SOCIOLOGY 390: Gender & Health

Winter 2014
Tuesday and Thursday – 2:35 – 3:55 pm
McGill University

Instructor: Sarah Berry (sarah.berry@mcgill.ca)
Office: Leacock Building, Room 820
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment only

Teaching Assistant: Kimberly Seida
Office: Leacock Building, Room 822A
Office Hours: check MyCourses for office hours

Course Description
This course explores major theoretical approaches and substantive topics within the social study of gender and health. Students will draw on a wide range of historical and theoretical understandings of gendered identities, roles, and experiences, including feminist efforts to decouple sex and gender, to critically analyse gendered patterns of health, illness, and disease. From the women’s health movement and attendant medicalization critiques, to more recent attempts to theorize masculinity and health, to the destabilizing effects of post-structural and queer theorizing on binary conceptions of gender and health, we will explore the macro-political structures within which gender and health are shaped and transformed, as well as the micro-politics of health care interactions. Throughout the course, gender will be discussed in relation to a range of other axes of health inequalities, including racialized identity, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and age.

Course Requirements:

1) **Exams:** There will be two exams for this course: a midterm and a final (non-cumulative) exam. The midterm exam will be held on **11 February** during the regular lecture period, and will be worth **25% of the final course grade**. The final exam will take place during the university-scheduled final exam period (14 April – 29 April) and will be worth **35% of the final course grade**. Both exams will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions covering information from course pack readings, handouts, lectures, films, and guest lectures.

2) **Film Response:** Films will be shown throughout the semester. For one of the films, you will be required to post a brief (two pages, double spaced) critical response on *myCourses*, no later than **one week after the film is shown**. You will be expected to analyse the film using lecture content and assigned readings. Moreover, your analysis should adopt one of the theoretical approaches introduced in the introductory theory lectures. Additional information and formatting requirements for the assignment will be available on *myCourses*. The film response is worth a total of **10% of the final course grade**.

3) **Paper:** Each student is required to write one 6 page paper on a topic covered in class or presented in the readings. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding
of the course materials, and to use one of the theoretical approaches discussed in the introductory lectures to explore her/his topic. A paper proposal worth 5% of the final course grade is due on March 11, at the beginning of the conference session. The final paper is due on April 10 and must be submitted in person, at the beginning of the final exam review lecture. Additional guidelines for the paper and paper proposal will be posted on myCourses and discussed in lectures and conference sections during the semester. The final paper is worth 25%. (5% Proposal + 25% paper = 30% of final course grade).

**Required Readings:**
There are no required textbooks for this course. All required readings are compiled in a course pack that is available for purchase at the McGill University bookstore.

**Please Note:** While it is unlikely that this syllabus will change substantially, it is possible that minor revisions may be made. While changes will be announced in class, it is your responsibility to keep up to date with the syllabus and the course materials. ***

**MyCourses/WEBCT:** The SOCI 390 myCourses website will be updated regularly with important announcements and information about the course. It is very important that you know how to access the site, and that you do so often.

**Academic Integrity and Grading Policy:**
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L’université McGill attaché une haute importance a l’honnêté académique. Il incombe par conséquent a tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entende par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

**Week 1: Conceptualizing Gender & Health; Overview of Gendered Health Inequalities**

**7 Jan:** What is Health? Experiences of Health, Wellness, Illness, and Biomedicine

**9 Jan:** What is Gender? Critical Intersections with Sex & Sexuality; Overview of Gender Differences & Inequalities in Health


Week 2: Theorizing Gender & Health (Part I)

14 Jan: Theorizing Gender & Health: Feminism & Women’s Health Movements (Part I)
16 Jan: Theorizing Gender & Health: Feminism & Women’s Health Movements (Part II)


Week 3: Theorizing Gender & Health (Part II)

21 Jan: Theorizing Gender & Health: Intersectionality & Multiple Axes of Inequalities
23 Jan: Theorizing Gender & Health: Masculinities


Week 4: Theorizing Gender & Health (Part III)

28 Jan: Theorizing Gender & Health: Transgender Identity & Queer Perspectives
30 Jan: FILM


Week 5: Gender, Health & Human Reproduction

4 Feb: Contraception, Reproductive Rights, & New Reproductive Technologies: Part I
6 Feb: Contraception, Reproductive Rights, & New Reproductive Technologies: Part II


Week 6: Gender & The Division of Labour in Health Care

11 Feb: ***MIDTERM EXAM***
13 Feb: Gender & the Division of Labour in Health Care

Week 7: Pregnancy, Childbirth & Postpartum Care: Historical Perspectives & Medicalization

18 Feb: Historical & Global Comparative Perspectives
20 Feb: Experiences of Pregnancy, Childbirth & Postpartum Care: Canadian perspectives & practices


Week 8: Gendered Occupational and Family Roles & Patterns of Health & Illness

25 Feb: Gendered Occupational and Family Roles & Patterns of Health & Illness: Part I
27 Feb: Gendered Occupational and Family Roles & Patterns of Health & Illness: Part II


Week 9: BREAK

4 – 6 March: Spring Break – no lectures or readings

Week 10: Gender & Mental Health

11 March: Historical & Global Perspectives (**Paper proposal due in class today**)
13 March: Contemporary Issues


Week 11: Gender, Beauty, Sport, and Health (Eating Disorders, Cosmetics, Cosmetic Surgery, Body/Self-Image, Competition)

18 March: Gender, Beauty & Health
20 March: Gender, Sport & Health


Marwick, Alice (2010). There’s a Beautiful Girl Under All of This: Performing Hegemonic


**Week 12: Gender, Media, Money & Health (Pharmaceutical Industry, Health Communication, Medicalization)**

25 March: Breast Cancer  
27 March: Menstruation


**Week 13: Gendered Sexualities & Health; Gender, Aging & Health (HPV Vaccine, Viagra, Sexual Dysfunction)**

1 April: HPV Vaccine  
3 April: Sexual Dysfunction; Aging & Health


Fishman, Jennifer & Mamo, Laura (2001). What’s in a Disorder: A Cultural Analysis of Medical and Pharmaceutical Constructions of Male and Female Sexual Dysfunction.


**Week 14:**

8 April: Gender & Health: Contemporary Activism & Future Directions  
10 April: Final Exam Review Lecture (**Final course paper due in class today***)