

**TEACHING TIPS for a course on International Women's Health and Human Rights  
based on the book, *From Outrage to Courage*, by Anne Firth Murray  
Copyright© 2007 Anne Firth Murray -- All Rights Reserved.**

*From Outrage to Courage*, the book, grew out of courses I have been teaching since 2001 at Stanford University within the Human Biology Program on "critical issues in international women's health." Hundreds of students have taken the courses, which are taught in highly participatory classes of about 36 students. The goals of the courses, beyond the simple transmission of information, are to stimulate students' concern about the situation of women worldwide and to communicate forcefully the reality of our interdependence and the possibility of change.

I make the point in the book that I believe that *what* we do may be important but *the way that we do it is more important*. Therefore, if you plan to teach a course on international women's health and human rights, I would advise developing a course that allows students great participation in an environment that encourages trust and respect.

Some of the topics—violence against women or access to reproductive health services, for example—are controversial and very close to the experiences of many of the students. The style of the class, therefore, is important. One of the things I say to my students on the first day of class is that I want the class over the ten weeks of the quarter to operate "the way I want the world to be—everyone being respectful of each other, listening with interest and openness, being courteous, especially with those who may disagree with you, and especially operating in ways that are mutually empowering to all." Even though we are together in the class for only ten weeks, I hope that we will feel that we are part of a community.

In the paragraphs below, I describe some of the techniques that I use to try to create an environment of openness and respect. I also include a sample syllabus. Individual teachers will do research on and decide about which readings you will want the students to read. The syllabus below assumes that you will be using *From Outrage to Courage* as the main text for the course.

Timing of class and duration: My classes meet twice a week, on Monday and Wednesday mornings for an hour and a half at each session. The Monday class is when the topic for the week is introduced, either by me or a guest resource person (or both). During the Wednesday class, the student team (of four students) leads the class in an exercise to deepen and broaden our understanding of the topic. This exercise may consist of a skit, a focused discussion, an exercise in which the class is divided up into small groups to tackle questions having to do with the week's general issues, and so on. The students are very imaginative, I find, and come up with "fishbowl," focus groups, role playing, and so on. It is important that the Wednesday activity be based as directly as possible on the readings for the week. This student exercise takes about an hour; I use the remaining half hour of the class to have general discussion on the reading and/or the topic of the week, to show a short video, or to hear from a guest to the class.

Size of class, leadership, and sections: Teaching in the quarter system, I like to keep classes to 32 or 36 students so that during the ten weeks of the quarter you can divide the class up into eight or nine teams of four who provide leadership on Wednesdays to

lead the class. This number also allows for the creation of four “sections” of eight or nine students each that meet for an hour sometime during the week to talk with each other about the readings. These are self-organized groups: one student leads, takes attendance, and comes into the “section” with trigger questions for discussion. (I used to have my teaching assistant lead these sections, but I have found that it works much better to have students lead and self organize during the sections and the Wednesday team work in class.)

Schedule for the week: Almost every day of the week, something is happening with regard to my class:

- On Mondays, we meet for an introduction to the topic of the week.
- On Tuesday evening a movie is shown. (The students organize the time and place so th at they can meet in groups to see the movies; they take attendance.)
- On Wednesday, the second meeting of the class happens, during which the student teams (usually of four people) lead the class for an hour.
- On Thursday and Friday, students meet in their “sections”: these are self-organizing, as mentioned above, and the student leader that week takes attendance.
- On Saturday at midnight, each student’s weekly email, sent to me and the teaching assistant, is due. Students are asked to send a short email (perhaps four or five sentences, unless they want to write more) letting us know how they felt about the reading, whether anything in particular stood out for them, or whether they had any significant questions about the reading. I try to respond to as many emails as possible, but at the very least, these emails sometimes serve as the basis for discussion in the next week. PLEASE NOTE that the in their emails the students are commenting on the reading that is relevant to the NEXT week of class, so their questions can provide background for the Monday and Wednesday meetings of the subsequent week.
- On Sunday or early on Monday: the teaching assistant collects all of the emails and posts them on our website (without attribution and not including any emails of students who specifically ask that we not include their emails); these are posted by Monday morning so that students can see what everyone has written before the first class of the week.

Convening the class with the intention of the group becoming a community, if only for ten weeks): I try very hard to convene the class in a room that can accommodate all students sitting in chairs in a circle so that everyone can see everyone else. During classes early in the quarter, we play “names” games, during which all the students (and the teaching assistant and the professor) learn the names of all students. One such game is to have a student begin and then each subsequent student around the circle repeats the name of the first student and every other student up to and including the speaker. Obviously, the last student in the circle has to try to remember all the names (and I usually locate the teaching assistant in that place.) We strive to have all interactions in the class be mutually empowering.

Content: The book, *From Outrage to Courage*, was based on my courses; therefore, for me, it provides a starting point for every week’s discussion. If you teach a similar course, you will add other readings so that discussions can be comprehensive and

lively. Students should be strongly urged to locate other sources on the topics listed in the syllabus to critique and/or add to the book. An interactive website can be very helpful in encouraging students to be active readers and critics.

Guest resource persons are important to my course, and I identify them from local organizations that might be working on some of the issues (e.g., the local Women's Crisis Center or Planned Parenthood Chapter); from the faculty at my university or at some other local university, many of whom may have traveled and/or done research on a relevant topic; and among the students themselves, who bring rich backgrounds to the class. Increasingly, films are available on the topics listed in the syllabus; I have asked students to research such films and to suggest appropriate films for the class. Finally, I have put together and briefly annotated a list of novels, memoirs, and journalistic accounts, mostly by non-U.S. people, for the students' use. Students are required to choose one such book and read it during the quarter; a short book review is required toward the end of the quarter.

Style: The style of the class is designed to be based on the following principles: mutual empowerment, mutual learning, evenhandedness, courtesy, generosity, compassion, trust, and respect. There is a conscious attempt to give reality to such principles. This is important in any setting, but it is especially important when some particularly sensitive issues are discussed.

Final Note: Please feel free to email me if you plan to teach a course on international women's health and human rights and think that I may be helpful. Please see the sample syllabus that follows.

Good luck!

Anne Firth Murray

**SYLLABUS FOR: CRITICAL ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S  
HEALTH**

Quarter or Semester  
Instructor's Name

Format: Seminar/workshop

Enrollment: 32-36

Mondays and Wednesdays: 11 a.m. to 12:20 in room #

Quarter/Year:

Prerequisite: None

Number of Units:

Grading: Letter

Suggested requirements (and weighting): class attendance (20%); participation and in-class writing, including a book review and an evaluation (16%); final paper/project (24%); mid-quarter short paper (10%); reading group attendance, participation, leadership, discussion comments and questions (20%); film attendance (10%). Students must sign in at each class and reading group discussion and at any other required events.

**DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an overview of international women's health issues presented in the context of a woman's life, beginning in childhood and moving through

adolescence, reproductive years, and aging. The approach to women's health is broad, taking into account economic, social, and human rights factors and particularly the importance of women's capacities to have good health and manage their lives in the face of societal pressures and obstacles. Particular attention will be given to critical issues of women's health such as: the demeaning of women; poverty; unequal access to education, food, and health care; and violence. Such issues as maternal mortality, sexually transmitted disease, violence in conflict and refugee situations, the effects of traditional practices, and sex trafficking will be discussed.

Course materials will draw from a wide variety of sources, including information about women's organizations outside the U.S. The class will be interactive. After the first week, each week will be devoted to a particular phase of a woman's life and/or a health issue related to that phase, with one session being introductory (often involving guest resource people) and the other being primarily discussion-based, with students leading parts of the discussions. Each student is required to attend a one-hour small group session each week and occasionally provide leadership.

The Course Reader (CR) represents the main required reading for the course, along with the text: Murray, Anne Firth, *From Outrage to Courage: Women Taking Action for Health and Justice*, Common Courage Press, 2007. Two other books will be on reserve at the library for students' use: Kim, J. Y., et al, eds., *Dying for Growth: Global Inequality and the Health of the Poor*, Common Courage Press, 1999, and Mann, Jonathan M., et al, eds., *Health and Human Rights: A Reader*, Routledge, 1999. Copies of these books will be on reserve at the library. The Course Reader (CR) is available on the web (in Coursework). Additional materials may be posted on the class website or handed out in class.

Most weeks during the quarter, a video/film evening will be scheduled for Tuesday evening at 8 p.m. Students are expected to attend 5 of the 8 screenings. During the early part of the quarter students will be invited to the home of the professor, during which we will get to know each other better and share our thoughts and expectations about the class.

Students will be responsible for all materials that are handed out in class and for announcements put on the Coursework website. These may include: course announcements, changes in the lecture or reading schedule, minimal additional reading material, and updated guest information.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

- To introduce critical health issues affecting women globally (particularly in poorer countries), in terms of their cultural and social contexts, not as a rationale for practices but as a basis for understanding.
- To familiarize students with some of the strategies and programs that non-governmental organizations are using to address women's health issues in poorer countries.

- To communicate a sense of personal responsibility, empowerment, and connection with women globally.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Students are expected to attend class and to have read and discussed with others the readings for each session. Students are expected to be prepared for discussion of the readings and to bring their experiences, leadership capacities, and perspectives to participatory discussions. Each week each student will be expected to attend a small reading group session. In addition, each week students will submit questions and/or comments on the reading and topic of the week. These comments will form the basis for fuller class discussions. Email responses will be due in electronic format sent to the professor and the teaching assistant by midnight each Saturday. Students are also asked to be up to date on the international daily or weekly news relating to women's and girls' health.

Students are expected to complete assignments by the set deadlines. There will be a short outline paper including five annotated references (maximum: 5-pages double-spaced in Palatino typeface) and one longer paper or project required (maximum: 12-page double-spaced in Palatino typeface). The outline paper and the longer paper or project offer opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of a topic or region of their choosing. Students are expected to attend at least five film/video evening sessions and to read at least one book from the supplementary reading list during the quarter.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

#### **Week 1: Introduction**

**WEDNESDAY:** Warm welcome. Introduction and overview of the subject, rationale, structure, and context for this course; introduction of participants, expectations. Review: requirements, website, film/video evenings, and books; syllabus, course reader, and reading lists; clarity about reading groups and assignments. Fill in contact sheets.

#### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read the syllabus thoroughly to avoid confusion later.
- Read the Foreword, Prologue, and Chapter 1 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al, pp. 1-34.
- Kim et al, Foreword and Chapter 1
- Pop. Ref. Bureau 2002 Women of our World data sheet: **view at:**  
<http://www.prb.org>
- CR: National Council for Research on Women, *The World's Women*
- CR: UNDP Human Development Report: *Still an Unequal World*
- CR: Hesperian Foundation: *Where Women Have No Doctor*, introduction
- CR: Avotri and Walters, "We Women Worry a Lot about our Husbands"

#### **Week 2: Women's Health and Human Rights**

**MONDAY:** Introduction to the course: Women's health and human rights. Review of course, syllabus, reader, reading lists, and requirements.

Guest resource person: (I usually ask an expert on human rights from the law school.)

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussions. Possible video: *Vienna Tribunal* (parts). In-class writing exercise on students' sense of the value of human rights. Names exercise.

This week's film / video evening: *A Woman's Place* or *The Shape of Water*

**SATURDAY a.m./p.m. for two hours: social meeting at professor's house**

**SUNDAY a.m./p.m. for two hours: social meeting at professor's house**

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapters 2 and 3 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al, pp. 181-201
- Kim et al, Chapter 3, especially pp. 44-52
- CR: Bumiller, "No More Little Girls"
- CR: World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty
- World Bank, Summers, Investing in All: Educating Women in Developing Countries
- CR: WHO, Female Genital Cutting
- Mann et al, pp. 336-62
- CR: Rahman/Toubia, Female Genital Mutilation: Guide to Laws and Policies (SKIM)
- CR: Zainaba (Opening the Gates)
- CR: Izett and Toubia, Learning about Social Change (SKIM)
- CR: US Dept. of Labor, Forced Labor: the Prostitution of Children (SKIM)

### **Week 3: Being Born a Girl; Poverty; Access to Education/Food**

**MONDAY:** Childhood, poverty, access, traditional practices, access, child labor.  
Guest resource person on girls' education, FGM, or nutrition:

**WEDNESDAY:** Discussion of critical issues of girls' childhood: poverty, access, traditional practices, child labor. Students lead discussion.

This week's film / video evening: *Secret and Sacred* (on female genital mutilation) or *End the Suffering* (also on FGM).

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 4 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: ICRW, The Critical Role of Youth in Global Development
- CR: Alan Guttmacher Inst., Into a New World: Young Women's...Lives (SKIM)
- Mann et al, pp. 35-45; and SKIM pp. 202-26,
- CR: Gender and AIDS Almanac, UNAIDS, 2001 (SKIM)
- CR: Nath, Madhu Bala, From Tragedy towards Hope
- CR: Farmer, Women, Poverty, and AIDS
- CR: Garcia Moreno in Visvanathan, Women Are Not Just Transmitters (SKIM)

#### **Week 4: Adolescence and Vulnerability**

**MONDAY:** Adolescence: vulnerability, fertility, sex trafficking, HIV / AIDS.

Guest resource person: someone expert on adolescence and/or HIV / AIDS.

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on dialogue with the body.

This week's film / video evening: *Pandemic* or *Everyone's Child*

Decide which book from the supplementary reading list you plan to read. Send an additional email this week noting the author and title of the book you choose.

#### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 5 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Measure Policy Brief: Making Pregnancy and Childbirth Safer
- CR: The Untold Story: How the Health Care System Contributes to Maternal Mortality (SKIM)
- CR: Patchesky, Spiraling Discourses of Reproductive and Sexual Rights
- CR: Abeyesekera, Activism for Sexual and Reproductive Rights
- CR: Eiven, Laura, et al, Lesbians, Health and Human Rights, and/o Mann et al, pp. 265-280 (SKIM)
- CR: Merali, Advancing Women's Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights (SKIM)
- CR: Dalsimer, Abuses against Women/Girls and China's 1-Child Family (SKIM)
- CR: Outlook: Preventing Cervical Cancer in Low-Resource Settings
- Mann et al., pp. 253-64
- CR: Alan Guttmacher Inst., Women, Society, and Abortion Worldwide (SKIM)

#### **Week 5: Reproductive Health, Sexuality, Maternity**

**MONDAY:** Womanhood: sexuality; fertility; maternal health; reproductive health; access to abortion.

Guest resource person: Person expert in some aspect of this field

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on students' perceptions of rights to reproduce.

This week's film: *Fathalla on maternal mortality* and/or *Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village*

#### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 6 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Carillo, Violence against Women: An Obstacle to Development
- CR: Population Reports: Ending Violence against Women
- CR: Coomaraswamy, Some Reflections on Violence against Women
- CR: Garcia and Sayavedro, Violence, Empowerment, and Women's Health

- CR: Sen, Subordination and Sexual Control (SKIM)

### **Week 6: Domestic Violence against Women**

**MONDAY:** Womanhood: domestic abuse

Guest resource persons: experts from a local women's crisis center

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion. Writing exercise on perceptions of violence.

This week's film / video evening: *Once Were Warriors*.

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 7 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- CR: Rehn and Sirleaf, Women, War and Peace
- CR: Farha, Contextualizing Violence against Women
- CR: Nikolic-Ristanovic, Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans
- CR: Swiss, Violence against Women during the Liberian Civil Conflict (SKIM)
- Mann et al, pp. 75-105
- CR: Jang, Domestic Violence in the Immigrant and Refugee Community (SKIM)

### **Week 7: Women in Conflict and Refugee Situations**

**\*\* NOTE: Outline of paper/project with annotated references is due in Anne's office in two weeks!**

**Please email Anne and the TAs by Wednesday, May 9, at 5pm if you plan to perform a final project (as opposed to writing a paper), describing your plans.**

**MONDAY:** Introduction to topic of women in conflict and refugee situations.

Guest Resource person: someone from the local community who has worked on refugee issues.

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion; staying healthy in the face of difficulties.

This week's film / video evening: Sierra Leone and/or Sri Lanka films

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 8 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Kim et al, Chapter 11 (SKIM)
- CR: UNDP: Valuing Women's Work
- CR: Altink, Stolen Lives: Trading Women into Sex and Slavery (SKIM)
- CR: Sleightholme and Sinha, Guilty without Trial (SKIM)
- CR: State Dept./CIA, Richard, International Trafficking in Women to the US
- Kim et al, one or more of chapters 4, 5, 6, and/or 7

### **Week 8: Globalization, Women and Work**

**MONDAY:** Globalization and Women's Work

Guest resource person to be announced and/or part of Moyers film or new film Bamako (re IMF/World Bank)

**WEDNESDAY:** Globalization and trafficking: Students lead discussion and/or video: Global Assembly Line and/or another relevant film

This week's film/video evening: *Who's Counting*

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

Read Chapter 9 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*

- Look back to readings re: poverty and inequality from weeks 1 and 2
- CR: UN, Aging in a Gendered World: Women's Issues and Identities, Introduction
- CR: International Institute on Aging: BOLD articles
- CR: Sánchez, Who Cares for the Caregivers?
- CR: Worters and Siegal, The New Ourselves Growing Older

### **Week 9: Aging and the End of Life**

**MONDAY:** Growing older; menopause; widowhood, poverty; access to services, end of life.

Possible guest resource person from gerontology department.

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion with prepared questions for class and possible guests.

This week's film/video evening: To be announced

### **Weekend Reading for Next Week's Discussions**

- Read Chapter 10 of Murray, *From Outrage to Courage*
- Mann et al: From Concept to Action, pp. 395-452
- Kim et al, chapters 15 and 16
- Additional materials to be provided by individual NGO organizations
- CR: Weaver, Gandhi's Daughters

**\*\*NOTE: Final paper/project is due in Anne's office at 5 p.m. in a week!**

### **Week 10: Making a Difference and Choosing Priorities**

**MONDAY:** We talk about strategies to address the issues we have been discussing as well as the challenge of evaluating interventions. We may have some guest resource people this day, people from local NGOs that work internationally or academics or activists that are working directly on the issues that we have been discussing. We discuss evaluation.

**WEDNESDAY:** Students lead discussion. We become a grantmaking foundation board and make decisions to fund one or more women's organizations. We fill out evaluations. We bid fond farewell.

**NOTE: Final paper/project is due in Anne's office this week!**

## **NOTICES**

### **• Students with Documented Disabilities**

Students who have a disability which may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class should notify the teaching assistants and initiate a request with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the DRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

### **• Honor Code**

Please visit and read the honor code website on Coursework: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>). By now, all of you should know the difference between putting information in "your own words" and merely changing a few words around. The latter does not demonstrate understanding and will be marked down. Direct quotes may be used when appropriate. They should be placed in quotation marks and correctly referenced.

### **Name and Contact Information for Professor**

Office hours by appointment; please sign up on the sheets on the door of my office.

### **Name and Contact Information for Teaching Assistant**