

Reproductive Politics & Technologies

Professor: Risa Cromer

A. Course Description

Reproduction provides a strategic site for examining relationships between bodies, politics, and technologies. While conventionally thought to mean the biological processes of procreation or the social processes supporting labor, this course approaches reproduction through a broadened lens that examines how it has been reconfigured within politics and by technologies. In turn, conventional understandings about politics and technologies take different shape when reproduction inhabits the center of analysis. With such contingencies in mind, this course examines two main lines of inquiry: the roles of science and technology within politics concerning reproduction, and the politics within practices involving reproductive technologies.

While reproductive politics and technologies have no single history, our task is to consider linkages among the geographically, culturally, and historically diverse examples we encounter. This course is organized around five main themes to help achieve this goal. We begin in Unit I by examining how the idea of reproductive politics cohered at the intersection of feminist scholarship and activism. Unit II introduces the science and technologies of population—one of the twentieth century's major inventions that politicized reproduction—including its management and control through case studies from around the world. Unit III delves into social justice issues that arise within reproductive politics, from incarceration, to the outsourcing of domestic labor, to disability rights. The course pivots in Unit IV to examine the historical and transnational issues entailed within reproductive technologies, with a focus on in vitro fertilization (IVF). Unit V extends the exploration of IVF into fields of cryopreservation, animal cloning and conservation, and environmental justice. Course materials draw primarily from anthropology, feminist technoscience, social justice advocacy, and documentary films.

Class Format

This class will be run as an upper-division undergraduate/graduate seminar based chiefly on reading, writing, and discussion. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and come to class each session ready to engage in in-depth discussion. While some in-class time will be allocated towards instructor lectures, we will work collaboratively towards developing an active, participatory intellectual space and students will be responsible for shaping our understanding of the assigned materials. Class time will be used for a variety of pedagogical activities besides lectures, including student-led discussions on readings, small group activities, and viewing and discussing documentary films.

Course Objectives

In the interplay between exploring particular issues in depth and accumulating skills for broader application, students will gain a better understanding of how interdisciplinary scholars grapple with the world around us. In general, students will be challenged to improve their analytic, writing, and communication skills. Students on completion of this course should have:

- Acquired a critical vocabulary from a variety of disciplines with which to critique and interpret reproduction, politics, and technologies;

- Demonstrated understanding of the intersectional nature of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and sexuality as they pertain to reproductive politics and technologies;
- Developed skills to systematically question and analyze problems, issues, and claims presented within diverse texts;
- Gained understanding of the role of anthropology in challenging and supporting common assumptions about reproduction politics and technologies;
- Applied knowledge to issues of significance to students;
- Approached thinking, writing, and informed social engagements as ongoing processes, and operated accordingly.

B. Required Reading

Books will be available for purchase at the campus bookstore. Articles will be available for electronic download through Canvas/Blackboard.

- Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (University of California Press 2017)
- Michelle Murphy, *Economization of Life* (Duke University Press 2017)
- Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Vintage Press 1998)

C. Course Expectations

Preparing for Class

Students are expected to come to class prepared to engage in in-depth discussion of the readings. Preparation means:

- Reading the assigned materials for the day
- Taking notes on the readings
- Developing one question and one comment/critique about on the reading
- Acquiring class notes from another student if you missed the previous class
- Checking Canvas/Blackboard and your email for messages from me before class
- Submitting assignments when they are due

In this seminar-style class, you will regularly be asked to collaborate with one another, pose questions, listen carefully, think critically, share ideas and insights (even while these are still in development), encourage your peers, and challenge yourself. In-class discussions will provide space not only for further clarifying the required course materials' meanings, but also for exploring the implications of the course themes for your personal lives. If you would like to further tailor the assignments to your own educational goals, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Attendance & Punctuality

Attendance is required. It will be taken each class session and factors into your participation grade. I understand that being a student comes with stresses and that things happen during the semester. Please notify me as soon as possible if you anticipate being absent. If you miss a class, you are still expected to turn in any work due that day as well as acquire notes from a classmate.

Repeated tardiness will affect your final grade. Make up work may be assigned to cover what you missed during class time.

Academic Integrity

All students must observe the university's Honor Code and adhere to university standards of academic honesty. Please familiarize yourself with this university website ([link here](#)) describing what constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is representing another's ideas, sentences, and works as one's own. In all assignments for this class, be sure to give credit when using other people's work. I will never penalize you for including citations—in fact it will show that you are diligent and investigated further. If you are unsure of whether something is plagiarism, please ask me. Note that it is your responsibility to seek clarification.

Standard Paper Format

All writing assignments (except for those completed in class) should be typed using this standard format: 1 inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, numbered pages, name and date at top of first page, and edited. All assignments should be uploaded through the Canvas/Blackboard "Assignment" tab. Printed or emailed papers will not be accepted.

Gadgets

Use of electronic devices for purposes unrelated to class affects the quality of our discussions and conveys a lack of respect to your classmates and to me. Please be sure phones are silenced and away for the duration of class. I discourage the use of laptops but highly encourage the use of notebooks/pens. If you need a laptop for readings or if you are sure you learn better with them open, please let me know (I will keep a list of approved uses) and disconnect from the internet for the duration of the class.

Accommodations

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me as soon as possible with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center so that we can make arrangements to address your needs. Timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at this phone number and email address.

D. Course Requirements

Participation – 10%

Each of you is an important part of this class. I take your participation seriously by requiring persistent engagement. Participation does not simply mean speaking a lot, but is demonstrated when you: come to class on time and prepared; listen attentively to others; ask pertinent questions; actively take notes; contribute relevant and constructive comments toward an inclusive learning environment; speak in small and large groups with awareness of your own levels of training and comfort; and collaborate during in-class activities. I expect that engagements with each other will be respectful of diversities of all kinds. I attempt to manage classroom dynamics to make it a learning environment for all but if you are finding it hard to engage in relation to other individuals or the class as a whole, please speak to me so that we

might find a resolution. Finally, attendance—you cannot participate if you are not present. Three tardy arrivals of more than 10 minutes late will be treated as one absence.

Discussion Leadership – 10%

At the beginning of the semester, the class will be divided into groups or pairs that will work together for leading discussion on their designated days. Interactive exercises are encouraged, such as structured debates, quiz shows, small group activities, mock trials, etc. Groups may also incorporate movie clips, news articles, pieces of art, blog entries, personal anecdotes, or an exploration of a related current issue. Students will be assessed based on completing a discussion preparation guide (available for download on Canvas/Blackboard), facilitating a creative lesson plan showing familiarity with the materials, and contributing positively to the conversational dynamics in the classroom.

Reading Meditations – 20%

To help students synthesize the reading material, each will post a written reflection each week throughout the term to the “Assignments” tab on Canvas/Blackboard. Responses will: briefly summarize the main argument(s) in the reading in one to three sentences, raise pertinent questions, and link readings to other ideas from the course. Occasionally you will be asked to respond to a specific prompt. Students are encouraged to use these postings as testing grounds for position paper topics. Meditations should strive to be 350-500 words, and are due by 9pm the evening before our first class of the week. Student discussion leaders and I will draw from your meditations to facilitate in-class discussion. Meditations will be evaluated based on “check-plus,” “check,” “check-minus” rubric.

Position Papers – 30% (15% each)

Students will write two position papers, which are 4-5 page essays that develop an interpretation based on themes and issues from a particular Unit. Units II-IV are eligible for these papers. Position papers are not summaries but your own exploration of themes governed by a central argument. Each are due the week following the end of a Unit. Some Units will have question prompts; others will be open-ended.

Final Project– 30%

Students will choose one of the following assignments for the final project. Detailed descriptions and deadlines for each part of the projects will be distributed at the end of Unit I. Final papers should be 6-7 pages in length. Students will deliver formal project presentations during the final week of the term.

Option 1—In-Depth Interview: Students will conduct an ethnographic interview with a person regarding a past or ongoing event in that person’s reproductive life—broadly conceived—and write a reflective essay that analyzes themes from the narrative with respect to course materials. This assignment allows students to practice a qualitative research method by designing and analyzing primary data with respect to theoretical concepts. The complete project materials that students will submit to the instructor include an interview guide, transcript/comprehensive notes from interview, and analytic essay.

Option 2—Critical Reading of an Ethnography: Students will read and critically analyze a book-length ethnography using skills learned in class to identify an argument, break it into its component parts, and evaluate it through multiple registers. This project will provide a more robust sense of how anthropology differs from, and perhaps dovetails with, other disciplinary analyses of reproductive politics and/or technologies. Students will be provided a list of books possible for review, though should meet with me to discuss pursuing titles of other interest. This assignment deepens one’s critical analysis skills while highlighting the value and shortcomings of an anthropological approach.

Option 3—New Topic Proposal: Students will develop a formal proposal for a new course topic as if they have been hired to work as a student instructor for a future iteration of the course. Students will argue for the inclusion of the new topic by describing the significance of the proposed topic in relation to course materials, reviewing recommended academic and cultural texts to assign, identifying complementary lecture material, and generating a possible list of guest speakers. This assignment provides students with an opportunity to pursue a topic of personal interest by synthesizing it with what you learned this semester.

E. Grading Distribution

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

Participation	10%
Discussion Leadership	10%
Reading Responses	20%
Position Papers (2 x 15% each)	30%
Final Project	30%

F. Reading Tips

Keep the following questions in mind as you read and take notes to help you formulate your thoughts for each reading:

- What is the main message or argument the author is trying to convey? Does their evidence support it?
- How do the texts relate to each other and to themes we encountered in class?
- What concepts seem significant, and why?
- What questions are you left with after reading the piece?
- Were there parts of the reading that you found intriguing, troubling, insightful, or informative? Why?
- Do you dis/agree with any points the author made and why?
- Have you had similar experiences to those discussed in the text?

G. Course Schedule

Note: Readings and assignment due dates may be adjusted according to needs of the class.

UNIT I: COMING TO TERMS

Week 1—In the Beginning...

Day 1 Introduction & Welcome

Day 2 Centering Reproduction

- Rayna Rapp, “Gender, Body, Biomedicine: How Some Feminist Concerns Dragged Reproduction to the Center of Social Theory,” pg. 466-477

Week 2—What’s Political About Reproduction?

Day 1 All Politics as Reproductive Politics

- Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, “The Politics of Reproduction,” pg. 311-343
- Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), pg. 1-18

Day 2 RJ in the USA

- Loretta Ross and Rickie Solinger, “A Reproductive Justice History,” *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* (2017), pg. 9-57
- Jael Silliman et al., “Women of Color and their Struggle for Reproductive Justice,” *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice* (2016), Ch 1
- *Film: [Listen Up! New Voices for Reproductive Justice](#)*

UNIT II – POLITICS OF POPULATION

Week 3—Science of Population

Day 1 The Problem of Population as a Politics of Reproduction

- Michelle Murphy, *Economization of Life* (2017), pg. 1-77

Day 2 What is Reproduced in the Name of Reproduction?

- Michelle Murphy, *Economization of Life* (2017), pg. 78-146

Week 4—Reproducing the Nation

Day 1 Barren States

- Gail Kligman, “Political Demography: The Banning of Abortion in Ceaușescu’s Romania,” pg. 234-255
- Elizabeth Krause, “‘Empty Cradles’ and the Quiet Revolution: Demographic Discourse and Cultural Struggles of Gender, Race, and Class in Italy,” pg. 576–609
- *Film: 4 Weeks, 3 Months, 2 Days*

Day 2 Controlling Population

- Susan Greenhalgh, “Science, Modernity, and the Making of China’s One-

- Child Policy,” pg. 163-96
- Junjie Chen, “Globalizing, Reproducing, and Civilizing Rural Subjects: Population Control Policy and Constructions of Rural Identity in China,” pg. 38-52

Week 5—Technologies of Control

Day 1 Sterilization

- Iriz López, *Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women's Struggle for Reproductive Freedom* (2008), pg. 3-19, one of Chs 3-6
- Elena Gutiérrez and Liza Fuentes, “Population Control by Sterilization: The Cases of Puerto Rican and Mexican-Origin Women in the United States,” pg. 85-100
- *Film: No Mas Bebés*

Day 2 Racism, Nativism, Xenophobia

- Dorothy Roberts, “The Dark Side of Birth Control,” *Killing the Black Body* (1997), pg. 56-103
- Andrea Smith, “Better Dead than Pregnant: The Colonization of Native Women’s Reproductive Health,” pg. 123-146
- Priscilla Huang, “Anchor Babies, Over-Breeders, and the Population Bomb: The Reemergence of Nativism and Population Control in Anti-Immigration Policies,” pg. 385-400

UNIT III – REPRODUCING INJUSTICE

Week 6—Reproductive Governance

Day 1 From Population to Rights

- Lynn Morgan and Elizabeth F. S. Roberts, “Reproductive Governance in Latin America,” pg. 241-254
- Elyse Singer, “Lawful Sinners: Reproductive Governance and Moral Agency around Abortion in Mexico,” pg. 1-21

Day 2 Policing Pregnancy, Criminalizing Mothers

- Dorothy Roberts, “Making Reproduction a Crime,” *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (1997), pg. 150-201.
- Lynn Paltrow and Jeanne Flavin, “Arrests of and Forced Interventions on Pregnant Women in the United States, 1973-2005: Implications for Women's Legal Status and Public Health,” pg. 299-343.
- *Film: “[Decriminalizing Stillbirth and Miscarriage: A Conversation with Lynn Paltrow](#)”*

Week 7—Stratified Reproduction

Day 1 Incarcerated Motherhood

- Rickie Solinger, “Interrupted Life: Incarcerated Mothers in the United States—A Traveling Public Art Exhibition,” pg. 63-101

- *Film: Mothers of Bedford*

Day 2

Outsourcing Care

- Shellee Colen, “‘Like a Mother to Them’: Stratified Reproduction and West Indian Child Care Workers and Employers in New York,” pg. 78-102
- Laura Briggs, “Offshoring Reproduction,” *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), pg. 75-100

Week 8—Selective Reproduction

Day 1

Adoption

- Ana Teresa Ortiz and Laura Briggs, “The Culture of Poverty, Crack Babies, and Welfare Cheats: The Making of the ‘Healthy White Baby Crisis,’” pg. 39-57
- Laura Briggs, “[Biopolitics of Adoption](#)”

Day 2

Reproductive and Disability Rights

- Marsha Saxton, “Disability Rights and Selective Abortion,” *The Disability Studies Reader* (2006), pg. 105-116
- Tine Gammeltoft and Hanh Thi Thuy Nguyen, “Fetal Conditions and Fatal Decisions: Ethical Dilemmas in Ultrasound Screening in Vietnam,” pg. 2248-2259
- Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, “[The Difference that Disability Makes: Reproductive Justice through a Wider Lens](#)”

UNIT IV – “ASSISTING” REPRODUCTION

Week 9—Questioning Reprotech

Day 1

Biologizing Technology

- Sarah Franklin, *Biological Relatives: IVF, Stem Cells, and the Future of Kinship* (2013), pg. 1-67

Day 2

Reprotech and RJ

- Laura Briggs, Faye Ginsburg, Elena R. Gutiérrez, Rosalind Petchesky, Rayna Rapp, Andrea Smith, and Chikako Takeshita, “Roundtable: Reproductive Technologies and Reproductive Justice,” pg. 102-125
- Laura Briggs, “The Politics and Economy of Reproductive Technology and Black Infant Mortality,” *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), pg. 101-148

Week 10—Cross-Border Reproductive Care

Day 1

Reprotourism

- Marcia Inhorn, “Globalization and Gametes: Reproductive ‘Tourism,’ Islamic Bioethics, and Middle Eastern Modernity,” pg. 87-103
- Lisa Ikemoto, “Reproductive Tourism: Equality Concerns in the Global Market for Fertility Services”

- Day 2 Outsourcing Fertility
- Daisy Deompampo, *Transnational Reproduction: Race, Kinship, and Commercial Surrogacy in India* (2016), pg. 59-94 and 195-222
 - *Film: Made in India*

Week 11—Clinical Labor

- Day 1 Donor X
- Catherine Waldby and Melinda Cooper, “Fertility Outsourcing: Contract, Risk, and Assisted Reproductive Technology,” *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy*, pg. 37-61
 - *Film: Eggsplotation*
- Day 2 Eggs as Research Capital
- Lisa Ikemoto, “Egg as Capital: Human Egg Procurement in the Fertility Industry and the Stem Cell Research Enterprise,” pg. 763-781
 - Catherine Waldby and Melinda Cooper, “Regenerative Labor: Women and the Stem Cell Industry,” *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy*, pg. 89-116

UNIT IV – QUEERING REPRODUCTION

Week 12—Cryopolitics

- Day 1 To Freeze or Not to Freeze: Is that the Question?
- Lisa Ikemoto, “Egg Freezing, Stratified Reproduction, and the Logic of Not,” pg. 112-117
 - Marcia Inhorn, “[Women, Consider Freezing Your Eggs](#)”
 - Lynn Morgan and Janelle Taylor, “[Egg Freezing: WTF?](#)”
 - Rachel Walden, “[Why Corporate Promotion of Egg-Freezing isn’t a ‘Benefit’ to All Women](#)”
- Day 2 Transparenting
- Micha Cardenas, “Pregnancy: Reproductive Futures in Trans of Color Feminism,” pg. 48-57
 - Paula Amato, “[Fertility Options for Transgender Persons](#),” UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health
 - Judith Halberstam, “The Pregnant Man,” pg. 77-78

Week 13—Cloning Animals

- Day 1 Hello, Dolly!
- Sarah Franklin, *Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy* (2007), pg. 1-45
- Day 2 Reproducing Zoos, Queering Nature
- Carrie Friese, “Models of Cloning, Models for the Zoo: Rethinking the Sociological Significance of Cloned Animals,” pg. 367-390

- Matthew Chrulew, “Freezing the Ark: The Cryopolitics of Endangered Species Preservation,” *Cryopolitics: Frozen Life in a Melting World* (2017), pg. 283-306

Week 14—Why Should Our Bodies End at Our Skin?

- Day 1 Toxic Infrastructures
- Michelle Murphy, “[Distributed Reproduction: Chemical Violence and Latency](#)”
 - Winona LaDuke, “Akwasasne: Mohawk Mothers’ Milk and PCB’s,” *All Our Relations*, pg. 11-27
 - Rachel Lorenzo, “[At Standing Rock, Environmental Justice is Reproductive Justice](#)”
- Day 2 Life in Ecological Ruin: Make Kin, Not Babies?
- Donna Haraway, “Making Kin in the Chthulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice,” *Make Kin Not Babies* (forthcoming collection), pg. 1-38
 - Other article TBD from forthcoming collection *Make Kin Not Babies*

Week 15—Speculating

- Day 1 Final Project Showcase
- Day 2 Final Project Showcase & Wrap Up