# Course Information

## The Politics of Sex and Reproduction

**Class Number**

PLSI 0470

**Section**

01

**Semester**

Fall 2020

**Description**

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing or consent of the instructor. Examination of the politics of sex and reproduction in the United States through policy, law, and theory. The role of the state on issues such as abortion, infertility, pregnancy, pornography, sex work, contraceptives, and procreative and non-procreative sex. Analysis of gender roles and the way conceptions of femininity and masculinity are written into U.S. law. (This course is offered as PLSI 470, SXS 470, and WGS 470. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

### Schedule Information

* Online — **TTh** 16:00 to 17:40

# Who is your professor?

Greetings, scholars! My name is Amanda Roberti (she/her) and I am excited to be your professor for The Politics of Sex and Reproduction this semester.

I studied at Rutgers University in New Jersey where I did my doctoral dissertation on the gendered rhetoric of abortion opponents. Speficically, I looked at how state lawmakers who introduce anti-abortion bills justify those bills as being “pro-women” or in women’s best interests.

But I am basically interested in the myriad ways in which the state (government) regulates bodies – especially sexual and reproductive bodies. When there is a sex act, a pregnancy, or even a potential pregnancy involved, there is inevitably a policy about it, and we will analyze them!

Please watch my introductory video for more about me. I truly can’t wait to meet you all! This will be a really fun and enlightening semester!

## Amanda Roberti

Assistant Professor

### Contact

**Email:** aroberti@sfsu.edu

### Office Hours

Wednesdays from 12pm – 4pm

### About

Amanda Roberti — Ph.D. PhD, Political Science – concentrations in Women and Politics, American Politics, Public Policy, and Public Law. My research focuses specifically on abortion policy in the US, reproductive justice, gender and rhetoric, conservative women in the US, and US states. MA, Political Science, Women’s and Gender Studies – Rutgers, Newark BA, Political Science, Philosophy – Kutztown University, PA Certified to teach in Women’s and Gender Studies Fun facts: I lived in Philadelphia for about 7 years, I’ve traveled across the country twice, I just moved from New Jersey, I used to have a miniature dachshund (but she died right before I moved here), I’m an avid hiker and hula hoop dancer!

# Objectives

Here are some of the objectives we will reach in this course. Keep them in mind while reading and working on assignments. I will too!

## Analyze the regulation of bodies from a historical and contemporary perspective

Our policies are often rooted in historical precedent. From slavery, to eugenics, to the sterilization of indigenous women, to the evolution of abortion policy, we analyze how our contemporary policies of reproductive bodies are rooted in historically racism, xenophobia, and misogyny.

## Identify key concepts in sex and reproductive politics

There’s almost an entirely different language out there that explains our politics around sex and reproduction. We will learn what these concepts are and how to use this language without becoming jargon, but to more clearly explain higher level, and theoretical concepts.

## Develop an intersectional lens and apply to a policy

Intersectionality is at the fore of this course. Our readings and discussions will all take an intersectional approach in analyzing and understanding the policies we study. Therefore, throughout this course, students will learn what intersectionality is, and how it can be harnassed as a tool of policy analysis. This will be practiced throughout the semester, but will be more formally applied in the final analytical paper.

## Connect Individual Experiences

Students will connect their experiences to the broader concepts we learn in class to better understand how their lives are impacted by and impact policy.

# Materials

One book is required for this course, listed below. If you are new to abortion politics, you may want to pick up the recommended book by Melody Rose, but it is not necessary.

All other readings, web linked articles, and videos will be provided on iLearn under the appropriate week.

## (Required) *Killing the Black Body*

**Author(s)**

Dorothy Roberts

**Publisher**

Penguin

**ISBN**

9780679758693

## *Abortion: Safe, Legal, and Unavailable?*

**Author(s)**

Melody Rose

**Publisher**

CQ Press

**ISBN**

9781933116891

# Policies

## COVID-19 and Our Campus

Your health and safety is our paramount concern at SF State. During the COVD-19 pandemic, every member of our Gator community is expected to do their part in keeping fellow students, faculty, and staff safe and well. Feeling well and safe will support you in focusing on your academic success.

Information is changing rapidly, as our health professionals, scholars, and researchers are learning more about COVID-19, and as such, we encourage you to frequently check your San Francisco State University email account and <https://news.sfsu.edu/campus-plan/students-families>for the most current information.

* You are encouraged to keep your emergency information updated on Campus Solutions in order to receive campus emergency alerts: https://upd.sfsu.edu/ENSFAQ
* You are also encouraged to provide your contact information to receive city of SF emergency alerts, including COVID-19 updates and instructions for public safety: https://sfdem.org/get-cityalerts
* If you have any questions regarding COVID-19 or your own health during this time, please reach out to Student Health Services: https://health.sfsu.edu
* If you are feeling overwhelmed, you are encouraged to connect with our on-campus health professionals in Counseling & Psychological Services: https://caps.sfsu.edu
* If you are looking for education on how to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy, then reach out to our Health Promotion & Wellness Team: https://wellness.sfsu.edu

## Personal Identity Policy

All humans have the right to be addressed in accordance with their personal identity preferences. In some cases, you may prefer to be called by a name other than what is listed on the course roster. For example, you want to be called the shortened version of a name (for example, “Alex” as opposed to “Alexander/Alexandra”). Sometimes this means that though your given name might be coded as one gender, you identify as another, and use a different name and pronoun. In all cases, faculty will use the name you provide, rather than the name provided by the campus database. I will provide my pronouns and for those who are comfortable, you may share yours as well!

## Accommodations for Religious Holidays Policy

The SFSU community recognizes and takes pride in the diversity of religious and spiritual backgrounds of its student body and strives to make every reasonable effort to give its students the opportunity to observe their recognized religious holidays. The Academic Senate Policy on the Observance of Religious Holidays indicates that, “The faculty of San Francisco State University shall make reasonable accommodations for students to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities….” Refer to the policy for further information, including  implementation procedures, found here: <https://cs.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/AcademicSenateSyllabiPoliciesSP09.pdf>.

## Course Culture

**My classroom is based on mutual respect.** Students need to **respect** the professor and other students in the course. Controversial topics may arise in political classes, opinions will likely differ, but the tone and tenor of class shall always remain cordial and civil. I seek to provide an intellectual environment where students can feel free to express their views without ideological or partisan oppression from the professor or other students. As this is college, we are all adults, and fully expect our conversations to reflect that fact.

## Class Attendance Policy

As this is a synchronous course, students are expected to attend all scheduled zoom meetings as they would a regular in-person class. I would absolutely prefer web cameras on, as this allows myself, and your fellow classmates to fully engage. If there is a privacy issue, please reach out to me ASAP and we can discuss it.

As a rule, I typically allow 3 absences. Life happens, and I understand. More than that and you start missing significant information and run the risk of falling behind. Please notify me of any expected or unexpected absences.

## Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the act of using the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own without giving proper credit to the source.

Plagiarism is not acceptable in this course. I unfortunately have experienced plagiarism in my years of teaching, and I have always taken swift action. Cite your sources! It only makes the paper better! If you are unsure of how to cite, no worries, I am here to help you. I can work with you to find the right citation style and figure out what needs to be cited. I can also help provide handy resources (some I still use myself!)

For more information on Standards for Student Conduct, visit the Office of Student Conduct site, here: <https://conduct.sfsu.edu/standards>.

## Turn It In

In this course, we will be employing software from TurnItIn.com as a tool for learning how to correctly cite resources. Turnitin.com is useful in helping to determine whether or not a writer is relying too heavily upon sources and whether a writer has given appropriate credit to an author or source. Students will be assigned a username and will be expected to submit their papers on the assigned due date to Turnitin.com, which in turn produces an “originality” report. This report will compare the student’s paper to content on the Web, to the Turnitin.com database of previously submitted papers, and to databases of common full-text journals. In creating an account, students agree that by taking this course, all required papers will be reviewed by Turnitin.com and acknowledge that their papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. All identifiers (student name, ID #, etc.) will be removed from the paper before it is uploaded into Turnitin.com. Use of Turnitin.com services is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use, which are posted on the Turnitin.com website.

## Late Work Policy

Though it is important to pay attention to deadlines, I understand that life happens. Work, other classes, family issues, health issues, and other things might pop up and create obstacles to getting our work done on time, as planned. That is why I encourage all students to be transparent and open with me about their ability to meet a deadline. I will work with students to make sure that your work is getting done, being mindful of those life things, and that you won’t have a pile of work due at the end of the semester.

## University Grading Information

Information regarding grades: <https://cms.sfsu.edu/content/grades-student-information>.

## How to Appeal a Grade

How to appeal a grade: <https://senate.sfsu.edu/policy/grade-appeal-practices-and-procedures-current>.

## Academic Calendar

To review course drop, withdrawal, instruction dates, or other information related to important dates at the university, visit the SF State academic calendar, here: <https://webapps.sfsu.edu/public/webcal/acadcalendar>.

## How to Enroll in/Drop a Class

How to enroll in/drop a class: <https://cms.sfsu.edu/content/registering-classes>.

## Syllabus Change Policy

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.

# Grades

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| 100.00% - 93.00%  | A  |
| 92.99% - 90.00%  | A-  |
| 89.99% - 87.00%  | B+  |
| 86.99% - 83.00%  | B  |
| 82.99% - 80.00%  | B-  |
| 79.99% - 77.0%  | C+  |
| 76.99% - 73.00%  | C  |
| 72.99% - 70.00%  | C-  |
| 69.99% - 67.00%  | D+  |
| 66.99% - 63.00%  | D  |
| 62.99% - 60.00%  | D-  |
| 59.99% - 0.00%  | F  |

# Activities

Students will complete several assignments and presentations, culminating with a final policy analysis paper.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name  | Contribution to Grade  | Description  |
| Lead Class Discussion  | 25%  | Students will work in pairs (or groups of 3 if needed) and choose one day to lead the class on the readings for that day (it can be a topic in which you are particularly interested in). That day, you will be the professor (at least for about half the class time). This includes summarizing the main points of the readings, posing questions, and offering critique. You will also want to talk about how the readings relate. You will be expected to also include a digital visual component to their discussion, which can include a power point/prezi/slides presentation, video, images, or website/blog. Presentations will typically last about 30 min, but this is flexible to allow for more discussion.  |
| Reflection Post  | 20%  | At the end of each “section” of material, students will answer reading questions that I will post on our iLearn forums. These are questions that should help digest and analyze the reading material. It is very important that students have the following in their reading papers: thorough answers that go above and beyond, citations from at least three of the readings (or you can go outside to other weeks, or to scholarly sources you have found on your own), **be in essay form** , and have correct and appropriate grammar. These reflections will typically be about 750 words or so – which is equivalent to about two pages double spaced. Don’t worry, the questions I pose will give you plenty to write about! Just think of the topics we are discussing!  |
| Reflection Response  | 10%  | Students will respond to at least ONE of their classmate’s reflections. These responses should be substantive, and pose another question or thought. They shouldn’t, for example, just say “I agree \*fire emoji\*” but should offer the original poster something to think about. This will facilitate discussion in our virtual meetings, as well as provide extra space for further discussion that we may not have been able to get to. If there is a disagreement, please remember to engage in civil dialogue and make your case with facts. Responses should be about 250 words.  |
| Intersectional Policy Analysis  | 40%  | Students will be expected to compose an intersectional policy analysis based on a policy topic of their choosing – relative to sex and reproduction. The topic can coincide with your lead class discussion, or may be another issue that is within your research goals, but was not covered in class (with special permission). This paper should be at least 10 pages long, and should include independent research of scholarly sources to enhance the analysis. In this paper, students should identify the topic area, specify relevant cases or public policies, trace the development of this policy, and finally analyze its implications. **Don’t be nervous if you haven’t done a policy analysis!** We will walk through this together in steps, beginging with a topic proposal. I will give you feedback that will help you with the analysis. Then we will work through outlines and drafts together so that you are constantly working on your paper throughout the semester. Also, we can enlist the help of our trusty and knoweldgeable librarian who can point you to the best resources.  |
| Class Participation  | 5%  | Come to class and engage in discussions!  |

# Schedule

For all court cases, be sure to read the syllabus. You do not have to read the entire opinion (especially if it is long).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date  | Topics & Activities  | Deliverables  |
| August 25 & 27  | Introductions to Each Other, Syllabus, and Course Foundations of Sexual Citizenship and the Role of the State  | Read: Muller v. Oregon (1908) The Republican Mother (Kerber)  |
| September 1 & 3  | Intersectional Lens  | Read: Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex (Crenshaw) Colorblind Intersectionality (Carbado) Am I a Black Woman or a Woman who is Black? (Jordan-Zachery)  |
| September 8 & 10  | Reproductive (In)Justice: Eugenics  | Read: Buck v. Bell (1929) Carrie Buck’s Daughter (Gould) Who May Give Birth to Citizens? (Roberts) Is there a Duty Not to Reproduce? (McHale)  |
| September 15 & 17  | Reproductive (In)Justice: Target Populations  | Read: Skinner v. Oklahoma The Sterilization of Native American Women (Lawrence) Anchor Babies, Over-Breeders, and the Population Bomb (Huang)  |
| September 22 & 24  | Abortion: Law  | Read: SCOTUS and States (Chp 2 Rose) Roe v. Wade (1973) Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992) Whole Women’s Health (2016) Whole Women’s Health Amicus Brief  |
| September 29 & October 1  | Abortion: Effects  | Read: Watch *After Tiller* Documentary Gendered Citizenship (Nosiff) Informed or Misinformed Consent (Daniels, et al) Informed Consent Website Abortion Reversal (Grossman, et al)  |
| October 6 & 8  | Pregnant and Detained  | Read: She Doesn’t Deserve to be Treated like This (Roth – Prison Study) Practicing Pathology: The Rhetoric of Pathology in Jane Doe's Struggle to Obtain an Abortion in Federal Immigration Custody (de Saint Felix) Patrolling Pregnant Women’s Bodies (Rollins)  |
| October 13 & 15  | Criminalization of Pregnancy  | Read: Making Reproduction a Crime (Chp 4 Roberts) NYTimes Article series: A Woman’s Rights  |
| October 20 & 22  | Class, Reproduction, and Sexual Deviancy  | Read: The Welfare Debate (Chp 5 Roberts) Stratification of Welfare Poor (Baldwin) The Politics of Disgust Selected Chapter (Hancock)  |
| October 27 & 29  | Sexuality: LGBTQ+ rights  | Read: Bowers v. Hardwick Lawrence v. Texas As the Tide Turns (McArthur)  |
| November 5 (NO MEETING NOV. 3 – ELECTION DAY)  | Sexuality: Shame and Gender Roles  | Watch: Purity Balls Documentary Read: So You’ve Heard of the Duggars? (Corrigan) I Now Pronounce you Husband and Wives (Ward)  |
| November 10 & 12  | Masculinity, Reproduction, Sexuality  | Read: The Children Men Father (Daniels Chp 5) The Egg and the Sperm (Martin) Incels Readings (Vox and Atlantic)  |
| November 17 & 19  | Commodification of Bodies: Surrogacy  | Read: The Law of Surrogacy (Spivak) Babies by the Bundle (Harrison & Rowley) New Reproductive Dystopia (Roberts)  |
| November 24 & 26 NO CLASS  | NO CLASS – Fall Recess  | Work on your papers!  |
| December 1 & 3  | Commodification of Bodies: Selling Sex  | Read: Pornography and Black Women’s Bodies (Hill Collins) Pornography: New Terrorism (Dworkin) Pornography is a Civil Rights Issue (Dworkin) The Movement to Criminalize Sex Work (Weitzer)  |
| December 8 & 10  | Sexuality Revisited! Trans Rights, and Sexuality and Prison Culture  | Readings TBD Paper drafts due Tuesday for peer review  |

We do not have exams in this course. Just posts, assignments, and your paper. Final papers are due via Turn It In on Thursday, December 17 by 11:59pm. We will meet that day at 2:45pm to discuss the papers/wrap up (and if we were in person I’d bring in treats, but we can just bring our own and hold them up to our cameras).

# SF State Policies

## Disclosures of Sexual Violence (Title IX)

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

* The SAFE Place – (415) 338-2208; [psyservs.sfsu.edu/content/safe-place](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/)
* Counseling and Psychological Services Center – (415) 338-2208; [psyservs.sfsu.edu](http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/)

## Disability Access

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The [Disability Programs and Resource Center](http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc) (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email to [dprc@sfsu.edu](http://mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu) .

## COVID-19 and Our Campus

Your health and safety are our paramount concern at SF State. We ask every member of our campus community to join a pledge to make and follow plans to keep fellow students, faculty, and staff safe and well. Feeling confident, safe and well will help you focus on your academic success. To participate in this class, all students are expected to:

* stay informed on the most up-to-date information related to SF State’s COVID-19 response and Campus Comeback plan
* plan ahead for possible class disruptions due to COVID-19 or other unexpected events, such as unhealthy air quality caused by smoke
* take care of yourself and others by staying home when you aren’t feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, and
* follow all required health and safety guidelines, including verifying your proof of vaccination or exemption status before coming to class; and wearing a multilayered mask over your nose and mouth at all times when indoors on campus; and wash your hands as often as possible (i.e. soap and water, hand sanitizer).

For more information about SF State’s response to COVID-19 and how you can keep yourself and others safe and well, visit the [Campus Comeback Website](https://together.sfsu.edu/) . To plan for how you will maintain your academic success when unexpected events disrupt regular teaching and learning activities, follow the information on the course syllabus and consult the Keep Learning guide.

Per Academic Senate policy resolution SU21-292