

History of Medicine and Public Health: Women's Health

HIST 398/ WMNS491/ AFAM491 (Fall 2011) -- Virginia Commonwealth University

Meeting Time/Place: Thursdays 4-6:40PM at Franklin Street Gym 0331

Instructor: Dr. Karen A. Rader (“Dr. Rader” or “Professor Rader” is fine)

Office: 916 W. Franklin Street (“Millhiser House”), Room #201

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 10-11AM and by appointment (please email!)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The question of “who creates medical knowledge?” impacts women's lived experiences from birth to death, but it also permeates the broader social history of health in America. By using the framework of a women's life spectrum as a lens on this history, this class will seek to illuminate how and why women's history and women's health are so intertwined. Central to our discussions will be an analysis of the interplay among race, ethnicity, class, and gender in shaping particular health care outcomes. Some questions we will explore include: How has gender shaped the construction of medical knowledge and the framing of women's health and illness in U.S. History, from the late 18th century to the present? How have women participated in health care in both paid and unpaid capacities? What are the political, economic and social factors affecting women as providers and as recipients of health care? What do the lessons of women's history, social history, and cultural history tell us about how contemporary patients and policy-makers can define health and illness, and organize health care as a means of empowerment?

REQUIRED BOOKS AND MATERIALS:

The following books have been ordered at the VCU Bookstore, but are also available on reserve at the Cabell Library and through many used book and on-line retailers. If you do not choose to buy through the VCU Bookstore, *please make sure that you have the correct edition* of the required texts.

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. Vintage, 1998

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper: And Other Stories*. Dover Press, 1997.

Leavitt, Judith Walzer, ed. *Women and Health in America: Historical Readings*. U. of Wisc. Press, 1999 [second edition] [**Abbreviated in the syllabus as “W&HinAm”**]

Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* (Harvard UP, 2006)

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *A Midwife's Tale*. Vintage, 1990.

Plus **REQUIRED ARTICLES (Abbreviated in the syllabus below as “PDFs”)**: These will be available two ways: (1) through Blackboard (as PDF files that you can download and/or print).

Plus **REQUIRED FILM/VIDEO MATERIAL** (See syllabus for details).

GRADING and EVALUATION:

You will be evaluated on the following criteria, each weighted as indicated.

- Participation
 - Attendance and Discussion (one lowest grade dropped) 10%
 - Thought Pieces (8@ 3.75% of grade each for total of) 30%
- Larger Written Assignments (3@20% each for total of) 60%

There will be four equally weighted assignments during the semester. These include:

 - Take-home Midterm exam
 - Historical book review of Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*
 - Legislative/policy analysis
 - Take-home Final Exam
 -

The lowest of these four grades will be dropped for purposed of your evaluation.

As a result *NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN and NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON.*

Grades will be assigned according to the following traditional scale of points earned:

A (far above average) =	90-100 %
B (above average) =	80-89 %
C (average) =	70-79 %
D (below average) =	60-69 %
F (unacceptable) =	59% and below

Any student may raise concerns about grading with the instructor at any time, but please try to do so as soon as possible when such concerns arise. If a student would like an individual grade reevaluated, s/he must put his/her concerns in writing and give that statement, along with the graded assignment in question, back to the instructor – who will respond (in writing, by your VCU e-mail) within one week.

General ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS, POLICIES, and OBJECTIVES:

Because the instructor seeks for students to achieve historical understanding and critical thinking with regard to the subject matter of this course, students should expect that most classes will be some combination of lecture/presentations, exercises, and discussion – and they should come prepared to participate actively.

Participation: To facilitate the achievement of historical understanding and critical thinking, as well as to increase students’ level of comfort with writing as a tool for learning, students will be asked to submit a short one page (250-300 word) thought-piece most Thursdays (see detailed description at the end of this syllabus, p. 13: **“What is a Thought-Piece?”**). Thought pieces are to be turned into the instructor **in hard copy only (no electronic copies will be accepted)** at the beginning of class in which they are due (each one is marked on syllabus). There will be no thought pieces assigned the last week of class, and none due in weeks when you have other written assignments due.

Thought pieces will be evaluated on a 1-10 scale and returned to you the following Tuesday. You will have NINE regular opportunities (and one extra credit opportunity) to write a thought piece during the semester, and your single lowest thought piece grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. As a result, **NO LATE THOUGHT PIECES WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON.**

Exams: The midterm and final exams will be take-home essay exams.

GENERAL CLASS AND VCU POLICIES:

General VCU and Class Policies:

VCU Statement on Safety

What to know and do to be prepared for emergencies at VCU:

- Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (www.vcu.edu/alert/notify). Keep your information up-to-date.
- Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
- Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
- Know where to go for additional emergency information (www.vcu.edu/alert).
- Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

VCU Honor System and Academic Integrity Policy

Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education. The Honor System is built on the idea that a person's honor is his/her most cherished attribute. A foundation of honor is essential to a community devoted to learning. Within this community, respect and harmony must coexist. The Honor System is the policy of VCU that defines the highest standards of conduct in academic affairs. The Honor System in its entirety can be reviewed on the Web at http://www.provost.vcu.edu/pdfs/Honor_system_policy.pdf or it can be found in the 2011-12 VCU Insider at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/insider.html> .

All students in this class must know and abide by the VCU Honor Code. In particular plagiarism will not be tolerated. There are two kinds of plagiarism: unintentional (poorly cited documentation for sources you have consulted or used in your work) and intentional (use of another's prose with the intention of passing it off as your own). Unintentional plagiarism should not happen, if you follow proper citation and documentation procedures (if you have any specific questions about how to do this, consult with me); if it does, you will be penalized within the framework for overall academic evaluation. Intentional plagiarism will be reported to the Dean's Office.

Attendance and Participation Policies

Absences: Attendance Grades will be posted about every 4-5 weeks (dates for posting listed on syllabus). To request reconsideration of an attendance grade, you must contact the instructor in writing not more than one week after each attendance grade is posted.

- Students are responsible for all material listed on the syllabus, including all readings, films, and lectures. If a student misses class or adds the class late, s/he is still responsible for all material listed on the syllabus.
- Latenesses of more than fifteen (15) minutes will be counted as absences.
- If we have any weather related absences, we will resume work as planned (including any tests or paper deadlines) the following class period.

Classroom and Discussion Etiquette

- Student conduct will be governed by the expectations described in “Student Conduct in the Classroom” (see http://www.students.vcu.edu/docs/policy_student_conduct.pdf)
- Students are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas based on the historical material we will be discussing; however, deliberately harmful comments based on race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or physical ability will not be tolerated. We are all individuals with our own passions and interests, but we are also members of an academic community -- so the tone of all collective discussions must remain scholarly and academic.
- Show courtesy to your instructor and your classmates by arriving on time and leaving only when the class has ended; also, turn off any cell phones, beepers, or pagers for the duration of class – and do not ‘surf the net’ or text message during class!
- Any student whose behavior is judged (for these, or any other reasons) by the instructor to be discourteous or disruptive will be asked to leave the classroom.
- Taping and/or digital recording of class sessions is not permitted.

Communications Policies:

- It will be necessary for the instructor to e-mail you (individually and collectively) from time to time. **For these purposes it will be assumed that each student uses his/her VCU student e-mail account.** Please make a habit of checking this student e-mail account regularly, or if you have another e-mail address you use more regularly, please make arrangements with the Computer Help Desk (library basement) to forward your VCU e-mails to you at this address.
- E-mail is the most effective way to communicate with the instructor outside of class or office hours – you can usually expect a response within several hours (barring the period between 8PM and 8AM, and weekends). But please do not send e-mails which make requests and simply presume that these requests will be fulfilled or approved. It is your sole

responsibility to check your e-mail in a timely fashion in order to get the instructor's response.

Disability Policy: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires Virginia Commonwealth University to provide a 'reasonable accommodation' to any individual who advises us of a physical or mental disability. Any student who wishes to discuss reasonable accommodations for a disability, visible or invisible, should contact me within the first three weeks of class so that we can meet and make all the necessary arrangements with the Coordinator of the VCU Office of Disability Support Services (ODSS). ODSS is can be reached by phone: 828-2253.

Religious Observances Policy: As per VCU policy, a student desiring to observe a religious holiday of special importance must provide advance written notification by the end of the second week of classes. The student remains responsible for any written material missed.

Technology Policy: Blackboard is an integral technology and your successful use of it will be vital for this class. ***You are responsible for working out any issues of access to Blackboard:*** for help with this contact Technology Support Services (www.ts.vcu.edu/helpdesk or (804) 828-2227)

Extra Credit Policy:

There will also be several extra credit opportunities during the semester through attending STS and related academic lectures and writing a 2-page summary/reflection of what you saw/heard. The instructor will post a list of these opportunities on the Bb (under COURSE INFORMATION) and will consider making other VCU academic lectures and/or community events extra credit assignments by student request. In order to add a non-listed event, the instructor must receive your request in writing AT LEAST 3 DAYS before the date of the event/lecture.

Extra credit assignments must be turned in as typed, double spaced, hard copy (either in class or in the instructor's office), and are due by 4:30PM no more than TEN DAYS after the lecture/event itself takes place. **NO late extra credit assignments will be accepted.**

With regard to evaluation, students can submit NO MORE THAN THREE extra credit assignments, and extra credit assignments can ONLY be used to replace lowest THOUGH PIECE GRADES. Extra credit will be graded on a 1-10 scale and returned to you as time permits (*all* regular grading/evaluation takes precedence for the instructor over extra credit assignment).

COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE – CHECK Bb for Updates)**WEEK ONE: Thurs 8/25****INTRODUCTION: Defining Women's Health**

Review Course Syllabus; General Discussion of Course and Learning Objectives

(PDF – mounted on Bb and handed out in class, 8/20) Excerpt from the 1971 Edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* by the Boston Woman's Health Collective

In-Class EXERCISE: Reading Primary Sources – Instructor will bring *OB, OS editions*: 1973 (pamphlet), 1976, 1982, 1984, 1998 – most from the VCU libraries

Plus mini-lecture on the following (to be read for the exam):

(PDF) Sheryl Ruzek, "Transforming Doctor Patient Relationships," *Journal of Health Services Research Policy*, July 2007, 12 (3): 181-82.

(PDF) Wendy Kline, "Please Include this in your book": Readers Respond to *Our Bodies, Our Selves*,' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2005, 79: 81–110

(PDF) Kathy Davis, "World Traveller: Translating *Our Bodies, Ourselves*," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 2002, 9 (3); 223–247.

UNIT #1 -- PUBERTY**WEEK TWO: Thurs 9/1**

FILMS (23 minutes, shown in class): *Personal Hygiene for Boys; For Girls* (1923-24 – United States Public Health Service)

(PDF) Clarke, Edward H. Part II, "Chiefly Physiological," *Sex in Education; or, a fair chance for the girls*. 1873. Arno Press, 1972.

(PDF) Wayman, Agnes. *Education through Physical Fitness*. Philadelphia: Lea and Fibiger, 1928, p. 118- 25.

W&HinAm: -- Margaret Lowe, "From Robust Appetites to Calorie Counting: Dieting Among Smith College Students in the 1920s"

(PDF) Lears, T.J. Jackson. "American Advertising and the Reconstruction of the Body, 1880-1930," in Kathryn Glover, ed., *Fitness in American Culture*. Amherst: U. Mass, 1989, p.47-68.

THOUGHT PIECE #1 DUE**WEEK THREE: Thurs 9/8**

Brumberg, *The Body Project* (all) plus

(PDF) Arthur Kleinman, *Illness Narratives* (1988), Chapters 1-2.

THOUGHT PIECE #2 DUE

UNIT #2 -- SEXUALITY**WEEK FOUR: Thurs 9/15**

READING:

Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (you are required to read the title short story only)

W&HinAm, read the following chapters:

--Diane Price Herndl, "The Invisible (Invalid) Woman: African American Women, Illness, and Nineteenth Century Narrative:

--Elizabeth Lunbeck, "A New Generation of Women: Progressive Psychiatrists and the Hypersexual Female"

--Elaine Abelson, "The Invention of Kleptomania"

(PDF) Dreger, Alice. "Doubtful Sex: The Fate of Hermaphrodites in Victorian Medicine," *Victorian Studies*, Spring 1995, Vol. 38, Issue 3, p. 335+**THOUGHT PIECE #3 DUE**

WEEK FIVE: Tues 9/22**UNIT #3 -- FERTILITY, CONTRACEPTION, and ABORTION**

W&HinAM, Chapters 13, 15, and 16:

--Linda Gordon, "Voluntary Motherhood: The Beginnings of Feminist Birth Control Ideas in the United States"

--Jessie M. Roderique, "The Black Community and the Birth Control Movement"

W&HinAM, Chapter 16:

--Andrea Tone, "Contraceptive Consumers: Gender and the Political Economy of Birth Control in the 1930s"

(PDF) Gladwell, Malcolm. "John Rock's Error," *New Yorker*, 13 March 2000, p. 52-63.**THOUGHT PIECE #4 DUE**

WEEK SIX: Thurs 9/29

W&HinAM, read the following chapters:

--Leslie Reagan, "'About to Meet Her Maker:' Women, Doctors, Dying Declarations and the State's Investigation of Abortion in Chicago, 1867-1940"

----Judith Walzer Leavitt, "Under the Shadow of Maternity..."

(PDF) Alice Walker, "The Abortion," pp 1-14 in *Coming to Terms: A Literary Response to Abortion*, Linda Ebersole and Richard Peabody, eds. (CUNY/New Press, 1994)**Book Review Assignment Distributed****THOUGHT PIECE #5 DUE**

WEEK SEVEN: Tues 10/6

UNIT #6 -- CHILDBIRTH AND MOTHERHOOD

W&HinAM, read the following chapters:

--Judith Walzer Leavitt, "Under the Shadow of Maternity..."

--Carolyn Leonard Carson, "And the Results Showed Promise...Physicians, Childbirth, and Southern Black Migrant Women, 1916-1930"

Plus Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave* (all)

Midterm exam distributed

THOUGHT PIECE #6 DUE

WEEK EIGHT: Thurs 10/13

FILM (Shown in Class): *A Midwife's Tale* (1997, Filmmakers' Collaborative/PBS Home Video)

MIDTERM EXAM DUE by 5PM (submit via Bb); No Thought Piece This Week

WEEK NINE: Thurs 10/20

No Class -- VCU STUDY DAY

WEEK TEN: Thurs 10/27

UNIT #7 -- WOMEN AS HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

W&HinAM, read the following chapters:

(Nurses and Doctors)

--Susan Reverby, "Neither for the Drawing Room or the Kitchen: Private Duty Nursing in Boston, 1873-1920"

--Darlene Clark Hine, "They Shall Mount Up with Wings as Eagles: Historical Images of Black Nurses, 1890-1950"

--Mary Roth Walsh, "Feminist Showplace"

-- Regina Morantz-Sanchez, "The Gendering of Empathic Expertise: How Women Physicians Became More Empathetic Than Men"

--Kinberley Jensen, "Uncle Sam's Loyal Nieces"

THOUGHT PIECE #7 DUE

WEEK ELEVEN: Thurs 11/3

FILM (Shown in Class): *Typhoid Mary* – The Most Dangerous Woman in American (NOVA/PBS, 2004)

Attendance Grade #2 Posted to Bb by the end of this week

Historical Book Review of Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale* due by 5PM on 11/3 (Submit on Bb) (No thought piece due this week)

**WEEK TWELVE: Thurs 11/10
(Midwives)**

W&HinAM, read the following chapters:

- Charlotte Borst, "The Training and Practice of Midwives"
- Susan Smith, "White Nurses, Black Midwives, and Public Health"

(Family Caregiving)

--Emily Abel, "A 'Terrible and Exhausting Struggle:' Family Caregiving During the Transformation of Medicine"

(PDF) Excerpt from Carol Levine, *Always on Call: When Illness Turns Families Into Caregivers* (United Hospital Fund, 2000). Chapters 2, 6, and 7

Legislative Policy Assignment distributed

THOUGHT PIECE #8 DUE**UNIT #9 -- MENOPAUSE****WEEK THIRTEEN: Thurs 11/17**

(PDF's) Wilson, Robert A. Chapters from *Feminine Forever* (NY: Evans, 1966), chapters 1 ("A Woman's Right to be Feminine") and 2 ("Must Women Tolerate Castration") (pages 24-54, inclusive).

(PDF) J.A. Houck, "What do these women want?": Feminist responses to *Feminine Forever*, 1963-1980," in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2003 Spring; 77(1):103-32 (on Web Board)

(PDF) Watkins, Elizabeth Siegel. 'Doctor, are you trying to Kill Me?' Ambivalence about the patient package insert for estrogen. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 76:1 (2002) 84-104.

(PDF) Eve Agee, "Menopause and the Transmission of Women's Knowledge: African American and White Women's Perspectives," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Mar., 2000), pp. 73-95.

THOUGHT PIECE #9 DUE**WEEK Fourteen: Thurs 11/24**

****NO CLASS 11/26: THANKSGIVING BREAK****

**Conclusion -- CONTEMPORARY POLICY ISSUES AND UNDERSTANDINGS
OF WOMEN'S HEALTH**

**WEEK FIFTEEN: Thurs 12/1
(Breast Cancer)****Legislative/Policy Assignment Due: Discuss and Share Results**

(Grades for this assignment will be posted by Monday 12/7 at noon)

Come to class prepared to talk 2-4 minutes about your findings!

(PDF) Ehrenreich, Barbara. "Welcome to Cancerland: A mammogram leads to a cult of pink kitsch," *Harper's Magazine*, November 2001.

(PDF) Boehmer, Ulrike, *The Personal and the Political: Women's Activism in Response to the Breast Cancer and AIDS epidemics*. Albany: SUNY, 2000. Chapter 4, "The Personal and the Political," pp. 57-95.

Final Exam distributed

Attendance Grade #3 posted on Blackboard this week

(No thought piece due this week)

**WEEK SIXTEEN 12/8
(What does it mean to be a woman?)**

Two essays from D. Kleinman, et. al., *Controversies in Science and Technology* (New Rochelle, NY: Mary Ann Liebert Inc. Publishers, 2008):

- (PDF) Alice Dreger, "Sex Beyond Karotype" (Chapter 23, p. 481-492)
- (PDF) Christina Matta, "Ambiguous Bodies and Deviant Sexualities: Hermaphrodites, Homosexuality, and Surgery in the US, 1850-1904" (Chapter 24, p. 493-504)

Plus the film: "Southern Comfort" (dir. Kate Davis, 2001)

EXTRA CREDIT THOUGHT PIECE OPPORTUNITY (optional); due in class

FINAL EXAM DUE (Submit via Bb) due by Friday 12/9 at 5PM

What is a Thought Piece? Adapted from A.R. Marshall, Brandon University (CA)

- A thought piece is a short (250-300 word) writing assignment that thoughtfully poses and answers a question (or at most, two questions) in relation to class materials (which are the readings, as well as lectures/discussions/presentations). Ideally, it is a vehicle for students to write critically and think analytically – but in a less formal style than would be required in a thesis-driven traditional essay assignment.

Some Guidelines:

- Thought pieces must address the readings assigned on the week that they are due, and they must engage one of the subjects or themes of the class broadly defined (if you’re having trouble discerning these, look at the unit titles and sub-titles on the syllabus, or the chapter/article titles). You must focus your ideas using the course materials assigned: do not use material from other books or sources except to introduce questions or probe ideas from those materials). ****Do not go to the library or consult web sites in order to do research for your thought pieces.**** The ideas should come directly from you!
- The more detail you provide to explain the points of your interpretation and to analyze the material you have been given, the better your writing will be. Begin the process of writing a thought piece by asking yourself as many questions as possible about the materials (what, why, when, how, who). These questions will help you decide how to deepen your analysis. Then revise, clarify and explore your ideas as you write.

The **formal requirements** are simple:

- You may write your thought piece either from a first person (i.e., “I think. ..”) or third-person (i.e. “This flaw in the author’s argument suggests...”) perspective
- You should refer to the class materials you are referencing specifically (i.e. by author’s name, quick in-text page number if applicable), but do not use formal citations.
- You must type/word process and double-space your text, as well as use coherent English sentences.

Please try to avoid **common problems**:

- Do not use your thought piece to write a story.
- If you wish to present an opinion, make sure that you argue it: do not use the thought piece simply to declare it through a series of statements
- Do not write your thought piece by copying class notes or reading quotes verbatim.
- Keep in mind that grammatical and spelling rules still apply.