Theories of Reproduction  
Spring 2020  
FYSEM-UA 755  
Thursday 3:30-6:00pm

Instructor: Kim Adams  
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244 Greene St. Office 510  
Office Hours: Thursday 12:00 – 2:00 pm  
and by appointment

Course Description and Learning Objectives
What does the printing press have to do with condoms? Photography with the human genome project?  
This course examines theories of reproduction in literary, philosophical, and scientific thought. A necessary condition for biological life and a fundamental mechanism for understanding mass culture, reproduction connects human sexuality to the history of technology and the life sciences to the debates of cultural politics. Over the semester we will draw connections between disparate theories of visual reproduction, audio reproduction, textual reproduction, human reproduction, and historical reproduction. We will examine ideas of birth control and eugenics in the context of memes and photocopies, situating the issues of sexual politics and reproductive rights in a wider cultural history of reproduction, and using alternate theoretical paradigms to reframe contemporary political debates. Students will learn to apply an interdisciplinary approach to the historical construction of biological categories including race, gender, and sexuality.

Readings
All course readings will be available on NYU Classes with the exception of the following books:
- M. NourbeSe Philip, Zong!, Wesleyan University Press.
You do not need to buy these books in the bookstore, but you do need to buy the correct editions. **You are required to bring a copy of the course readings to every class, preferably a hard copy.** If you plan to use digital copies, please discuss with me in advance how you will minimize disruption to fellow students.

Attendance
You are permitted two absences for the entire course. More than two absences will count against your final grade. If you must miss class due to illness or religious observance, please let me know in advance. In case of illness, your absence will be excused once you have provided me with a doctor’s note. True presence involves not only physically being there, but also a strong sense of attention being paid, an absence of electronic devices that disturb others, and a consistent attitude of respect toward your fellow learners. Please take notes by hand, on paper, unless there is a compelling reason for you to do otherwise.

Course Hours
This is a full credit course: the total time allotment for in-class and out-of-class work is approximately 200 hours over the length of a 14-week semester. Students should expect to spend 35 hours in class, attentively listening and actively participating in class discussions. Reading is expected to take approximately 7-8 hours per week, with an additional hour spent preparing discussion questions, for a total of 118 hours. Writing assignments ask approximately 47 hours total: 8 hours on the first assignment; 15 hours on the second; and 24 hours on the final. You should expect to spend as much time revising as you do writing. Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.
Assignments
Below is an overview of the assignments for the course. Students will be asked to prepare written discussion questions for each section meeting, in addition to the assignments listed below, to facilitate class discussion. All essays should be typed in Times 12-point font with 1 inch margins, using MLA formatting with internal citation and a Works Cited page. Assignments are due at 5pm on the due date, no exceptions. All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Assignment 1: Digital Practicum – Due February 24
For this assignment students will use photo editing software to represent a concept from the course reading and write two short reflection pieces, 400-500 words on their chosen concept and 400-500 words on the process of digital reproduction. This essay must cite the texts we read in class!

Assignment 2: Archival Methods – Due March 13
For this assignment students will visit an archive on their own and analyze a historical document or object related to the themes of the course. Students will employ library catalogs and finding aids to find an appropriate item, schedule an archive visit, learn the appropriate procedures for handling archival items and take detailed notes. Using these notes students will write detailed analysis of the object (1500 – 1700 words) which they will post to the class website.

Assignment 3: Final Paper – Due May 15
Students will write an analytical essay for the final paper on a topic of their choosing. This essay will examine a particular theory of reproduction discussed in class, or the relationship between multiple theories. This is not a research paper, but a focused examination of the texts from the syllabus. It must cite course materials and include a properly formatted bibliography. Students will discuss their topic ideas in class, submit a 300 word paper proposal on April 20th, and an outline of their paper on May 4th. Papers will be 2700 to 3000 words, and students will read their papers aloud, conference style, in lieu of a final exam.

Grades
Attendance and participation – 10%
Discussion questions – 20%
Assignment 1 – 15%
Assignment 2 – 25%
Assignment 3 – 30%

Content
In this course we will be reading and talking about challenging issues across the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, nationality, religion, and ethnicity. In the classroom we will approach these issues and each other with intellectual and emotional care and generosity.

Disability Disclosure Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
Schedule of Readings

**Week 1 – January 30 – Introduction**  

**Week 2 – February 6 – Reproductive Anatomy**  


https://www.ohjoysexttoy.com/pregnancy/


**Week 3 – February 20 – Mechanical Reproduction**  


**February 24 – Assignment 1 Due**

**Week 4 – February 13 – Cultural Reproduction**  


**Week 5 – February 27 – Visual Reproduction**  

Week 6 – March 5 – Reproducing Images


Week 7 – March 12 – Textual Reproduction


March 13 – Assignment 2 Due

March 19 – No Class – Spring Break

Week 8 – March 26 – Social Reproduction


Week 9 – April 2 – Inheriting Dispossession


Week 10 – April 9 – Eugenics and Birth Control


Week 11 – April 16 – Reproductive Rights


April 20 – Final Paper Proposal Due

Week 12 – Reproductive Futurism


Week 13 – Procreative Responsibility
Kazuo Ishiguro, Never Let Me Go, Vintage Press, 2005


May 4 – Outline for Final Due

Week 14 – Reproductive Freedom


May 15 – Final Paper Due