Course Description

Women’s multiple roles, shaped by their socioeconomic and cultural milieu, have profound implications for their own health, as well as for their families. In the last three decades, dramatic changes in women’s social and economic roles have occurred. This course will provide students with an opportunity to examine in detail how the evolving roles of women and other contextual factors have affected women’s and families’ health—both domestically and internationally. Following a lifecycle approach, each stage of women’s lives will be analyzed to determine how societal demands and expectations influence their physical, mental and reproductive health. Readings will include recent research findings and programmatic interventions. Students will learn how to develop research proposals on key socioeconomic forces that affect women’s health. By the end of the course, students will be able to assess critically the health effects associated with women’s roles, and appreciate how these effects can be mediated by households, communities and national policies.

Readings

Most assigned readings can be found in the Course Reader, which is available for purchase from Course Reader Material, 1141 Westwood Boulevard, (310) 443-3303. Other readings will be distributed in class or put on reserve in the Biomed Library.
Grading

It is expected that all students will attend and participate actively in all classes. Most years we are fortunate to have a range of geographic and disciplinary backgrounds represented among the students taking the class. Students are encouraged to draw on their personal and professional knowledge and experience during the discussions, in addition to the assigned readings.

Since the format of the course relies heavily on informed class discussion, students should come having completed all the readings for that day. There will be two small writing assignments. A one hour in-class midterm will be held on May 10th.

As a final assignment, all students will write a research proposal on some aspect of the relationship between women’s roles and their own health or the health of their families. Midway through the course we will spend part of a class session discussing research proposals. An outline for the proposal will be distributed at that time. You are encouraged to meet with one of the instructors to discuss your idea before beginning to work seriously on your proposal. You will be expected to present the proposal to the class and obtain feedback. Your final written research proposal is due at the last class.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- 15% class participation
- 10% two small writing assignments
- 25% midterm
- 50% research proposal
Class Topics and Assigned Readings

April 5

Introduction and Overview of Course
Women’s Multiple Roles and Rights
Writing assignment #1 distributed (One woman’s multiple roles)

Readings

April 7

Women’s Health Issues and Disparities

Readings

April 12

Gender Preference, Gender Discrimination and Young Girls’ Health

Writing assignment #1 due

Readings
April 14  Gender Roles and Adolescent Well-Being

Readings


April 19  Gender Roles and Adolescent Reproductive Health

Readings


April 21  Motherhood Roles, Women’s Work and Children’s Health

Readings


April 26

**Early Marriage and Early Motherhood Roles**

*Writing assignment #2 distributed*

**Readings**


April 28

**Women’s Work and Women’s Physical Health**

**Readings**


May 3  Women's Sex Work, Gender Roles and Health

Readings

May 5  Women’s Work and Women’s Mental Health

Writing assignment #2 due

Readings

May 10  Midterm

Designing a research proposal
Guidelines for final paper will be distributed

Reading
May 12  
Women’s Roles, Domestic Violence and Health 
Readings 

May 17  
Women’s Roles and Sexual Health 
Readings 

May 19  
Women’s Roles and HIV/AIDS 
Readings 


May 24 Women’s Roles as Dual Caretakers

Readings


May 26 Women’s Roles and Chronic Diseases, Aging

Readings


May 31  Student Presentations on Research Proposals
June 2   Student Presentations on Research Proposals
June 7   Student Presentations on Research Proposals
June 9   Women’s Health, Women’s Rights and a Vision for the Future
          Final paper due at beginning of class.

Readings