

HISTORY OF MEDICINE 531

Women and Health in American History

FALL SEMESTER 1998

Instructor: Maneesha Lal

Meetings: TR Sept. 3 - Dec. 15, 1998
2:30-3:45 pm
4185 Medical Sciences Center
1300 University Ave.

Office Hours: 4:00-5:00 pm TR and by appt.
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Course Description:

Assumptions about women and gender are embedded in a society's definitions of health and illness and in its medical systems. In this course, we will examine the historical development of health and medical issues relating to women, and analyze the ways in which gender, class, and race are reflected in disease distribution and the delivery of health care. Topics to be explored include gender representations in medical literature; women's relations to male medical authority; changing methods of managing childbirth; women's roles as midwives, nurses, and physicians; the gender dimensions of diseases such as AIDS, mental illness, and breast cancer; and women's negotiations with their bodies in the realms of diet and sport. Throughout the semester we will examine the varied meanings that have been associated with 'women' and 'health', and reflect on how to capture the diversity of women's experiences in the histories we read and relate. Course materials will be drawn from a range of primary and secondary sources: letters, diary excerpts, medical journal articles, oral histories, short stories, poems, films, and works of medical history.

Requirements:

The course will be conducted as a seminar, so it is imperative that each student complete the readings assigned and be well prepared to participate in class discussion. This means taking notes on the readings and formulating questions to be raised in class.

One critical reaction paper (3-4 pp.) to a day's set of readings. Students will select readings to which they wish to respond. To be submitted on day of readings, but no later than the date listed below. Five individual outlines of five days' sets of reading with three discussion questions per outline (1-3 pp. each). To be submitted on day of readings, but the five individual days may be selected by the student. One longer final paper (8-10 pp.), for which a thesis statement, annotated bibliography, and final draft is to be submitted for comments.

texts and the Course Reader are also on reserve at the Health Sciences Library (Middleton), except for the Lorde and the Brumberg, which are at College Library Reserve. Recommended texts are at Middleton Library.

Course Schedule

Week 1:

Sept. 3 **Introduction**

Week 2:

Sept. 8 **Approaches to Women and Health**

Letter from Rose Williams to Mrs. Lettie Mosher

Letters from Jane Savine to Elizabeth Gordon

Eliza M. Mosher, "A Protest Against the Teaching of Birth Control," *The Medical Woman's Journal* 32 (1925): 320.

Judith Walzer Leavitt, "Introduction to the Second Edition," forthcoming in *Women and Health in America: Historical Readings*, ed. Judith Walzer Leavitt, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 3-8.

Elizabeth Fee, "Women and Health Care: A Comparison of Theories," in *Women and Health: The Politics of Sex in Medicine*, ed. Elizabeth Fee (Farmingdale, NY: Baywood, 1983), 17-34.

Sept. 10 **Gender in Medicine and Biology**

Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16:3 (1991): 485-501.

Viewing of clips from "Look Who's Talking" and "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask"

Week 3:

Sept. 15 **Medical Views of the Female Life Cycle**

George Wythe Cook, "Puberty in the Girl," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children* 46 (1902): 804-807.

Oct. 1

Abortion

Alice Walker, "The Abortion," in *Trials, Tribulations, and Celebrations: African-American Perspectives on Health, Illness, Aging and Loss*, ed. Marian Gray Secundy (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1992), 94-103; orig. from *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980).

Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Mother," in *Trials, Tribulations, and Celebrations*, 104-105; orig. from *Blacks* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945).

"Coroner Fred," "Eleanor," "The Day Trip," "Estelle," and "Dr. James," in *The Worst of Times*, ed. Patricia G. Miller (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 12-27, 80-91, 157-164.

Leslie J. Reagan, "'About to Meet Her Maker': Women, Doctors, Dying Declarations, and the State's Investigation of Abortion, Chicago, 1867-1940," *Journal of American History* (1991): 1240-1264.

Week 6:

Oct. 6

Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Specialty of Obstetrics

Letters from Nettie Fowler McCormick to Anita McCormick Blaine, from Anita to Nettie, and from Miss Hammond to Mrs. McCormick (McCormick Papers)

Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-63.

Reaction Paper Due On or Before this Date!!! Submit in Class.

Oct. 8

Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 64-141.

Week 7:

Oct. 13

Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 142-218.

Oct. 15

Menopause and Aging

Robert A. Wilson, "The Fate of the Nontreated Postmenopausal Woman: A Plea for the Maintenance of Adequate Estrogen From Puberty to the Grave," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 11 (1963): 347-362.

Robert A. Wilson, "A Key to Staying Young," *Look* (Jan. 1966): 66-73.

Empathy, Gender, and Medicine, ed. Ellen Singer More and Maureen A. Milligan (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 40-58.

Week 10:

Nov. 3

"Address Delivered by Dr. Emily Blackwell at the Thirty-first Annual Commencement of the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children, May 25th, 1899," 9-19.

Isabella Vandervall, "Some Problems of the Colored Woman Physician," *Woman's Medical Journal* 27:7 (1917): 156-158.

Florence Brown Sherbon, "Women in Medicine," President's Address, Kansas Association of Medical Women, May 7, 1925.

Letter to Mrs.— from Committee on Admissions, University School of Medicine

Darlene Clark Hine, "Co-Laborers in the Work of the Lord: Nineteenth Century Black Women Physicians," in *"Send Us a Lady Physician": Women Doctors in America, 1835-1920*, ed. Ruth J. Abram (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 107-120.

Nov. 5

Nursing

Susan Reverby, "Neither for the Drawing Room Nor for the Kitchen': Private Duty Nursing in Boston, 1873-1914," in *Women and Health in America*, 454-466.

Viewing of "Sentimental Women Need Not Apply"

Week 11:

Nov. 10

"More Slavery at the South," *The Independent* 72:3295 (Jan. 25, 1912): 196-200.

Nina D. Gage and Alma C. Haupt, "Some Observations on Negro Nursing in the South," *Public Health Nurse* 24 (1932): 674-680.

Darlene Clark Hine, "The Intersection of Race, Class and Gender in the Nursing Profession," in *Critical Issues in American Nursing in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Darwin H. Stapleton and Cathryne A. Welch (New York: Foundation of the New York State Nurses Association, 1994), 59-67.

Emily K. Abel and Nancy Reifel, "Interactions between Public Health Nurses and Clients on American Indian Reservations during the 1930s," *Social History of Medicine* (1996): 89-108.

Week 14:

Dec. 1

Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*, 55-77.

Lisa Belkin, "Charity Begins at...the Marketing Meeting, the Gala Event, the Product Tie-In," *New York Times Magazine* (Dec. 22, 1996); and Letters to the editor, *New York Times Magazine* (Jan. 12, 1997), 4.

Viewing of clips from "A Litany of Survival"

Dec. 3

Body Projects

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project* (Random House, 1997), xvii-25, 57-94.

Week 15:

Dec. 8

Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 95-214.

Final Papers Due!!! Include in folder with previously submitted Draft, Thesis Statement, and Annotated Bibliography.

Dec. 10

Physical Fitness and Sport

Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising-Supported Magazines and Scorching Women," *American Quarterly* 47:1 (1995): 66-101.

Susan K. Cahn, "From the 'Muscle Moll' to the 'Butch' Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women's Sport," *Feminist Studies* 19:2 (1993): 343-368.

Week 16:

Dec. 15

Summary and Wrap-Up