



WST 591: Graduate Seminar on Reproductive Justice

Arizona State University

Instructor: Dr. Mellissa Linton (she/her)

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Office Hours: Wednesday/Thursday in Wilson Hall, Fifth Floor, #533A. E-mail to set-up an appointment.

Course Description: This graduate seminar examines the multifaceted concept of Reproductive Justice. The term was first introduced in June 1994 by the Black Women's Caucus at a national pro-choice conference in Chicago, Illinois. The caucus formed before the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which framed reproductive health as a human right. After that conference, the women involved sought to align the ICPD's human-rights framework with the U.S. reproductive-rights movement. They initially defined Reproductive Justice as the integration of reproductive health with social justice, using human-rights language.

In 1997, sixteen organizations led by women of color—Indigenous, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and Latinx women—founded the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. Their aim was to create a national Reproductive Justice movement that emphasizes that reproductive justice is a human right encompassing access as well as choice, and that extends beyond abortion.

Reproductive Justice, both as theory and praxis, encompasses the right to have or not have children and the right to raise the children we have in sustainable, healthy environments. It differs conceptually from the pro-choice movement by foregrounding racial, cultural, and socioeconomic inequalities. This seminar also analyzes histories of eugenics, unethical reproductive-technology testing, and coercive sterilization, showing how the "freedom to choose" can fall short in protecting women of color.

Syllabus subject to change based on discretion of the Professor, and with sufficient notice.

Required Texts: All course readings will be provided on Canvas and available at least two weeks in advance. Full books are available to virtually check-out through the ASU library.

Books:

1. Cooper Owens, Deirdre. 2017. *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*. University of Georgia Press.
2. Kafer, Alison. 2013. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Indiana University Press.
3. Lea Spira, Tamara. 2025. *Queering Families: Reproductive Justice in Precarious Times*. University of California Press.
4. Roberts, Dorothy E. 1997. *Killing The Black Body: Race, Reproduction, And The Meaning Of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon Books.
5. Theobald, Brianna. 2019. *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

E-mail Policy: Please e-mail mlinton3@asu.edu for all course-related questions. Please allow up to 48 hours for a response.

UNIT 1- Reproductive Justice: Black and Native Feminist Origins in the United States

Week 1: October 12-October 18

1. Review syllabus and assignments.
2. Ross, Loretta. "Understanding Reproductive Justice: Transforming the Pro-Choice Movement." *Off Our Backs* 36, no. 4: 14-19, 2006.
3. [BOOK] Roberts, Dorothy E. *Killing The Black Body: Race, Reproduction, And The Meaning Of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1997.
 - Read: Introduction
 - Chapter 1 "Reproduction in Bondage"
 - Chapter 2 "The Dark Side of Birth Control"

Week 2: October 19-25

1. [BOOK] Cooper Owens, Deirdre. 2017. *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*. University of Georgia Press.
 - Read: Introduction - "American Gynecology and Black Lives"
 - Chapter 1 - "The Birth of American Gynecology"

Week 3: October 26-November 1

1. Akhter, Farida. 1988. "The State of Contraceptive Technology in Bangladesh." *Reproductive and Genetic Engineering*.
2. [BOOK] Theobald, Brianna. *Reproduction on the Reservation: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Colonialism in the Long Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.
3. Le Grice, Jade Sophia, and Virginia Braun. "Indigenous (Māori) Perspectives on Abortion in New Zealand." *Feminism & Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2017): 144–162.

UNIT 2- Latina Immigrant Sterilization and *La Marea Verde en Latinoamérica*

Week 4: November 2-November 8

1. Watch Film [No Más Bebés \(2015\)](#)
2. Hernández, Leandra Hinojosa, and Sarah De Los Santos Upton. "Transgender Migrant Rights, Reproductive Justice, and the Mexico–US Border in the Time of COVID-19." *QED* (East Lansing, Mich.), vol. 7, no. 3, Michigan State University Press, 2020, pp. 142–50.

Week 5: November 9-November 15

1. Linton-Villafranco. Mellissa. 2025 "The Criminalization of Abortion in El Salvador." *New York University Press Anthology on Reproductive Justice*.
2. "From Hospital to Jail: the Impact on Women of El Salvador's Total Criminalization of Abortion: Citizen's Coalition for the Decriminalization of Abortion on Grounds of Health, Ethics and Fetal Anomaly, El Salvador." 2014. *Reproductive Health Matters*, vol. 22, no. 44, p. 52–60.
 - **Skim and briefly review:** [Unheard Voices: Women's Experiences with the Zika Virus in El Salvador](#).

Week 6: November 16-November 22

1. Martínez Coral, Catalina and Cristina Rosero. Regional Perspectives Report: Center for Reproductive Rights. "Colombia: Historic Advancement in the Decriminalization of Abortion," 2022.
2. Díez J, Ruibal A. The Decriminalization of Abortion in Latin America: A Tale of Gradual Judicialization. *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 58(1):48-51, 2025.

UNIT 3 - Queering Reproductive Justice

Week 7: November 23-November 29

1. Lea Spira, Tamara. 2025. *Queering Families: Reproductive Justice in Precarious Times*.
 - Read Introduction
 - Chapter 1
 - Chapter 2
2. Cárdenas, Micha. "Pregnancy: Reproductive Futures in Trans of Color Feminism" - *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 2016.
3. Bridget ("B") Schaaff, National LGBTQ Task Force, *Queering Reproductive Justice: Mini Toolkit* (Candace Bond-Theriault ed., June 2019)
4. Chen, Jung. "Queering Reproductive Justice: Framing Reproduction of Gay Men from a Transnational Perspective—Taiwan as a Case." *Sociology Compass*, vol. 17, no. 12, 2023

Week 8: November 30-December 5

1. [BOOK] Kafer, Alison. *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (2013).
 - Read the Introduction: "Imagined Futures."
 - Chapter 1: "Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips."
 - Chapter 2: "At the Same Time, Out of Time: Ashley X."
 2. Piepmeyer, Alison. "The Inadequacy of 'Choice': Disability and What's Wrong with Feminist Framings of Reproduction." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2013, pp. 159–186. *JSTOR*.
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Course Details

Readings

All readings in this class are provided for you as I prioritize accessibility.

- All articles assigned for this class are provided as .PDFS, and hyperlinked in the modules.
- For weeks where we read chapters from full books, you can access and read these books online through the ASU Library Resource Organizer.

E-mail Policy

Please e-mail mlinton3@asu.edu for all course-related questions. I will be posting periodic announcements on Canvas and it is important you check it regularly. My e-mail policy is 24 hours for a response, Monday - Friday from 9-5pm. I do not respond to e-mail over the weekend.

Course Assignments

Précis - 2 submissions at 25% equaling (50%)

- **Instructions for Précis:** Please select 2-3 articles OR book chapters from the course syllabus to address in a 2-3 page, double-spaced précis. You can select any readings on the syllabus prior to the deadline. I will give you in-depth comments. I suggest you choose articles most relevant to your research interests to have on file in the future.
- **What is a Writing Précis?** A précis is an excellent resource for the student in each of us. A Précis is a seminar and research tool, and is brief summary of essential points, statements or facts in an article/book chapter; it forces you to read purposefully. The goal is to distill the reading to its most essential argument, which will make it easier to synthesize and compare it with other works at a later time. An effective précis retains the core essence—the logic, development, and argument—of the original reading, but in much shorter form.
- **A Précis addresses the following:**
 - What is the text's main argument(s)?
 - How is the text structured? Describe its theoretical framework, methodological approach(es), and its relation to (inter)disciplinary conventions.

- Into what debates is the text intervening, how and why, and for what ends?
- How do the central formulations of each text relate to each other and to assigned readings and/or previous discussions?
 - *Note, you are not required to answer each of the above questions. They serve as guidance. Your skill lies in selecting the most pertinent points and eliminating the inessential. Do not add personal commentaries or opinions.

Annotated Bibliography on Reproductive Justice (25%)

- **Instructions of Assignment (25%):** This assignment will require researching ONE (1) academic source on Reproductive Justice that you have interest in, want to address in your final paper, or addresses an existing gap in existing Reproductive Justice literature.
 - **Instructions for Annotation:** Each student is responsible for contributing ONE (1) annotated academic source concerning Reproductive Justice. This assignment is meant to hone your research skills and identifying scholarly sources. The annotation for ONE (1) source is worth 25% and should be minimum one-page, and maximum two double-spaced pages.
 - **Parameters of Sources:** Sources that qualify for this assignment include: Books, Articles, Journal Articles and Primary Source Documents. Sources should directly engage with Reproductive Justice as a theoretical concept or political praxis. Directly engaging RJ means this term is clearly mentioned AND/OR is the implied focus or framing for the material. Please refrain from adding online, personal opinion pieces as a source.
 - **Mechanics:** 1 minimum 2 maximum double-spaced pages, to be submitted on Canvas. 12point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins. Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins. A separate works cited page in the citation format of your choice is required.
- **Parameters of Sources:**
 - Sources (Books/Articles/Primary Source Documents) included should directly engage with Reproductive Justice as a theoretical concept or political praxis. Directly engaging RJ means this term is clearly mentioned AND/OR is the implied focus/framing for the material.

- Journal articles are OK for submission. Please refrain from adding online, personal opinion pieces as a source.
- There is no length requirement for the Books/Article/Primary Sources you contribute.

Final Paper Assignment (25%)

- **Instructions:** You will be required to submit a final paper (7-10pp in length) that highlights key concepts and themes discussed throughout the semester. This paper will be culled from your précis, course readings and personal research interest.
- All students will answer one prompt provided by the Professor. See Assignment page for details.

Grading

Grading scale

Précis (2) (25 points each)	50 points
Annotated Bibliography	25 points
Final Paper	25 points
Total	100 points

Late or Missed Assignments

Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates (Arizona Mountain Standard time) are firm. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities.

All assignments are due at 11:59pm to Canvas. 12:00am is considered late. Each 24 hours an assignment is late, one letter grade will be deducted, up to a 50%.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

- Grading options cannot be changed after the add/drop period.
- Additional resource: <https://students.asu.edu/grades>
- **Late Policy:** You will lose a letter grade each day an assignment is late, up to a 50% grade markdown. Canvas assignments are hard deadlines; if an assignment is due at 11:59pm, 12:00am is considered late and will immediately lose a letter grade. Canvas automatically flags late assignments.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: The highest standards of academic integrity and compliance with the university's Student Code of Conduct are expected of all undergraduate and graduate students in academic coursework and research activities. The failure of any student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of individual colleges as well as the university. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to: cheating, fabrication of data, tampering, plagiarism, self-plagiarism or aiding and/or facilitating such activities. It is expected that students are familiar with these issues and that each student assumes personal responsibility in their work. Plagiarism results in an immediate failure and could require disciplinary action.

Self Plagiarism: Self-plagiarism occurs when you submit your own previously produced work, for which you have received credit in another course. You are not allowed to self-plagiarize in this course.

Additional Resources on Academic Integrity:

<https://provost.asu.edu/academic-integrity>

<https://eooss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>

Campus Resources

ASU Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS): Please contact me as soon as possible if you are registered with SAILS and have specific accommodations for this course. SAILS is the central campus resource for students with class accommodations and/or learning disabilities to ensure access to their education and help increase awareness in the university community. We work to create a culture of access and inclusion through collaboration with faculty, campus partners, and the use of universal design principles.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations should complete a registration form. Once this form is submitted, students will receive an automatic confirmation email. Within a few days of submission, students will be contacted, through their ASU e-mail by their assigned Accessibility Consultant (DAC) with information to set up their initial appointment. This appointment is essential to establishing eligibility and beginning the interactive process to determine accommodations.

If there are questions at any point prior to being connected with your DAC, you can contact our office at (480) 965-1234 and student.accessibility@asu.edu

ASU Writing and Tutoring Center: Free tutoring support is available in person and online for most courses. Services are offered through ASU's University Academic Success Programs for currently enrolled students. Tutoring is available in math, business, science, statistics, and engineering courses.

- Writing tutoring is available for any writing project at any stage of the writing process.
- Supplemental Instruction (SI) facilitates collaborative study groups for selected courses.
- Graduate academic tutoring is available for writing and statistics.
- Academic skills tutoring can help with critical reading, study skills, note taking, and more.
- Resources are available through our YouTube channel, Zoom recordings, and handouts.
- Visit <https://tutoring.asu.edu> or call (480) 965-9072 for more information about these services, to view schedules, or to book an appointment.