

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH/POLITICS/JUSTICE

GNDR_ST 332 & GNDR_ST 350-4

SPRING
2022



As feminist scholar Michelle Murphy points out, “reproduction is not self-evidently a capacity located in sexed bodies”; it is instead a site (or formation) that joins, “cells, protocols, bodies, nations, capital, economics, freedom, and affect as much as sex and women into its sprawl.” Thus, she reminds us, “how we constitute reproduction shapes how it can be imagined, altered and politicized.” In this seminar we will explore the changing contours of reproductive

politics in the U.S. from the 1960s to the present by examining a range of projects and organizations that conceptually reimagine what we mean by “reproduction,” the scope and content of “reproductive politics,” and the kinds of demands that can be made in the name of reproductive health, rights, freedom and justice. We begin with the ‘culture wars’ of the 1980s and the emergence of a reproductive politics (newly) figured in terms of “pro-life vs. pro-choice” and interrogate the extent to which this rendering continues to shape how we think about “reproduction” in the present. We then turn to the pre-history of this moment to explore the very different terms, demands and imaginaries that shaped the reproductive politics of 1970s-era liberation projects committed to “reproductive freedom” (e.g. feminist “self-help clinics”; Black Panther Party “community survival programs”; the free clinic movement; etc.). In the final unit, we investigate how the analyses and demands of a resurgent Reproductive Justice Movement led by women of color reconceptualizes and expands the terrain of reproductive politics to include demands for racial, economic and environmental justice as prerequisites for exercising the right to have or not to have children and to parent the children we do have. In addition to course materials, our collective research into this topic will include 1-2 weeks of (guided) archival research in Deering Library’s Special Collections &/or University Archives.

Amy Partridge

TTh 11am-12:20pm
University Hall 112