

POLITICS AND ISSUES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

Professor: Diane Price-Herndl

[MUSIC PLAYING] Welcome to Politics and Issues in Women's Health-- WST4320. I am Diane Price-Herndl. I am your professor for the course, and I'll be with you for the next 10 weeks. I am a professor in Women and Gender Studies. I'm also the chair of the department.

My background is from all over the United States. So I grew up in Texas, and my degrees are from TCU, the University of Minnesota, and the University of North Carolina. I was diagnosed with breast cancer-- fairly advanced breast cancer in 1998 when I was still in my 30s. I have been cancer-free since 1999, but in my 40s, I was diagnosed with a hormone-emitting but non-malignant brain tumor. And they took that out in 2007.

Since then, I haven't had any major health crises. But it's fair to say that, even though I'm not a health care professional, I've had my fair share of experience with medicine. Having said that, this is not a medical course per se. We're going to have to occasionally talk about the biological or the physical, but largely, what we're interested in here is the social and cultural aspects of medicine, the way that essentially political decisions make a difference in our health care and our health in general.

The three areas we're going to mostly be talking about are inequalities in health care, the politics of disease, and medicalization. When we cover those three topics in my face-to-face class, it's usually a very highly-interactive space. And I'm going to try to replicate that as much as I can in this online space. So we're going to be asking you to do discussion boards and quite a few small assignments as a way of really having you be involved in the course. This isn't just going to be me giving you the material.

This is, however, a 4000 level course taught in the summer, and you need to be braced for the fact that that means this is a lot of work. If you were taking this as a face-to-face class, we would be in the classroom four hours a week. And then on top of that, I would be giving you reading assignments and other kinds of assignments that I imagined would take another 8 to 12 hours a week. So you can tell, that adds up to somewhere between 12 and 16 hours, and so I'm hoping that you're going to spend that much time this summer on this class. And don't be surprised if you are.

I promise you, though, it'll be worth it. When this course is done, you're going to see our health care system in a whole new light. That's why I do what I do. You're going to discover that I'm passionate about women, I'm passionate about women's health, and I'm really passionate about the way that health care and health plays a difference in equality and opportunity for all people. So let's get started.

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