

Reproductive Justice

Seminar in Political Science MA Curriculum, University of Cologne
Module SpM Special Topics Political Science I (1335MSP1R1)

Summer Semester 2024

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Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

This special topics seminar offers an introduction to the politics of reproduction and sexuality. We will cover a variety of topics in reproductive health from a political and social view, going beyond simply what *should* be legal or possible under various laws and treaties to explore what patients and advocates *actually* experience. We will consider who has access to reproductive healthcare and under what conditions, building on the perspective of “reproductive rights” into the more expansive “reproductive justice” framework pioneered by multiply-marginalized Black women whose perspectives were not represented by the mainstream (often white) feminist movements. This course will take a comparative politics perspective rather than being anchored in one specific geography.

Accordingly, the course will be structured along the three principles of reproductive justice: 1.) the right *not* to have a child, 2.) the right to have a child, and 3.) the right to parent children in safe and healthy environments. This will take us through a variety of topics in reproductive politics such as contraception, abortion, social support for pregnant people and new parents, and parental leave policies. The reproductive justice structure will also draw the connections between these more obvious reproductive topics and other policy areas, such as climate, policing, and children’s health and safety as components of parenting children in safe and healthy environments.

Schedule

This seminar is scheduled for double blocks on Friday afternoons from 12:00 - 15:30 in Building 103 (Philosophikum), room S83. Each week will be divided into two sessions with a break in the middle. The first introductory session will only last for 90 minutes. We will meet on the following dates:

April 12, April 19, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 31, June 7

Objectives

After participating in this course, students will:

- Be familiar with a variety of topics in reproductive politics, the interconnections between different aspects of reproduction and social reproduction, as well as the connections to intersectional social justice movements

- Know how to find related literature and connect it with the readings from the syllabus and course discussions
- Reflect critically on international and inter-cultural differences in reproductive health topics that cross over from political science into public policy studies, gender studies, critical theory, sociology, and anthropology

Requirements

This course will be evaluated by a portfolio of assignments, weighted as follows:

Two reaction papers (20 points each):

For two sessions of your choice (excluding the introduction and final presentations), write a reaction paper of about 500 words. This short paper should reflect on all of the readings for the session critically, demonstrating your familiarity with the material and raising potential areas for discussion. Reaction papers should be uploaded to Ilias by 23:55 on the Wednesday night before our Friday meeting. Please note that each day we meet includes two sessions, so your paper should react to all of the readings for *one session*, not both of them. You may submit both papers for two sessions on the same day if you so choose, but please upload them separately as two files that each meet the requirements above.

Identify and present a published article on a reproductive justice topic (60 points):

A key research skill is identifying relevant and credible literature on your topic, as you have no doubt practiced in your other coursework. Throughout our discussions, we will cover many themes related to reproductive justice, but there are still so many additional important and relevant topics that will not fit in our syllabus. For this assignment, you should choose an article published in an academic journal or a chapter from an academic book. In your presentation, you must summarize the findings / theoretical contribution as well as connect this article / chapter to the class readings and discussions. A good starting point for finding an article would be to check the references cited in one of our assigned readings that interested you, but you are welcome to propose other articles as well.

Presentations will take place on the final day we meet, **7 June**. Depending on how many people enroll in the course, I will decide on the length of time of the presentations. Before preparing the presentations, students must send me the article they chose by no later than **17 May** so that I can approve this as an appropriate article for the assignment.

Grading Scale

The two reaction papers (20 + 20) and the final presentation (+ 60) total to 100 points. Consequently, grades will be awarded as follows:

Points Earned	Grade	Points Earned	Grade
95 - 100	1.0	65 - 69.5	3.0
90 - 94.5	1.3	60 - 64.5	3.3
85 - 89.5	1.7	55 - 59.5	3.7
80 - 84.5	2.0	50 - 54.5	4.0
75 - 79.5	2.3	0 - 49.5	5.0 (fail)
70 - 74.5	2.7		

Participation

It is the joint responsibility of instructors and students to create a respectful and inclusive atmosphere in our sessions together. Please attend the seminar regularly and participate in the discussion. Topics in this course may be emotional for some participants, and they relate to our individual deeply-held moral beliefs. All of us have opinions on these topics, and yours may be challenged during this course. The goal of this course is not to convince you to change your mind, but rather to expose you to the current debates on these topics. It is imperative that we respect one another's opinions in the spirit of collaboration and learning.

I want to help you succeed in this course. If you encounter problems during the semester, either with the contents of the course or personally (e.g. illness, family, visa, etc.) and you need an extension or assistance, please contact me as soon as possible. Should you require accommodations for a disability, please also bring this to my attention.

In the spirit of respectful and mutually beneficial participation in the course, it is inappropriate to use online artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT without citation. You are welcome to use whatever tools help you organize your ideas, find information, and improve your writing, but you should not use ChatGPT or similar tools to generate text for your assignments. This commonly results in citations to references that do not actually exist, and it can impair your learning. Please do not disrespect your classmates and instructors by trying to pass off AI-generated writing as your own work. For more information, you may consult the University of Cologne's statement on the use of AI tools: https://verwaltung.uni-koeln.de/stabsstelle02.1/content/faq/data/chatgpt/index_ger.html

Course Outline

12 April: Introduction

Ross, Loretta, and Rickie Solinger. 2017. *Reproductive justice: An introduction*. Vol. 1 of *Reproductive justice : a new vision for the twenty-first century*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
– Chapter 1, “A Reproductive Justice History”

Roberts, Dorothy E. 1997. *Killing the black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. 1999th ed. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.
– Introduction

Kreitzer, Rebecca J., Kellen A. Kane, and Christopher Z. Mooney. 2019. “The Evolution of Morality Policy Debate: Moralization and Demoralization.” *The Forum* 17 (1): 3–24.

The Right Not to Have a Child

19 April

Family Planning

O'Donnell Heffington, Peggy. 2023. *Without children: The long history of not being a mother*. New York NY: Seal Press.
– Introduction

Mills, Melinda, Letizia Mencarini, Maria L. Tanturri, and Katia Begall. 2008. "Gender equity and fertility intentions in Italy and the Netherlands." *Demographic Research* 18: 1–26.

Gembries, Ann-Katrin, Theresia Theuke, and Isabel Heinemann, eds. 2018. *Children by choice?: Changing values, reproduction, and family planning in the 20th century. volume 3 of Wertewandel im 20. Jahrhundert.* Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
– Chapter 10: From "Children by Choice" to "Families by Choice"?

Contraception

Roberts 1997 – Chapter 2: The Dark Side of Birth Control

Hegde, Shalika, Elizabeth Hoban, and Annemarie Nevill. 2012. "Unsafe abortion as a birth control method: maternal mortality risks among unmarried Cambodian migrant women on the Thai-Cambodia border." [eng]. *Asia-Pacific journal of public health* 24 (6): 989–1001.

Stark, Brett, Jaclyn M. W. Hughto, Brittany M. Charlton, Madeline B. Deutsch, Jennifer Potter, and Sari L. Reisner. 2019. "The contraceptive and reproductive history and planning goals of trans-masculine adults: a mixed-methods study." [eng]. *Contraception* 100 (6): 468–73.

Gembries et al. 2018 – Chapter 6: Ignaciuk, Agata. 2018. "Paradox of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives in Spain and Poland (1960s–1970s)."

3 May

Abortion Principles

Sommer, Udi, and Aliza Forman-Rabinovici. 2019. *Producing Reproductive Rights.* Cambridge University Press.

– Chapter 5: Reproductive Rights and the Nation-State: The Cases of New Zealand and Rwanda

Htun, Mala. 2010. *Sex and the State*, ed. Mala Htun. Cambridge University Press, 142–71.

– Chapter 6: Why Hasn't Abortion Been Decriminalized in Latin America?

Mishtal, Joanna. 2014. "Reproductive Governance in the New Europe: Competing Visions of Morality, Sovereignty and Supranational Policy." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23 (1): 59–77.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43234597>

Sabu, M. George. 1997. "Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India: From Recognition Back to Denial?" *Reproductive health matters* 5 (10). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3775470>

Abortion Access

Greene Foster, Diana. 2020. *The Turnaway Study: Ten Years, a thousand women, and the consequences of having - or being denied - an abortion.* Scribner.

– Chapter 1

Krajewska, Atina. 2021. "Revisiting Polish Abortion Law: Doctors and Institutions in a Restrictive Regime." *Social & Legal Studies* 31 (3): 409–38.

Jelinska, Kinga, and Susan Yanow. 2018. "Putting abortion pills into women's hands: realizing the full potential of medical abortion." [eng]. *Contraception* 97 (2): 86–89.

The Right to Have a Child

10 May

Pregnancy & Fertility Care

O'Donnell Heffington 2023 – Chapter 5: Because we can't

Roberts 1997 – Chapter 6: Race and the New Reproduction

Lie, Merete, and Nina Lykke, eds. 2017. *Assisted reproduction across borders: Feminist perspectives on normalizations, disruptions and transmissions*. Vol. 19 of *Routledge advances in feminist studies and intersectionality*. New York NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

– Chapter 15: Babies from Behind Bars

A Market for Babies

Satz, Debra. 2010. *Why some things should not be for sale: The moral limits of markets*. Oxford political philosophy. New York: Oxford University Press.

– Chapter 5: Markets in Women's Reproductive Labor

Lie & Lykke 2017 – Chapter 1: Citizen, Subject, Property: Indian Surrogacy and the Global Fertility Market

Sandel, Michael J. 2012. *What money can't buy: The moral limits of markets*. London, New York: Allen Lane.

– pages 43-60 of Chapter 2: Incentives

17 May

Disability & Reproductive Justice

Jarman, Michelle. 2015. "Relations of Abortion: Crip Approaches to Reproductive Justice." *Feminist Formations* 27 (1): 46–66. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43860777>.

Herzog, Dagmar. 2018. *Unlearning eugenics: Sexuality, reproduction, and disability in post-Nazi Europe*. George L. Mosse series in modern European cultural and intellectual history. Madison Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

– pages 28-41 (second half of Chapter 1)

O'Connell, Katie. 2016. "We Need to Talk About Disability as a Reproductive Justice Issue." *Reproaction Blog*, 2016.

<https://reproaction.org/we-need-to-talk-about-disability-as-a-reproductive-justice-issue/>

Powell, Robyn. 2022. "Disability Reproductive Justice." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=9793&context=penn_law_review.

*** MORE READINGS FOR 17 MAY BELOW! ***

The Right to Parent Children in Safe and Healthy Environments

17 May

Parental Leave & Social Benefits

Folbre, Nancy. 2010. Valuing Children.

– Chapter 8: Subsidizing Parents

– Chapter 10: Who should pay for the kids?

Son, Keonhi. 2024. “The Origin of Social Policy for Women Workers: The Emergence of Paid Maternity Leave in Western Countries.” *Comparative Political Studies* 57 (1): 69–100.

31 May

Policing & Societal Violence

Ross & Solinger 2017 – Chapter 4: Reproductive Justice and the Right to Parent
(This chapter is long, but relevant to both sessions today, so please read it!)

Roberts 1997 - Chapter 4: Making Reproduction a Crime

Environment & Climate

O'Donnell Heffington 2023 – Chapter 4: Because of the planet

Murtaugh, Paul A., and Michael G. Schlax. 2009. “Reproduction and the carbon legacies of individuals.” *Global Environmental Change* 19 (1): 14–20.

Conclusion

7 June

Intersectional Connections

Roberts 1997 – Chapter 7: The Meaning of Liberty

Cahn, Naomi. 2023. “The Political Language of Parental Rights: Abortion, Gender-Affirming Care, and Critical Race Theory.” *Seton Hall Law Review* 53 (5): 1443–76.

Student Presentations

For our final session, students will present the articles they have chosen – for details, see “Requirements” above. Depending on course enrollment numbers, we may use both sessions on this day for presentations and skip the discussion on intersectional connections.