**IDIS 298**  
*International Perspectives on Women’s Health*

Dr. Suzanne Schneider  
Office hours: 11am-12pm Mon.-Thurs.  
Office: 318 PPHAC  
Tel. 610-625-7015

Fall semester 2006  
Course meetings: 2:20-3:30pm Mon. & Wed.  
Course location: 218 Comenius Hall  
E-mail: sschneider@moravian.edu

**Course overview:** This course provides an overview of anthropological and sociological perspectives on the intersection of gender, culture, and health in a global context. During the semester, we will examine several theoretical approaches to the study of women and health. Some of the topics that we will explore include how poverty, race, and ethnicity affect women’s health; structural inequalities in health care access; HIV/AIDS and its global impact on women; and reproductive health politics and policies. We will explore case studies from Latin America to Africa as well as consider perspectives on gender and health in our own country. We will learn to think critically about health and disease on a global scale and to interrogate our own personal and social beliefs about health and the causes of illness.

**Required texts:**


Selected articles are on reserve at Reeves Library.

**Course requirements:**

**Exams (60%):** There will be three exams each worth 20% of your grade. Each exam will consist of two take-home essays that will cover course materials for roughly 1/3 of the class. The essays will challenge you to synthesize and analyze course material including readings, lectures, films, and discussion.

**Assignments (20%):**

*Illness narrative (10%)* This should be an experimental essay about an experienced illness – your own or a loved one’s – and the process of understanding, coping with, and managing the
illness. The essay should be 5-6 pages long and is due on September 20. We will discuss illness narratives and read examples of narratives during the first section of the course.

Ethnographic interview project (10%) You will select a topic that pertains to issues we are discussing in class, devise an interview schedule, and conduct ethnographic interviews with two (2) informants that are over the age of 40. In a 5-6 page paper, you will write up the results of your interviews. You will describe important or interesting aspects of your informants’ experiences, compare and contrast the perspectives of your two informants, and synthesize and interpret what you learn about your informants as anthropological subjects. The paper will be due on November 20.

Attendance and participation (20%): The course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required. As part of your participation grade, short in-class and take-home written assignments will be given periodically and graded on a check (✓) system. Specific assignments might involve writing on personal experiences, responses to course material, writing film reviews, and/or conducting internet research outside of class time. The combination of your attendance, participation, group work, and writing assignments will amount to 20% of your grade. Multiple absences from class will negatively affect your grade.

Grading:
Three essay exams 60% (20% each)
Two assignments 20% (10% each)
Class participation 20%

Academic Honesty
Plagiarism is passing off others’ work as your own. It can involve directly quoting passages from a text, the web, or any other document. It can also involve having a student write a paper for you or purchasing a paper from a writing service. If plagiarism is suspected, I will request drafts and notes of the written work. Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty.

Course schedule:
Aug. 28: Introduction to the course

Illness Experiences and Illness Narratives
Aug. 30: Gender and health
Doyal, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-26)

Sept. 4 – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Sept. 6: Women, work, and health
Doyal, Chapters 2 & 6 (pp. 27-57, 152-175)
Sept. 11: Illness narratives
Hunt, “Strategic Suffering” (pp. 88-107)
Mathews et al. “Coming to Terms with Advanced Breast Cancer” (pp. 43-61)
Frank, “The Cost of Appearances” (pp. 66-69)

Sept. 13: Women and health in Mexico
Finkler, Preface and Introduction (pp. i-xvii, 1-10)

Sept. 18: Gender and the nature of sickness
Finkler, Chapters 2-4 (pp. 11-50)

Sept. 20: Gender, culture, and health
Finkler, Chapters 5-6 (pp. 51-88)
*Illness narratives due*

Sept. 25: Life’s lesions
Finkler, Chapters 7-11 (pp. 89-144)

Sept. 27: Women in pain
Finkler, Chapters 12-15 (pp. 153-209)

Oct. 2: Film Small Happiness

Oct. 4: *Exam 1 due*
Film: Small Happiness (cont.)

Oct. 9 – NO CLASS – FALL RECESS

**Gender, HIV/AIDS, and Health Inequalities**

Oct. 11: Gender, sex, and health inequalities
Doyal, Chapter 3 (pp. 59-92)
Film: CNN News Stand: Blood for Honor

Oct. 16: Women and HIV
Farmer, “Women, Poverty, and AIDS (pp. 3-38)
Conners, “Sex, Drugs, and Structural Violence” (pp. 91-123)

Oct. 18: Society and health in Senegal
Renaud, Preface and Chapter 1 (pp. xi-xiv, 1-34)

Oct. 23: Stigma, STDs, and AIDS
Renaud, Chapters 2-3 (pp. 35-88)
Film: India: The Sex Workers

Oct. 25: Local health beliefs
Renaud, Chapters 4-5 (pp. 89-122)

Oct. 30: Women’s options
Renaud, Chapters 6-7 (pp. 123-167)

Nov. 1: Film: Sacrifice: The Story of Child Prostitutes from Burma

Nov. 6: Exam 2 due
Film: cont.

**Reproductive Rights on a Global Scale**

Nov. 8: Reproductive stereotypes and social control
Doyal, Chapter 5 (pp. 125-151)
Martin “The Egg and the Sperm” (pp. 29-43)

Nov. 13: Regulating reproduction
Doyal, Chapter 4 (pp. 93-123)

Nov. 15: The real population problem
Hartmann, Forward, Intro, Chaps 1-3 (3-56)

Nov. 20: The real population problem (cont.)
Hartmann, Chaps 4-5 (pp. 57-89)
*Ethnographic interview project due*

Nov. 22- NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Nov. 27: Population control as ideology
Hartmann, Chaps 6 & 7 (pp. 93-130)

Nov. 29: Population control as ideology (cont.)
Hartmann, Chaps. 8 & 9 (pp. 131-170)
Film: The World Bank: The Great Experiment, part 1

Dec. 4: Contraceptive controversies
Hartmann, Chaps 10 & 11 (pp. 173-219)

Dec. 6: Contraceptive controversies (cont.)
Hartmann, Chaps 12-14 (pp. 221-286)
*Questions distributed for final exam*

Dec. 11: Rethinking the population framework
Hartmann, Part 4 (pp. 289-313)

Final exam due date TBA