WS 830-5: Graduate Seminar I – Feminist Perspectives on Health & Illness

Sue Wilkinson

[Note: This course will be held at on Fridays, 9:30-1:30 at Harbour Centre, Room 2235]

The aim of the course is:
- To develop an appreciation of women’s varied experiences of health and illness across the lifespan
- To examine the role of social institutions (e.g. medicine, psychiatry, the media) in constructing women’s bodies and women’s minds
- To encourage critical thinking about issues in women’s health, including women’s rights, and feminist campaigns

Readings:
There will be a course reader which will include materials from sources such as:

Course requirements and Grading Structure:
15% - Short paper: research a campaign on a women’s health issue
15% - Short paper: examine media coverage of a women’s health issue
40% - Final paper on a key contemporary issue in women’s health
30% - 2 class presentations (one related to final paper, plus one other)

Graduate Students in departments and programs other than Women’s Studies are welcome in this course. Graduate students who are enrolled at UBC or Uvic may enroll in this course through the Western Dean’s Agreement. For further information please contact Dr. Sue Wilkinson (sue_wilkinson@sfu.ca) or Dr.Meredith Kimball (kimball@sfu.ca).
Tentative weekly programme for WS 830-5

Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: Medical science and women’s oppression
Week 3: Our bodies, our selves: the women’s health movement and the lesbian health movement
Week 4: Heterosexism in healthcare
Week 5: Feminism and psychiatry – Chesler and beyond
Week 6: ‘Syndromes’ and ‘treatments’ – PMS and HRT
Week 7: Anorexia and bulimia
Week 8: Breasts and breast cancer
Week 9: ‘Cosmetic’ surgery
Week 10: Body hair and hair removal
Week 11: Reproductive health
Week 12: Ageism in healthcare
Week 13: Open session – course review

The Department of Women’s Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.