

WMST 450/550 (PSYC 461/592; GHC 594)
Gender, Culture, and Health in the United States
Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR	Leah M. Adams, Ph.D. <u>Office:</u> David King 3057 <u>E-mail:</u> ladamse@gmu.edu <u>Phone:</u> (703) 993-4118
MEETINGS	Thursdays 4:30 – 7:10 pm (Buchanan Hall D001)
OFFICE HOURS	Thursdays 2:30 – 3:30 pm (or by appointment)
DEADLINES	September 4 is the last day to add this class; September 9 is the last day to drop this class with no tuition penalty

TECHNOLOGY

- **Official Communications via GMU E-mail:** Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.
- **Class cancellation policy:** If class is canceled, students will be notified via their GMU email and via Blackboard. The instructor will provide details regarding coursework and/or assignments.

REQUIRED TEXT & COURSE TECHNOLOGY

There is no required textbook for this course. Required readings for each class and assignment grading rubrics are available on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar course examines issues related to gender, culture, and health in the United States from a variety of interdisciplinary (e.g., psychological, public health, sociological) perspectives. In the context of this course, “culture” is a broad term that, at times, will encompass racial and ethnic identification, geographic region, sexual orientation, gender identity, generational status, and more. Likewise, course content will be framed to emphasize the interplay between cultural, social, economic, environmental, and political factors associated with health, along with methodological issues in research on health status and health behaviors. Although we will cover health issues broadly, we will also apply these frameworks to understanding the roles of gender, sex, and culture in several specific health-related domains, including reproductive and sexual health, HIV/AIDS, and intimate partner violence. Because we only have 14 weeks (!) to address this enormous content area, some topics will not be covered in depth and some may not be covered at all (apologies in advance!). As such, the final assignment included in the course is designed to encourage students to examine (relevant) topics of interest that may not be touched upon through lecture, discussions, and readings.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the completion of this course, students are expected to successfully be able to:

- Discuss the history of the women’s health movement in the United States
- Understand the distinction between health differences and health disparities among groups
- Discuss social determinants of health disparities, including the background and nature of gender-, sexual orientation-, racial/ethnicity-, location- driven health disparities in the United States
- Identify some of the socio-demographic, behavioral, and historical factors that influence health-related practices and statuses among specific populations in the United States
- Discuss the interrelationships between health, gender and gender-identity, sex, race & ethnicity, and SES in the United States
- Demonstrate content expertise on a specific health concern (of their choosing) as applied to a particular group in the U.S.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard under the “Assignments” tab

- **Participation:** This is a seminar course – your participation is a *vital* component of its quality. Together, we will strive to create an atmosphere in which open dialogue and communication are encouraged and respectful, even in instances of disagreement. Please ask questions, offer observations, and suggest alternative perspectives during class with the aim of advancing discourse about *ideas*, rather than attacking *individuals*. By its nature, participation requires that you are in class. There will be weekly in-class activities that will count toward your participation grade – if you aren’t in class, your grade *will* suffer.
- **Introductory Assignment (due Sept. 6):** Please write a brief (< 1-page) statement about why you are taking this course, what you hope to learn or “get” from it (your objectives), and some information about yourself (e.g., your major, future goals, things you’d like for me to know about you).
- **Interview Assignment (due Sept. 27):** All students will interview 1-2 individuals that identify as members of an identity group to which they do not belong. Think broadly here – the person you interview may be from a different religious, ethnic, cultural, age, or any other group! You will ask the individual(s) to give their opinion about various health concerns that they perceive to be most pertinent to members of their group. Then (because no one person should be tasked with being a representative of their whole group!), you will compare their answers to existing health data and discuss the perceived health problems versus the actual incidence and prevalence of these problems in that group. Findings should be summarized in a 3 – 5 page, double-spaced paper. The goal of this assignment is to assess the impact of identity status on health, and to identify different perceptions of health problems or gaps in health programming. A guide with possible interview questions and a grading rubric are available on Blackboard.
- **Reaction Papers (rolling deadline):** Students will submit four (4) reaction papers over the course of the semester. You can choose to write a reaction paper on any of the topics that we discuss, but you must complete at least one by October 11! Reaction papers are due within 72 hours (3 days) of class. Reaction papers should be brief (1 – 2 double spaced pages, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font) and are an opportunity for you to think deeply about the material and share your ideas. Reflections that are clear, thoughtful, and relevant will receive full credit. You do not have to answer each of these questions, but to get you thinking in line with the assignment, potential questions for you to consider in your reaction papers are: 1) What about the reading and lecture material stood out or surprised you, and why? 2) What connections can be made between the reading and lecture material covered and your experiences? 3) What questions or issues did the material raise that you would want to learn more about?
- **Fear 2 Freedom Reaction Paper (due Oct. 25):** Attend the Fear 2 Freedom event on October 18 in lieu of our typical class meeting. By October 25, submit a 1 – 2 page reaction to the event. You do not have to answer all of these questions, but consider addressing: 1) What did you learn? 2) What surprised you about the speakers/attendance/etc.? 3) What were the strengths of the event? 4) What were some weaknesses of the event, and how do you believe that it could be strengthened in the future?
- **(Graduate students only) Discussion Facilitator:** Graduate students will be charged with coordinating and leading a discussion of the day’s readings. You are expected to *briefly* summarize the texts to prepare everyone for the discussion that follows (remember, everyone has already read the articles). As the discussion leader, you should identify at least **five major questions for discussion** that were raised by the texts—you are free to emphasize particular readings over others, though all should be included in your review. You are tasked with covering these questions and facilitating the discussion (great practice for future teaching!). A rubric is available on Blackboard.
- **Final Paper (due Dec. 13)**
 - **Undergraduate:** Undergraduate students will select a health promotion (e.g., safe sex, exercise intervention, etc.) campaign and a target identity group (e.g., relating to gender identity or sex, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic group, immigration status, disability status, age, geographic region, etc.). You will provide an overview of the campaign’s general implementation and effectiveness. For the campaign’s target disease/illness, discuss any health disparities that may exist for your selected population. You will critique the campaign’s ability to meet the needs of your selected

population, along with ways to improve it and/or extend its impact. The resulting paper should be 6 – 8 pages, double-spaced, and should include credible sources. We will discuss additional details regarding this assignment in class on September 27. **Your topic should be chosen and approved by October 4.**

- **Graduate:** Graduate students will write a scientific research proposal in the style of an NIH grant proposal as their final project in this course. The project that you propose should address some significant issue relating to an identity (e.g., gender identity or sex, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic group, immigration status, disability status, age, geographic region, etc.) and a particular health concern within that group – ideally, the topic you choose will be relevant to your own research/thesis/dissertation/professional/personal interests. We will discuss additional details regarding this assignment in class on September 27. **Your topic should be chosen and approved by October 4.**
- **Presentation (due Nov. 29):** All students will give a brief (~10 minute) presentation of their final project (undergrad) or proposal (grad). This presentation is meant to give you the chance to showcase your work and to take advantage of the many perspectives in the class as you finalize your written product. Constructive feedback from your presentation should help strengthen the final written product that you submit. A rubric is available on Blackboard.

Semester Assignment Point Allocation

	UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE
Participation	20	15
Introductory Assignment	5	2
Interview Assignment	10	10
Discussion Facilitator	N/A	10
Reaction Papers (4 total)	40	40
Fear 2 Freedom Reaction	5	3
Final Paper	15	15
Final Presentation	5	5
Total Points:	100	100

EVALUATION & GRADES

Assignment grading rubrics are available on Blackboard. Final course grades will be assigned according to the following percentages (with normal rounding rules for decimals):

UNDERGRADUATE		GRADUATE	
Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
93.0 – 100.0	A	93.5 – 100.0	A
90.0 – 92.9	A-	90.0 – 93.4	A-
87.0 – 89.9	B+	87.5 – 89.9	B+
83.0 – 86.9	B	83.5 – 87.4	B
80.0 – 82.9	B-	80.0 – 83.4	B-
77.0 – 79.9	C+	70.0 – 79.9	C
73.0 – 76.9	C	< 70	F
70.0 – 72.9	C-		
67.0 – 69.9	D+		
63.0 – 66.9	D		
60.0 – 62.9	D-		
< 60.0	F		

EXAM & HOMEWORK POLICY

The following policy refers to all missed or late assignments, papers, or presentations that you fail to let me know about beforehand. Arrangements made beforehand with the professor (e.g., missing class for a religious holiday)

are not included in this policy. There will be no extensions or make-ups without penalty except in instances such as the following:

- hospitalization or illness that has been documented and judged by your instructor as preventing you from a) preparing adequately for a presentation, b) attending class, or c) completing an assignment
- death or serious illness in your family
- court appearances

Documentation must be provided by health officials (e.g., a physician or member of the student health center staff) in the case of illness; an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness in the family; and official paperwork in the case of court dates. Decisions regarding extensions and make-ups under these circumstances will be made on a case-by-case basis.

HONOR CODE

All students in this course are to become familiar with and follow the University's honor code, which does not tolerate any form of cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Exams and assignments are expected to be individual efforts unless otherwise noted by the instructor. Violations of the GMU Honor Code can result in failure of an assignment or exam, depending on the severity of violation. All violations will be reported to the Honor Committee. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation. For more information on the Honor Code please visit:

<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

In this course, and across the University, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different from their own.

ACCOMMODATION OF DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Services (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Note that this provision includes the range of disabilities, including physical, psychiatric, and learning disabilities.

NOTICE OF MANDATORY REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE, AND STALKING

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at (703) 380 – 1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (703) 993 – 2380 (and below). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling (703) 993 – 8730, or e-mailing titleix@gmu.edu.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

George Mason offers services to support students' academic and emotional development. Counseling and Psychological Services, located in SUB I room 3129 (<http://caps.gmu.edu/learning-services/>), offers workshops in academic skills, stress management training, and individual and group counseling for students who would like some help with social, emotional, or educational concerns. Consider taking advantage of these resources if you need them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

***Note:** Required readings are due each week and are available on Blackboard

Week	Date	Topics	Assignments Due
1	8/30	Introductions! Review course Syllabus and structure; Foundational concepts; <i>Choose graduate student discussion leader dates</i>	
2	9/6	Intersectional Identities & Health	Introductory Assignment due
3	9/13	Differences & Disparities	
4	9/20	Place & Health	
5	9/27	Funding Health Research – Grant Proposals 101	Interview Assignment due
6	10/4	Violence As A Public Health Consideration Part 1	Project/Proposal Topic due
7	10/11	Violence As A Public Health Consideration Part 2	At least one reaction paper should have been submitted by now!
8	10/18	Class canceled – Attend Fear 2 Freedom Re-Imagined Event (Dewberry Hall, Johnson Center)	
9	10/25	Mental Health	Fear 2 Freedom review due
10	11/1	Substance Abuse	
11	11/8	Family Planning, Reproductive & Sexual Health	
12	11/15	HIV/AIDS in the U.S.	
13	11/22	Thanksgiving Day – No Class	
14	11/29	<i>Student Presentations</i>	
15	12/6	Class wrap-up!	<p>By This Date You Should've Completed:</p> <p>Undergraduate Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 introductory assignment • 1 interview assignment • 1 Fear 2 Freedom response • 4 reaction papers • 1 presentation • A lot of participation! <p>Graduate Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above • 1 discussion facilitation
Thurs 12/13		Final Papers Due via Blackboard by 7:10 pm!	

Women and Gender Studies
Fall 2018 Events
Room 240K Johnson Center | wgst@gmu.edu | 703-993-2896
wmst.gmu.edu | wgstcenter.gmu.edu | Facebook: MasonWGST
Twitter: @MasonWGST | Instagram: @MasonWGST

Monday, August 27, 2018 - First Day of Class

Welcome Week Breakfast with Women and Gender Studies

Wednesday, August 29, 2018 | 10:00AM - 12:00PM | 240K Johnson Center

Get Connected Fair

Wednesday, September 5, 2018 | 11:00AM -2:00PM | Outside Johnson Center

Consent Carnival

Thursday, September 13, 2018 | 6:00PM -8:00PM | Wilkins Plaza (North Plaza, JC – Clock Tower)

International Fellows Panel on Women's Issues

Tuesday, September 18, 2018 | 5:00PM -7:00PM | Gold Room, JC

Take Back the Night

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 | 7:30PM || Wilkins Plaza (North Plaza, JC – Clock Tower)

Fall for the Book - Authors Angie Hattery and Earl Smith

Book: Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives Are Surveilled and How to Work for Change

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 | 3:00PM | George's 3rd Floor, Johnson Center

Fall for the Book - Author: Eithne Luibheld

Book: Sexualities, Intimacies, and Queer Migration

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 | 4:30PM | George's 3rd Floor, Johnson Center

Fall for the Book - Author: Kelli Maria Korducki

Book: Hard to Do: The Surprising Feminist History of Breaking Up

Thursday, October 11, 2018 | 3:00PM | George's 3rd Floor, Johnson Center

Fear 2 Freedom Re-Imagined – Pledging to End Sexual Violence on Campus

Thursday, October 18, 2018 | 4:30PM -6:00PM | Dewberry Hall, Johnson Center

GMU Visiting Filmmakers Series presents: Dark Money

Free screening and Q&A with Kimberly Reed

Tuesday October 30 at 4:30pm

Johnson Center Cinema

See our [event site, in progress](#).

See IndieWire review and [background on the film](#).

Dark Money examines the influence of untraceable corporate money on our elections and elected officials. The film takes viewers to Montana—a frontline in the fight to preserve fair elections nationwide—to follow intrepid local journalist, John Adams as he works to expose the real-life impacts of the US Supreme Court's Citizens United decision. Through this gripping story, *Dark Money* uncovers the shocking truth of how American elections are bought and sold.

Kim Reed's work has been featured on The Oprah Winfrey Show, CNN, NPR, The Moth and in Details magazine. One of Filmmaker Magazine's "25 New Faces of Independent Film," she directed and produced Prodigal Sons, which landed on many best of the year lists, screened at more than 100 film festivals and garnered 14 audience and

jury awards. Reed was recognized as one of Out magazine's "OUT100." She also produced, edited and wrote Paul Goodman Changed My Life and produced The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson. Reed is a fourth-generation Montanan.

NOTE: Our event is scheduled for the week before midterm elections.

**Politics of Gender & Justice: The Intersection of Identity & Discipline
Women and Gender Studies Annual Conference / Art/Creative Piece Exhibit**

Friday, November 16, 2018 | 9:00AM-5:00PM | 1201 Merten Hall

Finals Study Break Pizza Party & Self-Care

Tuesday, December 11, 2018 | 5:00PM | 240K Johnson Center

Women and Gender Studies Center Extended Hours for Reading Days and Exams

(Exact Hours: TBA)

Sunday, December 9, 2018 | Monday, December 10, 2018 | Tuesday, December 11, 2018