

MCS Selective Reproductive Justice

Catalog Description: This selective will cover an introduction to the key principles of **reproductive justice**, the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities. This right centers around the essential need for women and persons with the capacity to become pregnant to be able to decide when to and when not to bear children, based on the United Nations' internationally-accepted Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Beyond access to abortion, reproductive justice assesses access to contraception, assisted reproduction technologies (IUI, IVF, etc), comprehensive sex education, STI prevention and care, alternative birth options, adequate prenatal and pregnancy care, wages to support our families, birthing centers that hear and treat all pregnant persons, access to safe neighborhoods and education, and more. We will discuss the current limitations on this right in the context of the United States, while also understanding it in a global health perspective.

Instructor



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Syllabus

This selective will consist of four 2-hour sessions devoted to exploring the history, current practice, and bioethics of reproductive justice, addressing the core functions of contraception, sex education, abortion, pregnancy care, assisted reproductive technologies, and the policies that affect our ability to raise those children. Considerations for individual patient treatment and for healthcare policy will be

assessed, and autonomy will be examined through the lens of forced sterilization, eugenics, crisis pregnancy centers, TRAP laws and more.

Weekly readings will be assigned (PDFs will be emailed) in conjunction with audio/visual materials- short documentaries, podcasts, etc in order to gain understanding of the many concepts and key issues within the reproductive justice framework. Students will gain an understanding not just of the medical and public health importance, but also the many ways to become involved in policy work, health communications, and patient advocacy.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of this course you will have the ability to:

1. Define reproductive justice and its key concepts of access and education regarding contraception, sex education, abortion, pregnancy care, STI screening, and safe birthing and child-rearing environments.
2. Examine the many policies, pieces of legislation, and practice guidelines that can affect an individual's access to care and a provider's ability to give that care.
3. Advocate for patient's and physician's autonomy on whatever level you feel comfortable, whether institutional, local, county, state, or nationally.
4. Discern the ethical/moral issues surrounding 'personhood', autonomy, and reproduction.
5. Evaluate your role as a healthcare provider and a citizen of your state and country.

Topics and Dates

Week 1- A History of Reproductive Rights and Justice in the United States: Abortion, Contraception, Forced and Coerced Sterilization, Custody, and Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Readings, lecture and discussion this week will be focused on the history of reproduction and its medicalization in the context of U.S. Healthcare. We will discuss the wording and implications of key Supreme Court decisions, legislation, and marketing campaigns for and against the right to access abortion, contraception, and sterilization. A key focus will be on how policies and access to abortion affect key health outcomes.

Week 2- Healthcare Economics and Policy: Funding, Payment, and Economic Outcomes of Reproductive Health Policies From Slavery to Medicaid Expansion

An introduction to the close relationship between healthcare, reproductive rights, and the personal, national, and global economy. Impact of universal healthcare, coverage of services such as contraception, family planning and abortion, and the impact of paid parental leave and extended maternal health coverage.

Week 3 – Bioethics, Goals, and Key Health Issues in the Reproductive Justice Framework

Autonomy, pregnancy exceptions to advanced directives, drug screening pregnant individuals, rights to privacy, and reproductive technologies- in vitro fertilization, intrauterine insemination, donor eggs and sperm, screening embryos.

Week 4- Advocacy, Lobbying, and Leadership as Part of The Physician Experience: Incorporating This Work into a Career in Medicine

Regardless of the field you choose, your voice can be used to improve policies and outcomes for birthing

persons and infants (or any population you so choose to advocate for). There are many avenues via which you can make this work a part of your career in medicine; as a medical journalist, a researcher, drafting policy, signing petitions, drafting position statements for your medical organization, being an expert witness, speaking to the media, or creating new forms of access for your patients.

Evaluation

1. Grading is Pass/Fail
2. To pass, the following will be required:
 - a. Attendance to all four sessions unless absence is excused by dean's office.
 - b. Being prepared for sessions by completing assigned reading/listening/viewing.
 - c. Participate regularly in discussions, with respect for all persons and opinions.
 - d. Each student will write a single reflective essay (double spaced, 2-3 pages in length) on an ethical issue within the reproductive justice umbrella, and discuss how the student's perspective has been impacted by the course materials and discussion, and how this may impact their future practice (if at all).

Class size

Minimum 5

Maximum 12