

# GWS 350 WOMEN & HEALTH J Term 2024

*Don't compromise yourself. You're all you've got.*  
~Janis Joplin

*The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.*  
~Gloria Steinem

*Our ultimate objective in learning about anything is to try to create and develop a more just society.*  
~Yuri Kochiyama

TIME  
PROFESSOR  
EMAIL

ONLINE  
Dr. U. Ryder  
[uryder@uri.edu](mailto:uryder@uri.edu)

## REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings available online in Brightspace

**Gender & Women's Studies website:** You should make sure to read and become familiar with the material listed on the GWS website at <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/StudentResources.html>. Here you will find information that will not only help you in this course, but in all of your classes at URI. Information includes expectations for discussion, reading, and writing; how to use Brightspace; formatting papers and works cited; finding research material; etc. It is expected that you have familiarized yourself with this information since your assignments will be graded in accordance with this material.

## DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

### Course Description:

Women's control over their own bodies has been an important aspect of feminist analyses of sexism and inequality. A central argument of this work is the belief that "women cannot have control over our lives until we have control over our bodies" (Worcester and Whatley 2009: xvii). Echoing this belief, this course offers a broad introduction to health issues that affect women's bodies and minds, along with the historical, structural, political, economic, and cultural factors that influence our understanding of health and illness. The course readings will provide you with an overview of both historical context and recent research on a variety of women's health topics and ask you to consider their relevance to your own life and/or the lives of other women you know. Given the online format of the class, you won't be listening to lectures all the time; instead you'll be reading independently, thinking about the issues you encounter, watching video files, writing responses to discussion questions, and responding to others' comments. This course is aimed at the following goals:

- Developing written communication skills.
- Synthesizing information from a variety of sources.
- Thinking critically about the implications of what you read.
- Applying the knowledge you gain in the course to life in the "real world."

## EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### Participation in Online Discussion (42 points):

Thoughtful commentary on course readings is a required component of the course and central to its success. Your insight and opinions, when relevant, are valuable and I want to hear them. What I am most interested in, however, is your ability to demonstrate a significant engagement with course materials. You are encouraged to dialogue with each other frequently and post as many comments as you'd like. I encourage you to use this space to converse with each other about other things that come up as you do the reading: ideas or questions or comments that strike you as relevant or interesting or unusual and worth pursuing.

At minimum, you are required to post at least three comments each day, each week. That is: three comments every day. Posting many times on the one or two days does not fulfill the requirement, though you are always welcome to post more often than the bare minimum.

1. An original comment about the weekly assigned readings or media. You should begin a new discussion thread with a descriptive title (e.g., "The Medicalization of Birth") rather than labeling it something like "Week 6 Comments." You should reference specific articles and refer to authors by their last name and include relevant quotes and page numbers. Your commentary should be **375-500 words** (the equivalent of 1.5 – 2 type-written, double-spaced pages) and should reflect the day's theme.

2. A second comment that responds in a significant way to another student's original comment. These secondary comments should be substantive – don't just say "I agree" or "I disagree." Be specific in your acknowledgement of and response to your classmates' comments. Your response comments should be at least **100-150 words**. Be clear about the comment you are referencing and the ideas you are responding to. You should respond to at least one other post each day.

3. A comment in response to an additional discussion question/comment that has been posted by me or an additional comment in response to a colleague. My question/comment will relate to current events in women's health or to the readings. It may also be a follow up in response to something a student has posted. There is no minimum word count, but I expect your responses to demonstrate a sustained engagement with the topic under consideration. You should respond by 11pm each day.

Each forum will close to new comments each day at 11:00 pm, and you will not be able to post or receive credit for work submitted after that time.

In order to ensure a good grade, you should check Brightspace frequently to remain up-to-date on all posts. Be clear about the authors and topics you are considering, provide page numbers and citations where appropriate, and TALK TO EACH OTHER instead of waiting for me to jump in. If the conversation is going well, I will be more of a moderator than a facilitator, and this is how it should be! I will comment when necessary or respond to students individually, but this is YOUR class and you should expect to take full responsibility for the online discussion.

You will be graded on the quality of your postings every week. You will receive a score from 0 to 3 based on the content, sophistication, cohesion, accuracy, spelling, grammar, punctuation, headings, and formatting of your work.

### Annotated Resource List (20 points):

The goal of this project is to give you an opportunity to focus on a topic of your choice, by developing a resource list for a women's health issue of concern or interest to you. The list should be thorough (approximately 4-6 pages) and include contact information (people, websites, locations, phone numbers, etc.) for campus, local, state, and national resources. You should also identify media resources (websites, books, articles, videos, etc). Include a brief (no more than a paragraph) description of each resource. However, do not submit only a list of articles, books, or videos. The point is to provide a mix of resources – books, videos and articles *and* medical, community, or other resources.

Two (2) points of this are for the topic, which must be approved by me. Please see the due date in the tentative schedule.

### Exams (three exams, each 9 points):

There are certain concepts and facts that you should be able to recall and discuss after taking this class. To this end, there will be three tests based on the assigned readings and materials.

### Report on a women's health event (11 points):

There may be opportunities during the term to attend special lectures, performances, and other events related to women's health. Due to Covid-19, I expect most of you will find an event online. This can be a podcast, YouTube, TEDTalk, etc. on women's health. The event does not have to have taken place during the term but should be no more than one year old. Whether you attend an event in person or find one online, you are required to post a 375-500 word reaction paper on Brightspace. This assignment is due on the last day of classes.

In summary, your course grade will be based on the following:

- i. Participation in Online Discussion – 42 points
- ii. Annotated Resource List– 20 points
- iii. Online Exams – 27 points (9 points each)
- iv. Attend and report back on a women's health event – 11 points

## OFFICIAL POLICIES

### GRADING POLICY

Listed below are the criteria for the various letter grades used in this course:

- A: This is a superior grade and is given to work that has **far exceeded the specific requirements of the assignment**. Additionally, a student receiving this grade must have shown both **insight** and **initiative** in completing the graded task.
- B: This is a very good grade and is given to work that has **carefully and thoroughly met the specific requirements** of the assignment and shows evidence of **extra effort**.
- C: This is an average grade and is given to work that has **met the specific requirements** of the assignment.
- D: This is a below average grade and is **indicative of work not completed**. It is given when the specific requirements of an assignment are not met.
- F: This is a **failing grade** and is **given to work that is wholly an inadequate representation** of college-level work.
- O: This is a grade **given when an assignment is not turned in**. Most work will be assigned some points. Try to avoid not doing your assignments.

Final letter grades will be assigned on the following numerical basis: **A=100-94; A-=93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B-=83-80; C+=79-77; C=76-74; C-= 73=70; D+=69-67; D=66-64; D-= 63-60; F=59-below**

Papers and other assignments are due on the date established in class. Missing assignments are recorded as 0 and will adversely impact your final grade.

### STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Within any classroom it is imperative that students and teachers establish a relationship built on mutual respect and trust. Students should be able to rely on the fact that teachers will prepare their classes in earnest, respond fully to their questions, and test them appropriately on subject matter covered in the course and issue grades fairly using established criteria. Teachers should be able to rely on the fact that students will rigorously and honestly perform the tasks assigned to them, ask questions when they don't understand reading or lecture material and comment on any aspect of the course that they feel is not addressing their needs or expectations.

In accordance with stated URI policy I expect that you will adhere to ethical academic practices in the writing and reporting of your work. **Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Specifically, plagiarism can result in an F for the assignment, an F for the course or dismissal from the university. If you have some question about whether or not to document a source or piece of reference material please do not hesitate to ask.**

Read the document published by URI's College of Business Administration to help you understand further what plagiarism is. "What Is Plagiarism?" You can also refer to the University of Rhode Island Manual, "Academic Regulations" (Chapter 8), and the University of Rhode Island Student Handbook: Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations. (<http://www.uri.edu/judicial/Student%20Handbook/ch1.html#4>).

Syllabus Subject to Change (a syllabus is not a contract)

In this class, cheating and plagiarizing is not acceptable and will be punished according to URI's as found in the University Manual, "Academic Regulations" (Chapter 8).

The following are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Using material from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation;
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently;
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams;
- Unauthorized communication during exams;
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student;
- Taking an exam for another student;
- Altering or attempting to alter grades;
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams;
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references;
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty; and
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors.

Remember: Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit for assignments/tests to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the Internet) without properly acknowledging the source.

Please note that it is your responsibility to understand plagiarism guidelines and the University's policy on cheating.

#### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION BASED ON DISABILITY**

Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, who believe that they may need accommodations in this class, are asked to contact Disability Services for Students Office at 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Please meet with the Disability Services staff to verify your eligibility for any classroom accommodations and for academic assistance related to your disability. Accommodations can only be provided for students who have officially registered with Disability Services and who present an official documentation. URI's Disability Services for Students can also be reached by email at: [dss@etal.uri.edu](mailto:dss@etal.uri.edu) or TTY-via RI Relay at 1-800-745-5555 or at DSSFS's website.

#### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION BASED ON OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

It is your responsibility to get class notes if you miss a session due to an official URI sponsored activity (such as athletics). In addition, you are expected to turn in assignments on time. If you will miss class on the due date of an assignment speak to the instructor IN ADVANCE so that I can make proper arrangements.

#### **ACADEMIC POLICY ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

In accordance with University policy, students may be absent from class due to religious holy days. Please be sure to let me know if you will be absent so that we make the appropriate accommodations.

**6.20.10** Policy on Religious Observance. No faculty or staff member, administrator or student shall be discriminated against because of religious beliefs or practices.

**8.51.11** Students who plan to be absent from classes or examinations for religious holy days that traditionally preclude secular activity (see 6.20.11 for how such information is made available) shall discuss this with the appropriate instructor(s) in advance of the holy day. The instructor(s) shall then make one of the following options available:

- a. the same quiz, test, or examination to be administered either before or after the normally scheduled time;
- b. a comparable alternative quiz, test, or examination to be administered either before or after the scheduled time;
- c. an alternative weighting of the remaining evaluative components of the course which is mutually acceptable to the student and instructor(s).

#### **URI STATEMENT ON COVID & HEALTH PROTOCOLS**

As members of the URI community, students are required to comply with standards of conduct and take precautions to keep themselves and others safe. Visit [web.uri.edu/coronavirus/](http://web.uri.edu/coronavirus/) for the latest information about the URI COVID-19 response.

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- Students who are experiencing symptoms of illness should not come to in-person class. Please stay in your home/room and notify URI Health Services via phone at 401-874-2246.
- If you are already on campus and start to feel ill, go home/back to your room and self-isolate. Notify URI Health Services via phone immediately at 401-874-2246.

If you are unable to attend class, please notify me immediately at [uryder@uri.edu](mailto:uryder@uri.edu)

Please note that Health Services is not able to provide documentation for absence due to routine illness and will resume the practice of notification to the Dean's office for serious illness/injury that requires the student to miss multiple classes.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

You are responsible for withdrawing from the course; you must correctly drop it or you will receive a failing grade.

## **DEADLINES**

All deadlines are firm. All work must be submitted by the due dates listed on the syllabus. Late work will not be accepted except in the case of severe illness or emergency and may be awarded only partial credit.

***When I discover who I am, I'll be free.*** ~Ralph Ellison

***We might as well be true with ourselves.*** ~Cardi B

***When you love and accept yourself, when you know who really cares about you, and when you learn from your mistakes, then you stop caring about what people who don't know you think.***

~Beyoncé

***People hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they are so often separated from each other...***  
~Martin Luther King Jr.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Date	Lecture/Activity	Reading/Homework
January 2 Tuesday	Introduction & Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarize yourself with Brightspace and print a hard copy of the syllabus for your records.</li> <li>Start discussing! Please tell us a little about yourself and why you are taking this course.</li> </ul>
January 3 Wednesday	History and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Our Bodies, Ourselves - The Politics of Women's Health</li> <li>Read: The Historical Context</li> <li>Read: History can shape health policy</li> <li>Watch: The Eugenicist Movement in America</li> </ul>
January 4 Thursday	Historical context and present realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Sterilization</li> <li>Read: CA Bans Sterilization of Inmates</li> <li>Read: Native American Women and Coerced Sterilization</li> </ul>
January 5 Friday	HPV & Cervical Cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Race and ethnic group knowledge and HPV</li> <li>Read: HPV Vaccine Pros and Cons</li> <li>Read: RI leads the country in HPV vaccination rate</li> </ul>
January 8 Monday	Breast health and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch: A tool that finds 3x as many breast tumors</li> <li>Read: Breast Cancer and The Environment: Opportunities for Action</li> <li>Read: Environmental justice</li> </ul>
January 9 Tuesday	Women & the Healthcare System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch: The single biggest health threat women face</li> <li>Watch: Mother and daughter doctor-heroes</li> <li>Read: Being a doctor is hard. It's harder for women.</li> <li><b>Take QUIZ #1</b></li> </ul>
January 10 Wednesday	Puberty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read: Imagine never having to have your period again...</li> <li>Read: Puberty before age 10 – A New 'Normal' –NY Times</li> <li>Read: The Risks of Earlier Puberty</li> <li>Read: The fight to end period shaming is going mainstream</li> <li><b>Submit your Annotated Resource List topic via Brightspace by today</b></li> <li>NOTE: Only submit the <u>topic</u> for approval. Do not submit the entire list, which is due at the end of the term. You will not earn credit if you submit the completed list.</li> </ul>
January 11	The Pink Tax	

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Thursday		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Why Many Native American Girls Skip School when they have their Periods</li> <li>• Read: The Pink Tax</li> <li>• Read: Examples of items that cost more for women</li> </ul>
January 12 Friday	Maternal health and infant mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Maternal Deaths and Contraception</li> <li>• Read: Racial Disparities Persist in Maternal Morbidity, Mortality and Infant Death</li> <li>• Read: Native Americans and emergency contraception</li> <li>• Watch: The Last Abortion Clinic</li> </ul>
January 15 Monday	<b>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY</b>	<b>NO CLASS / NO DISCUSSION DUE</b> <b>Work on other assignments</b>
January 16 Tuesday	Body image & body size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: Everybody Knows Somebody</li> <li>• Read: Eating disorder information article</li> <li>• Read: The thigh gap and eating disorders</li> <li>• Kim Kardashian and the appetite suppressant lollipop</li> <li>• <b>Take QUIZ #2</b></li> </ul>
January 17 Wednesday	Women and Ageing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: The Beauty of Aging</li> <li>• Read: Dodds: Gender, Ageing and Injustice</li> <li>• Read: Gender and aging</li> <li>• Read: Alternative aging</li> </ul>
January 18 Thursday	Social media and women's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Excessive social media could harm female self-esteem</li> <li>• Read: The Link between Social Media and Body Image</li> <li>• Read: Social Media (Again) Shown to be Worse for Girls' Mental Health than Boys'</li> </ul>
January 19 Friday	Covid-19 and women's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Covid-19 has "devastating" effect on women and girls</li> <li>• Read: Women, Caregiving, and Covid-19</li> <li>• Read: A Pandemic within a Pandemic: Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19</li> <li>• Visit the URI's Women's Center homepage and review the information they provide on violence and sexual assault</li> <li>• <b>Take QUIZ #3</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Wrap up</b> <b>Hooray, We're Done! ☺</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annotated Resource List due <u>Jan. 20</u> by 11:00pm.</b></li> <li>• <b>Event response due <u>Jan. 20</u> by 11:00pm</b></li> </ul>