

POL 286: Politics of Motherhood

Syllabus
Spring 2015
Melissa Harris-Perry

This course examines the intersection of motherhood and politics in the United States with a focus on contemporary politics. There will be some grounding in 19th and 20th century women's political history. We will consider the politics of motherhood in various forms: the relevance of parental identity in the political choices of women; the cultural and political battles surrounding reproductive justice and the ability of women to choose motherhood; the complicated ways that motherhood is represented in popular culture; and the intersections of race, class and sexual orientation with the politics of motherhood. Although the enrollment is a bit large, this course functions as a traditional in-depth seminar. The focus is on close reading of the texts, careful and original analysis of key ideas, class participation, and written analysis.

ASSESSMENT

Class leadership (10%) Each week one or two students will be responsible for leading the class discussion by preparing discussion questions and guiding conversation on the assigned readings.

Five Reading Response Papers (50%) Each student will write five (5) 700-1000 word essays in response to the assigned readings. Students will sign up in Week 1 of class for which weeks they will respond. Each response paper is worth 10% of the grade. Together these papers account for 50% of the grade.

Reading Response Papers are due at 12 Noon each Wednesday via email. Students may choose to write in response to reading from any five weeks of their choice. However, *at least* two (2) papers must be submitted in response to readings before Spring Break.

Final Essay (20%) Students will choose to write a final essay from five possible prompts. Students will have 24 hours to complete the essay. The final essay should not exceed eight (8), double-spaced, 12-point font, pages with standard one-inch margins.

Annotated Bibliography (10%) Each student will prepare an annotated bibliography of 5 to 7 sources corresponding to the week the student leads class discussion. Annotated bibliographies should include academic sources with a mix of books and articles. Annotations should be 150-300 words long. Annotated bibliographies are due the final day of class.

Class Participation (10%) Students are expected to complete all readings before each class. The professor will call on students to contribute. Lack of familiarity with the assigned material will have a negative affect on student assessment. Written attendance will be taken.

Late Assignment Policy

All students have one Free Pass to be used on any written assignment except the final essay. One assignment can be turned in up to 48 hours late with no questions asked and no negative consequences for the grade. After the Free Pass is used, any assignment submitted late will be subject to the late assignment policy. Assignments submitted late will lose 1/3 letter grade for any late submission within the first 48 hours. Each additional 24 hours results in another 1/3 letter grade reduction. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for emergencies or health challenges that are documented by a physician or university administrator. All assignments must be submitted via time stamped email.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Readings marked with a * are available as links from the course website. Books are all available through the university bookstore.

O'Reilly, Andrea, ed. *Maternal Theory: Essential Readings*. Toronto: Demeter Press, 2007.

Douglas, Susan and Meredith W. Michaels. *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined All Women*. New York: Free Press, 2004.

Luker, Kristin. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984.

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

Twine, France Winddance. *Outsourcing the Womb: Race, Class and Gestational Surrogacy in a Global Market*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001.

Ryan-Flood, Róisín. *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Kinser, Amber. *Motherhood and Feminism*. Berkeley, Calif.: Seal Press, 2010.

Dyrness, Andrea. *Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

Week 1: January 14 Introduction to the Course

No readings required before the first class meeting.

ELECTORAL POLITICS

Week 2: January 21 Motherhood and the Franchise

*Dubois, Ellen Carol. *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978. Chapter 1 and 2

*Cott, Nancy. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987. Chapter 1.

*Blackwell, Alice Stone. "Why women should vote."

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/suffrage/whyvote.html>

*Fields-White, Monee. "How Racism Tainted Women's Fight to Vote." *The Root*. March 2011.

http://www.theroot.com/articles/politics/2011/03/womens_suffrage_and_racism_ida_b_wells_vs_frances_e_willard.html

*Giddings, Paula. *Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching*. New York, N.Y.: Amistad, 2008. Chapter 14.

Week 3: January 28 Targeting Moms as Workers and Voters

*Carroll, Susan. "The Disempowerment of the Gender Gap: Soccer Moms and the 1996 Elections." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Vol. 32, No. 1 (1999): 7-11.

*Vavrus, Mary Douglas. "From Women of the Year to 'Soccer Moms': The Case of the Incredible Shrinking Women." *Political Communication*. Volume 17, Issue 2 (2000): 193-213.

*How to Reach the Wal-Mart Mom Voter. The Federalist.com, October 2014.

<http://thefederalist.com/2014/10/28/how-to-reach-the-wal-mart-mom-voter/>

*Walmart Mom Voter Research Project. Please read through the site carefully. Available here: <http://www.walmartmomsresearch.com>

*Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992. Chapters 7, 8 and 9

*Beckert, Mary E. "From Muller v. Oregon to Fetal Vulnerability Policies." *The University of Chicago Law Review*. Vol. 53, No. 4 (1986): 1219-1273.

Week 4: February 4 A Mother for Vice President: Sarah Palin

*Schreiber, Ronnee. "Dilemmas of Representation: Conservative and Feminist Women's Organizations React to Sarah Palin." In *Women of the Right: Comparisons and Interplay Across Borders*, edited by Kathleen M. Blee and Sandra McGee Deutsch. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.

*Loke, Jaime, Dustin Harp & Ingrid Bachmann. "Mothering and Governing: How news articulated gender roles in the cases of Governors Jane Swift and Sarah Palin." *Journalism*

Studies. Volume 12, Issue 11 (2011): 205-220.

*Sarah Palin. *Going Rogue: An American Life*. New York: Harper, 2009. Chapter 1 and 2.

*Kim, Richard and Betsy Reed. *Going Rouge: An American Nightmare*. Deerfield Beach, Fla.: Health Communications, 2009. Section 4: Lipstick on a Faux Feminist.

MOTHERHOOD IN POPULAR CULTURE

Week 5: February 11 Popular Culture

Douglas and Michaels, *The Mommy Myth*, Chapters 1-5, 8, 10

Maternal Theory, Chapter 34 and 35

Week 6: February 18 The Workplace Mommy Wars

*Sandberg, Sheryl. *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. Chapters 6-9.

*Stone, Pamela. *Opting Out?: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2007. Chapters TBA

Maternal Theory, Chapter 7, Chapter 17 and Chapter 25

REPRODUCTIVE POLITICS

Week 7: February 25 Reproductive Rights, Foundational Text

Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*.

Week 8: March 4 Reproductive Rights at the Intersections

Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. (selections)

Maternal Theory, Chapter 29, Chapter 47 and Chapter 50

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: March 18 Surrogacy, Motherhood as Pregnancy

Twine, *Outsourcing the Womb: Race, Class and Gestational Surrogacy in a Global Market*.

Week 10: March 25 Surrogacy, Motherhood as Domestic Labor

Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*.

MOTHERS ON THE MARGINS

Week 11: April 1 Motherhood and Poverty

*Edin, Kathryn, Maria Kefalas and Frank Furstenberg (eds). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Introduction and Chapter 6

*Jetter, Alexis, Annelise Orleck & Diana Taylor. *The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right*. Hanover: Dartmouth College, 1997. Pages 87-140
Maternal Theory, Chapter 40 and Chapter 44

Week 12: April 8 Lesbian Motherhood

Ryan-Flood, *Lesbian Motherhood: Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship*.
Maternal Theory, Chapter 9, Chapter 11, Chapter 12, Chapter 23, Chapter 30

MOTHERHOOD AND ACTIVISM

Week 13: April 15 Motherhood and Feminism

Kinser, *Motherhood and Feminism*.

Week 14: April 22 Education Activism

Dyrness, *Mothers United: An Immigrant Struggle for Socially Just Education*.

CONCLUSION

Week 15: April 29

FINAL SUMMARY or FLEX DATE