

WOMEN'S STUDIES 431
Childbirth in the United States
Spring Semester, 1995

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1419 Medical Science Center
263-4560 or 262-1460

Office Hours: 9:30-11:00 TR
and by appt.

COURSE MEETS: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 - 12:15; Room 5295 MSC

This course examines women's childbirth experiences in the United States from the colonial period to the twentieth century. It addresses throughout questions of authority and decision making that remain central in women's health policy debates today. Physiology of childbirth, interactions between birthing women and their attendants, changes in experiences, and evolving ideas about "choices" are major themes addressed during the semester.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The enrollment for this course is kept as low as possible so that the class can be run primarily as a seminar-discussion. All students are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class and to participate regularly, actively, and constructively in the class discussion. Graduate students must attend an additional seminar, the time to be arranged on the first day of class.

Undergraduate Students:	Group project	20%
	In-class Exam	25%
	Final Exam	35%
	Class participation & Worksheets	20%
Graduate Students:	Research paper	70%
	Seminar work	30%

Course Readings: (ordered at Room of One's Own)

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Vintage, 1991).

Judith Walzer Leavitt, Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America 1750-1950 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Barbara Katz Rothman, Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society (Norton, 1989, paper).

431 Reader, available at Agricultural Journalism Copy Center, Room B25, Agricultural Engineering Building.

431 Class Schedule

January	24	Introduction
	26	Procreation and Women's Lives
January	31	Community of Women
February	2	Traditional Midwives
February	7	Birthing Women, Midwives, Physicians
	9	Traditional Home Delivery
February	14	Anatomy and Physiology of Birth
	16	Anatomy and Physiology of Birth
February	21	In-class Exam
	23	"All My Babies"
February	28	Shadow of Maternity
March	2	Physician Interventions/forceps
March	7	Anesthesia
	9	Scrupulous Cleanliness/Surgery
March	14	Spring Recess
	16	Spring Recess
March	21	Gender and Differences in the Birthing Room
	23	Shadow of Maternity & the Federal Government
March	28	Social Childbirth/Group Projects
	30	Social Childbirth/Group Projects
April	4	Social Childbirth/Group Projects
	6	Social Childbirth/Group Projects
April	11	Birth Moves to the Hospital
	13	Childbirth in the Hospital
April	18	Early 20th Century Attack on Midwifery
	20	Lay Midwives and Nurse-Midwives
April	25	"Natural Childbirth," Lamaze, etc.
	27	Home or Hospital? Decision Making and Change
May	2	Recreating Motherhood
	4	Recreating Motherhood
May	9	Recreating Motherhood
	11	Summary and Review
FINAL EXAM: MAY 18, 199 ⁵ ₄ at 2:45 p.m.		

Women's Studies 431
Required Readings

January 26: Procreation and Women's Lives

*Paula A. Treichler, "Feminism, Medicine, and the Meaning of Childbirth," in Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science (Routledge University Press, 1990), pp. 113-138.

January 31-February 9: Childbirth & Traditional Midwifery

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Vintage, 1991).

1/31/95: pp. 3-101
2/02/95: pp. 102-203
2/07/95: pp. 204-285
2/09/95: pp. 286-364

February 14-16: Anatomy and Physiology of Birth

Pregnancy and Birth pamphlets, available in class

*PDR Family Guide to Women's Health and Prescription Drugs, miscellaneous diagrams.

*Alice Hoffman, "Fortune's Daughter" excerpts.

February 23: "All My Babies"

*George Stoney, "All My Babies, Research"

February 28-March 9: Maternity & Physicians

Judith Walzer Leavitt, Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950 (New York: Oxford, 1986).

2/28/95: pp. 3-35
3/02/95: pp. 36-63
3/07/95: pp. 116-141
3/09/95: pp. 142-170

*H.B. Willard, Obstetrical Journal, 1849-1856 (3/2)

*McCormick letters, 1890 (3/2)

*Fanny Longfellow, Diary and Letters, 1844-1853 (3/7)

*Joseph B. DeLee, "Prophylactic Forceps Operation," American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology 1 (1920): 34-44; 77-80. (3/9)

*J. Whitridge Williams, "A Criticism of Certain Tendencies in American Obstetrics," New York State Journal of Medicine 22 (1922): 493-499. (3/9)

April 20: Lay and Nurse-Midwives

*Nancy Schrom Dye, "Mary Breckinridge, The Frontier Nursing Service, and the Introduction of Nurse-Midwifery in the United States," in Women & Health, pp. 327-344.

*Linda Janet Holmes, "African American Midwives in the South," in The American Way of Birth, ed. Pamela Eakins (1986): 273-291.

*Holly F. Mathews, "Killing the Self-Help Tradition Among African Americans: The Case of Lay Midwifery in North Carolina, 1912-1983," in African-Americans in the South: Issues of Race, Class and Gender, ed. Hans Baer and Yvonne Jones (1992): 60-78.

*Eugene R. Declercq, "The Transformation of American Midwifery: 1975-1988," American Journal of Public Health 82 (1992): 680-684.

April 25: "Natural Childbirth," Lamaze, etc.

*Marjorie Karmel, Thank You Dr. Lamaze: A Mother's Experiences in Painless Childbirth (1959): 69-85; 87-89.

*Margot Edwards & Mary Waldorf, Reclaiming Birth: History and Heroines of American Childbirth Reform (1984): 29-48.

*Toi Derricotte, "Natural Birth" excerpts.

April 27: Home or Hospital? Decision Making and Change

Leavitt, Brought to Bed, pp. 196-218.

*Alice Gilgoff, "Home Birth," in Encyclopedia of Childbearing ed. Barbara Katz Rothman (1993), pp. 175-177.

*Robbie Davis-Floyd, "Hospital Birth," Ibid, pp. 178-181.

May 2-9: Recreating Motherhood

Barbara Katz Rothman, Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society (1989).

5/2/95: pp. 17-81

5/4/95: pp. 85-184

5/9/95: pp. 196-260.

16. Gladys Denny Schultz, "Journal Mothers Report on Cruelty in Maternity Wards," Ladies' Home Journal 75 (May, 1958): 44-45; 153-4; (December, 1958): 58-59; 135; 137-139.
17. Letter in response to Author's Query, 1983.
18. Anais Nin, "Birth," excerpts in Cradle and All: Women Writers on Pregnancy and Birth ed. Laura Chester (Faber and Faber, 1989), pp. 152-155.
19. S. Josephine Baker, "Schools for Midwives," American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children 65 (1912): 256-270.
20. Joseph B. DeLee, "Progress Toward Ideal Obstetrics," American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children 73 (1916): 407-415
21. Dorothy Reed Mendenhall, "Prenatal and Natal Conditions in Wisconsin," Wisconsin Medical Journal 15 (1917): 353-369.
22. Nancy Schrom Dye, "Mary Breckinridge, The Frontier Nursing Service, and the Introduction of Nurse-Midwifery in the United States, in Women and Health, pp. 327-344.
23. Linda Janet Holmes, "African American Midwives in the South," in The American Way of Birth, ed. Pamela Eakins (1986), pp. 273-291.
24. Holly F. Mathews, "Killing the Self-Help Tradition Among African Americans: The Case of Lay Midwifery in North Carolina, 1912-1983," in African Americans in the South: Issues of Race, Class, and Gender, ed Hans Baer and Yvonne Jones (University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 60-78.
25. Eugene R. Declercq, "The Transformation of American Midwifery: 1975-1988," American Journal of Public Health 82 (1992): 680-684.
26. Marjorie Karmel, Thank You Dr. Lamaze: A Mother's Experience in Painless Childbirth (1959), pp. 69-85; 87-89.
27. Margot Edwards and Mary Waldorf, Reclaiming Birth: History and Heroines of American Childbirth Reform (Crossing Press), pp. 29-48.
28. Toi Derricotte, "Natural Birth," excerpts in Cradle and All: Women Writers on Pregnancy and Birth ed. Laura Chester (Faber and Faber, 1989), pp. 108-115.
29. Alice Gilgoff, "Home Birth," in Encyclopedia of Childbearing ed. Barbara Katz Rothman (1993), pp. 175-177.
30. Robbie Davis-Floyd, "Hospital Birth," Ibid, pp. 178-181.