ARTSCI XXXX: First Year Seminar (S/U)

Course Title: **Designer Babies? Gender, Race and the New Reproduction**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Forty years after the world’s first “test tube baby,” how have reproductive technologies transformed human life? With gene editing, preimplantation genetic diagnosis, or gestational surrogacies, are we close to creating “designer babies” with pre-selected traits? What are the ethical and social justice implications of these practices? How might they challenge, or perpetuate, existing social inequalities in our world? How do race and gender matter in our analysis of the new reproduction?

This first-year seminar explores these questions and more. We will work with a variety of course materials, including scholarly research, journalistic articles, and film. Along the way, students will be introduced to methods of interdisciplinary analysis, and will practice skills of critical reading and discussion that are essential in the college classroom.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Disability:** The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. ***SLDS contact information:*** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu/); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.
2. **Academic Misconduct**: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 33355487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](https://trustees.osu.edu/assets/files/RuleBook/CodeStudentConduct.pdf).
3. **Enrollment:**All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter.  No requests to add the course will be approved by the Chair after that time.  Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of the student.
4. ***Title IX Statement****:* Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at [http://titleix.osu.edu](http://titleix.osu.edu/) or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan.
5. ***Class Cancellation*:** In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via your OSU e-mail. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, students will:

* Learn about feminist and other theories about race, gender, and the new reproduction
* Apply these theories to analyze specific case studies
* Learn about methods of interdisciplinary analysis
* Practice skills of critical reading and discussion

COURSE MATERIALS

Materials for this course will be made available either online or through our course carmen site. To facilitate discussion please bring copies of all readings to class.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

* **Attendance** at every session; one excused absence with doctor’s excuse or other emergency documentation.
* **Discussion commentaries** of 150 words, posted on Carmen, due 24 hours before class time. A discussion commentary is a paragraph that focuses on something you found interesting, important, disturbing, or puzzling in the course materials for the week. You can also discuss connections across themes and weeks.
* **Oral Presentation:** Each student will prepare a 4-5 minute presentation on the course material once during the semester.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE MEETINGS

Week 1: Introduction to the course and to each other

**Frameworks:** This section of the course (weeks 2-4) introduces theoretical frameworks for analyzing new reproductive technologies

Week 2

* Paul Knoepler, [“Ethical Dilemmas of Designer Babies,”](https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_knoepfler_the_ethical_dilemma_of_designer_babies) [TED Talk]
* Editorial, [“The Need to Regulate ‘Designer Babies’,](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/regulate-designer-babies/) *Scientific American* (2018)

Week 3

* Dorothy Roberts, “Race and the New Reproduction,” *The Reproductive Rights Reader,* ed. Nancy Ehrenreich
* Dorothy Roberts, [“The Problem with Race-Based Medicine,”](https://www.ted.com/talks/dorothy_roberts_the_problem_with_race_based_medicine) [TED Talk]:

Week 4

* Angela Davis, “Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights” *The Reproductive Rights Reader,* ed. Nancy Ehrenreich (NYU Press, 2008)
* Sister Song Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, [“Reproductive Justice”](https://www.sistersong.net/reproductive-justice)

**Case Studies:** This section of the course (weeks 5-13) considers the social, cultural, and political implications of various new reproductive technologies.

Week 5

* Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz, “Speaking of Solidarity: Transnational Gestational Surrogacy and the Rhetorics of Reproductive (In)Justice,” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies,* vol. 34, no. 3 (2013).
* Rebecca Haimowitz and Vaishali Sinha, dir., *Made in India: A film about surrogacy* (2010). Please watch this documentary film in advance of class through the digital media library.

Week 6

* Alfonso Cuarón, dir., *Children of Men* (2006). Please watch the movie in advance of class through the digital media library.

Week 7

* Martha Ertman, “What’s wrong with a parenthood market? A new and improved theory of commodification,” in *The Reproductive Rights Reader,* ed. Nancy Ehrenreich
* Lori Andrews, “Is there a right to clone? Constitutional challenges to the ban on human cloning,” in *The Reproductive Rights Reader,* ed. Nancy Ehrenreich

Week 8

* Amy Bohigian, dir., *Conceiving Family* (2011); this is a documentary film we will screen in class

Week 9

* Laura Mamo, “From Whence We Came: Sex without reproduction meets reproduction without sex,” and “Going High-Tech: Infertility Expertise and Lesbian Reproductive Practices,” in *Queering Reproduction: Achieving Pregnancy in the Age of Technoscience* (Duke University Press, 2007).

Week 10

* Andrew Niccol, dir*. Gattaca* (1997). We will watch the movie together in advance of class this week. For those who cannot attend, you can stream the film through OSU’s media services library. In class, we will discuss the movie.

Week 11

* Erik Parens and Lori P. Knowles, “Reprogenetics and Public Policy: Reflections and Recommendations,” A Special Supplement to the Hastings Center Report [selections]
* Sujatha Jesudason and Katrina Kimport, “De-Centering the Individual and Centering Community: Using a Reproductive Justice Methodology to Examine the Uses of Reprogenetics,” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies,* vol. 34, no. 3 (2013).

Week 12

* Marsha Saxton, “Disability Rights and Selective Abortion,” in *The Reproductive Rights Reader*
* Laura Hercher, [“Designer Babies Aren’t Futuristic. They’re already here*.”*](https://www.technologyreview.com/s/612258/are-we-designing-inequality-into-our-genes/) *MIT Technology Review*, October 22, 2018.
* Phillip Ball, [“Seven Ways IVF Changed the World: From Louise Brown to Stem-Cell Research,”](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jul/08/ivf-in-vitro-fertilisation-louise-brown-born) *The Guardian,* (July 8, 2018).

Week 13

* Andrea Henle, [“How CRSPR lets you edit DNA,”](https://www.ted.com/talks/andrea_m_henle_how_crispr_lets_you_edit_dna) Ted-ED talk.
* Julia Belluz, [“Is the CRSPR Baby Controversy the start of a terrifying new chapter in gene editing?”](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/11/30/18119589/crispr-gene-editing-he-jiankui) vox.com, January 22, 2019.
* Statement by He Jianku, [“’Designer Baby’ is an Epithet.”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv1svMfaTWU)

Week 14

* Final reflections