

**SOCIOLOGY 355**  
**“Gender, Health, and Illness”**  
**Winter 2020**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50am, Locy Hall 111

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**Contact information**

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<https://www.sociology.northwestern.edu/people/faculty/visiting/madeleine-pape.html>

**Office hours this quarter**

11am-12pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Kresge Centennial Hall, Room 3217



*A copy of this syllabus can be found on the Canvas site for the course.*

## Course Description

How are experiences of health and illness influenced by the gendered social and political context in which our bodies are located? This course will introduce you to the major theoretical and substantive topics that comprise the social study of gender, its relationship to health and illness, and the influence of social movements, politics, and policymakers. We will survey a range of sociological approaches to gendered bodies, identities, processes, and institutional structures, with a focus on understanding how they contribute to gendered patterns and inequalities in experiences of health and illness across the lifespan. The course will investigate how gender shapes the production of knowledge about bodies and health; consider the social basis of health outcomes; trace the origins, impacts, and tensions within the women's health movement in the United States (US); analyze how other socially meaningful forms of difference, such as race and class, interact with gender to shape experiences of health and illness; and consider questions of social justice and care in relation to the health experiences of queer, intersex, and transgender individuals.

The course is structured around two units, each of which will cover a diverse range of topics:

### **(1) Deconstructing Gender, Sex, Health, and Illness**

- Gender, sex, or gender/sex?
- Deconstructing health, illness, risk, and technology
- Gender bias in scientific knowledge and practice
- Gender as a health determinant

### **(2) Politicizing Gender, Health, and Difference**

- Social movements
- The women's health movement in the U.S.
- Health systems and systemic inequalities
- Race, privilege, and reproductive justice
- Gender, violence, and health
- Trans health

Since students in this course come from a range of majors and backgrounds, we will begin by deconstructing core concepts and developing a shared language for thinking about gender in relation to health experiences and policy. The second unit of the course will explore the social/political structures and processes that contribute to gender differences and inequalities in health, as well as sources of resistance and change. We will discuss the role of social movements in shaping policy and research agendas, the intersection of gender and race, the healthcare needs and experiences of gender-diverse and trans individuals, and the longstanding feminist causes of reproductive rights and gendered violence. *This course is inclusive and affirming of the bodies, identities, and experiences of all people, including cisgender women, transgender women and men, people who identify as intersex, and genderqueer/nonbinary people.*

## Course Format

There will be a strong lecture component to the course. The course will also consist of in-class discussion of assigned readings and key concepts from the lectures, as well as a variety of other in-class activities. Both attendance and participation are graded. I encourage students to take notes on the key points raised in the lecture and during in-class activities. I will make all of the lecture slides

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available on Canvas prior to the exams, but the slides do not contain all of the lecture content, thus good notetaking will be essential to be prepared for the midterm exams.

## Course Objectives

Throughout this course, you will encounter materials and activities that are aimed at advancing the following objectives. My goal is that by the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Distinguish gender from sex and understand how they are entangled in our bodies and lives
- Explain how health experiences and systems are gendered at multiple levels
- Articulate how gender and sex intersect with other socially meaningful forms of difference, including class, race, age, sexuality, citizenship, and disability.
- Think critically about health-related issues, including issues of access and social justice
- Situate health issues and concepts in their historical, political, and social context
- Comprehend and communicate core ideas from sociological and multidisciplinary texts about gender and health
- Summarize your own or another's research for a multidisciplinary audience
- Confidently present research and/or facilitate discussion on issues related to gender, health, and illness
- Construct informed arguments about the pros and cons of particular health initiatives and interventions

## Assessment Tasks

### *Description*

Your grade for the quarter will be calculated on the basis of the following **four** course requirements:

#### **1. Class attendance and participation (20%)**

I will be documenting attendance as well as the quality of your participation during in-class activities. Please come prepared to participate by completing the assigned readings ahead of each lecture. I allow students a maximum of two unexcused absences from class. If you need to miss more than two classes, please discuss with me to ensure that your participation grade is not negatively affected. Being disruptive in class, such as by regularly arriving late, may also impact your participation grade.

#### **2. Two midterm examinations (each worth 20%)**

I will give two in-class exams composed primarily of and multiple-choice questions and short answer questions where you will be expected to define and engage with the core concepts introduced in lectures and readings.

#### **3. Group Poster: Gender as a Health Determinant (20%)**

What is “gender” and how does it shape health? Working in groups of 2-3 students, you will review existing research on an aspect of gender that contributes to poor health outcomes. Each group will produce a conference poster presenting their findings, which they will present to the class (15%). Each group member will also work independently to prepare a short summary (“elevator pitch”) describing gender as a health determinant and summarizing your findings (5%). Further instructions to come in class!

#### 4. Final Project: Advocacy blog entry/op-ed (20%)

For this project, you will investigate a health-related issue that is both gendered and intersectional (e.g. disproportionately impacts women with disabilities or men of color) OR is a concern for sexual or gender minorities (e.g. trans youth health). Write a focused 1000-1200 word research-informed blog entry or op-ed describing the problem and advocating for a specific intervention that could address it (20 points). You will also produce a 100-150 word “clickbait” summary of your piece (4 points). Further instructions will be provided in class.

#### *Assessment Dates and Deadlines:*

01/30/2020 **Midterm #1**, in-class  
 02/20/2020 **Group Poster**, in-class (poster and individual summary due by 9:00am on Canvas)  
 03/05/2020 **Midterm #2**, in-class  
 03/20/2020 **Final Project** due by 9:00am on Canvas.

#### *Grading Scale*

Final grades are calculated based on the following scale:

≤ 93	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
67-69.9	D+
63-66.9	D
60-62.9	D-
> 60	F

#### *Policy on re-grading*

If you believe that there has been an error in the grading of your exams, poster, participation, or final project, you may email me a concise memo explaining why you believe this is the case within one week of the posting of the grade on Canvas. I will review the request and if I agree with your assessment, I will adjust the grade. However, I will re-grade the entire exam/poster/project and if I find other errors that went unnoticed, I will adjust the grade downward accordingly. This means that it is possible that your grade could actually go down following a re-grade. One week after grades have been posted they will be considered final and no longer subject to re-grading.

#### **Assigned Readings**

All readings will be available in Canvas (either under Course Reserves or under "Files"). The assigned readings are a combination of academic journal articles, reports, and book chapters. There are no required books to purchase for this course. For students who are not familiar with reading academic journal articles, the following resources may be useful to guide your reading:

<https://medium.com/ai-saturdays/how-to-read-academic-papers-without-freaking-out-3f7ef43a070f>

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/strategies-for-reading-academic-articles>

<https://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/studyskills/ReadingScholarlyandJournalArticles.pdf>

Ahead of each week, I will provide you with a list of guiding questions to assist you in identifying the key points from each reading. You may wish to refer to these questions in preparing for the midterm examinations.

### **Other Course Materials: Top Hat**

To facilitate interaction and learning during lectures, this course will make use of the Top Hat classroom response system during lecture ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)). You will be able to submit answers to in-lecture questions using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, or through text message. You can visit the Top Hat overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center, which outlines how to register for a Top Hat account and provides a brief overview to get you started. An invitation will be sent to you by email, but if you don't receive an email you can register by visiting our course website (<https://app.tophat.com/e/595688>).

You will need our **Top Hat Course Join Code: 595688**

Top Hat will require a paid subscription (a full breakdown of all subscription options can be found at <http://www.tophat.com/pricing>). You can purchase a one-semester subscription for \$30. Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, you must contact Top Hat directly (in other words, Northwestern IT cannot help to troubleshoot any issues. The Top Hat service is external to Northwestern). You can contact their support team by email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), via the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

### **Guiding Principles for Class Participation**

The way you approach this course will determine your own experience as well as shape the experiences of others. I hope that students in this course are committed to the common goal of achieving an equitable and inclusive healthcare system, in which gender differences, inequalities, and biases don't influence our ability to access and experience good health and flourishing. As such, this is a feminist and social justice oriented classroom, in which we will engage with course material and with each other in respectful and thoughtful ways in a joint effort to understand the relationships between gender and health as well as their intersections with class, race, age, sexuality, disability, indigeneity, and citizenship.

Attendance is mandatory and only two absences per semester will be permitted. However, attendance alone does not constitute being an engaged student, on which you will be assessed. An expectation of this course is that you will also be an active participant in classroom discussion, in which I will ask you to participate in dialogue in an informed way and provide thoughtful feedback to other students. As an engaged learner, your job is to enter conversations about what was read/heard and offer your responses to the ideas presented. This means coming to lecture adequately prepared i.e. having completed and reflected on the assigned readings ahead of lecture. I have set what I consider to be a realistic reading load in order to facilitate this. I will also provide you with a set of guiding questions ahead of time to help you navigate the assigned readings each week.

**Values of an engaged learner:**

- **Be responsible:** Attend all lectures (unless you're contagious); be on time and don't leave lecture early without prior explanation; take careful note of due dates, assignment details, and required readings; work on strategies for effective reading that enable you to identify and retain the most important points; make use of office hours - come and speak to me if you are experiencing any difficulties or have concerns about completing the assessment tasks for this course.
- **Be respectful:** respect your instructors and your peers; be self-aware as you express your ideas and questions and take care to consider whether they may be disparaging or offensive to others; mobile phones should be silenced, kept out of sight, and brought out only for Top Hat; if you wish to use a laptop or tablet to take notes during lecture, you may, but **if you do so I reserve the right to call on you at any point during lecture** to ask for your input; be mindful that *how* you choose to use technology will impact the students around you. As such, it will be taken as a reflection of the extent to which you respect your peers and are committed to creating an engaged and constructive learning environment.
- **Be active and constructive:** Contribute to classroom conversations in ways that embody the intention of moving us towards our common goals of eliminating gender inequalities and achieving health equity; respond to others constructively by recognizing their worth and their good intentions, even if you disagree with their point of view; intervene as an ally when you hear comments that you think could be offensive or disrespectful to others; reflect on the relevance of course material to your own personal, academic, and professional lives; apply insights and skills from this course outside of it, such as when you're at work, in conversations with family and friends, and in your other courses.
- **Be honest:** Turn in your own work. Academic integrity is described in further detail below.

**Office Hours**

Office hours are a time outside of class to meet with me to discuss the material being presented in class, questions about exams, projects, or other related interests you have. This could include (but is not limited to) asking for advice on meeting criteria for written assignments, seeking clarification of material presented in class, and following up on aspects of the class you find interesting. If you would like to attend office hours but cannot make the scheduled times (11am-12pm, T/Th), please send me an email and I will try to accommodate you at another time.

**Email Policy**

Like students, instructors at Northwestern University receive a high volume of daily emails. I will respond to emails within 48 hours on weekdays. If you contact me with a question that can be answered by reading the syllabus, I will not respond. If you missed lecture, **please contact a fellow student for their notes.**

Emailing in a polite and professional way is vital to representing yourself as a student who takes both me and your own learning seriously. **Some guidelines for emailing me:** include the course code in the subject line (SOC 355); address me by name (Madeleine is fine!); give your email a structure; use full sentences and professional language; sign off with your own name.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, within the **first two weeks of class**. All information will remain confidential.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is taken very seriously at Northwestern. Students are responsible for reading and understanding Northwestern's Academic Integrity policies. All suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Weinberg College Dean's Office. These include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, unfair advantage, unauthorized collaboration, and aiding and abetting of academic dishonesty. Students found in violation of academic integrity may receive a zero on the assignment or a failing grade for the course and may be suspended or permanently expelled from the University. See the WCAS website on academic integrity and Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide for more information:

<https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registrationgrades/integrity/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/Academic-Integrity-Guide-August-2019.pdf>

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to: directly copying work written by another person without an appropriate citation, modifying a few words written by someone else, but otherwise presenting another person's ideas as if they were your own without appropriate citations; and using information from the internet without appropriate citation even if there is no identifiable author (such as a Wikipedia page). Collaboration with other students is only permitted for exam preparation and the group poster project. No collaboration is permitted on other written work.

Note: This course makes use of **Turnitin**, a software product that compares your work against other texts in its database in order to safeguard academic integrity. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Please contact me if you have any questions about Turnitin.

### **General Wellbeing**

Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being at NUhelp. Information to access the website and app are below:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/get-help/nuhelp-app-features.html>

### **Content Warning**

A course on health issues almost inevitably will include material that will upset some students. Please keep this possibility in mind and be forewarned. I strongly recommend reviewing the topics ahead of time to assess whether there are some lectures that may not feel comfortable attending.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE****UNIT 1. DECONSTRUCTING GENDER, SEX, HEALTH, AND ILLNESS****Week 1: Overview of Course; Gender, Sex, or Gender/Sex?*****Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>***

Syllabus overview and a collective class contract

***Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>***

Fishman, J.R., J.G. Wick, and B.A. Koenig. 1999. "The use of 'sex' and 'gender' to define and characterize meaningful differences between men and women." In *Agenda for Research on Women's Health for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Volume 1, pp. 15-19. Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health.

Karkazis, K. 2019. "The misuses of biological sex." *The Lancet* 394(10212): 1898-1899.

**Week 2: Deconstructing Health, Illness, Risk, and Technology*****Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>***

Conrad, P. and K.K. Barker. 2010. "The social construction of illness: Key insights and policy implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S): S67-S79.

Saguy, A.C. and K. Gruys. 2010. "Morality and health: News media constructions of overweight and eating disorders." *Social Problems* 57(2): 231-250.

***Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>***

Fosket, J.R. 2010. "Breast cancer risk as disease: Biomedicalizing risk." In *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.*, edited by A. E. Clarke, L. Mamo, J. R. Fosket, J. R. Fishman and J. K. Shim, pp. 331-352. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Morris, T and J.H. Robinson. 2017. "Forced and coerced cesarean sections in the United States." *Contexts* 16(2): 24-29.

**Week 3: Gender Bias in Scientific Knowledge and Practice*****Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>***

Davis, G. and M.J. Evans. 2018. "Surgically Shaping Sex: A Gender Structure Analysis of the Violation of Intersex People's Human Rights." In B.J. Risman, C.M. Froyum, and W.J. Scarborough (eds.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 273-284. New York: Springer.

Martin, E. 1991. "The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles." *Signs* 16(3): 485-501.



**Thursday, January 23rd**

Clayton, J.A. and F.S. Collins. 2014. Policy: NIH to balance sex in cell and animal studies. *Nature* 509(7500): 282-283.

Harvey Wingfield, A. 2009. "Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men's Experiences with Women's Work." *Gender & Society* 23(1): 5-26.

**Week 4: Gender as a Health Determinant****Tuesday, January 28th**

Shim, J. 2014. "The Dichotomy of Gender." In *Heart-Sick: The Politics of Risk, Inequality, and Heart Disease*, pp. 139-161. New York, London: New York University Press.

**Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>****\*\*\*In-class Midterm Exam 1**

*Based on material from Part I. No books, notes, or electronic devices*

**UNIT 2. Politicizing Gender, Health, and Difference****Week 5: Social Movements; Women's Health Movement in the United States****Tuesday, February 4th**

Epstein, Steven. 2000. "Democracy, Expertise, and AIDS Treatment Activism." Pp. 15-32 in *Science, Technology, and Democracy*, edited by D. Kleinman. Albany: State University of New York Press.

**Thursday, February 6th**

Avery, Byllye. 1987. "'Equal' but still not on the same level." *Contact* 98: 2-5.

Davis, K. 2002. "Feminist Body/Politics as World Traveller: Translating Our Bodies, Ourselves." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 9(3): 223-247.

**Week 6: Health Systems and Systemic Inequalities; Race, Privilege, and Reproductive Justice****Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**

McFarland, M., J. Taylor, C.A.S. McFarland, and K.L. Friedman. 2018. "Perceived unfair treatment by police, race, and telomere length: A Nashville community-based sample of black and white men." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(4): 585-600.

Robertson and Collins. 2011. "Women at Risk: Why increasing numbers of women are failing to get the health care they need and how the Affordable Care Act will help." Findings from the Commonwealth Fund Biennial Health Insurance Survey of 2010. Commonwealth Fund Issue Brief; May 2011: 1-16.

**Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

McMillan Cottom, T. 2019. "Dying to be Competent." In *Thick*, pp. 73-98. New York: The New Press.

Pollock, A. 2020. "Reproductive Injustice: Serena Williams' Birth Story." In *Sickening: Racism, Health Disparities, and Biopolitics in the 21st Century*, pp. 136-150. Unpublished manuscript.

**Week 7: Race, Privilege, and Reproductive Justice****Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

Reich, J. 2014. Neoliberal Mothering and Vaccine Refusal: Imagined Gated Communities and the Privilege of Choice. *Gender & Society* 28(5): 679-704.

Roberts, D. 2015. "Reproductive Justice, Not Just Rights." *Dissent* 62(4): 79-82.

**Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>****\*\*\*Group poster presentations**

*Digital copy of poster and individual summaries due by 9:00am on Canvas*

**Week 8: Gender, Violence, and Health; Trans Health****Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**

Sweet, P.L. 2019. "The Sociology of Gaslighting." *American Sociological Review* 84(5): 851-875.

**Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

Latham, J.R. 2017. "(Re)making Sex: A Praxiography of the Gender Clinic." *Feminist Theory* 18(2): 177-204.

Miller, L.R. and E.A. Grollman. 2015. "The social costs of gender nonconformity for transgender adults: Implications for discrimination and health." *Sociological Forum* 30(3): 809-831.

**Week 9: Trans Health****Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Meadow, T. 2018. "Gender Troubles." *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 24-53. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

In-class: Documentary. "Growing Up Trans."

**Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>****\*\*\*In-class Midterm Exam 2**

*Based on material from Part II. No books, notes, or electronic devices.*

**Week 10: WCAS Reading period.**

***Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>***

Class review and discussion of final projects.

***Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>***

No class.

**Exam Week**

***Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>***

**\*\*\*Final project** due by 9:00am on Canvas.