

**Women, Agency and Sexual Safety: Advocating for the New Science
(or Putting Women's Bodies at the Center of Science)**
CAAS328\WS328 #1 Fall 2010,
Tuesday 3-6 pm, K1320 Kresge Bldg. Ross School of Business
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This course will examine the problems of the current technologies designed by scientists to enable women to have control over their reproductive capacities. The science to enable the prevention of STI, HIV, and pregnancy has now returned to condom use as the main method. This exposes the troubling nature of the scientific projects which have developed technologies of disease and pregnancy prevention for women. They have essentially separated out women's bodies from women's agency. The convoluted and unfriendly design of the female condom and its expense does not promote women's autonomy. The pill does not prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections. It is the condom in the end which is now being promoted for women's protection. The deep contradiction of this ancient male method at this moment is that women must negotiate condom use with men, thus putting their sexual safety in men's hands.

These problematic technologies are a direct result of women's ideas and voices being excluded at the very concept of the scientific project. The new technologies being developed will be examined e.g. Microbicides, the female condom, cervical protection, Pr/ep and male circumcision. These technologies have emerged because of the lack of truly female centered technologies which now force scientists to re-examine the limits of a science which did not put women's bodies at the center of science. For example one important research question has been the limited study of the vagina only as a vehicle for sexual intercourse and child birth not as an entity in its own right beyond these functions. It is this gap in the science of the female body that must impact greatly the development of new technologies for women. This is a critical question when one puts women's bodies at the center of science. To do this, is to develop technologies that will not only facilitate women's physical health but also facilitate women's agency.

This course takes a transnational perspective on the purpose, development, and utilization of different kinds of reproductive technologies. Feminist critiques and analyses of the role of reproductive technologies in Africa, U.S., and global contexts are central to the course. In advocating for Women, their agency and sexual safety, a new science is necessary and the advocacy of this new science is urgent.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on a combination of attendance, active participation, and course assignments as follows:

Attendance and Participation 30%

Paper One due: October 12th. 8 pages, 25%

Paper two due: December 7th. 8 pages, 25%

Class presentation: 20%

Expectations

All students are expected to attend class *and actively participate*. Each student is granted one unexcused absence without penalty. Active participation involves coming to class having read and critically engaged in the material. Here is a breakdown of the grading system

Grades

Attendance and Participation 30%

Attendance- If you don't come to class you cannot participate nor can you be aware of the level of discussion in the class and the issues raised and analyzed which may have an impact on your own thinking and written work. Attendance also affects information given in the class about scheduling, readings, changes in information and analyses given by the instructor.

Participation means the following:

Speaking- to speak continuously or frequently is not the only measure of participation. Is your speech informed by the readings, is your speech respectful of others, is it considerate, is its impact to silence others. Is it simply to speak. These are some of the criteria in evaluating participation. Be prepared to share your viewpoints, challenge assumptions, and ask important questions. *Just talking does not qualify as active participation.*

Group Presentation

This component of the class requires that you participate in a group presentation which will focus on an investigation of texts and curricula that teach the human body. The purpose is to examine what is taught about women and how that information is presented. Is this information presented in a way that generates a science and a knowledge that puts women's bodies at the center of science. Does this information facilitate women's agency, and sexual safety? In addition students may want to speak to practitioners in the health fields and discuss with them what they were taught about women's bodies and to current medical and nursing students about the kind of information they are taught. Working in a group requires responsibility and participation. It requires that work is shared equitably and that the ideas of others be heard. It is possible that one person's presentation in a group might be better than another's. Even though the effort might be that of a group it is possible for individuals to separate themselves. However if the content is weak then just the presentation alone will not suffice. Each person in the group will be judged on the basis of attempts at interviews, research and information, critical analyses and of course the strength of their presentation. A power point must be a part of every presentation..

Paper Assignment (two papers 20% each due on Nov. 12th. and Dec. 9th.)

Two papers are due. They must be well written. Papers sloppily presented or written or turned in late without an accepted excuse will be graded down. Papers which present information without analysis and thinking are unlikely to be favorably viewed. Papers that do not regurgitate information, that reflect on the meaning of the information, that apply the information to the problem discussed, that brings ideas to the table, that demonstrates insight and reflection are likely to be graded favorably.

Finally my grading style is not objective. It is a myth that grades are objectively decided. I do not have equivalencies for grades -that doing three particular things will give you an A and three other things will give you a B. The information you have been provided with represent what I like, what I value. You can always meet with me to discuss your papers or any issues you have concerning your work and the class.

My goal is to provide you with material that will give you new information on the topic of the class, but also to provide material that will make you think and most importantly, to make you act. This cannot be done by just reading alone and coming to class. You must learn to analyze,

to challenge ideas and to critically think. I seek in this class, for you to be engaged in a dialogue that is based on education that is problem posing. The problem is how will you impact the way science and scientists study women's bodies and their development of solutions for women's ailments that will foster women's agency and sexual safety. Some of the issues raised during the course may be controversial or difficult to discuss. With this in mind, it is important that we respect and listen to each other with open minds.

Readings

Although there is a great deal of research going on in this area, the readings for this class will be in a compilation of a two volume course pack most of the material coming from journals and web sites. The readings on the vagina for this class will be through the readings on Microbicides which directly deal with the vagina as an entity beyond reproduction and sexual intercourse. The sites for many of the discussions and readings in this class are, the global campaign for Microbicides, <http://www.global-campaign.org/> Center for Disease Control <http://cdc.gov/> International Partnership for Microbicides <http://www.ipm-microbicides.org/>

You can print off yourself the first part of the course pack which is the seven modules of the learning course on the website of the Global Campaign for Microbicides. Just click on the microbicide essentials course on the website. You have to register in order to access this course. There will be one course pack which will be available at Excel at 1117 S. State St. tel. 996-1500

Tuesday September 7th.

First day of Class, Introduction

Tuesday September 14th.

**Zena Stein: HIV Prevention: The Need for Methods Women Can Use
GCM Module Microbicides Essentials 1: Introduction to Microbicides
GCM Module Microbicides Essentials 2: Basic Science Course pack**

Tuesday September 21st.

**GCM Module Microbicides Essentials 3: How Would Microbicides Work? GCM Module
Microbicides Essentials 4: Need, Use, and Impact**

Tuesday September 28th.

**GCM Module Microbicides Essential 5: Development And Clinical Trials Course pack
Course Pack**

Tuesday October 5th.

**GCM Module Microbicides Essentials 6: Making Access a Reality GCM Module
Microbicides Essentials 7: The Microbicides Landscape Course pack**

Tuesday October 12th.

First paper due

Preventing Prevention Trial Failures, Course Pack

October 19

Fall Break

Tuesday October 26th.

**Cultural Norms and Behavior Regarding Vaginal Lubrication During Sex: Implications for the Acceptability of Vaginal Microbicides for the Prevention of HIV/STIs by Braunstein and Wijgert,
Vaginal Microbicides and the Prevention of HIV Transmission by Blayne Cutler and Jessica Justman
Course Pack,**

Tuesday November 2nd.

**GCM Module Microbicides Essentials: Rectal Microbicides
course pack part two**

**from Promise to Product: Advancing Rectal Microbicide Research and Advocacy
www.rectalmicrobicides.org/materials.php**

**Anal Intercourse Among Young Heterosexuals in Three Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinics in the United States by Pamina Gorbach
Course Pack**

Tuesday November 9th.

**Are People Using Condoms? Current Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and the Implications for Microbicides by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
"The Female Condom: Significant Potential for STI and pregnancy Prevention" by Outlook, Vol. 22 (2). PATH**

Female Condoms, Other Female Condoms, Other Cervical Barriers by the Cervical Barrier Advancement Society (<http://www.cervicalbarriers.org/information>)

Uganda Female Condom Distribution Program Halted Over Complaints that Condoms Were Not User Friendly, Official Says by Kaiser Daily Women's Health Policy DC Pushes female Condom to fight HIV, Course Pack

Tuesday November 16th.

Diaphragm and Lubricant gel for Prevention of HIV acquisition in Southern African Women: A Randomized Control Trial by Nancy Padian

The Social Construction of Science by N. Haniff and email reply by Julia

Male Circumcision and HIV/AIDS: Challenges and Opportunities by Sharif R. Sawires

Male Circumcision and HIV prevention: Ethical , Medical and Public Health Tradeoffs in Low Income Countries by Stuart Rennie

Understanding the Impact of Male Circumcision Interventions on the Spread of HIV in Southern Africa by Timothy B. Hallett Course Pack

Course Pack part two

Tuesday November 23rd.

Class Presentations Begin

Tuesday November 30th.

Class Presentations

Tuesday December 7th.

Second paper due

Class Presentations

Last day of class

