

## Reproductive Health and Justice

Spring 2023

WST3903 –Class#: 21093, Section 39SE

MWF 5 (11:45am-12:35pm) ; MCCA186 ; 3 Credits

Dr. Joanna Neville

*“To be clear, reproductive justice is not a label—it’s a mission. It describes our collective vision: a world where all people have the social, political, and economic power and resources to make healthy decisions about gender, bodies, sexuality, reproduction, and families for themselves and their communities. And it provides an inclusive, intersectional framework for bringing that dream into being. Reproductive justice is visionary, it’s complex, it doesn’t fit neatly on a bumper sticker, and it has a lot to teach us about how to be successful in a changed and changing world.” ~Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas and Kierra Johnson<sup>1</sup>*

**Instructor:** Dr. Joanna Neville (She/her/hers)

**Email:** [jneville@ufl.edu](mailto:jneville@ufl.edu)

**Phone:** You may leave a message OR you may TEXT your question or concern to

352-327-8039. If you leave a message after 8pm, I will answer the next business day. Please make sure to include your name and class.

Office: 205 Ustler Hall

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 or by appointment. \*I can meet via Zoom too.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Oriana Fernandez

**Email :** [Oriana.fernandez@ufl.edu](mailto:Oriana.fernandez@ufl.edu)

**Office Hours:**

**Zoom Link:** <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98664457612>

**Rationale:** Contemporary understandings of reproductive practices, and the policies that govern them, generally invoke either a medical framework, one rooted in science and the “natural” or a moral framework which ascribes a hierarchy of worth to reproducing individuals and their (potential) offspring. Utilizing a sociological perspective of reproductive health and politics, this course explores the social construction of reproductive health, reproductive practices, and subsequent policies in the contemporary United States and approaches reproduction as more than a biological imperative. Focusing on the ways in access to reproductive health and more specifically-women’s decision-making regarding reproduction have been constrained based on their social location (i.e. gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability, etc), this course invokes a reproductive justice framework. We will take a critical look at the way social authorities (institutions such as government, medicine, media, business) have advocated reproductive capacities for some people while limiting the reproductive opportunities for others- typically women of color and queer individuals. Our analysis will investigate the ways in which reproductive control encompasses and intersections with various aspects of individuals’ lives.

**Course Aims, Objectives, and Outcomes:** Students in this course will gain broad exposure to a number of reproductive health issues and the interdisciplinary theorizing of feminist, medical social scientist, and public health scholars. Topics highlighted in some of these works include the social construction of social/health problems and the female body, particularly as they intersect with ideologies of identity and power; reproductive health rights and “choices;” the effects of structural violence and inhumane conditions on reproductive health; and how women make meaning of their health experiences. The course will draw on various theoretical and analytic tools including critical race theory, critical legal theory, sociology of science, human rights, feminist theory, and a range of public health methods. As a sociologist, I will often utilize the social perspective in understanding these concepts. This course will offer empirical, analytical, and theoretical tools understanding reproductive health and justice through a combination of readings, lectures, reflection, and audio-visual materials

Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures or processes. This course emphasizes the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas and Kierra Johnson, [Beyond Choice: How We Learned to Stop Labeling and Love Reproductive Justice](#) (via [rhrealitycheck](#))

**Specific Learning Objectives:** Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Describe the varied histories of reproductive politics in the U.S., and place contemporary reproductive practices within this current cultural context, particularly as they relate to race, ethnicity, and social class.
- Apply feminist and sociological theories to contemporary debates over reproduction, specifically as they relate to the debates about control and choice (structure/agency).
- Connect the lived local reproductive experiences to the greater cultural constructions of gender, health, and reproductions.
- Examine the use of poetry and fiction as a critical pathway for collective resistance
- Explain concepts and major perspectives relating to reproduction, including issues of reproductive justice and debates about childbirth, contraception, abortion and so on.
- Articulate inequalities in the ways that reproductive justice has been impacted by based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and other social locations.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills which strengthen our ability to understand, integrate, analyze, and communicate complex ideas.

**TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES:** For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk, not me. Here's the help desk contact info: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> • (352) 392-HELP (4357) • Walk-in: HUB 132 Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues should be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You should e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up or extension.

1. **REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND ASSESSMENTS:** A careful reading of the articles is essential for success in this course. All of the assessments are based on your understanding of the material presented. Class will be structured around readings. We will structure our discussions around a primarily sociological perspective, and students are expected to participate in a mature and responsible manner and respect the rights of others and their opinions.
2. **ESTABLISHING A QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content, which may include images, texts, data, and theories from across the disciplines. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. In this class, *Discrimination and Health*, students will encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, facts, ideas, and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge, and the pursuit of new ideas.

If students have concerns about classroom issues, disagreements, or grades, your first point of contact is me, your instructor. Please see my contact information at the top of this syllabus and on Canvas. I am always available and open to discuss concerns. If the problem cannot be resolved, we will email the next departmental contact: this may be the departmental course coordinator or the department chair. Their contact information can be found on the program's website at <https://wst.ufl.edu/> Email to the departmental contact should include a clear description of your concern and any supporting documents.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** Ross, L., Derkas, E., Peoples, W., Roberts, L., & Bridgewater, P. (Eds.). (2017). *Radical reproductive justice: Foundation, theory, practice, critique*. Feminist Press at CUNY.

Additional readings available on Canvas and see listed below.

Course Policies: **Attendance** : Attendance in this course is recommended, but not required. If you choose to access all course content through Canvas, your grade will not be impacted by not attending in-person lectures. I will be in class on the assigned days and times to deliver lectures, interact with students, and facilitate discussion. I would love to see you there, but no part of your calculated grade is based upon attendance. Please see section on Covid-19- do not come to class if you have any symptoms of any illness. You can access content on Canvas. However, throughout the semester, I will choose random class days and take attendance. If you are there, you will receive a bonus credit. If you were present for all bonus credits, you will receive six extra credit points. You can also access content on Canvas.

UF POLICY ON MAKING UP MISSED WORK: Make-up Policy: As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

In the case of an absence due to participation in an official university activity, observance of a religious holiday, performance of a military duty, or any other university-approved absence (e.g., jury duty) which the student knows about in advance, the student is expected to notify the instructor of the conflict before the assignment is due, and if possible, at the start of the semester.

#### Assessments:

1. **Personal Analytical Essay: “The Personal is Political” : (30 points)** This activity encourages students to reflect on their own bodily experiences as important sites for creating knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health. The objective is to explore how these intimate experiences are linked to social forces that eventually influence their knowledge and decisions about their health. \*This activity asks that you recall and write about past personal experiences that might trigger uncomfortable emotions. This will be kept as personal material will not be shared, and this is a safe learning environment. Please let me know if you have any questions. See more on Canvas, and I will discuss in class.
2. **Participation Total: ( Intro Post (2pts) and Take Away (3pts) + 5 Main discussion posts X 2pts each= 15 points total)** Participation Reflections Discussion Posts: These assignments connect the material to the lived local experiences of students as well as more global ones. You are required to “reflect” or comment on articles or media that correspond to the week by posting on the discussion thread. Your post must be at least 75 words and analyze the topic of that week. They must be posted from the author’s account and must be original. **I may use these posts as a jumping off for our in-class discussions, so be prepared to discuss your post.** All posts will be via Canvas.
3. **Learning Activities: (15x2=30 points.)** Active learning activities aim to show students real-world explanations of reproductive health and justice using an active learning framework. More specifically, these in-class activities introduce students to specific concepts within the reproductive realm such as the reproductive justice movement and abortion laws. Students will critically analyze these concepts and creatively develop policy solutions. See Canvas for more details, and I will discuss in class.
4. **Response Papers (20X4= 80 points)** These response papers help students identify and develop an understanding of the construction of sociological knowledge and also develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. They are due no later than the listed time/day.
5. **Final Paper: Analysis of a Reproductive Justice Campaign (Campaign Submission 5 points + Final Project 40 points = 45 points)** This assignment encourages students to think critically about discourses on women’s reproductive rights using a reproductive justice approach that insists on moving out of the pro-choice pro-life dichotomy. Students will apply their knowledge by analyzing one campaign addressing women’s reproductive rights in a 2.5 to 3-page paper. You must get your campaign approved in the “campaign submission” prior to final paper submission. See more on Canvas, and I will discuss in class.

## Grade Point Totals:

200-185 = A  
184-179 = A-  
178-173 = B+  
172-165 = B  
164-159 = B-  
158-153 = C+  
152-145 = C  
144-139 = C-  
138-133 = D+  
132-125 = D  
124-119 = D-  
<119 = E

\*There MAY be opportunities for bonus points. See attendance policy.

\*\*More information about grades and UF's grading policies is available in the Undergraduate Catalog  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies>

## 5. UNIVERSITY POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND RESOURCES

**UF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** This course will subscribe to the University of Florida Student Honor Code. A central part of the UF Honor Code is the Honor Pledge: "The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by Students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Further information about the UF Honor Code and guidelines for Academic Honesty are here.

In this course, plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in failing the course and other disciplinary action. In all instances, you must do your own work. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for submitting another's work, ideas, or wording as your own. This includes using direct quotes from online sources without citation or submitting a paper you bought but did not write. Ignorance is not an excuse. Please be aware that there are various anti-plagiarism techniques available for use by University of Florida faculty that enables faculty members to determine if research papers have been plagiarized. There is a difference between plagiarism and collaboration. Collaboration, for purposes of this class, is the act of discussing ideas with classmates, debating issues, and examining readings from the class together so that each of you arrives at your own independent thought. Collaboration in this class is encouraged.

**STUDENT CONDUCT CODE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** This course also operates under UF's Student Conduct Code. The Student Conduct Code is a set of standards and regulations which describe the rights, privileges, and responsibilities for all currently enrolled students at the University of Florida. For more information, click here. UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more information, see UF policies regarding harassment. Furthermore, in order to make this an effective course for everyone, all participants will be expected to meet the professional standards of integrity expected for members of the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies Research. This means I expect all participants to interact with peers "professionally," meaning with honesty, ethical behavior, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, and effective communication. Additionally, I expect all course participants will fulfill work obligations in a thoughtful and timely way, and display collegiality and sensitivity to faculty and other students.

**UF GENDER EQUITY:** The Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity provides support to anyone affected by sexual or gender-based misconduct, harassment, or discrimination. Please know that both your instructor in this course is considered Officials with Authority who are required to report violations of the gender equity policy. "Title IX is a federal law that requires officials with the authority to take action, to report violations of the gender equity policy. Officials with authority must report these violations to the Title IX Coordinator or their deputies. The obligation to

report applies whenever an Official with Authority receives, in the course and scope of employment, information about the alleged misconduct and policy violation. The report must include all information known to the employee which would be relevant to an investigation or redress of the incident, including whether the alleged victim has expressed a desire for confidentiality.” For further information, including how to make a report, click [here](#). Below are some specialist support services. You might not need them, but you might know someone who does. For specialist support in the aftermath of sexual assault, the Office of Victim Services on campus offer confidential, free support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Office of Victim Services : 1515 Museum Road, (352) 392-5648 (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) Phone: (352) 392-1111 (after business hours and on weekends)

Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center 352-264-6760 Monday-Friday, 8:30AM- 5PM, some services available 24/7

Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network 352-377-8255 (24-hour helpline)

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The University of Florida is committed to providing equal educational access to students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) collaborates with campus partners to facilitate access and inclusion for Gators with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (0001 Building 0020-Reid Hall, [accessuf@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu); Voice 352-392-8565; Fax, 352-392-8570) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. Information for students from the DRC is available [here](#). In this course, I am committed to providing equitable education access through reasonable accommodations as outlined in your accommodation letter. Please notify me within the first two weeks of class about any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodation to be unavailable.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES:** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor are available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helpful resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1. Here are additional resources:

- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit [shcc.ufl.edu](http://shcc.ufl.edu).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room/Trauma Center: For immediate medical care in Gainesville, call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

**EXTRA COURSE FEES:** There are no additional fees for this course.

**ACADEMIC RESOURCES:** E-learning technical support - 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or email to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu). Student help FAQs

- Library support - Ask-a-librarian. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources
- Teaching Center -Broward Hall, (352) 392-2010 or 392-6420. Study skills workshops, study groups, and tutoring.
- University Writing Studio - 2215 Turlington Hall, (352) 846-1138, The UF Writing Program offers all UF students help in the ongoing process of becoming better writers via one-on-one tutoring, online tutoring, and workshops.
- Career Connections Center - 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at [evaluations.ufl.edu](https://evaluations.ufl.edu). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

COVID-19: In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl](https://one.ufl.edu) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

### Consider Adding a (second) Major in Women's Studies!

Do you want to learn about issues of diversity, power, equity, and justice and gain the scholarly knowledge and skills to change the world? Adding the Women's Studies major can deepen your critical thinking, analysis, and skills in intersectional feminist approaches to studying and transforming gender, race, class, sexualities and other systems of power. The Women's Studies major shows graduate schools and employers that you bring advanced knowledge and skills about diversity and equity issues. The 30-credit Women's Studies major consists of four core courses and six electives. It's simple to combine with another major, and up to 15 credits can double count with another degree (English, Psychology, and Sociology in particular have many courses that can double count). It's also the perfect complement to pre-health studies. Contact undergraduate coordinator Dr. Alyssa Zucker ([azucker@ufl.edu](mailto:azucker@ufl.edu)) to make an appointment to discuss adding the major.

#### 6. **Tentative Schedule.** \*Subject to change by instructor. Last day to withdraw for a "W" is April 14

| Schedule   | Monday                 | Wednesday | Friday                                       |
|--|------------------------|-----------|--|
| Week 1: Course Introduction<br>January 9-13  | Classes Start          |           | Introduction Posts due before Friday 11:59pm |
| Week 2 : <b>Part One: Reproductive Health</b> January 16-20<br><i>The Politics of Reproduction</i> (Ginsburg and Rapp, 1991) on Canvas   | NO CLASS<br>MLK JR Day |           |  |
| Week 3: "The Sperm and The Egg"<br>January 23-27<br><i>The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles</i> (Martin, 1991) on Canvas. |                        |           | Personal Essay Due before 11:59pm            |
|  |                        |           |  |

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| <p>Week 4: Let's Take a Look at Contraceptive Care</p> <p>January 30-February 3</p> <p><i>Under (implicit) pressure: young Black and Latina women's perceptions of contraceptive care.</i> (Gomez and Wapman, 2017) on Canvas</p>   |              |                                 | Discussion Post #1 Due  |
| <p>Week 5: <b>Part Two: Reproductive Justice: Foundation and Theory</b> February 6-10</p> <p>Conceptualizing Reproductive Justice Theory (Pages 170-190 in reader)</p>  |              |                                 | Response 1 due before 11:59pm                                   |
| <p>Week 6: Reproductively Privileged: Critical White Feminism and RJT (Pages 241-250 in reader)</p> <p>February 13-17</p>   |              | In-Class Activity               | Mental Health Day: MidPoint (just about)<br>Check in: No class! |
| <p>Week 7: Centering Reproductive Justice: Transitioning from Abortion Rights to Social Justice (Pages 251-271 in reader)</p> <p>February 20-24</p>   |              |                                 | Discussion Post #2 Due  |
| <p>Week 8: <b>Part Three: Reproductive Justice in Context: Policy, Practice, and Activism</b></p> <p>"We Need to Talk about Disability as a RJ Issue" (Pages 302-305 in reader) and "The Reluctant RJ Organizer and Birth worker" (Pages 347-354 in reader)</p> <p>February 27- March 3</p> |              | Response # 2 Due before 11:59pm |   |
| <p>Week 9: "Wise Women Gathering Place" (Pages 332-339 in reader) and "HIV Prevention and RJ" (Pages 340-346 in reader)</p> <p>March 6-10</p>   |              | In-Class Activity               |   |
| <p><b>Week 10: Spring Break</b></p> <p><b>March 13-17</b></p>   | Spring Break | Spring Break                    | Spring Break  |
| <p>Week 11: Mothering While Poor (Pages 355-360 in reader) and Tubes Tie, Truly Child Free-At Last! (Pages 404-412)</p> <p>March 20-24</p>  |              | Response 3 due before 11:59pm   |   |
| <p>Week 12: <b>Part Four: Reproductive Health and Justice: Fiction and Poetry</b></p> <p>"Brown Seed" and "Depression" (Pages 428 and 430 in reader) March 27-31</p>  |              |                                 | Discussion Post #3 Due  |

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|---|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Week 13: "Reproductive Justice for Women of the East" (Page 436 in reader)<br><br>April 3-7   |   | Response 4 due before 11:59pm |                        |
| Week 14: <b>Part Five: Reproductive Future and Open Questions</b><br><br>"Queering Reproductive Access: Reproductive Justice in ART" (Tam, 2021 on Canvas)<br><br>April 10-14 |   | Discussion Post #4 Due        |                        |
| Week 15:<br><br>Structural Competency and Reproductive Health (Downey and Gomez, 2018 via Canvas)<br><br>April 17-21  |   |                               | Discussion Post #5 Due |
| Final Week: April 24-26<br><br>Paper Due  | NO Class work on Final Paper<br><br>Take Away Post Due before | Paper Due before 11:59pm      |                        |

### Articles and other resources (available on Canvas through weekly modules)

Downey, M. M., & Gómez, A. M. (2018). Structural competency and reproductive health. *AMA journal of ethics*, 20(3), 211-223.

Ginsburg, F., & Rapp, R. (1991). The politics of reproduction. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 311-343.

Gomez, A. M., & Wapman, M. (2017). Under (implicit) pressure: young Black and Latina women's perceptions of contraceptive care. *Contraception*, 96(4), 221-226.

Tam, M.W. Queering reproductive access: reproductive justice in assisted reproductive technologies. *Reproductive Health* 18, 164 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-021-01214-8>