

# Gender, Sex and Health

FALL 2019

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**LECTURE:** Fridays, 8:30-11:20, KTH 107

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## **Course Description**

In this course students will learn to challenge dominant gender paradigms and develop an in-depth understanding of the ways in which gender contributes to the differential structuring of health experiences for women, men and gender minorities. The course incorporates historical, theoretical and empirical perspectives to explore the relationship between gender and health in Canada and other countries. It also explores this relationship at the intersection of class, ethnicity and sexuality, and throughout the life course.

The course incorporates lectures and seminar-style discussions. Each class will involve a traditional lecture. Starting on Week 4 (September 27), the lecture will be followed by a student presentation on the week's topic. A discussion, led by the student(s), will follow the lecture and presentation. To derive the maximum benefit from a seminar-style course, it is important to come to class prepared by completing the readings, preparing one or two key questions, arguments and/or observations about the week's readings, and being fully ready to participate in discussions.

Some of the topics covered in class can be sensitive in nature. Students are expected to discuss topics in a manner that is respectful of divergent viewpoints and experiences, and that in no way threatens the dignity of classmates.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

- To develop an in-depth understanding of key theories and definitions used in the study of gender and health.
- To acquire empirical knowledge on gender as a social determinant of health, from an intersectional perspective.
- To link gendered experiences of health to systemic processes at various scales (local, global, etc.).
- To advance skills in critical thinking, writing, research, and presenting.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- All readings are available on Avenue to Learn.

## **Course Evaluation Breakdown**

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- Policy brief (25%) October 11
- Presentation (25%) (starting Week 4, except for Week 7)
- Essay (30%) November 29

Further instructions, including grading criteria, will be discussed in class and may be posted on Avenue to Learn.

## **Attendance and participation in class discussions (20%)**

Each week, students will be expected to discuss the required readings as well as the material presented in lectures and student presentations. Students should prepare by

carefully reading the material and note one or two key questions, arguments and/or observations about the week's topic. Participation marks will be awarded based on the quality (rather than on the quantity) of interventions throughout the term, as well as on attentiveness. Quality interventions are those that deepen the discussion and/or introduce new or divergent perspectives. In addition, we will start each class by discussing news stories relevant to the field of gender and health. Students are encouraged to bring stories to the attention of the class and are encouraged to comment on stories discussed in class.

### **Policy brief (25%)**

Students will write a policy brief on an issue related to gender and health. A policy brief outlines the rationale for choosing a particular course of action in a policy debate. The purpose is to convince the target audience (non-specialized audience) of the urgency of the problem and the benefits of adopting the course of action that is proposed. The policy brief should be no more than 1,500 words. It should be prepared according to the following template: <https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/idrcpolicybrieftoolkit.pdf>

Policy briefs are to be submitted to the instructor in class in hard copy on October 11.

### **Presentation (25%)**

Each week starting in Week 4 (except for Week 7), one or more students will present, with slides, on the week's topic. The number of students presenting each week will be based on class enrollment. The content of the presentation will first be discussed with the instructor and will draw on supplemental readings to be chosen by the student(s). After the presentation, the student(s) will lead a class discussion. Students should prepare for a one-hour lecture and discussion. The presentation will be evaluated by the instructor based on content (well-researched) and quality (well organized, easy to understand), as well as creativity. Video clips can be included in the presentation but should not replace it. A sign-up sheet will be distributed in class on September 13.

### **Essay (30%)**

Each student will submit a research paper on a topic related to gender and health (not the same topic as your presentation). This may or may not be a topic that was covered in class. The essay should be analytical rather than descriptive. This means that you need to develop a thesis in relation to your topic and analyze the evidence that *supports* and *detracts* from your thesis. The essay should be 8 pages double-spaced excluding title page, footnotes (if applicable) and references. It should be typed using 12-point font and printed on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper. Include a title page that includes the name of the instructor, your name, the course title and number, the date, as well as a title for your essay. There is no required number of references, however you should use common sense. You may consult a variety of sources but make sure to include plenty of scientific articles that are *not* in the list of required course readings. You may use any recognized citation style for the reference list (e.g. APA). Papers can be handed in class in hard copy anytime during the term, up to and including November 29. Late papers should be emailed to the instructor (Please note the late policy below).

In marking your essay, I will consider the following: Clarity of your thesis; strength of the arguments in support of your thesis; your ability to present and debate contrasting viewpoint(s); strength of the supporting evidence (quality of the references used to support your arguments; appropriate use of statistics, examples, etc.); appropriateness of the introductory and concluding statements; and writing, spelling, grammar and organization (sections must flow from one to the next).

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1**

#### **September 6 – Theorizing the relationship between gender, sex and health**

Readings:

- Krieger, N. 2003. Genders, sexes and health: what are the connections – and why does it matter? *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 32(4): 652-657.
- Connell, R. 2012. Gender, health and theory: Conceptualizing the issue, in local and world perspective. *Social Science & Medicine*. 74(11): 1675-1683.
- Hankivsky, O. 2012. Women's health, men's health, and gender and health: implications of intersectionality. *Social Science and Medicine*. 74(11): 1712-1720.

### **Week 2**

#### **September 13 – Stereotypes of women in health practice, research and public discourse**

Readings:

- Quintner, J.L. 1995. The Australian RSI debate: stereotyping and medicine. *Disability and Rehabilitation*. 17(5): 256-262.
- Ehrenreich, B. and English, D. 2005. *Femininity as a disease*. IN *For her own good*. Two centuries of the experts' advice to women. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Anchor Books. Pages 120-127.
- Edwards, S. 2016. Hillary Clinton health hysteria has deeply sexist 19<sup>th</sup>-century origins. *Fusion*. September 14. <http://fusion.net/story/347377/hillary-clinton-health-hysteria-19th-century/>

Note: Sign-up for presentations today

### **Week 3**

#### **September 20 – Women's autonomy in health encounters**

Readings:

- Sartin, J.S. 2004. J. Marion Sims, the father of gynecology: Hero or villain? *Southern Medical Journal*. 97(5): 500-505.
- Cahill, H.A. 2001. Male appropriation and medicalization of childbirth: an historical analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 33(3):334-342.
- Parry, D.C. 2008. "We wanted a birth experience, not a medical experience": Exploring Canadian women's use of midwifery. *Health Care for Women International*. 29(8-9): 784-806.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07399330802269451>

## Week 4

### **September 27 – The women’s health movement from a historical and critical perspective**

Readings:

- Morrow, M. 2007. ‘Our Bodies Our Selves’ in context: Reflections on the women’s health movement in Canada. IN Women’s health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy. Morrow M, Hankivsky O and Varcoe C. Eds. University of Toronto Press. Pages 33-63.
- Kumanyika, S.K., Morssink, C.B., Nestle, M. 2001. Minority women and advocacy for women’s health. American Journal of Public Health. 91(9): 1383-1388.

Note: Presentations begin

## Week 5

### **October 4 – Masculinities and health**

Readings:

- Courtenay, W.H. 2000. Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men’s well-being: a theory of gender and health. Social Science and Medicine. 50: 1385-1401.
- Walter, N., Bourgois, P., Loinaz, H.M. 2004. Masculinity and undocumented labor migration: injured Latino day laborers in San Francisco. Social Science and Medicine. 59(6): 1159-1168.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2690638/>
- Coen, S.E., Oliffe, J.L., Johnson, J.L., and Kelly, M.T. 2013. Looking for Mr. PG: Masculinities and men’s depression in a northern resource-based Canadian community. Health & Place. 21: 94-101.

## Week 6

### **October 11 - Transgender health and social stigma**

Readings:

- Poteat, T., German, D., Kerrigan, D. 2013. Managing uncertainty: a grounded theory of stigma in transgender health care encounters. Social Science and Medicine. 84: 22-29.
- Winter, S., Diamond, M., Green, J., Karasic, D., Reed, T., Whittle, S., Wylie, K. 2016. Transgender people: health at the margins of society. The Lancet. 388(10042): 390-400.
- Green, J. 2016. Transgender: why should we care? The Lancet. 388(10042): 334-335.

Note: Policy brief due today

## Week 7

### **October 18 – Mid-term break**

## Week 8

### **October 25 – The medicalization of women and men’s bodies**

Readings:

- Offman, A. and Kleinplatz, P.J. 2004. Does PMDD belong in the DSM? Challenging the medicalization of women's bodies. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*. 13(1).
- Marshall, B.L. 2008. Older men and sexual health: post-Viagra views of changes in function. *Generations*. 32: 21-27.
- O'Grady, K. 2003. Reclaiming menopause: Another look at HRT and the medicalization of women's bodies. *Canadian Women's Health Network*. 5/6(4/1). <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/node/39548>

## Week 9

### November 1 – Women workers' invisibility and implications for health

Readings:

- Messing, K. 2014. Pain & prejudice. What science can learn about work from the people who do it. BTL Books. Chapter 2 "The invisible world of cleaning", pages 12-32.
- Brophy, J.T., Keith, M.M, and McArthur, J.E. Breast cancer and work: why we need to build a movement.

## Week 10

### November 8 – Gender, health and politics

Readings:

- Casper, M.J., Carpenter, L.M. 2008. Sex, drugs, and politics: the HPV vaccine for cervical cancer. *Sociology of Health & Illness*. 30(6): 886-899. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2008.01100.x/full>
- Harris, L.H., Silverman, N.S., Marshall, M.F. 2016. The paradigm of the paradox: women, pregnant women, and the unequal burdens of the Zika virus pandemic. *The American Journal of Bioethics*. 16(5): 1-4. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15265161.2016.1177367>
- Miller, M.E. 2016. With abortion banned in Zika countries, women beg on web for abortion pills. *Washington Post*. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/02/17/help-zika-in-venezuela-i-need-abortion/?utm\\_term=.c5a530a05d19](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/02/17/help-zika-in-venezuela-i-need-abortion/?utm_term=.c5a530a05d19)

## Week 11

### November 15 – Rethinking the vulnerability paradigm

Readings:

- Higgins, J.A, Hoffman, S., Dworkin, S.L. 2010. Rethinking gender, heterosexual men, and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS: Time to shift the paradigm. *American Journal of Public Health*. 100(3): 435-445. <http://europepmc.org/articles/pmc2820057>
- Dworkin, S.L. 2005. Who is epidemiologically fathomable in the HIV/AIDS epidemic? Gender, sexuality and intersectionality in public health. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*. 7(6): 615-623. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4115794/>

- Leipert, B.D., and Reutter, L. 2005. Developing resilience. How women maintain their health in northern geographically isolated settings. 15(1): 49-65.

## **Week 12**

### **November 22 – Gender, body image and health**

Readings:

- Holstein, M. B. 2002. A feminist perspective on anti-aging medicine. *Generations*. 4: 38-43.
- Grogan, S. 2006. Body image and health: contemporary perspectives. *Journal of Health Psychology*. 11(4): 523-530.

## **Week 13**

### **November 29 – Course Wrap-Up**

There are no readings for this week. We will be watching and discussing a documentary on gender and health (to be chosen together).

Note: Essay due today

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Policy briefs and essays should be submitted in class in hard copy.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor will permit extensions for exceptional circumstances only, for example when students have followed the requirements to report their absences.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>

On-line self-reporting tool – illness lasting less than 3 days. Can only be used once per term. Instructors are not allowed to accept medical notes! These must be submitted to your Faculty office. In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please also communicate with the course instructor.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Department/University Policies:**

All assignments for this class should be submitted/returned in-class, unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor.

### **Code of Conduct:**

<http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca>

“McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, the dissemination of knowledge and personal and professional development. Membership in this community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study work and live within it.”

### **Computer Use:**

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

### **Course Modifications:**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and Avenue to Learn (if used by instructor) *regularly during the term* to note any changes.

### **Evaluations (Online):**

<http://evals.mcmaster.ca>, and log in via MACID.

These help faculty and the Department of Health, Aging & Society meet our goal of continually improving teaching effectiveness. All students in the course are invited and encouraged to complete the evaluation.

### **McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation**

Please find the McMaster University policy on academic accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy at the following link:

- <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

### **Student Success Centre:**

Email Address: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/>

Location: GH-110

Contact: 905-525-9140 x 24254

Some services include: student orientation, academic skills, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition. Writing Support:

<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>

### **Student Wellness Centre:**

Email Address: <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/>

Location: MUSC-B10

Contact: 905-525-9140 x 27700

Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. [Student Accessibility Services](#) can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

If you require this course outline in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: [hasdept@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hasdept@mcmaster.ca)).

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

**Please always include student name, ID, course # and TA name in messages.**

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.