Application for the

2023 NEH

Summer Seminar for Faculty

***Reproductive Health in/as American History***

June 6-June 29, 2023

SUNY Potsdam

Seminar Leader:

Kelly O’Donnell, Ph.D.

Lecturer, History of Science and Medicine

Yale University

Applications due by March 13, 2023

to

Geoffrey Clark

Department of History

SUNY Potsdam

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**2023 NEH Summer Seminar**

*Reproductive Health in/as American History*

Kelly O’Donnell, Ph.D.

Lecturer, History of Science and Medicine

Yale University

**Seminar Description:**

Since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which for 50 years guaranteed a constitutional right to abortion, Americans have found themselves navigating an uncertain new reproductive health landscape. The *Dobbs v. Jackson's Women's Health Organization*decision made history, in large part by relying on a reading of history that interpreted this specific fertility control measure as a more recent break with tradition. But historians of medicine, sexuality, and the law have spent decades documenting how complex and widespread birth control and abortion practices have been throughout American history.

How have Americans imagined and controlled their reproductive bodies? How have laws intervened into these practices? What difference did/does the law make in women's attempts to control their fertility? What roles have medical practitioners played in this realm and how has that changed over time? Is reproductive health private or public?

In beginning to address these questions, this seminar samples the history of reproductive health and medicine in the United States from the colonial era to the present day. It emphasizes the cultural and historical contexts of reproductive health; the significance of reproduction within the broader social, cultural, and political history of the United States; and the entanglements of reproductive medicine with social and political categories of race, gender, disability, and national identity. Specific topics include the management of reproduction in the context of slavery and American empire, the cultivation of medical authority over reproduction by medical practitioners and lawmakers, movements for reproductive rights and reproductive justice, and the roots of contemporary disparities in access to and quality of reproductive care.

Reproduction has always been central to understanding America's history, as more and more scholars are realizing in light of contemporary debates. In this seminar participants will learn not only the specifics of this context, but how to incorporate and center reproductive health in their teaching. Readings will include the preliminary list of texts below by specialists in the field, as well as a selection of relevant primary sources and documentary films each week to use as potential teaching tools.

**Seminar Schedule**

**Week 1 – Deeply Rooted Histories of Reproductive Health**

* Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger, “Reproductive Justice in the Twenty-First Century,” in *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* (University of California Press, 2017).
* Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale* (Knopf, 1991), selections.
* Susan Klepp, *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760-1820* (University of North Carolina Press, 2009), selections.
* Deirdre Cooper Owens, “Chapter 1: The Birth of American Gynecology,” in *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*, 15-41.
* Joint OAH-AHA Statement on the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* Decision (July 2022).
* Historians’ Amicus Brief, *Dobbs v. Jackson Health Organization* (September 2021).
* Watch: “A Midwife’s Tale” (1998).

**Week 2 – The Question of Fertility Control in a Eugenic Era**

* Heather Munro Prescott and Lauren MacIvor Thompson, “A Right to Ourselves: Women's Suffrage and the Birth Control Movement,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 19, no. 4 (2020): 542-558.
* Andrea Tone, "Black Market Birth Control: Contraceptive Entrepreneurship and Criminality in the Gilded Age." *The Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (2000): 435-459.
* Jane Marcellus, "My grandmother’s black market birth control:“subjugated knowledges” in the history of contraceptive discourse." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 27, no. 1 (2003): 9-28.
* Wangui Muigai, “Looking Uptown: Margaret Sanger and the Harlem Branch Birth Control Clinic,” *The Margaret Sanger Papers Project Newsletter* (Spring 2010).
* Elaine Tyler May, “Mothers of Invention,” Chapter 1 in *America and the Pill: A History of Promise, Peril, and Liberation* (Basic Books, 2010).
* Wendy Kline, “Motherhood, Morality, and the ‘Moron’: The Emergence of Eugenics in America,” Chapter 1 in *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (University of California Press, 2001).
* Lara Marks, “Human Guinea Pigs?” Chapter 4 in *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (Yale University Press, 2001).
* Watch: “Where Are My Children?” (1916).

**Week 3 – Revisiting the History of Abortion Post-*Dobbs***

* Leslie Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, 2nd edition (University of California Press, 2022), selections.
* Special Forum Section on the History of Abortion, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (forthcoming, Spring 2023):
  + Kelly O’Donnell and Naomi Rogers, “Revisiting the History of Abortion in the Wake of the *Dobbs* Decision”
  + Leslie J. Reagan, “From *When Abortion Was a Crime* to Abortion *is* a Crime”
  + Johanna Schoen, “Writing the History of Legal Abortion”
  + Lina-Maria Murillo, “A View from Northern Mexico: Abortions before *Roe v. Wade*”
  + Brianna Theobald, “*Dobbs* in Historical Context: The View from Indian Country”
  + Jessica Martucci, “‘It Gives the Mother the Best Chance for Her Life”: U.S. Catholic Healthcare and the Treatment of Ectopic Pregnancy”
  + Kelly O’Donnell, “Tech-ing the Trade: Notes on Reformulating Abortion and its History”
* Kelly O’Donnell, “Reproducing Jane: Abortion Stories and Women’s Political Histories,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* vol. 43, no. 1 (Autumn 2017): 77-96.
* Watch: “The Janes” (HBO, 2022).

**Week 4 – The Long Shadow of Eugenics in America**

* Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America* second edition(University of California Press, 2015), selections.
* Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Fixing the Poor: Eugenic Sterilization and Child Welfare in the Twentieth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), selections.
* Natalie Lira and Alexandra Minna Stern, “Mexican Americans and Eugenic Sterilization: Resisting Reproductive Injustice in California, 1920-1950,” *Aztlan* vol. 39, no. 2 (Fall 2014).
* Rebecca Kluchin, *Fit to Be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980* (Rutgers University Press, 2011), selections.
* Rebecca Kluchin, “How Should a Physician Respond to Discovering Her Patient Has Been Forcibly Sterilized?” *AMA Journal of Ethics* vol. 23, no. 1 (Jan. 2021).
* Aline C. Gubrium et al. “Realizing reproductive health equity needs more than long-acting reversible contraception (LARC),” *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 1 (2016): 18.
* Loretta J. Ross and Rickie Solinger, *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction* (University of California Press, 2017), selections.
* Watch: “No Más Bebés” (2015).

**APPLICATION**

**SUNY Potsdam NEH Faculty Development Program**

**Summer Seminar for Faculty**

Our summer seminar is offered to faculty of the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley (SUNY Potsdam, Clarkson University, St. Lawrence University, and SUNY Canton).  The seminars provide area faculty with a valuable opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the subjects that they teach and research by working with distinguished outside experts, by studying alongside other instructors and scholars, and by undertaking individual projects of their own design. The seminar meets in morning and afternoon sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

There are up to eight participants selected for each seminar.  Through research, reflection, and discussion with the seminar director and with other seminar members, participants have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of their field and to improve their ability to convey that understanding to others. Participants are expected to take part fully in the work of the seminar and to complete all seminar projects.

Although writing may be encouraged by seminar directors, lengthy papers typical of graduate courses are not required.  Seminar topics are broad enough to accommodate a wide range of interests.  The topics allow participants to address significant questions, explore major texts, and extend their thinking beyond disciplinary concerns.

***Eligibility***

To be eligible applicants must be members of the faculty of SUNY Potsdam or faculty of one of the Associated Colleges.  Faculty members who have participated in previous SUNY Potsdam NEH Seminars are eligible to apply, but preference will be given to those who have not previously participated.

***Selection Criteria***

The selection committee will review applications and select participants based (1) the applicant’s qualifications to do the work of the seminar and prospects to contribute to it; (2) the conception and organization of the applicant’s proposed study project in relation to the seminar topic; (3) the potential value of that project to other members of the seminar.

***Stipend and Conditions of Award***

Individuals selected to participate in the four-week seminar will receive a stipend of $3,500 and an allowance of up to $1,000 for purchase of library books and travel related to the seminar project.

Participants are required to attend all seminar sessions and to engage fully in the work of the seminar.  During the duration of the seminar, they may not undertake other professional duties that will interfere with their participation in the seminar (in particular, they may not be teaching Summer School in tandem with participating in the seminar).

Immediately following the completion of the seminar, participants will be asked to submit an evaluation. In addition, ten months following the seminar, participants will provide an evaluation of the impact the seminar had on their profession development with particulars about papers given, scholarship published, and curricular projects implemented as a result of participation in the seminar.

Applications may be submitted by ordinary post to the NEH Program Chair, Professor Geoffrey Clark, Dept. of History, Satterlee Hall, SUNY Potsdam, 44 Pierrepont Ave., Potsdam, NY 13676. Alternatively, applications may be submitted electronically to the NEH Chair by email at [clarkgw@potsdam.edu](mailto:clarkgw@potsdam.edu). **If submitting electronically, please include all application materials in the proper order in ONE (1) Word file and include your last name in the file name.**

**APPLICATION MATERIALS**

Please assemble your application by drafting the following documents:

**1.  Application Cover Sheet (included below)**

**2.  Description of Objectives**

Applicants must write an essay describing their objectives in applying to the seminar. **Close attention should be given to the preparation of the description of objectives because it will be considered carefully by the committee members as they make their selections.** This essay should include any relevant personal and academic information.  The essay should address reasons for applying to the seminar; the applicant's interest, both academic and personal, in the subject of the seminar, qualifications to do the work of the seminar and to contribute to it; what the applicant wants to accomplish in the seminar; and the relation of the seminar to the applicant's professional responsibilities.  The descriptive material provided about the seminar should be read carefully because the committee may request that specific information be given in the description of objectives.

The application essay should run **NO MORE THAN** four double-spaced pages.  Be sure to address the following questions in relation to the proposed project:

a. The specific study, research, or curricular project, including the basic ideas, problems, and questions that are of interest, with a specific concrete plan of investigation and a statement of its rationale.

b. If the proposed project is part of a long-term undertaking, the present state of the larger undertaking and how the summer project fits in.

c. The relation of the study to the applicant's immediate and long-range objectives as a teacher and scholar.

d. Other information relevant to the proposed project.

**3. Professional Information Form**

A current *curriculum vitae* and the supplemental professional information form (included below) must accompany the application.

**4. Current C.V.**

**2023 NEH Summer Seminar**

**Cover Sheet**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Home Address:**

**Work Address:**

**Telephones**

**Cell:**

**Work:**

**Academic Discipline and Specialty of Applicant:**

**2023 NEH Summer Seminar**

**Professional Information Form**

**1.  Applicant’s Name and Institutional Affiliation (include department).**

**2.  The Applicants Position is Full Time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_    Part Time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**3.  Number of Years Teaching \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4.  Education (list institutions, dates of attendance, major field and graduate degrees**

**5.  Graduate or Post-Graduate Work in field of seminar**

**6.  Research Interests in field of seminar**

**7.  Courses Taught during the last five years** **whose content relates in some way to the field of the seminar**

**8.  Previous SUNY Potsdam NEH Seminars in which you have participated**

**9.  *Most significant* Publications and Professional Activities (This list should be selective, not exhaustive.)**