

“We must use our lives to make the world a better place to live, not just acquire things. That is what we are put on earth for.” ~ Dolores Huerta, 2004

Women’s and Gender Studies: Women’s Health 3375

Online CRN: 24985 Spring 2024

Instructor: Melissa N. Ortega, PhD


Email: mnortega@utep.edu


Cell Phone: (915) 219-0444 MST


Hours: Email professor to set up an appointment.


Dear Students,


A warm embrace to each of you as you embark on an exciting journey into the world of Women's Health! It is thrilling to have you as part of our vibrant community of learners.


 **What to Expect:** Get ready for a semester filled with insightful discussions, empowering knowledge, and a deeper understanding of women's well-being. Our course is designed to explore various aspects of women's health, from physical to mental well-being, reproductive health, and beyond.

 **Meet Your Instructor:** I am here to guide you every step of the way. Feel free to reach out with any questions, thoughts, or just to say hello. I’m here to support your learning journey.

 **Connect with Peers:** One of the most enriching aspects of our course is the diverse community of students. Engage in discussions, share experiences, and build connections with your fellow learners. You'll find that the exchange of ideas enhances the learning experience.

 **Important Dates:** Don't forget to mark your calendars for upcoming lectures, assignments, and events. Stay tuned for announcements to keep track of all the exciting happenings in our Women's Health community.

 **Resources:** Explore the wealth of resources at your disposal, including textbooks, articles, and additional readings. We encourage you to delve into the material and bring your unique perspectives to our discussions.

 **Embrace the Journey:** Remember, learning is a journey, not a destination. Embrace the opportunity to expand your knowledge, challenge your thoughts, and grow personally and academically.

UTEPEDGE™

This course addresses the following UTEP Edge experiences:



Research



Communication



Global
Awareness



Social
Responsibility



Community Engagement

This course aligns with the following UTEP Edge experiences:

- Research
- Communication
- Global Awareness
- Social Responsibility
- Community Engagement

Course Description and Goals: Women's Health will cover an overview of current health topics pertinent to women in the 21st century. The course will cover the basic politics and economics connected to women's health in the United States and globally. The course will focus on sexual and reproductive health through the life cycle, nutrition and exercise, and women's specific mental health topics.

Course Objectives: Students who are successful in Women's Health should have a general understanding of the biological and emotional realities of women's health as well an understanding of alternative models of women's health care. Students in this course should be able to critically analyze the way that the current medical model of health care, and the economic and political systems that influence women's health care and marginalize women and girls.

Pandemic Note: We are still existing in the midst of a pandemic. Many of us are facing additional challenges this semester that we may or may not feel prepared for. Some of them you may feel comfortable sharing, some of them you may want to keep private, some of the challenges may be so deeply rooted that we may not even be aware that we are facing them. This is a semester that will inevitably be full of added stressors. If there is something that I can support you with, be that classwork, time management, advising, a good joke, etc. please let me know. I will do my best, when I am informed, to be flexible and to help you work to be successful in this class. We do not exist separately from the world around us, and I hope that this class is in some ways a space to explore that connectedness.

Required Reading:

New Dimensions in Women's Health (8th Edition) Linda Lewis Alexander, Judith LaRosa, Helaine Bader, Susan Garfield, William James Alexander
Our Bodies Ourselves. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective (2011)

Additional Readings may be required throughout the semester and will be made available to the students via blackboard.

Grading and Performance Evaluation:

Exams: 2x15pts: 30pts
Group Presentation: 15pts
Discussion Board: 45pts

Response Papers: 10pts

Total: 100pts

Assignments:

Exams: Each exam will be worth 15 points. Exams will be multiple choice and true and false. The exams will be based on the reading, discussion boards, and student presentations. Exam one will cover the first half of the class and exam two will cover the second half of the course.

Group Presentations: Each student will complete one presentation this semester. The presentations will be completed with a partner and will be due on different dates throughout the semester. Each student must sign up for their presentation topic during the first week of the course. Students will create a presentation using the media of their choice; powerpoint, prezi, video etc. More information on the presentations is available on BB under the group sign up tab found in week 1.

Response papers: Students will submit 2 short essays this semester. The first essay will be a response to a film “The Business of Being Born”, which I will provide for you in the first half of the semester. The second essay is a response to a short book, which you must either purchase/rent/or borrow from the library. For this assignment you will choose one of the following titles: The Big Letdown, This Common Secret, or Girls and Sex and complete an academic review. Details and instruction for the book review can be found under the week 9 tab.

Discussion Board: Discussion boards allow you to interact with your classmates as you would in a face to face course. They are essential for critical thinking analysis and connecting the ideas from the text with the wider world in this online course. You are expected to participate in the weekly discussion boards as follows.

A. You must have one initial post of 200-300 words that makes an original statement and follows all discussion prompt guidelines for that week. You must cite two of the readings (or any other media or outside source) each week to receive full credit. You must use both in text citations and include your references at the bottom of the post.

B. In addition you must respond to at least two different classmates' initial postings with a 75-150 word minimum response per post.

C. Your initial post must be posted each Thursday by midnight, Mountain Time. D. Your follow up posts to peers are due each Sunday by 5pm, Mountain Time. E. Late initial posts and/or follow up posts will not be accepted and will not receive credit. F. You should respond to direct questions or issues raised by others in response to your initial post, including those raised by your professor.

Policies and Expectations:

A note on Inclusion and being uncomfortable (adapted from Whitman College) The topics that we're covering in this class are often difficult, not just intellectually but emotionally. While I expect there to be rigorous discussion and even disagreement during our class discussions, I ask that you engage in discussion with care and empathy for other members in the classroom. Aim to disagree without becoming disagreeable. In this class, we will not shy away from the

uncomfortable. Critically examining and assessing our most basic assumptions and values is not just one of the tasks of Women and Gender Studies but is an activity vital to living an authentic life. I urge you to have the courage to the uncomfortable in this class. In exchange for your courage, I will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

Asking for Help: • Be sure to ask questions of both your classmates and your professor. This is an essential part of learning. • Before contacting me with a question please review each of the following:

- I address the questions that students most frequently ask on the first entry entitled "FAQs" of the Discussion Forum. Please check this forum first before emailing me with a question. If you ask me a question that is addressed in the FAQs, I will respectfully direct you back to them.
- If you have a question that you think other students may want an answer to, (or may even have the answer) please post it on the "FAQ" Discussion Board. If you email me a question that is best addressed on this Discussion Board, I will respectfully direct you to post your question there and will answer it there.
- It has been my experience that often students' questions will be answered through a review of the syllabus or assignment prompt in question. Therefore, if you email questions that are directly and clearly addressed by these, I will respectfully redirect you back to them. If you review the syllabus and/or assignment prompt and still have questions or need clarifications, please do email me and I will gladly assist you.
- If you have a question about technical problems (ie, your computer, problems submitting an assignment, browser issues, internet connection issues) please contact Tech Support or the UTEP Help Desk as outlined on the first page of this syllabus. Please note that I am neither qualified nor able to help you with these issues and will respectfully direct you back to Tech Support.

Late Work:

As a general policy I will not accept late work. I do commit to being flexible with any deadline. If you know that you are struggling to make a deadline, reach out to me. I will work with you to create deadlines that will work with your schedule. It is my goal to help everyone do well in this course and to help everyone complete all of the work. I know that all of you are balancing a lot of different things. To help you grow as students I am asking you to be accountable for your schedules and to be honest with me when you need more time. I will always accommodate your timeline needs (within reason).

Work Load: This is an online course. I expect that you will commit between 6-8s hours per week on this course. As you prepare for your semester please schedule your time accordingly so that you can commit the time you need each week to be successful in the course.

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities for extra credit during the semester. The instructor reserves the right to present these opportunities throughout the semester.

Resources:

Academic Writing: For help with writing any assignments for this course, please visit the University Writing Center online at <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766> For further information on the writing centers services and hours please call 915.747.5486

Research:

UTEP librarians are here to help you so please visit them in person for assistance or online at <http://libraryweb.utep.edu/>.

POLICIES & OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Course/Classroom Policies:

Students are expected to log on to Blackboard on a daily basis.

The assigned readings should be read in order for you to successfully complete your assignments, exams, but most importantly to achieve your learning goals.

Digital citizenship is important in an online course. When discussing issues in class, please be respectful of others. Personal attacks are not permitted. This applies whether the person is a student, a visitor, or the instructor. I look forward to hearing your opinions and ideas. Your voice and ideas are important and should be to others as well. Respect for one another is mandatory. A violation of this policy will result in the student being removed from class. I will do my very best to ensure that every student in my course is heard and respected.

Students are expected to take exams and submit assignments on the assigned dates.

Drop Policy: The instructor reserves the right to drop a student for lack of attendance or participation on BB, lack of work turned in, or class disruptions. If at any time a student decides to drop the course, it is the student's responsibility to do so. If you drop before the UTEP drop deadline, you will receive a "W". If you drop yourself or are dropped by the instructor after the deadline, you will receive an "F".

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Please consult the Handbook of Operating Procedures at <http://hoop.utep.edu> for the complete University policy on academic dishonesty. You may also consult with the Assistant Dean of Students at the Student Union Building West, Room 102, or by calling 747-5648.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact The Center for

Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit the office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106.

For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

A Message from Women's & Gender Studies:

Women's and Gender Studies supports a learning environment in which individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our program must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability are contrary to the mission of our program. All our faculty and staff are responsible for promoting inclusive spaces for all, including students with children and breastfeeding mothers. While a Women's and Gender Studies student, you will be given an equitable opportunity to contribute and succeed. The lived experiences and knowledge that you bring to our courses are considered a resource, strength, and benefit. Thank you for the experiences that you bring to our program!

Policy on Children in Class: It is our belief that if we want to reach all students, that we should also expect parents and children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus a reflection of Women's and Gender Studies' commitment to student, staff and faculty parents. If you are breastfeeding or are the guardian of a child, feel free to bring them to class if there is a gap in childcare. You may sit near the door, and we understand if you must step out occasionally to meet their needs.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports your thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official UTEP records, please let me know.

- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Protections for pregnant and parenting students: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.