

## MENSTRUATION, GENDER AND RIGHTS: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

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Spring 2020

Course number: HRTS 44360GU

Class Time: Wednesday, 4:10 to 6 pm

Classroom: Philosophy Hall Room 507

**Lead Instructor:** Inga Winkler

**Office:** Interchurch 308C

**Office Hours:** Wed 9:30 to 11:30 am or  
by appointment

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**Email:** inga.winkler@columbia.edu



The course will be taught by an interdisciplinary team of faculty members with backgrounds in human rights, law, epidemiology, anthropology, biomedical informatics, computer science, economics, and women's and gender studies, who are fellows in the Working Group on Menstrual Health & Gender Justice. The lead instructor will be present throughout the course and will be joined by one or several co-instructors for individual sessions.

- Inga Winkler, Institute for the Study of Human Rights
- Noémie Elhadad, Biomedical Informatics, Columbia University Medical Center (ne60@cumc.columbia.edu)
- Lauren Houghton, Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health (lh2746@cumc.columbia.edu)
- Anja Benschaul-Tolonen, Economics, Barnard College (guest speaker, atolonen@barnard.edu)
- Chris Bobel, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, UMass Boston (guest speaker, Chris.Bobel@umb.edu)

### Course Synopsis

The course will explore the contemporary discourse around menstruation as a key entry point for gender justice in global and local contexts. The recent shift in public discourse around menstruation is crucial because efforts to support menstruators across the lifespan not only confer health benefits but are also part of an enduring project of pursuing gender equality and women's rights. Centering attention on menstrual health resists pernicious social control of women's bodies and recognizes the body as foundational, urgent and politically relevant. This is why menstruation matters: it unites the personal and the political, the intimate and the public, the physiological and the socio-cultural.

The course examines gender justice and women's rights through the lens of menstruation, discussing questions of gender stereotyping, transnational feminism, and gender identity.

Students will gain an understanding of the relevance of menstruation across different spheres of life combining bio-medical and socio-cultural factors. We will ask: What is the relationship between menstruation, human rights and gender equality? What does it mean to approach menstrual health research from an interdisciplinary perspective? -- Over the course of the semester, we will examine different spheres of life, including health, education, equality in the work place, freedom of religion, and cultural rights. In doing so, the course will pay particular attention to the intersection of gender and other markers of inequalities, including disability, socio-economic status, age, caste, and gender identity.

Together, we will explore:

- (i) how different fields make unique contributions to the study of menstruation;
- (ii) how questions of data and research design in the menstrual health sphere shape our understanding of challenges and injustices;
- (iii) how interdisciplinary approaches (and combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies) may fill some of the research gaps we identify; and
- (iv) how to communicate research results in their complexity to a broader audience.

## **Learning Objectives**

Upon completing this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze current challenges in the context of women's rights and gender justice through the lens of menstruation and critically interrogate current developments on menstruation as a significant site of struggle for gender equality and women's rights
- Assess the relevant body of research on menstruation (including quantitative and qualitative data, impact evaluations for policy programming from difference disciplinary backgrounds including anthropology, law, economics, biomedical informatics, epidemiology and others), identify gaps in research
- Develop proposals for interdisciplinary research designs to fill these gaps by collaborating with an interdisciplinary team
- Communicate research results in their complexity to a broader audience

To meet these objectives, the course will explore the role menstruation plays in different spheres of life using it as a proxy for broader challenges for gender justice.

We consider work in groups an essential component of the course, as working across disciplines often requires engaging with different viewpoints and approaches. In addition, we seek to enable students to communicate research findings and are planning to integrate a workshop with The OpEd Project into the course for that purpose.

## **Course Materials**

No course book is required. Course materials will be made available to students at the beginning of the semester. Many of the materials will be chapters of the forthcoming *Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies* that the instructors have edited and contributed to, respectively. The majority of materials is available on CourseWorks. The remaining materials have been put on Reserve in the Lehman Library.

In addition to scholarly texts, we have assigned OpEds and other public writing almost every week. As you will be writing your own OpEd, we want you to familiarize yourself with this style of writing, so apart from content, please pay close attention to format and style. (\*\*\*) If the reading lists seem long, that's mostly because the pieces are short! (\*\*\*)

We will also use documentaries, video clips, and other visual materials in class.

## Requirements

- **Midterm:** A short paper focused on menstrual stigma (6-8 double spaced pages) in response to a prompt that asks for comparing different disciplinary approaches **(25 % of grade)**.

**The midterm is due March 11.**

- **Group project:** A research proposal (25 pages, double-spaced) for an interdisciplinary research project on menstruation **(35%)**

The proposal will include an extensive literature review presenting the state of the art of research on a particular issue (e.g. menstrual leave) in different disciplines, identify research gaps and develop an interdisciplinary research design to address these gaps. Over the course of the semester, groups will continuously be in touch with the team of instructors to develop their proposals based on several rounds of feedback.

**You will first present your ideas for your proposal in class on Feb. 26.**

**An abstract is due on March 4.**

**Draft proposals are due on April 1.**

**You will do a presentation in class on April 29.**

**Final proposals are due on May 6.**

Please note: The **presentations, abstract and draft** are formative tasks. You will receive feedback that groups are expected to incorporate to strengthen their proposals. These formative tasks will not be graded individually, but rather factor into the overall grade for your proposal. Submitting drafts late will result in grade deductions according to the policy below.

- An **OpEd** (800 words) that communicates the complexity of a particular topic related to menstruation to a general audience **(25 %)**.

Students will benefit from a program with The OpEd Project to learn about communicating research results and public engagement. They will pitch their OpEds to different venues, and unless another venue is secured they will have the opportunity to publish their pieces on the Working Group's blog at [periodsatcolumbia.com](http://periodsatcolumbia.com).

**A draft OpEd is due on April 8. The final OpEd is due on May 6.**

- **Participation** in class and interactive in-class exercises that practice interdisciplinary thinking, research skills, and communication skills (15%).

More details for all assignments will be posted on CourseWorks.

**Writing Centers.** For drafting the papers and proposals, students are encouraged to use the Writing Centers. More information about the centers and the possibility to make appointments is available at <http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center> and <http://writing.barnard.edu/>.

**Extension policy.** Assignments should be completed by the due date, first so that students can keep up with their work in this and other classes, and second so that they can cultivate a professional habit of turning in work on time.

Extensions will only be granted on an exceptional basis, such as illness or a family emergency. Extensions will not be granted for poor time management. Students who wish to request an extension should email the instructor to ask for the extension; give the reason; and specify the additional time needed. Extensions will be decided on a case-by-case basis based on supporting documentation. If there is no documented reason for an exception, students will receive a grade reduction penalty for any work submitted late.

Late submissions will reduce your assignment grade by  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a letter grade per two days after the deadline (that is, from what would have been an A to an A- for assignments that are submitted after the deadline up to 48 hours late, to a B+ for assignments that are 48 to 96 hours late, to a B for assignments that are 96 to 144 hours late etc.). Final assignments at the end of the semester cannot be submitted late unless students are granted an Incomplete by their School.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to do their own work on all assignments for this course and act in accordance with the Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity and Honor Code established by the students of Columbia College and the School of General Studies. Because any academic integrity violation undermines our intellectual community, students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or committed any other act of academic dishonesty can expect academic sanctions and may be referred to the Dean's Discipline process.

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with different forms of plagiarism and what they involve. Apart from verbatim copying, paraphrasing text in different words without acknowledging the sources also amounts to plagiarism. Students are encouraged to use the [Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity](#), which provides more detailed information.

### **Students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities have rights to reasonable accommodation. In order to ensure their rights, it is the responsibility of students to report any learning-related disabilities, to do so in a timely fashion, and to do so through the Office of Disability Services. Students can

contact [Disability Services](#) at 212-854-2388 and [disability@columbia.edu](mailto:disability@columbia.edu). Students who have documented conditions and are determined by DS to need individualized services will be provided an DS-certified 'Accommodation Letter'. It is students' responsibility to provide this letter to the instructors and in so doing request the stated accommodations. Students are encouraged to confirm accommodation needs with the instructor during office hours.



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## Course Overview

The first three sessions focus on overarching concepts and situate menstruation in the context of gender, connecting biological and socio-cultural factors. We will then move into specific fields including health, culture, religion, work and education, exploring the lived experiences and marginalization of menstruators. The last few sessions will focus on activism and policy developments that challenge the status quo.

- 1) Setting the Scene: Menstruation, Gender and Rights (January 22)
- 2) Menstrual Stigma (January 29)
- 3) A Lifecourse Approach: From Infancy to Menopause (February 5)
- 4) FemTech to Advance Menstrual Health (February 12)
- 5) Menstruation, Culture and Religion (February 19)
- 6) Work on Group Projects (February 26)
- 7) Menstruation and Education (March 4)
- 8) Transgender and Non-Binary Menstruators (March 11)
- 9) Spring Recess (March 18)
- 10) Menstruation at Work and Beyond (March 25)
- 11) OpEd Project Workshop (Friday, April 3 - all day)
- 12) Menstrual Activism & Challenging Menstrual Norms (April 8)
- 13) US Policy Developments (April 15)
- 14) MHM in the Context of Global Development (April 22)
- 15) Group presentations (April 29)

## Class calendar and reading list

\*\*\*Subject to change\*\*\*

### 1) **Setting the Scene: Menstruation, Gender and Rights (January 22)**

*What is the relationship between menstruation, human rights and gender equality? What does it mean to approach menstrual health research from an interdisciplinary perspective?*

**Leads:** Inga Winker, Lauren Houghton, Noemie Elhadad, Chris Bobel (via Zoom)

#### **Required readings:**

- Gloria Steinem: If Men Could Menstruate
- Abigail Jones, The Fight to End Period Shaming Is Going Mainstream, Newsweek, 20 April 2016, available at: <https://www.newsweek.com/2016/04/29/womens-periods-menstruation-tampons-pads-449833.html>
- Bobel, Chris. "[Menstrual Pads Can't Fix Prejudice](#): Opinion, New York Times, 2018
- Chandra Bozelko: Prisons that withhold menstrual pads humiliate women and violate basic rights, Guardian
- Cass Bliss, Menstruating while Trans (Poem)
- Inga Winkler & Virginia Roaf, Taking the bloody linen out of the closet - Menstrual hygiene as a priority for achieving gender equality, Cardozo Journal of Law and Gender 2015 (21/1), 1-37

### 2) **Menstrual Stigma (January 29)**

*Explore menstrual stigma at the root of many challenges related to menstruation. What are the origins of menstrual stigma and how is it perpetuated? What role does the persistence of the concealment imperative, and standards of femininity play? How are different population groups affected by a double stigma? What are efforts to challenge stigma and stereotypes?*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler

#### **Required readings:**

- Johnston-Robledo, Ingrid, and Joan Chrisler. 2013. "The Menstrual Mark: Menstruation as Social Stigma." *Sex Roles* 68 (1-2): 9-18. doi:10.1007/s11199-011-0052-z
- Emily Martin, Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies: Menstruation and Menopause, *International Journal of Health Services*, Volume: 18 issue: 2, page(s): 237-254
- Kissling, Elizabeth Arveda. "Bleeding out Loud: Communication about Menstruation." *Feminism & Psychology* 6, no. 4 (November 1, 1996): 481-504. doi:10.1177/0959353596064002.
- Annie McCarthy & Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt: Bleeding in Public? Rethinking Narratives of Menstrual Management from Delhi's Slums, Handbook
- Linda Steele and Beth Goldblatt, The human rights of women and girls with disabilities: Sterilization and other coercive responses to menstruation, Handbook

- Robyn Steward et al., “Life is Much More Difficult to Manage During Periods”: Autistic Experiences of Menstruation, Handbook

### **Additional readings:**

- Erving Goffmann, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity, 1963 (excerpts)
- Sandra Barkty. 1990. Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression, Chapter 6: Shame and Gender.
- Jill Wood: Menstrual Politics: The Concealment Imperative, Handbook
- Ela Przybylo and Breanne Fahs: Empowered Bleeders and Cranky Menstruators: Menstrual Positivity and the “Liberated” Era of New Menstrual Product Advertisements, Handbook
- Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge. 2016. Intersectionality, Chapters 1, 2, and 4.
- Kimberlé Crenshaw. ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,’ The University of Chicago Legal Forum (1989), pp. 139-167
- Herbert, Ann C. et al. 2017. “Puberty Experiences of Low-Income Girls in the United States: A Systematic Review of Qualitative Literature From 2000 to 2014.” Journal of Adolescent Health 60, 363-379.
- Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli and Sheila Vipul Patel: Mapping the knowledge and understanding of menarche, menstrual hygiene and menstrual health among adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries, Reprod Health 2017; 14:30

### **3) A Lifecourse Approach: From Infancy to Menopause (February 5)**

*The experience of menstruation differs across the life course from infancy to menopause. There is also vast variation worldwide in the timing of menstrual events across populations. We will explore the menstrual cycle, its underlying hormones and the timing of menstrual events and the implications of these menstrual factors for health.*

**Lead:** Lauren Houghton and Inga Winkler

#### **Reading:**

- Ellison PT1, Panter-Brick C, Lipson SF, O'Rourke MT. The ecological context of human ovarian function. Hum Reprod. 1993 Dec;8(12):2248-58.
- P. Cole, B. MacMahon. Oestrogen fractions during early reproductive life in the aetiology of breast cancer, Lancet, i (1969), pp. 604-606
- Lynnette Leidy Sievert. Should Women Menstruate? An Evolutionary Perspective on Menstrual-Suppressing Oral Contraceptives, in Evolutionary Medicine
- Yoav Ben-Shlomo, Diana Kuh, A life course approach to chronic disease epidemiology: conceptual models, empirical challenges and interdisciplinary perspectives, International Journal of Epidemiology, Volume 31, Issue 2, April 2002, Pages 285–293, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/31.2.285>
- Julie Hennegan et al., Women’s and girls’ experiences of menstruation in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and qualitative metasynthesis, PLOS Medicine.

- Shailini Vora: Bleeding on the Streets: homeless women's lived experience of menstruation, in: Chris Bobel et al. (eds.), Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies, Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming 2020
- Przybylo, E., & Fahs, B. (2018). Feels and flows: On the realness of menstrual pain and crippling menstrual chronicity. *Feminist Formations*, 30(1), 206-229

#### **4) FemTech to Advance Menstrual Health (February 12)**

*Explore the impact of menstrual stigma on women's health using the diagnosis of endometriosis as an entry point. How can we improve the patient-provider relationship? What do we know about women's menstrual health? What do we not know? And how can we improve?*

**Lead:** Noémie Elhadad and Inga Winkler

##### **Required readings:**

- Maya Dusenbery. 2018. Doing Harm, The Truth About How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed, and Sick, Harper Collins, Chapter 1 (Chapter 6 as additional reading)
- Nnoaham KE, Hummelshoj L, Webster P, d'Hooghe T, de Cicco Nardone F, de Cicco Nardone C, et al. Impact of endometriosis on quality of life and work productivity: a multicenter study across ten countries. *Fertil Steril* 2011; 96:366–73.e8.
- McKillop M, Mamakyna L, Elhadad N. Designing in the Dark: Eliciting Self-tracking Dimensions for Understanding Enigmatic Disease. ACM SIGCHI 2018; doi:10.1145/3173574.3174139
- Noemie Elhadad et al., The Invisible Work of Patients and Providers in an Enigmatic Chronic Disease
- Heather Guidone The Womb Wanders Not: Enhancing Endometriosis Education in a Culture of Menstrual Misinformation, Handbook
- Sumpter C, Torondel B. A systematic review of the health and social effects of menstrual hygiene management. *PLoS One* 2013;8:e6200

#### **5) Menstruation, Culture and Religion (February 19)**

*Menstruation is about so much more than blood. What are the socio-cultural and religious meanings of menstruation? How are these perceived and presented? Does menstruation restrict women and girls? – We will look at different examples of struggles such as the movement against chhaupadi in Nepal and the movement at the Sabarimala Temple in India. We will explore different conceptions of women's agency beyond Western liberal feminist thought.*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler and Chris Bobel

##### **Required readings:**

- CEDAW/CRC, General comment on Harmful practices
- Rose George, Blood Speaks, Mosaic, March 11, 2014, available at: <https://mosaicscience.com/story/menstrual-taboo-periods-shame-women/>



- Sara Parker and Kay Standing, Nepal's menstrual huts: what can be done about this practice of confining women to cow sheds?, *The Conversation*, 23 January 2019, available at: <http://theconversation.com/nepals-menstrual-huts-what-can-be-done-about-this-practice-of-confining-women-to-cow-sheds-109904>
- Ilana Cohen: Menstruation and Religion: Developing a Critical Menstrual Studies Approach, Handbook
- Kapur, Ratna (2018), *Gender, Alterity and Human Rights: Freedom in a Fishbowl*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, Chapter 2
- Deepthi Sukumar, Caste is My Period, Handbook
- Carmel Christy, Sabarimala temple: How the Indian media fell into the trap of caste and gender stereotypes, *The Conversation*, 21 January 2019, available at: <https://theconversation.com/sabarimala-temple-how-the-indian-media-fell-into-the-trap-of-caste-and-gender-stereotypes-109897>
- Winkler I, Bobel C. "Touch the Pickle!" Myth-Busting, Modernity and Saviorism in Representations of Menstrual Beliefs and Practices in the Popular Media

#### **Additional readings:**

- Alma Gottlieb, Menstrual Taboos: Moving beyond the Curse, Handbook
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1984. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" *boundary 2*, 12, no. 3 (Spring – Autumn): 333-358
- Abu-Lughod, Lila (2013), *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (excerpts)
- Kapur, Ratna (2002), The Tragedy of Victimization Rhetoric: Resurrecting the "Native" Subject in International/Postcolonial Feminist Legal Politics, 15 *Harv. Hum. Rts. J.* 1-37
- Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton University Press, 2005, Chapters 1 and 5
- Ranabhat, Chhabi, Chun-Bae Kim, and Eun Hee Choi (2015), *Chhaupadi Culture and Reproductive Health of Women in Nepal*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10110539515602743>
- Sara E. Baumann, Pema Lhaki & Jessica G. Burke (2019): Assessing the Role of Caste/Ethnicity in Predicting Menstrual Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices in Nepal, *Global Public Health*, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2019.1583267

## **6) Work on group projects (February 26)**

**\*\*\* Student presentation: Initial ideas on research proposal \*\*\***

Group work: developing research proposals

Overview of doing mixed methods research

**Lead:** Lauren Houghton and Inga Winkler

#### **Readings:**

Please select relevant methodological chapters for your project.

- Zhang W, Creswell J. The Use of “Mixing” Procedure of Mixed Methods in Health Services Research. *Med Care*. 2013 Aug. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23860333>
- Bård A. Andreassen, Hans-Otto Sano, Siobhán McInerney-Lankford (ed.), *Research Methods in Human Rights, A Handbook* (select chapters depending on your project)
- Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *Feminist Research Practice, A Primer*, 2nd ed. (select chapters depending on your project)

## 7) Menstruation and Education (March 4)

\*\*\*Abstract for research proposal due\*\*\*

*Many of the developments on menstrual health and hygiene have been motivated by the claim that girls drop out of school when menstruating. Yet, what do we know about menstruation and school absenteeism? Is that the key issue? How does menstrual stigma influence learning experiences? And why is menstrual education so important? How do quantitative and qualitative research inform our knowledge on these issues?*

**Lead:** Anja Benshaul-Tolonen and Inga Winkler

### Required readings:

- Mason, Linda, et al. "We keep it secret so no one should know"—A qualitative study to explore young schoolgirls attitudes and experiences with menstruation in rural Western Kenya." *PloS One* 8.11 (2013): e79132.
- Oster, Emily, and Rebecca Thornton. "Determinants of technology adoption: Peer effects in menstrual cup take-up." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10.6 (2012): 1263-1293.
- Anja Benshaul-Tolonen, Garazi Zulaika, Marni Sommer, and Penelope A Phillips-Howard, *Measuring Menstruation-related Absenteeism Among Adolescents in Low-Income Countries, Handbook*
- Catherine Kansime et al., *Menstrual health intervention and school attendance in Uganda (MENISCUS-2): a pilot intervention study*, *BMJ Open* 2020;10:e031182. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2019-031182
- Phineas Rueckert, *Why Periods Are Keeping Girls Out of School — and How You Can Help*, *Global Citizen*, 30 May, 2018, available at: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/menstrual-hygiene-day-education/>
- Kate Wilkinson, *No data shows 1 in 10 African girls miss school because of menstruation*, *AFricaCheck*, 26 September 2016, available at: <https://africacheck.org/reports/no-data-shows-1-in-10-african-girls-miss-school-because-of-menstruation/>

### Additional readings:

- Sommer, Marni, Nana Ackatia-Armah, Susan Connolly, and Dana Smiles. 2014. "A comparison of the menstruation and education experiences of girls in Tanzania, Ghana, Cambodia and Ethiopia." *Compare* 45, no. 4, 1-21.

- Oster and Thornton “Menstruation, sanitary products, and school attendance: Evidence from a randomized evaluation” AEJ Applied, 2012.

## 8) Transgender & non-binary menstruation (March 11)

\*\*\* Midterm due \*\*\*

*How can we ensure that our discussion on menstruation is inclusive? How do transgender and non-binary menstruators experience menstruation? How are their health care needs and other needs addressed? How does the language we use signal inclusivity? Is the term menstruator useful? What do trans-exclusionary radical feminists (TERFs) mean when they speak about a ‘risk of female erasure’?*

**Lead:** Noémie Elhadad and Inga Winkler

**Guest speaker:** AJ Lowik, University of British Columbia (via Zoom)

### Required readings:

- Cass Bliss, Here’s What It’s Like to Get Your Period When You’re Not A Woman, Huffington Post, Aug 20, 2018, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nonbinary-period-menstruation\\_us\\_5b75ac1fe4b0182d49b1c2ed](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/nonbinary-period-menstruation_us_5b75ac1fe4b0182d49b1c2ed)
- Klara Rydström: Degendering Menstruation: Making Trans Menstruators Matter, Handbook
- Josefine Persdotter, Towards a Definition of Menstrunormativity, Handbook
- Chrisler, Joan C., Jennifer A. Gorman, Jen Manion, Michael Murgo, Angela Barney, Alexis Adams-Clark, Jessica R. Newton, and Meaghan McGrath. 2016. “Queer periods: attitudes toward and experiences with menstruation in the masculine of centre and transgender community”. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 18 (11): 1238-1250.
- Bleeding Thunder, A Zine Exploring Genderqueer Menstruation

### Additional reading:

- Sophie Lewis, How British Feminism Became Anti-Trans, New York Times, Feb 7, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/opinion/terf-trans-women-britain.html>

## 9) No class, spring recess (March 18)

## 10) Menstruation at Work and Beyond (March 25)

*How do we accommodate menstruation at work? What are the practical needs? Beyond that, how do we address shame, distress and anxiety? What are the expectations menstruators face in terms of “dealing with menstruation”? How do we change social norms and gender stereotypes that lead to women and menstruators being perceived as less capable, not*

*trustworthy and unfit for decision-making? Can menstrual leave policies provide a solution? What does a period-friendly work place look like in different contexts?*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler

**Required readings:**

- Schoep ME, Adang EMM, Maas JWM, et al, Productivity loss due to menstruation-related symptoms: a nationwide cross-sectional survey among 32 748 women, *BMJ Open* 2019;9:e026186. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-026186
- Roberts T-A, Goldenberg JL, Power C, Pyszczyński. “Feminine protection”: the effects of menstruation on attitudes towards women. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1471-6402.00051>
- Rachel Levitt and Jessica Barnack-Tavlaris: Addressing Menstruation in the Workplace: The Menstrual Leave Debate, *Handbook*
- Bobbitt-Zeher, Donna. “Gender Discrimination at Work: Connecting Gender Stereotypes, Institutional Policies, and Gender Composition of Workplace.” *Gender & Society* 25, no. 6 (December 2011): 764–86. doi:10.1177/0891243211424741.
- Sandra Fredman, Substantive Equality Revisited, *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, Volume 14, Issue 3, 1 July 2016, Pages 712–738 (and responses as further reading)
- Sebert Kuhlmann A, Bergquist EP, Danjont D, Wall LL., Unmet menstrual hygiene needs among low-income women., *Obstet Gynecol* 2019;133:238–44.

**Additional readings:**

- Marni Sommer et al. Managing menstruation in the workplace: an overlooked issue in low- and middle- income countries, *International Journal for Equity in Health* (2016) 15:86
- Sally King: PMS and the Myth of the Irrational Female, *Handbook*
- ACLU , ACLU Appeals Case of Georgia Women Fired for Getting her Period at Work, 17 August 2017, available at: <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-appeals-case-georgia-woman-fired-getting-her-period-work>
- Katie Ann Hasson, Not a “Real” Period?: Social and Material Constructions of Menstruation, *Gender & Society* 30 issue: 6, pages: 958-983
- Elizabeth Arveda Kissling (2013) Pills, Periods, and Postfeminism, *Feminist Media Studies*, 13:3, 490-504, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2012.712373
- Inga Winkler, Human Rights Shine a Light on Unmet Menstrual Health Needs and Menstruation at the Margins, *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, February 2019 - Volume 133 - Issue 2 - p 235-237

**11) OpEd Project Workshop (Friday, April 3 – all day)**

**\*\*\* Draft Research Proposals Due \*\*\***

**Required reading:**

- OpEd Project resources: Op-ed Writing tips and tricks, <https://www.theopedproject.org/oped-basics>

## 12) Menstrual Activism & Challenging Menstrual Norms (April 8)

\*\*\* Draft OpEd due \*\*\*

*Menstruation is political and has turned into a site of struggle for gender justice. How have different movements across time and geographies addressed menstruation? What forms do activists choose? How do these movements tackle menstrual stigma?*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler

**Guest speaker:** Breanne Fahs, Arizona State University (via Zoom)

### Required readings:

- Chris Bobel and Breanne Fahs, The Messy Politics of Menstrual Activism, Handbook
- Fahs, Breanne. (2011). Sex during menstruation: Race, sexual identity, and women's qualitative accounts of pleasure and disgust. *Feminism & Psychology*, 21(2), 155-178
- Bobel, Chris. 2010. "Feminist Engagements with Menstruation" In *New blood: third-wave feminism and the politics of menstruation*, 28-41. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Breanne Fahs and Chris Bobel, *From Private to Public: Shifting from the Politics of Bloodless Respectability to Radical Menstrual Embodiment*, Signs, forthcoming
- Stella Nyanzi, *Bloody Precarious Activism in Uganda*, Handbook

## 13) US Policy: The Tampon Tax and Beyond (April 15)

*Advocates in the United States are pushing for the elimination of the 'tampon tax' as well as measures to increase tampon safety, product labelling, and providing menstrual products to schools, shelters and prisons. Other initiatives seek to improve menstrual education. – Where do we stand on these policy developments? Are they far-reaching enough? What can the US learn from other countries?*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler

**Guest speaker:** Laura Strausfeld (tbc)

### Potential Reading:

- Margaret E. Johnson, *Menstrual Justice* (May 1, 2019). *UC Davis Law Review*, Forthcoming; University of Baltimore School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper # 2019-04. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3389773>
- Jennifer Weiss-Wolf, *The Politics of Periods*, *Ms. Magazine*, 8 May 2018, <https://msmagazine.com/2018/05/08/the-politics-of-periods/>
- Tomi-Ann Roberts: *Bleeding in Jail: Objectification, Self-Objectification and Menstrual Injustice*, in: Chris Bobel et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Critical Menstruation Studies*, Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming 2020

- Plan International UK. 2018. Break the Barriers: Girls' experiences of menstruation in the UK. Accessed March 13, 2019. <https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-break-the-barriers-report-032018pdf/download?token=Fs-HYP3v>.

**Additional reading:**

- Jennifer Weiss-Wolf, US Policymaking to Address Menstruation: Advancing an Equity Agenda, Handbook
- Beth Goldblatt and Linda Steele, Bloody unfair: Inequality related to menstruation – considering the role of discrimination law, Sydney Law Review, forthcoming
- Jessica Valenti, The case for free tampons, The Guardian, 11 August 2014, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/11/free-tampons-cost-feminine-hygiene-products>

**14) 'Menstrual Hygiene Management' in Development Practice (April 22)**

*The last decade has given rise to 'MHM' as a field of development practice. What are the key developments? What is the role of NGOs, social entrepreneurs, international organizations, donors? What are some of the risks the sector is facing? To what extent do these development address (or reinforce) the underlying menstrual stigma?*

**Lead:** Inga Winkler, Chris Bobel and Anja Benshaul-Tolonen (tbc)

**Required readings:**

- Sommer, Marni, Jennifer S. Hirsch, Constance Nathanson, and Richard G. Parker. 2015. "Comfortably, Safely, and Without Shame: Defining Menstrual Hygiene Management as a Public Health Issue". American Journal of Public Health. 105 (7): 1302-1311.
- Julie Hennegan: Interventions to improve menstrual health in low and middle income countries: do we know what works?, Handbook
- FSG Consulting, An Opportunity to Address Menstrual Health and Gender Equity (Gates Foundation), 2016
- Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (2015) Medicalising menstruation: a feminist critique of the political economy of menstrual hygiene management in South Asia, Gender, Place & Culture, 22:8, 1158-1176, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2014.939156
- Bobel, Chris (2019), Chapter 3, "Can You Imagine?" Making the Case for a Bloody Crisis, in: The Managed Body, Developing Girls and Menstrual Health in the Global South, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan

**Additional readings:**

- Van Eijk, Anna Maria, M. Sivakami, Mamita Bora Thakkar, Ashley Bauman, Kayla F. Laserson, Susanne Coates, and Penelope A. Phillips-Howard. 2016. "Menstrual Hygiene Management among Adolescent Girls in India: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." BMJ Open 6, no. 3 (March): 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010290>

- Maria Carmen Punzi and Mirjam Werner, Challenging the Menstruation Taboo One Sale at a Time: The Role of Social Entrepreneurs in the Period Revolution, Handbook
- Sommer, M., Schmitt, M., Clatworthy, D. *A toolkit for integrating Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) into humanitarian response*. New York: Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health and International Rescue Committee, 2017
- Sphere Association. *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, fourth edition. Geneva: Sphere Association, 2018. [www.spherestandards.org/handbook](http://www.spherestandards.org/handbook)

## **15) Presentation of Proposed Research Projects (April 29)**

**Lead:** Students

**\*\*\* Final research proposal due (group project): May 6 \*\*\***

**\*\*\* Final Op-Ed due: May 6 \*\*\***