Informed by the history of the International Women and Health Meetings (IWHMs), this course investigates the political vision and organizational structure for women’s health movements around the world. It contrasts early strategies driven by coalitions of activists from the North, which focused on reproductive rights, self-help, and a definition of health based largely in the physiology of women’s bodies with approaches advanced by activists from the global South, which attend to the social, cultural, and economic factors that affect women’s access to the most basic healthcare. This course examines how and why contemporary feminist conceptions of health are grounded in a comprehensive framework attentive to international power dynamics, globalization, macroeconomic policy, national and global poverty, conflict and war, and debt crises in various countries. Beginning with an overview of women’s contemporary health challenges, the class then analyzes the political tactics and strategies women have devised to secure access to healthcare for themselves, their families, households and communities. Introducing students to the global institutions, organizations, and policies that impact health, course material also traces how women’s nongovernmental organizations have attempted to transform existing institutions and policies of global health governance to enable women in all regions of the world to lead physiologically, psychologically, and emotionally healthier, more dignified lives.

**Course Requirements**

Students are required to complete all assigned readings for the course and actively participate in the online discussion board. The class participation grade will be based on the number, volume, and quality of student comments, which engage reading materials, films, and lectures (given by the professor and uploaded to the online lecture delivery system). Sustained, astute, and informed class participation is crucial for a successful and productive online classroom experience, and such participation depends largely upon students completing the reading assignments in a timely fashion. Class discussion is closely aligned with the reading assignments for each week. To facilitate candid discussions, it is important that each student manifest respect for the opinions of their classmates. Hostile, intolerant, and insensitive remarks will not be tolerated and will be removed from the online discussion board. **Class participation as described here will count toward 20 percent of the final grade.**

Each student is required to complete three short projects, the requirements for which are outlined in the syllabus under “Course Structure.” **Each short project counts toward 20 percent of the final grade; short projects count, in total, toward 60 percent of the final grade.**

There will be a final examination. Students will be given their examination a week prior to its due date and may utilize all course materials (but only assigned course materials) to complete the exam. **The final exam counts toward 20 percent of the final grade.**

**Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Any student who plagiarizes the work of another will face serious academic consequences. If students are unclear about the**
meaning of plagiarism or whether or not their work may be plagiarizing, the student must discuss the issue directly with me. Again, failure to do so may, and most likely will, result in severe punishment. You may also address your inquiries online at http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html.

Reading Materials

The following books are required for this class. They are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore (One Penn Plaza, Ferren Mall, New Brunswick, NJ 08901). ISBN numbers are noted if you would prefer to order these books online.


Other readings are drawn from these books, which are not required for this class.


**Course Overview**

**Week # 1: Course Introduction: Framing the Discussion on Women’s Health Activism**

**Week of Tuesday, September 4th**


**Week # 2: The Fight over Healthcare for All: Best Characterized as Redistribution (of resources) or Recognition (of different identities)?**

**Week of Monday, September 10th**


**Week # 3: The Global Roots of the Women’s Health Movement: Part I**

**Week of Monday, September 17th**


**Week # 4: The Global Roots of the Women’s Health Movement: Part II**

**Week of Monday, September 24th**


Week # 5: The Biopolitics of Gender

Week of Monday, October 1st


Week # 6: Project Week: Transformative Tactics

Week of Monday, October 8th

Project # 1 due 11:59 pm, Friday, October 12th

Anne Firth Murray features small descriptions of international women’s health NGOs and projects throughout From Outrage to Courage. Your first project consists of two parts. Part 1: Select a women’s health NGO that Murray features in her book and write up a fact sheet on it. (Guidelines for the formatting of the fact sheet will appear in a separate document.) Part 2: Research an international women’s health NGO or project that is not featured in Murray’s book and write a brief description (250–300 words) of the NGO or project. You must (1) be absolutely sure that the NGO or project is not already featured in Murray’s book, and (2) write descriptions for two international women’s health NGOs.

The online discussion board for this week will focus on the various tactics utilized by these organizations and projects to achieve more equitable access to healthcare for their constituencies.

Week # 7: Structural Violence and Health

Week of Monday, October 15th

Week # 8: Epistemological Boundary Crossings in the Fight for Universal Healthcare

Week of Monday, October 22nd


Week # 9: The Global Women’s Movement Responds to Capitalist Development

Week of Monday, October 29th


Week # 10: The Impact of Globalization on Women’s Health

Week of Monday, November 5th


**Week # 11: Global Health Governance**

Week of Monday, November 12th


**Week # 12: Project Week: Women Cultivate Mechanisms of Global Accountability**

Week of Monday, November 19th

**Project # 2 due 11:59pm Monday, November 26th**

We have examined the economic and social consequences of the policy tools of significant institutions of global health governance: the World Bank and the IMF utilize structural adjustment policies; the World Trade Organization utilizes trade agreements; and the World Health Organization utilizes the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health. In 1000 words, make a case for which institution and attendant policy tool is potentially most harmful to women’s health globally. Clearly identify one or two ways women’s NGOs might hold these institutions accountable to human rights, including the universal right to health.

**Week # 13: Women Fight for Alternative Modalities of Global Health Governance**

Week of Monday, November 26th
Global Prescriptions (Petchesky), “Implementing International Norms at the National Level: Women’s Health NGOs in the Firing Line,” Chapter 5, pp. 188–246


Gender and the Political Economy of Development (Rai), “Gender and Multi-Level Governance: Feasible and Transformative Politics?” Chapter 5, pp. 159–197

Week # 14: Integrating the Fight for Health as a Human Right in the Global Women’s Movement

Week of Monday, December 3rd


The People’s Charter for Health, written by The People’s Health Movement


Week # 15: Project Week: Women’s NGOs Strategize the Global Redistribution of Resources

Week of Monday, December 10th

Each of these readings are short and are chosen to prepare you for your final short project.


Financial Flows (a short clip by AWID explaining their subject of their international forum held in Istanbul, Turkey, April 19–22, 2012, and why financial flows matter to women)


Project # 3 due 11:59 pm, Wednesday, December 12th

The development mantra of neoliberal capitalism is “trade, not aid.” The sustainable development mantra of the Association for Women’s Rights and Development (AWID) and Development Alternatives for Women of a New Era (DAWN) is “tax, not aid.” In 1000 words explain this distinction between trading and taxing as development strategies and explain why feminist development scholars and organizations prefer the latter. Define what a financial transaction tax is and state why feminist development scholars believe that a financial transaction tax potentially allows for development financing without conditions, dissimilar from the conditional lending structures of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. How do AWID and DAWN tie the financial transaction tax to healthcare financing, and what might the financial transaction tax mean for guaranteeing healthcare as a universal human right (and holding countries, corporations, and the international financial institutions responsible for upholding the right to healthcare)?

The final examination is open book and will appear online by 11:59pm Wednesday, December 12th. The exam is due on or before 11:59pm Thursday, December 20th.