



(Poor People's Campaign march, NWRO delegation, Washington DC, 1968)

HIST 200: Global Reproductive Politics

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Professor: Emily Callaci

ejcallaci@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30, 5125 Humanities or on Zoom

Class Time: Monday 1:20-3:15

Class Location: HUMANITIES 2261

Course credits: 3

Designation: Honors Optional

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What are reproductive politics? Why is “reproduction” political to begin with? What is the difference between reproductive rights and reproductive justice, and why is this distinction important? How do reproductive technologies, like IUDs and birth control pills, become tools of personal freedom in some contexts and tools of coercion in other contexts? Why is carework—the most essential labor in any society—so poorly remunerated compared with other kinds of work? In this FIG, we will explore reproductive politics from a global perspective. Drawing on case studies from around the world, we will explore how fertility, reproduction, child-rearing and various forms of carework have held different and changing meanings across cultures and times, and the various contexts in which reproduction has been subject to political struggle. We will explore how reproduction been shaped by global historical processes, including the dynamics of gender, class, race, and geopolitics. While cultivating a global understanding of the history of reproduction, this FIG will also give students a chance to place their own lives, and our own society, within this global history.

As with all FIG courses, this one is linked with two other courses: Gender and Women's Studies 103: Gender, Women, Bodies and Health and Sociology 134: Sociology of Race and Ethnicity in the United States. Together, these three classes will help students think broadly about reproductive politics from the intimate vantage point of the body to the global vantage point of migration, poverty and environment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, all of us should be able to:

- Analyze contemporary struggles over reproductive politics by placing them within historical and global context. In other words, we will be able to articulate what is unique about the contemporary moment, and to identify the historical processes that have shaped it.
- Explain how reproduction is experienced differently by different people, as shaped by the dynamics of class, race, gender, sexuality and geography.
- Locate ourselves and our communities within the broader global history of reproductive politics. By identifying how we fit into this uneven global history, we deepen our sense of personal and social responsibility. (This aligns a key learning goal of the Wisconsin Idea).
- Apply the skills of historical research to any topic, in and beyond this class. These skills, which align with the goals of the History Major, include:
 - posing original research questions
 - analyzing primary sources
 - making evidence-based arguments
 - communicating research findings in a clear way

In addition to these learning goals, I invite students in this class to:

- Develop, discuss and improve study habits and routines appropriate to college-level study.
- Build a community and networks of support that you will be able to draw on throughout your time at UW Madison.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All students are required to obtain the following book:

Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump*, (University of California Press, 2018).

This book is available from various online vendors, such as <https://bookshop.org/> and <https://www.indiebound.org/>. All other course readings will be available on the Canvas site, which is here: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/314957>

COURSE FORMAT:

This course will meet as an in-person seminar. For the sake of everyone in the class, our priority is the health and safety of all seminar members. Therefore, if you are ill, please do not attend class. There is no penalty for missing class due to illness.

EVALUATION:

This semester, I am experimenting with a pedagogical practice known as “un-grading.” The idea is, where possible, to eliminate grades on individual assignments and instead foster an ongoing process of student self-assessment in dialogue with the instructor. If you are curious about some of the research on grades and “un-grading” as pedagogy, some of my favorite essays on the topic are by Dr. Jesse Stommel, which can be found [here on his website](#).

To be clear: I believe that all courses at UW Madison should be challenging and rigorous for students. I expect students in my courses to spend the required amount of focused time, free from distraction, to prepare for class. (In the case of this 3-credit class, that amounts to 135 hours over the semester, which averages out to around 7-8 hours per week outside of class meeting time). I expect students to complete all assignments and to be present and engaged in class. I also believe that courses should be opportunities for creativity, exploration, and for trying new ideas and skills.

In some instances, grades can be useful. I know from experience—both as a former student and as a professor—that at times, grades can provide information and can be a source of reassurance for some students, letting them know “where they stand.” However, for a seminar such as this one, where there is an opportunity for one-on-one interaction and more qualitative feedback, and in which the learning goals are more qualitative than quantitative, I find that grades can often get in the way of deeper learning. Here are my reasons for trying to find alternatives to conventional grading:

1. I believe that true life-long learning is driven by the internal motivation of students, rather than externally imposed criteria. Grades direct focus to the latter; I want this class to be an opportunity for students to re-center the former.
2. I believe that the best learning happens in a collaborative relationship between teacher and student. In my experience, grades are not the best way to foster this kind of collaboration, and can sometimes hinder it.

3. I believe that university classes should be a space for experimentation and creativity, which sometimes means going out on a limb or trying new skills and ideas. By contrast, I find that grades can stifle creativity, creating incentives for students to stay in their comfort zone, rather than taking intellectual risks.
4. I believe that one of the most important, lasting things we learn in college is *how* to learn. By de-centering grades, I hope to put more emphasis on the learning process, rather than just on the product.

In this class, we cannot do away with grades entirely, as we are still in an educational system that requires grades. You will receive a final grade for the course. My hope is that you will assign that grade yourself, with my support. I still maintain authority over final grades, and can overturn your self-assigned grade if the grade you assign to yourself is not consistent with the work you have done in the class. But based on my experiences (and based on what studies on un-grading show), I don't expect this to be an issue.

I believe that, in this course, students who put the time and work into this course can earn the grade they wish to attain. Within the UW Madison scheme, here is how I define grades:

A: the student has mastered the material, completed all assignments and has gone above and beyond the course requirements. The student has done exceptional, original work. The student has had a positive impact on the class as a whole, enhancing the learning of other students.

AB: the student has mastered the material, has completed all assignments and has met all learning goals. The student has been actively engaged in the course, and has had a positive impact on the course as a whole.

B: the student has mastered most of the material, has completed all assignments and has met most learning goals. The student has been actively engaged in the course.

BC: the student has understood some of the material, has completed all assignments, has met some learning goals and requirements, but may have some significant weak spots, or may not be as actively engaged.

C: the student has understood some of the material, has completed most assignments, and has met at least two learning goals.

D: the student has understood very little of the material, is missing several assignments and did not meet learning goals or requirements.

F: the student did not meet any requirements or goals of the class.

REQUIREMENTS:

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities, which include regularly scheduled meeting times during class and office hours, reading, writing, revising, conducting research, providing feedback to other students, and participating in self-assessment.

Below is a summary of the assignments. Assignments for this course come with an accompanying handout with more detailed instructions and learning objectives. You can find them on the course Canvas page. All written assignments can be turned in on Canvas.

Weekly response papers: 40%

- You will write 10 weekly response papers. Each paper will be roughly 2 double-spaced pages, which is about 500 words. Papers are due Sunday at 5pm. In order to allow for maximum flexibility, I am setting the official deadline as late as possible while still allowing me enough time to read your papers before class. I encourage you to turn in these papers earlier, by Friday afternoon, so that you can rest on the weekend.
- I will give a prompt for each paper. You are welcome—and encouraged—to go beyond what is asked in the prompt, but do make sure to answer the prompt.
- I will give each paper feedback that you can then use to improve your writing in subsequent papers.
- I will assign one of three scores: 0, 1 or 2. If you do not turn in a paper, I will assign your paper a 0. If you turn in a paper, but it does not adequately respond to the prompt, I will assign a 1. Papers that respond adequately to the prompt will receive a 2.

Participation in class: 20%

Participation consists of the following:

- You will post a discussion question each week. Learning to ask good questions takes a lot of time and thought. Your questions should be open-ended and meant to engage conversation, rather than “yes or no” questions, or questions that simply have a factual answer. In order to foster good conversations, questions should engage with the knowledge and material that we all have access to. A handout on canvas will elaborate on these and other criteria for good discussion questions.
- Students are required to attend class every week, unless they are ill.
- Students are required to read, listen to, or watch all assigned materials. They are required to take thorough notes on the assigned materials and bring them to class.

- Students are required to participate in class sessions. Participation may look different for different students. Participating is not just about how much you talk, but about engaging in a way that contributes to the course as a learning community. Sometimes, good participation can be about learning to hold back and let others speak. The best kinds of participation both express your individual insights and bring out the best in other students by asking questions, responding to what other students say, bringing new perspectives to bear, and showing respect for all students. It can also involve giving positive feedback to students who are helping your learning.

Oral history paper: 25%

You will conduct an oral history interview with a person of your choosing on the theme of reproduction and life history. You will then write a paper (6 pages, double spaced) based on your findings. This assignment has several components:

5%: Questions—you will submit 5 questions to be used as a starting point for the oral history interview.

10%: peer review—you will exchange a draft of your paper with a partner and you will provide feedback to each other.

10%: paper—you will turn in your final paper, along with the first draft and the feedback you received from your peer.

For this paper, as for the weekly response papers, I will assign simple score of 0, 1, or 2, as well as feedback that you can use to assess your learning and writing.

Midterm reflection/self-assessment: 5%

Halfway through the semester, you will compose a self-assessment, in the form of a letter to me, reflecting on where you have come, what you still would like to work on or accomplish by the end of the semester. You are also welcome to include any questions or concerns you have.

Final portfolio: 10%

The final portfolio is an opportunity to stand back and reflect on what you have accomplished over the course of the semester. In the process of compiling and presenting your portfolio to me, you will assign yourself a grade. The portfolio should include the following:

1. The grade you assign yourself, along with a brief paragraph summarizing your reasoning.
2. Two paragraphs about your weekly response papers. The first paragraph tells us your scores and explains how you have incorporated feedback to improve over time. *Please give specific examples!* The second paragraph should identify your three strongest papers, and explain what you like about them. Did they push your thinking in new or unexpected directions? Develop a new conclusion? Were they written particularly well? Did they

take you somewhere unexpected? Please include your three best papers as an appendix to the portfolio.

3. A paragraph or two that summarizes your participation in the course. You can start with the empirical data: did you attend all classes, and submit a question each week? From there, you can dig deeper. Are there aspects about participation that you had to work hard at? Were there any “aha moments,” where, by the end of a class session, you understood something new or had a new perspective? Can you recall a moment when another student said or did something that helped you see something in a new light, or where you helped other students learn? Were there any class sessions where your discussion question led to a great conversation?
4. A paragraph summarizing your oral history project, including your research process, the experience of peer review, and how it met the course learning objective of placing our own experiences within the history of global reproductive politics. Please include your paper as an appendix to the portfolio.
5. Optional: if applicable, you may write a paragraph or two explaining anything you worked on this semester related to the topic of the course and which contributed to the learning objectives, but which is not part of the course. Perhaps you did some relevant political activism, or volunteer work, or educated yourself further in some way. Feel free to think outside the box here.

Honors Requirement: Students are encouraged to devise an assignment or project that builds on some component that is already in the syllabus. Students enrolled for honors credit must submit a 1-paragraph proposal for how they will meet the honors requirement by Friday October 29.

RESOURCES AND POLICIES

Office Hours:

I encourage you all to come to my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or your academic program. These hours are set aside specifically for your benefit, and I really hope to see you there! I am available both in person in my office or remotely, via Zoom.

Academic Honesty:

The University of Wisconsin takes matters of academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism in particular is a very serious offense that can pose a real threat to your success and to the integrity of our broader learning community. I will strictly enforce the university policies on academic honesty. The rules about plagiarism can sometimes be confusing. If you are unsure about them, please be on the safe side and check. You can start here:

http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

If you are still unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, and whether you are committing plagiarism, please come speak to me during office hours. Ignorance of the definition of

plagiarism will not be an acceptable excuse. More detailed information about student codes of conduct may be found here:

<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES STATEMENT

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

As an historian, I recognize that my profession has privileged certain people and excluded others—both in terms of the people who gotten jobs as history professors, and in terms of the perspectives and experiences that have been deemed worthy of historical inquiry. I also acknowledge that the University of Wisconsin-Madison itself occupies the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk, a place their nation has called Teejop. In an 1832 treaty, the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede this territory. While we cannot undo all forms of historical injustice in a single seminar, we recognize our ongoing obligation to foster a more just and inclusive university, and within it, a more just and inclusive discipline of History.

As a professor, I take seriously my responsibility to create a safe learning environment where all students can participate in open and honest dialogue with one another. I expect all members of the seminar to contribute to a learning atmosphere that is respectful and inclusive and which recognizes the dignity of each member. I welcome disagreement and varying viewpoints as a productive and necessary part of intellectual inquiry, and I expect seminar members to express disagreement in a respectful way.

Academic Resources for Students:

DoIT Help Desk – If you have questions about Canvas, BBCollaborate, Zoom or other platforms supported by UW, you can contact the DoIT Help

Desk: <https://it.wisc.edu/services/help-desk/>. They can also guide students to resources for help with bandwidth issues.

History Lab – The History Lab is a resource where expert PhD students work with you and your history/history of science projects 1-on-1. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff will help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer.

Visit our website <http://go.wisc.edu/HLAB> early and often to schedule an appointment with a Lab TA or to find writing tips, guides, and resources.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1, September 12: Birth Control and Women’s Liberation

Read:

1. Linda Gordon, “The Prehistory of Contraception,” in *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 9-21
2. Margaret Sanger, *Motherhood in Bondage*, (New York: Brentano’s, 1928), 221–237.

Week 2, September 19: Birth Control, Eugenics and the “Population Bomb”

Read:

1. Alison Bashford, “World Population from Eugenics to Climate Change,” *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*, 505-520
2. Dorothy Roberts, “Margaret Sanger and the Racial Origins of the Birth Control Movement,” in *Racially Writing the Republic: Racists, Race Rebels, and Transformations of American Identity*, eds. Baum and Harris, (Duke University Press, 2009), 196-213.
3. Elaine Tyler May, *America and the Pill*, Chapter 1 and 2, 11-56
4. Margaret Sanger, “Birth Control and Racial Betterment,” (1919)

Due: Response paper #1 (Sunday September 18, 5pm)

Week 3, September 26: Abortion in America

Read/listen:

1. Leslie Reagan, "The First Time Abortion was a Crime," *Slate*, June 1, 2022
2. Jill Lepore, "Of Course the Constitution Has Nothing to Say About Abortion," *The New Yorker*, May 4, 2022
3. Mary Ziegler, *Abortion and the Law in America: Roe v. Wade to the Present*, (Cambridge University Press, 2020), Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 5, 1-26 and 121-149
4. Podcast: "Shmashmortion," On the Media, NPR, January 4, 2018

Due: Response paper #2 (Sunday September 25, 5pm)

Week 4, October 3: Global Abortion politics

Read:

5. Yana Rodgers, *The Global Gag Rule and Women's Reproductive Health: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, (Oxford University Press, 2018), 13-66
6. Siri Suh, "New President, Old Anti-Abortion Policy: Continuing Contradictions in US Global 'Family Planning' Policies." *Gender Policy Report*, University of Minnesota, February 2, 2017

Watch:

7. *Lingui, The Sacred Bonds*, director Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, MUBI

Due: Response paper #3 (Sunday October 2, 5pm)

Week 5, October 10: Race and Reproductive Justice in America

Read:

1. Loretta Ross and Rickie Sollinger, "Reproductive Justice in the Twenty-First Century," in *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*, 58-117
2. Linda Villarosa, "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life or Death Crisis," *New York Times*, April 11, 2018
3. Brianna Theobald, "Nurse, Mother Midwife: Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail and the Struggle for Crow Women's Reproductive Autonomy," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, (Autumn 2016), 17-35

Due:

1. Response paper #4 (Sunday October 9, 5pm)
2. 5 oral history questions (bring to class)

Week 6, October 17: Welfare Politics and Reproductive Labor

Read:

1. Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics*, Intro, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
2. Premilla Nadasen, "Expanding the Boundaries of the Women's Movement: Black Feminism and the Struggle for Welfare Rights," *Feminist Studies* 28(2), 2002, 270-301.
3. "Welfare is a Women's Issue," by Johnnie Tillmon, (originally published in *Ms. Magazine*, 1972.)
4. Silvia Federici, "Wages Against Housework," (1975)

Due:

1. Response paper #5 (Sunday October 16, 5pm)
2. midterm self-assessment (October 17, 11pm)

Week 7, October 24: Oral History Presentations 1

Due:

1. Prepare a 5-minute presentation on your oral history project (half of the class will present this week, half will present next week)
2. First draft of your paper to exchange with a peer reviewer (everyone should bring a hard copy to class)

Week 8, October 31: Oral History Presentations 2

Due:

1. 5-minute presentation on your oral history project (second half of class will present)
2. Oral history paper, including first draft, peer review comments, and final draft

Week 9, November 7: Immigration and "Stratified Reproduction"

Read:

1. Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics*, Chapter 3
2. Catherine C Choy, "To the Point of No Return: From Exchange Visitor to Permanent Resident," from *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*, (2003), 94-123
3. Catherine C Choy, "[When the Reporter Asks you Why There are So Many Filipino Nurses in the US.](#)" *The Margins*, May 17, 2021
4. Mary Romero, "Who Takes Care of the Maid's Children? Exploring the Costs of Domestic Service," in *Feminism and Families*, (Routledge 1997), 63-91

Due: Response paper #6 (Sunday November 6, 5pm)

Week 10, November 14: Global Politics of Maternal Mortality

Read:

1. Claire Wendland, *Partial Stories: Maternal Death from Six Angles*, (2022) introduction and chapter 1
2. Sasha Turner, “The Nameless and the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection and the Archive of Slavery,” *Slavery and Abolition*, (2017)
3. Adeola Oni-Orisan, “The Obligation to Count: The Politics of Monitoring Maternal Mortality in Nigeria,” in *Metrics: What Counts in Global Health* (2016)

Due: Response paper #7 (Sunday November 13, 5pm)

Week 11, November 21: Controlling Populations

Read:

1. Vanessa Fong, “China’s One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters,” *American Anthropologist* 104 (4), 2002, 1098-1109.
2. Gail Kligman “Political Demography: The Banning of Abortion in Ceausescu’s Romania,” in *Conceiving the New World Order: the global politics of reproduction*, (University of California Press, 1995), 234-255

Watch:

One Child Nation, 2019 dir. Nanfu Wang and Jialing Zhang, Amazon Studios

Due: Response paper #8 (Sunday November 20, 5pm)

Week 12, November 28: Assisted Reproductive Technology around the world

Read:

1. *Once and Future Feminist*, “All Reproduction is Assisted,” Forum: Boston Review, ed. Merve Emre.
2. Laura Briggs, Chapter 4: “The Politics and Economy of Reproductive Technology and Black infant Mortality,” *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics*

Watch

3. *Google Baby*, 2009 dir. Zippi Brand Frank, HBO 2

Due: Response paper #9 (Sunday November 27, 5pm)

Week 13, December 5: Families and Neoliberalism

Read:

1. Laura Briggs, Chapter 5: “Gay Married, With Children,” and Epilogue: The Subprime

Due: Response paper #10 (Sunday December 4, 5pm)

Week 14, December 12: Final Discussions and Assessment

Due: Final Portfolio