

**Human Biology 129: CRITICAL ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
HEALTH**
Winter, 2008
Anne Firth Murray

Format: Seminar /workshop Quarter /Year: Winter 2008 Number of Units: 4

Enrollment: 32-36 Prerequisite: None Grading: Letter

Mondays and Wednesdays: 11 a.m. to 12:20 in Building 160, room 318

Basis of grading: class attendance (20%); participation and in-class writing, including a book review and an evaluation (16%); final paper / project (24%); mid-quarter short paper (10%); reading group attendance, participation, leadership, discussion comments and questions (20%); film attendance (10%). Students must sign in at each class and reading group discussion and at any other required events.

DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of international women's health issues presented in the context of a woman's life, beginning in childhood and moving through adolescence, reproductive years, and aging. The approach to women's health is broad, taking into account economic, social, and human rights factors and particularly the importance of women's capacities to have good health and manage their lives in the face of societal pressures and obstacles. Particular attention will be given to critical issues of women's health such as: the demeaning of women; poverty; unequal access to education, food, and health care; and violence. Such issues as maternal mortality, sexually transmitted disease, violence in the home and in conflict and refugee situations, the effects of traditional practices, and sex trafficking will be discussed.

Course materials will draw from a wide variety of sources, including information about women's organizations outside the U.S. The class will be interactive. After the first week, each week will be devoted to a particular phase of a woman's life and /or a health issue related to that phase, with one session being introductory (often involving guest resource people) and the other being primarily discussion-based, with students leading parts of the discussions. Each student is required to attend a one-hour small group session each week and occasionally provide leadership.

The text for the course is: Murray, Anne Firth, *From Outrage to Courage: Women Taking Action for Health and Justice*, Common Courage Press, 2008. In addition to the text, articles that appear on Coursework represent the main required reading for the course. Two other books will be on reserve at the library for students' use: Kim, J. Y., et al, eds., *Dying for Growth: Global Inequality and the Health of the Poor*, Common Courage Press, 1999, and Mann, Jonathan M., et al, eds., *Health and Human Rights: A Reader*, Routledge, 1999. Copies of the texts will be on reserve at the library. Readings for the course are available on the web (in Coursework). Additional materials may be posted on the class website or handed out in class.

Most weeks during the quarter, a video/film evening will be scheduled for Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. Students are expected to attend 5 of the 8 screenings. During the early part of the quarter students will be invited to the home of the professor, during which we will get to know each other better and share our thoughts and expectations about the class.

Students will be responsible for all materials that are handed out in class and for announcements put on the Coursework website. These may include: course announcements, changes in the lecture or reading schedule, minimal additional reading material, and updated guest information.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

1. To introduce critical health issues affecting women globally (particularly in poorer countries), in terms of their cultural and social contexts, not as a rationale for practices but as a basis for understanding.
2. To familiarize students with some of the strategies and programs that non-governmental organizations are using to address women's health issues in poorer countries.
3. To communicate a sense of personal responsibility, empowerment, and connection with women globally.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend class and to have read and discussed with others the readings for each session. Students are expected to be prepared for discussion of the readings and to bring their experiences, leadership capacities, and perspectives to participatory discussions. Each week each student will be expected to attend a small reading group session. In addition, each week students will submit questions and/or comments on the reading and topic of the week. These comments will form the basis for fuller class discussions. Email responses will be due in electronic format sent to the professor and the teaching assistant by midnight each Saturday. Students are also asked to be up to date on the international daily or weekly news relating to women's and girls' health.

Students are expected to complete assignments by the set deadlines. There will be a short outline paper including five annotated references (maximum: 5-pages double-spaced in Palatino typeface) and one longer paper or project required (maximum: 12-page double-spaced in Palatino typeface). The outline paper and the longer paper or project offer opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of a topic or region of their choosing.

Students are expected to attend at least five film/video evening sessions and to read at least one book from the supplementary reading list during the quarter.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

WEDNESDAY, 1/9/08: Warm welcome. Introduction and overview of the subject, rationale, structure, and context for this course; introduction of participants, expectations. Review: requirements, website, film/video evenings, and books; syllabus, course reader, and reading lists; clarity about reading groups and assignments. Fill in contact sheets.

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read the syllabus thoroughly to avoid confusion later.
- Read the Foreword, Prologue, and Chapter 1 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al, pp. 1-34.
- Kim et al, Foreword and Chapter 1
- Pop. Ref. Bureau 2002 Women of our World data sheet: **view at:** [http://www/prb.org](http://www.prb.org)
- CR: National Council for Research on Women, *The World's Women*
- CR: UNDP Human Development Report: *Still an Unequal World*
- CR: Hesperian Foundation: *Where Women Have No Doctor*, introduction
- CR: Avotri and Walters, "We Women Worry a Lot about our Husbands"

Week 2: Women's Health and Human Rights

MONDAY, 1/14/08: Introduction to the course: Women's health and human rights. Review of course, syllabus, reader, reading lists, and requirements.
Guest resource person: (I usually ask an expert on human rights from the law school.)

WEDNESDAY, 1/16/08: Students lead discussions. Possible video: *Vienna Tribunal* (parts). In-class writing exercise on students' sense of the value of human rights.
Names exercise.

This week's film/video evening: *A Woman's Place* or *The Shape of Water*

SATURDAY a.m./p.m. for two hours: : meeting at professor's house

SUNDAY a.m./p.m. for two hours: : meeting at professor's house

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapters 2 and 3 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al, pp. 181-201
- Kim et al, Chapter 3, especially pp. 44-52
- CR: Bumiller, "No More Little Girls"
- CR: World Development Report 2000/2001: *Attacking Poverty*
- World Bank, Summers, *Investing in All: Educating Women in Developing Countries*
- CR: WHO, *Female Genital Cutting*
- Mann et al, pp. 336-62
- CR: Rahman/Toubia, *Female Genital Mutilation: Guide to Laws and Policies (SKIM)*
- CR: Zainaba (*Opening the Gates*)
- CR: Izett and Toubia, *Learning about Social Change (SKIM)*

- CR: US Dept. of Labor, Forced Labor: the Prostitution of Children (**SKIM**)

Week 3: Being Born a Girl; Poverty; Access to Education/Food

MONDAY: Childhood, poverty, access, traditional practices, access, child labor.
Guest resource person on girls' education, FGM, or nutrition:

WEDNESDAY: Discussion of critical issues of girls' childhood: poverty, access, traditional practices, child labor. Students lead discussion.

This week's film/video evening: *Secret and Sacred* (on female genital mutilation) or *End the Suffering* (also on FGM).

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 4 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: ICRW, The Critical Role of Youth in Global Development
- CR: Alan Guttmacher Institute, Into a New World: Young Women's...Lives (**SKIM**)
- Mann et al, pp. 35-45; **and SKIM** pp. 202-26,
- CR: Gender and AIDS Almanac, UNAIDS, 2001 (**SKIM**)
- CR: Berer, Women and AIDS (**SKIM**) and read pp. 5-13.
- CR: Nath, Madhu Bala, From Tragedy towards Hope
- CR: Farmer, Women, Poverty, and AIDS
- CR: Garcia Moreno in Visvanathan, Women Are Not Just Transmitters (**SKIM**)

Week 4: Adolescence and Vulnerability

MONDAY: Adolescence: vulnerability, fertility, sex trafficking, HIV/ AIDS.
Guest resource person: someone expert on adolescence and/or HIV/ AIDS.

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on dialogue with the body.

This week's film/video evening: *Pandemic* or *Everyone's Child*

Decide which book from the supplementary reading list you plan to read. **Send an additional email this week** noting the author and title of the book you choose.

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 5 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Measure Policy Brief: Making Pregnancy and Childbirth Safer
- CR: The Untold Story: How the Health Care System Contributes to Maternal Mortality (**SKIM**)
- CR: Patchesky, Spiraling Discourses of Reproductive and Sexual Rights
- CR: Abeyesekera, Activism for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
- CR: Eiven, Laura, et al, Lesbians, Health and Human Rights, and/o Mann et al, pp. 265-280 (**SKIM**)
- CR: Merali, Advancing Women's Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights (**SKIM**)
- CR: Dalsimer, Abuses against Women/Girls and China's 1-Child Family (**SKIM**)
- CR: IWHC, Reproductive Tract Infections

- CR: IWHC, Special Challenges: Cervical Cancer and/or
- CR: Outlook: Preventing Cervical Cancer in Low-Resource Settings
- Mann et al., pp. 253-64
- CR: Alan Guttmacher Inst., Women, Society, and Abortion Worldwide (SKIM)

Week 5: Reproductive Health, Sexuality, Maternity

MONDAY: Womanhood: sexuality; fertility; maternal health; reproductive health; access to abortion.

Guest resource person: Person expert in some aspect of this field

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on students' perceptions of rights to reproduce.

This week's film: *Fathalla on maternal mortality* and/or *Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village*

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 6 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Carillo, Violence against Women: An Obstacle to Development
- CR: Population Reports: Ending Violence against Women
- CR: Coomaraswamy, Some Reflections on Violence against Women
- CR: Garcia and Sayavedro, Violence, Empowerment, and Women's Health
- CR: Sen, Subordination and Sexual Control (SKIM)

Week 6: Domestic Violence against Women

MONDAY: Womanhood: domestic abuse

Guest resource persons: experts from a local women's crisis center

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on perceptions of violence.

This week's film/video evening: *Once Were Warriors*.

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 7 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Rehn and Sirleaf, Women, War and Peace
- CR: Farha, Contextualizing Violence against Women
- CR: Nikolic-Ristanovic, Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans
- CR: Swiss, Violence against Women during the Liberian Civil Conflict (SKIM)
- Mann et al, pp. 75-105
- CR: Jang, Domestic Violence in the Immigrant and Refugee Community (SKIM)

Week 7: Women in Conflict and Refugee Situations

**** NOTE: Outline of paper/project with annotated references is due in Anne's office in two weeks!**

Please email Anne and the TAs by Wednesday, May 9, at 5pm if you plan to perform a final project (as opposed to writing a paper), describing your plans.**

MONDAY: Introduction to this week's topic.

Guest Resource person: someone from the local community who has worked on refugee issues.

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion; staying healthy in the face of difficulties.

This week's film/video evening: Sierra Leone and/or Sri Lanka films

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 8 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Kim et al, Chapter 11 (**SKIM**)
- CR: UNDP: Valuing Women's Work
- CR: Altink, *Stolen Lives: Trading Women into Sex and Slavery* (**SKIM**)
- CR: Sleightholme and Sinha, *Guilty without Trial* (**SKIM**)
- CR: State Dept./CIA, Richard, *International Trafficking in Women to the US*
- Kim et al, one or more of chapters 4, 5, 6, and/or 7

Week 8: Globalization, Women and Work

MONDAY: Globalization and Women's Work

Guest resource person to be announced and/or part of Moyers film or new film Bamako (re IMF/World Bank)

WEDNESDAY: Globalization, women's work, trafficking: Students lead discussion and/or Video: Global Assembly Line and/or another relevant film

This week's film/video evening: *Who's Counting*

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Look back to readings re: poverty and inequality from weeks 1 and 2
- CR: UN, *Aging in a Gendered World: Women's Issues and Identities*, Introduction
- CR: International Institute on Aging: BOLD articles
- CR: Sánchez, *Who Cares for the Caregivers?*
- CR: Worters and Siegal, *The New Ourselves Growing Older*

Week 9: Aging and the End of Life

****NOTE: Final paper/project is due in Anne's office at 5 p.m. in a week!**

MONDAY: Growing older; menopause; widowhood, poverty; access to services, end of life.

Possible guest resource person from gerontology department.

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion with prepared questions for class and possible guests.

This week's film/video evening: To be announced

Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions

- Read Chapter 10 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al: From Concept to Action, pp. 395-452
- Kim et al, chapters 15 and 16
- Additional materials to be provided by individual NGO organizations
- CR: Weaver, Gandhi's Daughters

Week 10: Making a Difference and Choosing Priorities

****NOTE: Final paper/project is due this week (give date)!**

MONDAY: We talk about strategies to address the issues we have been discussing as well as the challenge of evaluating interventions. We may have some guest resource people this day, such as: Jennifer Staple (Unite for Sight); Ana Maria Enriques (consultant on women's groups); Nicole Sanchez (Youth Philanthropy Worldwide); Jane Maxwell (Hesperian); and possibly someone from Global Fund for Women.

WEDNESDAY: Students lead discussion. We become a grantmaking foundation board and make decisions to fund one or more women's organizations. We fill out evaluations. We bid fond farewell.

NOTICES

• Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who have a disability which may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class should notify the teaching assistants and initiate a request with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request

is being made. Please contact the DRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

- Honor Code

Please visit and read the honor code website on Coursework:

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>).

By now, all of you should know the difference between putting information in “your own words” and merely changing a few words around. The latter does not demonstrate understanding and will be marked down. Direct quotes may be used when appropriate. They should be placed in quotation marks and correctly referenced.

Name and Contact Information for Professor

Office hours by appointment; please sign up on the sheets on the door of my office.

Name and Contact Information for Teaching Assistant