the Female Cycle" Brumberg, "Anorexia Nervosa in the 1980s"</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i> Foucault, Michel. Selections from <i>Discipline and Punish</i>. In <i>The Foucault Reader</i>. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 170-213. <i>Focus on "The Means of Correct Training" and "Panopticism," pp. 188-213</i> Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1899) Jordanova, "Medical Images of the Female Body" Reissman, "Women and Medicalization: A New Perspective" Green, "Gendering the History of Women's Healthcare" Showalter, "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome" Wailoo, "'Chlorosis' Remembered: Disease and the Moral Management of American Women" Hoffman and Tarziani, "The Girl Who Cried Pain: A Bias Against Women in the Treatment of Pain"</p>
Sept. 15	<p>Childbirth and Mothering Martin, "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Birth" Jordan, "The Achievement of Authoritative Knowledge in an American Hospital Birth" Litt, "Taking Science to the Household: Scientific Motherhood in Women's Lives"</p>

	<p>Blum, "From Sacred to Disembodied Motherhood: Breastfeeding with the Experts and the State"</p> <p>Recommended: Lyerly et al, "Risk and the Pregnant Body" Balsamo, "Public Pregnancies and Cultural Narratives of Surveillance" Roberts, "Making Reproduction a Crime" Roberts, "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?" Jordan, "Birthing Systems and Change" Handwerker, "Medical Risk: Implicating Poor Pregnant Women" Stabile, "Shooting the Mother: Fetal Photography and the Politics of Disappearance" Fox and Worts, "Revisiting the Critique of Medicalized Childbirth" Richie, "The Social Construction of the 'Immoral' Black Mother" Blum, "'Mother to Mother' in La Leche League" Kukla, "Ethics and Ideology in Breastfeeding Advocacy Campaigns"</p>
Sept. 22	<p>Gender and Genitals: Medical Management of Intersex Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants" Chase, "Surgical Progress Is Not the Answer to Intersexuality" Dreger et al., "Changing the Nomenclature/Taxonomy for Intersex: A Scientific and Clinical Rationale" Levy, "Either/Or: Sports, sex, and the case of Caster Semenya" Hillman, "Special," "Opinion," and "Condition"</p> <p>Recommended: Dreger, "A History of Intersex: From the Age of Gonads to the Age of Consent" Chase, "Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism" Wilson and Reiner, "Management of Intersex: A Shifting Paradigm"</p>
Sept. 29	<p>Abortion, Contraception, and Reproductive Health Kline, "Learning from the Uterus Out: Abortion and Women's Health Activism in Chicago" Hartouni, "Reproductive Discourse in the 1980s" Freedman et al., "Obstacles to the Integration of Abortion into Obstetrics and Gynecology Practice" May, Selection from <i>America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation</i> Roberts, "The Dark Side of Birth Control" Wynn and Trussell, "The Social Life of Emergency Contraception in the United States: Disciplining Pharmaceutical Use, Disciplining Sexuality, and Constructing Zygotic Bodies"</p>

	<p>Recommended: Guttmacher Institute, "Roe at 40: New Infographics Illustrate Key Facts about Abortion in the United States." Advocates for Youth, 1 in 3 website U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Use of Contraception in the United States: 1982–2008 Guttmacher Institute, Contraception fact sheet Gerber. The Economics of Abortion Access in the U.S. Ross, "African-American Women and Abortion, 1800-1970" Davis, "Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights" Jesudason & Epstein, "Disability and Justice in Abortion Debates" Haraway, "Fetus: Virtual Speculum in the New World Order" Takeshita, "The IUD as Technoscientific Biopower" Greenhalgh, "Science, Modernity and the Making of China's One-Child Policy"</p>
Oct. 1	<p>Thought piece due by 12 midnight to the Canvas Dropbox</p>
Oct. 6	<p>Women and Desire: Medical Management of Female Sexuality Lunbeck, "Hysteria: The Revolt of the 'Good Girl' and 'Women as Hypersexual'" Maines, "Inviting the Juices Downward" Roberts, "Early puberty, 'sexualization' and feminism" Bell, "Genital Cutting and Western Discourses on Sexuality" Fishman, "Manufacturing Desire: The Commodification of Female Sexual Dysfunction"</p> <p>Recommended: Leclerc-Madlala, "Virginity Testing: Managing Sexuality in a Maturing HIV/AIDS Epidemic" Allen, "'Restless Vagina Syndrome': Big Pharma's Newest Fake Disease" Hartley, "The 'Pinking' of Viagra Culture: Drug Industry Efforts to Create and Repackage Sex Drugs for Women" Legato, "Sexual Dysfunction" Tuana, "Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance" "HPV Vaccine: Should it be mandatory for school girls?" <i>CQ Quarterly</i> Tiefer, "The Medicalization of Impotence: Normalizing Phallogentrism" "The Kindest Cut: In Colorado, a surgeon helps restore feeling--and so much more--to victims of female genital mutilation," <i>Newsweek</i></p>
Oct. 13	<p>Menstruation and Menopause Martin, "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause" Mamo and Fosket, "Scripting the Body: Pharmaceuticals and the (Re)Making of Menstruation" Ferguson and Parry, "Rewriting Menopause: Challenging the Medical Paradigm to Reflect Menopausal Women's Experiences" "Menopause, as Brought to You by Big Pharma," <i>New York Times</i></p>

	<p>Recommended:</p> <p>Krieger et al., "Hormone replacement therapy, cancer, controversies & women's health: historical, epidemiological, biological, clinical and advocacy perspectives"</p> <p>Dan, "What have we learned? An Historical View of the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research"</p> <p>Loshny, "From Birth Control to Menstrual Control: The Launch of the Extended Oral Contraceptive, <i>Seasonale</i>"</p> <p>Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate" (1986)</p> <p>Figert, "The Three Faces of PMS: The Professional, Gendered, and Scientific Structuring of a Psychiatric Disorder"</p> <p>Martin, "Premenstrual Syndrome, Work Discipline, and Anger"</p> <p>Tavris, "Misdiagnosing the Body: Premenstrual Syndrome, Postmenstrual Syndrome, and Other Normal 'Diseases'"</p> <p>Lock, "Anomalous Ageing: Managing the Postmenopausal Body"</p> <p>Winterich, "Sex, Menopause, and Culture: Sexual Orientation and the Meaning of Menopause for Women's Sex Lives"</p> <p>Woods, "Menopause: Models, Medicine, and Midlife"</p> <p>Hillyer, "The Embodiment of Old Women: Silences"</p>
Oct. 20	<p>Breast Cancer: Illness Narratives and Pink Ribbons</p> <p>Young, "Breasted Experience"</p> <p>Lorde, "Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis"</p> <p>Ehrenreich, "Welcome to Cancerland"</p> <p>Jain, "Cancer Butch"</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>Finally A Women's Movement Men Can Get Behind: http://contexts.org/socimages/2009/12/09/finally-a-womens-movement-men-can-get-behind/</p> <p>Sered and Tabory, "'You are a Number, Not a Human Being'"</p> <p>Yadlon, "Skinny Women and Good Mothers: The Rhetoric of Risk, Control, and Culpability in the Production of Knowledge about Breast Cancer"</p> <p>Aronowitz, "Do Not Delay: Breast Cancer and Time, 1900-1970"</p> <p>Solomon, "The Politics of Breast Cancer"</p> <p>http://www.bcaction.org http://www.mamm.com/</p>
Oct. 22	<p>Paper proposal and annotated bibliography due by 12 midnight to your Canvas Dropbox</p>
Oct. 27	<p>Women and Disability</p> <p>Duffy, "Making Choices" (poems)</p> <p>Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory"</p> <p>Wilkerson, "Disability, Sex Radicalism, and Political Agency"</p>

	<p>Thomas, "Medicine, Gender, and Disability: Disabled Women's Health Care Encounters" Kafer, Selections from <i>Feminist, Queer, Crip</i></p> <p>Recommended: Thomas, "The Baby and the Bath Water: Disabled Women and Motherhood in Social Context" http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch/ Shakespeare, Gillespie-Sells, and Davies, "Barriers to Being Sexual" Papers from Queer Disability Conference at SFSU http://www.disabilityhistory.org/dwa/queer/proceedings.html</p>
Nov. 3	<p>Women, Depression, and Mental Illness Slijkhuis and Oosterhuis, "'Paralysed with fears and worries': neurasthenia as a gender-specific disease of civilization" Tavis, "Misdiagnosing the Mind" Metzl, "The Gendered Psychodynamics of Pharmaceutical Advertising, 1964-97" Blum, "Gender in the Prozac Nation: Popular Discourse and Productive Femininity"</p> <p>Recommended: Cauchon-Wirth, "A Dangerous Symbolic Mobility: Narratives of Borderline Personality Disorder" Wilson 2006, "The Work of Antidepressants: Preliminary Notes on How to Build an Alliance Between Feminism and Psychopharmacology" "Treating Depression: Is effective treatment available?" <i>CQ Researcher</i></p>
Nov. 10	<p>Fitness and Fatness McKinley, "Ideal Weight/Ideal Women: Society Constructs the Female" Ernsberger, "Does Social Class Explain the Connection Between Weight and Health?" Cogan, "Re-evaluating the Weight-Centered Approach toward Health" Boero, "Fat Kids, Working Moms, and the 'Epidemic of Obesity': Race, Class, and Mother Blame" Kirkland, "The Environmental Account of Obesity: A Case for Feminist Skepticism"</p> <p>Recommended: Bell and McNaughton, "Feminism and the Invisible Fat Man" Sobal, "The Medicalization and Demedicalization of Obesity" Royce, "The Shape of Abuse: Fat Oppression as a Form of Violence Against Women" Giovannelli and Ostertag, "Controlling the Body: Media Representations, Body Size, and Self-Discipline" Gaesser, "Is 'Permanent Weight Loss' an Oxymoron?"</p>

	<p>"The surprising reason why being overweight isn't healthy" <i>CNN.com</i> 2010 To Cure a Fat Child is Not a Simple Matter: http://contexts.org/socimages/2010/01/14/to-cure-a-fat-child-is-not-a-simple-matter-1967-psa/ Solovay and Rothblum, "No Fear of Fat" Germov and Williams, "Dieting Women: Self-Surveillance and the Body Panopticon" Heyes, "Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers"</p>
Nov. 23	Paper draft due for peer review by midnight to your Canvas Dropbox
Dec. 1	<p>Transgender & Nonbinary Bodies Hausman, "Demanding Subjectivity: Transsexualism, Medicine, and the Technologies of Gender" Raymond, "Therapy as a Way of Life: Medical Values versus Social Change" (1994) Serano, "Coming to Terms with Transgenderism and Transsexuality," "Before and After: Class and Body Transformations," and "Deconstructive Surgery" Dreger, "Gender Identity Disorder in Childhood: Inconclusive Advice to Parents"</p> <p>Recommended: Garber, "Spare Parts: The Surgical Construction of Gender" Halberstam, "Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum" Roen, "Either/Or and Both/Neither: Discursive Tensions in Transgender Politics" Lane, "Trans as Bodily Becoming: Rethinking the Biological as Diversity, not Dichotomy" Scott-Dixon, "Public Health, Private Parts: A Feminist Public-Health Approach to Trans Issues" http://srlp.org http://www.glaad.org</p>
Dec. 3 TBA	Peer review/Paper workshoping session
Dec. 10	Final paper due to professor by midnight due by 12 midnight to your Canvas Dropbox

Course guidelines

Course website:

The course website is a primary tool for this course and will contain the discussion forum and all of the required readings. Please check the site frequently.

Class announcements:

Announcements will be posted on the course website. Special announcements will be sent to your Harvard email account. You are responsible for checking the course website and your Harvard email regularly.

Class attendance:

This is a small discussion-based course that requires your on-time attendance and full participation. More than two absences or late arrivals may lead to dismissal from the course.

Office hours:

I invite you to visit me regularly in office hours during the semester. I will try to have a mix of outdoor in-person office hours and Zoom office hours. You can sign up for office hours online via Calendly. If you are unable to attend the scheduled office hours, please email me to set up a time to meet.

Email:

Please keep email to a minimum and keep your emails brief and professional. Visit me in office hours if you have detailed questions about the assignments or readings. Do not rely on email for last minute questions.

Technology policy:

The class will set a technology policy in our opening meeting. In the past, we have used the following policy: Phones must be turned off and put away. If a laptop or similar technology will benefit you in the classroom and you can use it without being disruptive, you are welcome to use it. Please use your judgment. Consider the positives and negatives for you and your learning style. Attend carefully to your participation in the class discussion. I recommend disconnecting your wifi. Please disable any sounds. The class expects the professor to step in if technology use becomes disruptive.

Mask and refreshment breaks:

We will take a 10-minute mask, bathroom, and refreshment break at the midway point of our seminar.

Statement on disabilities:

If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester regarding reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course.

Statement on academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty) is prohibited and will lead to dismissal from the course and referral to Harvard disciplinary procedures.

Statement on collaboration:

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are

working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Guidelines for Course Requirements

Participation

This is a student-centered seminar in which participation and intensive discussion is essential. Class participation is a central element of this course and will frame my evaluation of your academic performance.

Requirements:

- Consistent on-time attendance
- Completion of assignments by due date – 1 no-questions asked extension for any reason is OK
- Print out and bring course readings and notes to class and show evidence of deep reading, preparation, and critical thinking
- Participate vigorously, constructively, and attentively in class discussion
- Generous and invested contributions to course discussion board
- Meeting with professor in office hours

Class Presentation

Each class will feature 1-2 student presentations. The goal of these presentations is to enrich the class discussion with your perspectives and expertise, provide an opportunity to learn effective use of PowerPoint technology, sharpen your oral presentation skills, and improve your comprehension of the material by teaching it to others.

Sign-ups will open on Friday, August 27, after the online course orientation session. In consultation with the professor, you will design a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation outlining key concepts for the day's topic and framing discussion questions. Your presentation should effectively use images, multimedia, and textual analysis. *Requires advance meeting with professor – please plan ahead.*

Requirements:

- Set up meeting with professor - meet at least 1 week in advance
- Careful reading of the materials
- Email your final PowerPoint file to the professor by 12 pm the day of your presentation and upload it to the course discussion board. Note: the professor can review and comment on a draft of your presentation if it is sent at least 48 hours in advance.

Presentation elements:

- Interest the audience in the topic and share what you found interesting, surprising, new, or provocative

- Briefly outline the key concepts from the day's readings
- Define any key terms
- Briefly outline controversies and debates
- Relate to themes and concepts from the course as a whole
- **IMPORTANT:** Use images, multimedia, and textual analysis of quotations from the reading to facilitate understanding (make sure to include citations)
- Close with one important question that you hope the class will engage
- Maximum of 15 minutes (~10 slides)

Evaluation of your presentation will be based on the following elements:

- *Preparation:* Were you prepared? Is it obvious that you read closely and tried to get help if you needed it?
- *Clarity:* Was your presentation clear? Did you attempt to simplify complex concepts? Was your presentation organized and well thought-out?
- *Content:* Did you address all of the items above? You don't necessarily have to include all of them, but you should try to follow the basic outline.
- *Discussion:* Did your presentation facilitate the discussion? How did you answer questions from the professor and the class?
- *Oral communication and presentation style:* Did you speak loud enough? Slow enough? Clear enough? Did you have good eye contact with your audience? Were you responsive to the audience? Was your presentation engaging and interesting?
- *Effective use of PowerPoint technology (IMPORTANT):* Did the visual presentation enhance and enliven your talk? Did you find novel and relevant images and multimedia?

Discussion board postings

Due: 12 midnight the Sunday before each class

Our class discussion board will permit the continuation of discussion outside of class and provide an opportunity for you to formulate questions and responses to the readings prior to class. These brief, *informal* written reading responses will also help you identify topics, themes, questions, and material for your final project.

Requirements:

- Post *at least* one item by 12 midnight on Sundays before each class
- Minimum of one type-written page or 500 words (or two 250-word posts)
- Posting must reference readings and evidence critical, original engagement with the texts
- You may skip 1 post with no consequences for your grade, and you do not need to post on the day of your presentation
- Be active in the discussion forum and respond to others' posts. These additional postings need not conform to length/content requirements of the required posts.

Research paper

Due: 1-page thought piece due **Oct. 1**; 4-page paper proposal due **Oct. 22**; paper draft of at least 10 pages due **Nov. 23** for peer review; final paper due **Dec. 10**

The objective of the final paper is to allow you to pursue mastery and in-depth research in an area of special interest to you. The paper should engage your passion as well as your critical and creative faculties, and it should represent in conception and final product the interdisciplinary sources, methods, and debates at the heart of this course.

To support the development of your research paper topic, provide regular feedback, and encourage pro-active writing, I have designed a series of small assignments that will serve as milestones along the way. The *thought piece* is a one-page single-spaced reflection on the topics, themes, and questions that are emerging for you from our class discussions. The thought piece should hone in on a subset of topics and questions that you might explore in your research paper. Next, you will write a 4-page (double spaced) *proposal* laying out your question, the importance of this question to you, the sources and methods you will use, the feasibility of the project in the time allotted, and a brief outline or project plan. Provide a separate *annotated bibliography*, properly formatted, with at least 8 valid academic sources (these may be from our course materials). Under each citation, write a 1-2 sentence summary of the thesis of the source and its relevance to your project. Finally, there will be a paper exchange in the final week of class where you will receive *peer feedback* from 1-2 of your classmates, and provide feedback to 1-2 classmates in turn.

The professor will provide feedback along the way. You may be asked to revise certain aspects of your plan based on this feedback. Your final paper should be a polished realization of your proposal. The final version is due to the professor on Dec. 10 at midnight in the Canvas Dropbox.

Writing guidelines:

- Advance an original argument or analysis using only your own ideas
- State your thesis clearly
- Use specific examples, quotations, and details to support your argument
- Clean grammar and spelling

Formatting guidelines:

- 15 pages of main text and bibliography with minimum of 8 sources
- MS Word .doc format
- References, footnotes, and images are not included in the page count and should be placed at the end of the document
- Provide complete citations in a consistent, recognized academic citation style of your choice
- Double-spaced
- 12 pt Times New Roman font
- 1 inch margins
- Name and page number on the upper right header of each page