

**BIRTH CONTROL
POPULATION, POLITICS, AND POWER**

K20.1398

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Spring 2008

Classroom: Waverly 370
Class day/time: Tuesdays 3:30-6:10pm
Office hours: Wednesdays 10am-12pm

What is the political and economic value of people? Who has the right to control human reproduction and why? How do individuals express reproductive autonomy, and how do states exercise population control? This course will focus on birth control (broadly conceived as the management of human reproduction) as a lens through which to see how the evaluation and cultivation of national populations has shaped government in the modern world. In discussing and writing about topics such as race and eugenics, overpopulation and modernization, sterilization and abortion, human rights and demographic nationalism, this class will ask you to draw on a variety of primary and secondary sources to develop your own ideas about government and self-government in the age of birth control.

Required readings for this course include the following six books that are available at Shakespeare & Co. (716 Broadway) and the Course Reserve Desk in the basement of Bobst library. All other readings on this syllabus are available in PDF form on Blackboard. Additional readings will be handed out in class; if you are absent, it is your responsibility to acquire a copy.

Sex in Development, edited by Adams and Pigg
The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood
The Crux, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Conceiving the New World Order, edited by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp
American Eugenics, by Nancy Ordovery
Killing the Black Body, by Dorothy Roberts

Attendance is required and will be recorded at the beginning of each class. One absence will be allowed without penalty. A second absence may result in the lowering of your grade by one full letter grade unless permission is granted in advance.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the date indicated on the syllabus. In addition to informed and active participation in class discussions, students are expected to prepare one oral presentation and to write three analytical essays. Essay prompts will be handed out in class two weeks before each due date. Late work will not be accepted without prior approval. Essays must be double-spaced with standard margins and correct citation. Plagiarism—accidental or otherwise—will result in failure.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, preparedness and class participation	25% of the final grade
Essay 1 (primary and secondary source analysis) DUE FEB 19	20% of the final grade
Essay 2 (analysis of argument and methodology) DUE MARCH 25	20% of the final grade
Essay 3 (comprehensive analysis and synthesis) DUE APRIL 29	20% of the final grade
Oral presentation (analysis of one assigned reading)	15% of the final grade

Incompletes will only be considered upon the submission of a request for a grade of incomplete.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS to be read *before* the date for which they are assigned unless otherwise noted. The six books on reserve at Bobst are marked with an asterisk; all other readings are on Blackboard. The schedule of required readings is subject to change with advance notice.

January 22 – POPULATION and CAPITAL

In-class reading: Thomas Malthus, selections from “An Essay on the Principle of Population,” in *On Population*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (New York: Modern Library, 1960), 3-17.

In-class reading: Karl Marx, selections from *Capital, Vol. 1*, in *Marx and Engels on the Population Bomb*, ed. Ronald Meek (Berkeley: Ramparts, 1971), 88-116.

January 29 – VOLUNTARY MOTHERHOOD and RACE SUICIDE

Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin, 1990), 93-155.

Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2003), 155-187.

Margaret Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage* (Old Saybrook: Applewood, 1993), 3-8, 188-203.

February 5 – LIBERALISM and RADICALISM

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Crux* (Durham: Duke U. Press, 2003).*

Emma Goldman, “The Individual, Society and the State,” “Victims of Morality,” and “Women Suffrage,” in *Red Emma Speaks* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities, 1996), 109-123, 168-174, 190-203.

February 12 – RACE and EMPIRE

Angela Davis, “Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights,” in *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981), 202-221.

Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Fred Cooper and Ann Stoler (Berkeley: U. of California, 1997), 87-151.

February 19 – BIOPOWER and PURITY – **ESSAY 1 DUE**

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 135-159.

In-class film screening: *The Lynchburg Story* (Trombley, 1994).

February 26 – FASCISM and PRONATALISM

Victoria de Grazia, "The Nationalization of Women," in *How Fascism Ruled Women* (Berkeley: U. of California, 1992), 1-17.

Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany," in *When Biology Became Destiny*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review, 1984), p.271-289.

David Hoffmann, "Mothers in the Motherland," *Journal of Social History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2000): 35-48.

March 4 – STATES and SOCIETIES

Conceiving the New World Order, ed. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp (Berkeley: U. of California, 1995).*

March 11 – SEX and DEVELOPMENT

Vincanne Adams and Stacy Leigh Pigg, eds., *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality, and Morality in Global Perspective*. (Durham: Duke U. Press, 2005).*

March 25 – MODERNIZATION and TECHNOLOGY – **ESSAY 2 DUE**

Maria Milagros Lopez, "No Body is an Island: Reproduction and Modernization in Puerto Rico," in *Talking Visions* (Cambridge: MIT, 1998), 193-201.

Amartya Sen, "Population: Delusion and Reality," *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 41, no. 15 (1994).

Amartya Sen, "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing," *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 37, no. 20 (1990).

In-class film screening: *La Operacion* (Dir. Ana Maria Garcia, 1982)

April 1 – NATIONALISM and DIFFERENCE

Nancy Ordover, *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 2003).*

April 8 – LIBERTY and EQUALITY

Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997).*

April 15 – AGENCY and SUBJECTIVITY

Rayna Rapp, "Moral Pioneers: Women, Men and Fetuses on a Frontier of Reproductive Technology," in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge* (Berkeley: U. of California, 1991), 383-393.

Susan Bordo, "Are Mothers Persons? Reproductive Rights and the Politics of Subjectivity," in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: U of California, 1993), 71-97.

Ellen Willis, "Abortion: Is a Woman a Person?" in *Powers of Desire*, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review, 1983), 471-476.

April 22 – DYSTOPIAN VISIONS of the PAST/PRESENT/FUTURE

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986).*

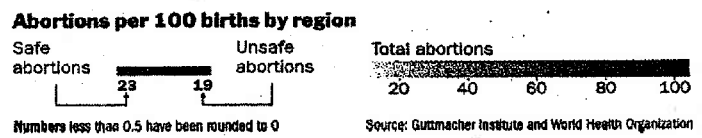
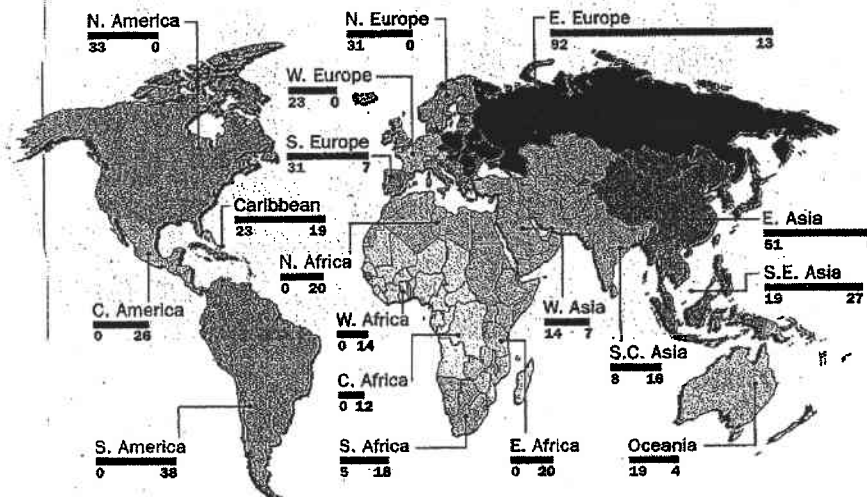
In-class film screening: *Children of Men* (dir. Alfonso Cuaron, 2006).

April 29 – CONCLUSIONS – ESSAY 3 DUE

Discuss papers and conclusions.

Abortion: Prohibition Is Not Prevention

Abortion is no less prevalent where the procedure is prohibited, according to a study from the Guttmacher Institute and World Health Organization. It's just more dangerous. "The [legal] status of abortion seems to predict not the number of abortions that occur but the safety," says author Dr. Gilda Sedgh. Half of the 42 million abortions worldwide are performed by unskilled individuals or in unhygienic conditions. Overall, abortion is down; Eastern Europe has the highest rate, with 105 abortions per 100 births.



TIME MAGAZINE, OCTOBER 29, 2007