

San Jose State University
 WGSS 114 (#27113) Spring 2025
 MW 1:30 – 2:45pm DMH 231
 IG #sjsuwgss

Dr. Susana L. Gallardo
 susana.gallardo@sjsu.edu
 Drop-in Hours: Mon 3-5 pm
 DMH 238A / 408.644.8081

The Politics of Mothering & Reproduction

This course is an interdisciplinary examination of the politics of mothering and reproduction in terms of reproductive justice. While political struggles around reproduction have typically focused on cis women’s bodies, we are *all* affected by reproductive struggles. As Aren Z. Aizura notes, feminists, feminists of color, queer, trans, and disability movements have all contributed to understanding reproductive capacities not as natural or biological instincts but as socially and technologically constructed, commodified, and always contested (Aren Z. Aizura

We will draw on an intersectional and transnational feminist perspective that analyzes issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, ability and nation among others as they interact in our daily lives. As an upper division seminar focused on WGSS majors and minors, *regular attendance is required to substantially participate in discussion and occasional films*. We assume a basic understanding of intersectional and transnational feminisms and basic writing skills.

Recommended Texts:

Tanya S. Bakhru & Krista L. Benson, *Reproductive Justice, Adoption and Foster Care* (Routledge, 2024).

There is one *recommended* text for this class, but all readings will be available on Canvas or at the library. **I highly recommend that you print out each reading** and keep it in a notebook or folder that you can bring to class for discussion.

CLASS DAYS: Class regularly meets on MW 1:30 – 2:45. Please note that during weeks three and eight, two Wednesday classes (2/12 & 3/19) are cancelled so that students may attend two *required* WGSS events, the Trans* Teach-In and the WGSS Major Celebration.

<p>Assignments and Evaluation</p> <p>20% <i>Seven</i> (of 8) weekly braindumps, due every Tuesday night</p> <p>20% Participation – including team discussion and short final reflection paper</p> <p>20% Midterm essay</p> <p>40% Research paper (10% biblio, 10% outline/draft, 20% final paper)</p>	<p>Grades are assigned on the following scale</p> <table> <tr> <td>98-100 A+</td> <td>93-97 A</td> <td>90-92 A-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>88-89 B+</td> <td>83-87 B</td> <td>80-82 B-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>78-79 C+</td> <td>73-77 C</td> <td>70-72 C-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>68-69 D+</td> <td>63-67 D</td> <td>60-62 D-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>59- F</td> </tr> </table>	98-100 A+	93-97 A	90-92 A-	88-89 B+	83-87 B	80-82 B-	78-79 C+	73-77 C	70-72 C-	68-69 D+	63-67 D	60-62 D-			59- F
98-100 A+	93-97 A	90-92 A-														
88-89 B+	83-87 B	80-82 B-														
78-79 C+	73-77 C	70-72 C-														
68-69 D+	63-67 D	60-62 D-														
		59- F														

Course Requirements & Assignments

We design SJSU classes with the expectation that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (**normally three hours per unit per week**), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. In this class, that means...

- **Braindumps** refer to completely informal writing on the module reading, one page typed single-spaced or two pages handwritten. When you've finished the reading, I want you to sit in front of the computer and just write about the readings. It should be narrative (not just bullet points) of your thoughts about the reading, questioning the reading, comparing ideas, criticizing—whatever works for you. Grammar/punctuation/formality do not matter here—I just want to see what you're getting out of the reading. Braindumps are graded 10 for Excellent/Good, 7 for PhonedIn or 0.
- **Midterm** – is a takehome essay assignment that draw on the semester's readings thus far. Due March 29.
- **Research paper** is the final project/exam based on minimum five sources. Paper deadlines will be broken down to: bibliography (10%), outline/draft (10%), and final paper (20%).

Classroom Protocol

- All assigned work is due at the time stipulated on Canvas. Because I would rather see assignments late than not at all, I do accept late work. **LATE work will be downgraded ten percent the first day it is late, and five percent every day after that; it will NOT be accepted more than one week late.** If you are ill or overworked, let me know in advance and we can figure something out. You must let me know in advance though. Medical emergencies are the sole exception.
- **Please do *not* email me about missing class.** You are an adult and you make your own decisions and you do not need to notify me if you choose to miss class, whether for a good or silly reason.
- **Grade checks** – If you require a midterm grade check of any kind (athletic, EOP, fraternity/sorority, etc., personal), please complete the form linked at the top of the Modules page of Canvas *at least a week before* your deadline, and I will either email you the form or send it to the appropriate party.
- **Drop-in hours** – I will always be available for drop-in hours at my office on **Wednesday afternoons 3-5 pm. You do not need to make an appointment** to come by to chat or ask a question or just check in. You can also just call me during office hours by phone or we can set up a zoom by request.
- **Pronoun Use:** How we refer to each other is a basic sign of respect, both names and pronouns. Students in this class will be referred to by the name and pronoun they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. Please advise me as soon as possible if your name and pronoun differ from my course list (mysjsu) so that I and the class may address you properly. If necessary, see [this guide](#) from the Pride Center about how to change your name and pronouns on mysjsu.


- **Accommodations** are adjustments or modifications to educational environments and practices that allow a student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to meet an academic standard or requirement. If you have any kind of disability, please 1) register asap at the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) and 2) drop me an email or catch me afterclass so we can check in to make sure you are equipped to do your best work in my class.

Communication

- Please read this syllabus carefully! This is our contract for the semester and it contains all the information you need to be successful in this class. I will do everything I can to support your learning, so please please keep in touch with me. **If you are having problems keeping it together, let me know early so we can strategize together how you can make the best use of your time and get you through the semester.**
- If you are going to email me, please remember that I have several classes and a lot of students. **Please put your course number or title in the subject heading** so I will know what you're talking about. Allow a minimum of 48 hours for the return of emails that will be sent primarily during business hours (Mon – Fri between 9 am – 5 pm).

WGSS 114 is an elective course designed for the WGSS major and/or minor. Our **WGSS Program Learning Outcomes** state that upon graduation, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation social and institutional contexts.
2. Identify and describe major theories and political movements central to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, placing contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and embodied contexts.
3. Describe the global span of feminist movements and the connection among gender and sexual minorities around the world.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking and research skills through written, oral and creative means.

The WGSS Minor requires only 15 units and is a terrific critical-thinking complement to majors in Science, Business, or the Social Sciences. Ask me about it! 

Plagiarism & AI

From my perspective, there is *nothing* worse you can do in this class than plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the academic dishonesty of presenting someone else's work as your own, and it will not be tolerated. For better or worse, *do your own work*. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. If you are unclear about this, please see the library Plagiarism tutorial linked in our top Canvas module.

You *may* use artificial intelligence (AI) programs, e.g., ChatGPT, to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs

may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

You may *not* submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor).

University Policy & Resources

There are lots of resources at this public university if you need assistance!

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services are listed on Syllabus Information web page. (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>) hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

- - - - -

Course Schedule

All readings on Canvas unless stated otherwise. Subject to change at instructor's discretion or in event of another pandemic, earthquake, flood or apocalypse.

Week 1 - 1/27 Introductions

Read: Lorretta Ross, *Radical Reproductive Justice* (2017), "Introduction" [**Braindump**]

Film: *Break the Silence* (O'Feral, 2019)

Week 2 - 2/3 Defining Terms

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, "Introduction" (6-18) & "Under Western Eyes" (20-42).

Read *one* of the following, and browse the others

- Intersectionality
<http://openbooks.library.umass.edu/introwgss/chapter/intersectionality/>
- Race: <http://openbooks.library.umass.edu/introwgss/chapter/race/>
- Trans/Intersex: <http://openbooks.library.umass.edu/introwgss/chapter/gender-and-sex-transgender-and-intersex/>
- Sexualities: <http://openbooks.library.umass.edu/introwgss/chapter/sexualities/>

Week 3 – 2/10

Read: Tanya Bakhru, *Reproductive Justice, Adoption & Foster Care (RJAF)*, “Introduction” (ch. 1), 1-24. [Braindump]

Read: Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, “Intro,” 4-21

2/12 No class meeting but REQUIRED attendance: *Trans Teach-In* Student Union 2AB

Week 4 - 2/17 Systems of Care

“...controlling the reproductive potential of Black, Indigenous, and people of color is central to the formation of the U.S. itself”

Read: Bakhru, *RJAF* Ch. 2 (26-38, 42-58) [Braindump]

2/17 Guest speaker: Dr. Tanya Saroj Bakhru, WGSS

Week 5 - 2/24 Systems of Care

Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage* (2017), “Intro” & Ch. 2 (1-14, 42-72) [Braindump]

Read: “Intro to History of Boarding Schools” (8 pgs)

Week 6 - 3/3 Transnatl Adoption & Indigenous Sovereignty

“...how the project of empire in the U.S. has impacted adoption practices”

Read: Bakhru, *RJAF* Ch. 3 (60-74, 78-90) “Transnational Adoption & Indigenous Sovereignty”

DeBourbon, "White Property Interests in Native Women's Repro Freedom" (15-29) [Braindump]

3/3 Guest speaker: Dr. Kerri J. Malloy, NAIS

Week 7 - 3/10 Transnatl Adoption & Indigenous Sovereignty

Read: Sarah Deer, et al, “Rage, Indigenous Feminisms and the Politics of Survival (1057-1070) [Braindump]

Week 8 - 3/17 Juvenile Justice, Foster Care & Adoption

Read: Bakhru, *RJAF* Ch. 4 “Juvenile Justice, Foster Care & Adoption” – “Save” the children

3/19 No class meeting but Required attendance: **WGSS Celebration of Major**

Week 9 - 3/24 “Save the Children”

San Jose social work selected readings

Week 10 - 4/7 Inclusive Birth

Read: Marsden, “Born in the USA” Preface-Ch. 1 [**Braindump**]

Davis-Floyd, “International MotherBaby Childbirth Initiative” (7 pgs)

Film: *Business of Being Born*

Week 11 - 4/14 Inclusive Birth

Read: “The Historical Significance of Doulas & Midwives” [**Braindump**]

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-significance-douglas-and-midwives>

Read: Scott Davis, “Obstetric Racism”

Week 12 - 4/21 Black Maternal Mortality in the U.S.

READ: TBA

Film: *Birthing Justice*

Week 13 - 4/28 The Pregnancy Police

Read: Grace Howard, *The Pregnancy Police*, Ch. 5 “I Felt Like Nobody” (120-157)

Browse: [Post-Dobbs Pregnancy Criminal Cases](#)

4/30 *Guest speaker: Dr. Grace Howard, Justice Studies*

Week 14 - 5/5 Research week

Week 15 - 5/12 Last day of class!

Wk	Date	M	W	W
1	1127	Intro	Defining reproductive justice	1/29
2	213	Defining Terms (Mohanty)		215
3	2110	RJ, Adoption & Foster Care (Bakhru, Roberts)	No class meeting. Required attendance: *Trans Teach-In*....	2112
4	2117	Systems of Care (Bakhru) Guest speaker: Dr. Tanya Bakhru, WGSS		2119
5	2124	Systems of Care II (Cooper Owens)		2126
6	313	Transnatl Adoption & Indigenous Sovereignty (Bakhru & DeBourbon) Guest speaker: Dr. Kerri J. Malloy, NAIS		3/5
7	3110	Transnat Adoption & Indigenous Sovereignty (Deer)		3/12
8	3117	Juvenile Justice (Bakhru)	No class meeting. Required attendance: **WGSS Celebration of Major**	3/19
9	3124	"Save the Children" (San Jose)		3/26
	3131	. . .		
10	417	Inclusive Birth (Marsden)	Film: <i>Business of Being Born</i>	419
11	4/14	Inclusive Birth II		4116
12	4/21	Black Maternal Mortality (Scott Davis) Film: <i>Birth Justice</i>		4123
13	4/28	The Pregnancy Police (Howard)		4130
14	515	Research Week		517
15	5112	Last day of class! Papers due		