



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Contemporary motherhood/fatherhood and childlessness	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lina Šumskaitė Other: Prof. Dr. Eglė Kačkutė–Hagan, Prof. Dr. Eglė Šumskienė, Dr. Ieva Bisigirskaitė, Dr. Raminta Baušytė.	Vilnius University, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Sociology and Social work, Universiteto st. 9/1, Vilnius

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	Individual Studies

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Life	Spring semester/ Autumn semester	English/Lithuanian

Requisites	
Prerequisites: English sufficient knowledge (B1 level)	Co-requisites (if relevant): no

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	130	48	82

Purpose of the course unit		
<p>Purpose of the course unit – to introduce students to the critical analysis of contemporary motherhood/fatherhood, as well as childlessness, and to develop their competences and practical skills. Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyse cultural, social, ethical and medical aspects of motherhood/fatherhood (including not having children) in different societies and communities; solve problems in a creative manner working independently and in a team with professional and social responsibility, citizenship and in line with equal opportunities, human rights and ethical standards; apply critical motherhood/fatherhood theory, and theories of childlessness and child-freeness, research results and good practices; show organization skills and be capable of leadership while working in a team or independently. 		
Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will be able to apply core theories of motherhood to understand and critically interpret cultural	Problem-based lectures, theory analysis, studying representations of motherhood in a	Participation in seminars of a case study: novel, movie and/or media case.

representations and discourses of motherhood/fatherhood.	pop-culture, movies and media. Analysing a case in media, novel and movie during seminars	
Students will be able to describe the way cultural and political discourses surrounding motherhood, fatherhood and childlessness are being constructed in different social, demographic and legal contexts. They will be able to assess critically the proposed or implemented policies in terms of human rights, equal opportunities, social justice, equality and other democratic values as well as identifying the offences related to these values.	Problem-based lectures, literature analysis, and seminars organized applying conversation cafe method for discussing the selection of the topic for the podcast.	Extended plan of a podcast prepared in groups (engaging with at least two disciplines).
Students will be able to understand sexual and reproductive health issues, their relationships with general physical health, psychological and emotional health and social life. They will be able to discuss the reproductive rights of marginalised society groups.	Problem-based lectures, literature analysis, group work.	Participation in seminars of a case study: novel, movie and/or media case.
Based on theories and gained knowledge, students will be able to assess and discuss the effects of globalization on parenthood practices.	Problem-based lectures, literature study, and group work.	Final exam (podcast- a group work) - presentation of podcast during final seminars.

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. Theories of motherhood/fatherhood: 1.1. Ethical norms of motherhood/fatherhood, 1.2. Balancing family and work; 1.3. Social movements of men (fathers) and mothers; 1.4. Motherhood in discourses of demographic anxiety, 1.5. Reproductive health and ethical norms: physiology and anatomy of the reproductive system, fertility.	10		4				14	20	Reading a piece of literature, studying media case or watching a movie (selection of two options) Emily Pine "From Baby Years" in Emily Pine, Notes to Self, Penguin, 2019. Media case TBC based on recent examples. Movie: Maggie Gyllenhaal "The Lost Daughter" (2021), or Lynne

									<p>Ramsey "Let's Talk about Kevin" (2011).</p> <p>Reading literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Henriksson-Wahlström et al. (p. 1-16); 2. Borght, M., V. & Wynsa, C. (p. 2-10) 3. Fábián, K. and Korolczuk, E. (p. 1-30). 4. Mohr & Almeling (p. 163-171). 5. Heffernan & Stone (p. 337-360)
<p>2. Single motherhood/fatherhood:</p> <p>2.1 Everyday challenges, social stigma;</p> <p>2.2. Support from the state and informal networks;</p> <p>2.3. Representations of single motherhood/fatherhood.</p>	6	2	2				10	20	<p>Research on a novel, movie and/or media case.</p> <p>Reading literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nieuwenhuis, R. Maldonado (p.1-27). 2. MC Robbie, A. (p. 119-137)
<p>3. Reproductive rights:</p> <p>3.1. Women/men with disabilities and their reproductive rights;</p> <p>3.2 Reproductive rights of women/men with illnesses, and health problems;</p> <p>3.3. Reproductive rights of the LGBTIQ+ community.</p>	6	2		4			12	22	<p>Selecting a topic for the podcast. Discussing during seminars organized with a method of conversation café. Writing extended podcast plan.</p> <p>Reading literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities; 2. Frederick, A. (p.74-95) 3. Martinez F. (p. 1802-1811) 4. Obedin & Macadon (p.4-8)
<p>4. Childlessness:</p> <p>4.1. Not having children by choice (child-freeness),</p> <p>4.2. Non-voluntary childlessness: circumstances leading to childlessness (life events such as not finding a suitable partner, divorce, delaying having children)</p> <p>4.3. Infertility tests, treatment, and the intertwining of these forms of childlessness.</p>	6	2	4				12	20	<p>Preparing podcast and presenting during seminars.</p> <p>Reading literature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inhorn MC, Patrizio P. (p. 411-426) 2. Shenfield, F. et al. (2705-2707)

Total	28	6	10	4			48	82	
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Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Final exam (podcast)	50	May	Podcast is worth of 5 points. Students working in a group will be required to produce a 8-10 min. (up to 500MB) podcast that demonstrates: - ability to analyse the topic from theoretical perspectives of two disciplines (2 points) - originality of ideas (2 points). - ability to present the material clearly and in a structured manner (1 point). Students will be able to vote for most favourite podcast after presentations and to get additional points. 1 st place – 0,6 point, 2 nd place –0,4 point, 3 rd place –0,3 point.
Interim task 1	20	February-March	Case Study Discussion (movie, novel or media case) Students are required to select two options from a choice of three and to prepare for participation in two seminars. Evaluation criteria: -Preparation for the seminar (e.g., reading, watching the material, preparing questions); -Active and informed participation in the seminar
Interim task 2	30	April	An extended plan for podcast (max 3 points) The evaluation criteria: -selection of theoretical texts from two disciplines (1 point). -originality of the idea (1 point). - planned structure and visualization of presentation (1 point)

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Pine, E.	2019	"From Baby Years"	Emily Pine, Notes to Self, Penguin.	Uploaded on Moodle
Henriksson, Wahlström, Williams & Fahlgren (eds.)	2023	Ambivalent Narratives of Motherhood and Mothering: From Normal and Natural to Not-at-all	Narratives of Motherhood and Mothering in Fiction and Life Writing	Palgrave MacMillan Open Access: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-17211-3
Heffernan, V., Stone, K.	2021	#regrettingmotherhood in germany: Feminism, Motherhood, and Culture'	<i>Signs</i> , 46 (2):337-360	https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/id/eprint/13763/1/2021-1Heffernan%26Stone-%23regrettingmotherhood.pdf
Nieuwenhuis, R. Maldonado, L. C. (eds.)	2018	The triple bind of single-parent families. Resources, employment and policies to improve well-being	Policy Press, University of Bristol, The University of Chicago Press	Uploaded on Moodle

Mohr & Almeling	2020	Men, Masculinities and Reproduction- conceptual reflections and empirical exploration	Norma, 163-171	
Frederick, A.	2017	Risky mothers and the Normalcy Project: Women with disabilities negotiate scientific motherhood	Gender & Society, Vol. 31 No. 1, p.74-95.	DOI: 10.1177/0891243216683914
Fábián, K. and Korolczuk, E. (eds.)	2017	Introduction: Rebellious Parents: Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia.	Indiana University Press, p. 1-30	Uploaded on Moodle
United Nations	2006	Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities		https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html
Obedin-Maliver, J. & Makadon H., J.	2016	Transgender men and Pregnancy	Obstetric Medicine, Vol. 9(1) 4–8	DOI: 10.1177/1753495X15612658
Martinez F.	2017	Update on fertility preservation from the Barcelona International Society for Fertility Preservation-ESHRE-ASRM 2015 expert meeting: indications, results and future perspectives	Human Reproduction 32(9):1802-1811	Upload on Moodle
McRobbie, A.	2014	Feminism, the family and the new 'mediated' maternalism	New Formations 80, p. 119-137.	Uploaded on Moodle
Borght, M., V. & Wynsa, C.	2018	Fertility and infertility: Definition and epidemiology.	Clin Biochem. 62: 2-10.	Uploaded on Moodle
Inhorn MC, Patrizio P.	2015	Infertility around the globe: new thinking on gender, reproductive technologies and global movements in the 21st century.	Hum Reprod Update. 21(4):411-426.	Uploaded on Moodle
Shenfield, F., Pennings, G., Cohen, J., Devroey, P., de	2005	ESHRE Task Force on Ethics and Law including. <i>ESHRE Task Force on Ethics</i>	Human Reproduction. 20(10): 2705–2707.	Uploaded on Moodle

Wert, G. Tarlitzis, B.		<i>and Law 10: Surrogacy.</i>		
Recommended reading				
Elizabeth Grosz	1994	Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism. Indiana UP		https://virtualbiblioteka.vu.lt/permalink/370LABT_VU/2hf6rc/alma990003250801008452
Dotson, L.A., Stinson, J. and Christian, L.	2003	People Tell Me I Can't Have Sex	Women & Therapy, Vol. 26 No. 3-4, pp.195-209.	DOI: 10.1300/J015v26n03_02
Authors collective	2011	Female infertility & assisted reproductive technology (ART).	p. 3-5, 11-21.	Uploaded on Moodle
Authors collective	2011	Overcoming male infertility.	p. 3-4, 10-28.	Uploaded on Moodle
Authors collective.	2018	Managing the stress of infertility.	p. 3-25.	Uploaded on Moodle
United Nations	1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)		https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx

NOTE: Including Open Educational Resources in the reading list is recommended