

C. Joffe
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“Social science perspectives on the abortion conflict in the U.S.,” Winter 2009

This is an 8 week on-line course that will focus on various aspects of the abortion issue in the United States. The course has been especially developed for those holding Fellowships in Family Planning and the Ellertson Social Science Postdoctoral Fellows in Abortion and Reproductive Health. The course instructor is Carole Joffe, PhD, Visiting Faculty, Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health, UCSF, and professor of sociology, at U.D. Davis. There will also be some guest faculty for certain sessions.

Class format. Class will “meet” from 4-6, PST, on Tuesdays (starting January 13, 2009), using both a conference call format, as well as software which allows a shared computer screen. Classes will include both lecture and (hopefully, lively!) discussion.

Recognizing the significant time constraints on many of those taking this course, I will try to keep the reading each week to no more than 50 pp or so—sometimes less, and will offer suggested additional readings for those with time/inclination to read more. Weekly readings will be e-mailed to participants. Some readings will be posted on a course website.

Class requirements. As this is a non-credit course, the only requirements are regular attendance, and participation in class discussion about the reading. Those participants who are enrolled in an MPH or other masters program, and wish to draw on the materials of this course for credit in such programs should discuss this with Professor Joffe.

Topics

#1. January 13—**Abortion and the medical profession in historical perspective.** Reading: C. Joffe, “U.S. medicine and the marginalization of abortion” (Chap. 2, in Joffe, **Doctors of Conscience: The Struggle to Provide Abortion before and after Roe v Wade**); C. Joffe, T. Weitz and C. Stacey, “Uneasy allies: Prochoice physicians, feminist health activists and the struggle for abortion rights;” A. Foster, J. Van Dis, and J. Steinauer, “Educational and legislative initiatives affecting residency training in abortion.”

(No class meeting January 20th-- Watch or go to the Inauguration!)

#2. . **Key legal cases.** Readings: T.Weitz and S.Yanow, “Implications of the Federal Abortion Ban for Women’s Health in the United States;” C. Joffe, “The abortion procedure ban: “Bush’s gift to his base;” T.Camp, ““Partial-birth abortion’ ban: Health care in the shadow of criminality.” **Guest faculty:** Talcott Camp, Associate Director, ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project.

#3. Feb.3. **The rise of the antiabortion movement.** Reading: C. Mason, **Killing for Life: the apocalyptic narrative of pro-life politics**, pp. 10-45; L. Gordon, **The Moral Property of Women: a history of birth control politics in America**, pp. 302-320.

#4. Feb.10- **The demographics of abortion: “The Two Americas”.** Reading: H. Boonstra et.al, “Abortion in Women’s Lives,” Guttmacher Institute, 2006; Issues 4 Life Foundation, “Press release,” May 2008; *Washington Times*, :Editorial: Planned Parenthood Targets Blacks; W. McGurn, “The NAACP and Black Abortions;” R. Jones et.al, “ ‘I would want to give my child like everything in the world’: How issues of motherhood influence women who have abortions;” M. Gillian, “Health care inequality is key in abortion debates

#5. Feb.17 **Abortion provision in challenging environments.** For this session, participants should watch “The Last Abortion Clinic,” available on PBS website. Reading: L. Freedman, U. Landy, and J. Steinauer, “When there’s a heartbeat: Miscarriage management in Catholic-owned hospitals;” C. Joffe, “The doctor in the sauna;” Guttmacher Institute, material on abortion restrictions. **Guest faculty:** Robin Rothrock.

#6. Feb.24. **Abortion and popular culture.** Reading: C. Condit, **Decoding abortion rhetoric: communicating social change**, pp.22-42; M. Isern, et.al., “Vera Drake (2004) and the Cider House Rules (1999): the abortion in the cinema and its use in teaching;” T Weitz and A. Hunter, “Six feet Under brings abortion to the surface.” **Guest faculty:** Tracy Weitz, UCSF.

#7. March 3-- **Abortion and mental health.** Reading: selections from **Koop: A memoir**; August 2008 report of American Psychological Association task force on “Post abortion syndrome;”; various materials from Elliot Institute article on PAS.

#8. March 10-- **The spread of abortion politics to other areas.** Reading: D. Dimairo and C. Joffe, “.The Religious Right and the reshaping of sexual policy: An examination of reproductive rights and sexuality education;” R. Shorto, “Contra-contraception”; various short pieces on recent HHS regulations on “health workers’ refusals.”