The Politics of Reproduction  
Department of Gender Studies, CEU  
Fall 2019  
Instructor: Eva Fodor  
Office: Nador 9, room 208

Course description:
How societies reproduce life and labor power both reflects and shapes the character of a wide range of social and political institutions, including gender relations. In the past decade an increasing amount of attention has been devoted to the exploration of various dimensions of this process and this course will sample and explore some of these. We will, for example, examine the concept and practice of surrogacy, childlessness, sterilization, or the social dimension of new reproductive technologies, as well as how these inform the way we conceptualize our own biology, the family, childbearing, kinship, etc. Our focus is both local and global and we will pay ongoing attention to how these two levels intersect with each other and create social inequalities, change hierarchies and empower certain groups while disempowering others.

In addition to the theoretical and empirical readings, we will design, conduct and analyze a research project together on the theme of childlessness. Our readings will inform the project and we will discuss methods of qualitative data collection and analysis in practice.

Learning outcomes
By the end of this course you will have developed...

- an understanding of the basic concepts in the field of gender and reproduction;
- your ability to summarize and synthesize scholarly theories and apply them to empirical problems;
- your research skills, including ability to formulate research questions, design a project that would answer them, carry out some social science research and write up the results.

Course requirements:
- Active class participation (approx. 20%)
- Three, one-page reaction papers distributed during the term. (approx. 30%)
- Participation in research project (no grade)
- Write up of research project based on joint work (50%)

A reaction paper is a maximum one-page single spaced essay, which contains a brief summary of the readings – a synthesis if more than one reading is assigned- as well as your critical comments, ideas and reflections about it. Reaction papers are due on Moodle by midnight the night before each class. No late reaction papers please, no emails either.
A note on learning disabilities:
If you have a documented learning disability and need extra time or help with the assignment, please let me know in advance and we’ll find a way to accommodate your needs.

A note on e-etiquette:
A number of recent research papers have shown that classroom learning is compromised when students use laptops and other electronic devices (such as ipads, smart phones, etc) during lectures and discussions in the classroom. Therefore, please leave your electronic devices at home or keep them turned off as their use will not be permitted in class.

Missing a class:
If you can’t attend a class because of an illness or another acceptable reason, you are expected to inform the teacher in advance (either in person or through email) and provide documentation.
Reading schedule (tentative, small print is recommended only):

**Week 1. The Politics of Reproduction- introduction**

Required readings:

**Week 2: Reproductive governance**

Required readings:

**Week 3: Childlessness**

Required readings:
- [http://werenothavingababy.com/](http://werenothavingababy.com/)

**Week 4: Designing a research project**

We will discuss our research project on childlessness, create a questionnaire and test drive it.

Read these:  
[https://www.wired.com/story/how-we-reproduce-childfree/](https://www.wired.com/story/how-we-reproduce-childfree/)

**Week 5: Making families**

Required readings:


**Week 6: How men figure in reproduction**

Required readings:
- Kate Reed. 2009. 'It's them faulty genes again': women, men and the gendered nature of genetic responsibility in prenatal blood screening." *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 31, 3, 343-359.

**Week 7: Eggs and sperm**

Required readings:

**Week 8: Surrogacy**

Required readings:
- Sharmila Rudrappa in Context https://contexts.org/articles/indias-reproductive-assembly-line/

**Week 8: Infertility and assisted reproduction**
Required readings:


**Week 9: Producing perfect children**

**Required readings:**


- “Something Like a War” a documentary by Deepa Dhanraj, 1991. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Fq7HSIPVq4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Fq7HSIPVq4)

**Week 10: Data analysis**

No reading other than that of the interviews.

**Week 11: Abortion rights, abortion movements**

**Required readings:**


**Week 12: Wrapping up**

**Required readings:**


- Check out TransHack Feminism: [https://calafou.org/en/content/transhackfeminist-thf-convergence-report](https://calafou.org/en/content/transhackfeminist-thf-convergence-report)