

COURSE CODE: *SOCI 448*

**COURSE TITLE: CULTURE AND REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH**

**SESSION#: TWO – TITLE: APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH**

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UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

College of Education

School of Continuing and Distance Education

2017/2018 – 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

Course Information

Provide the following information:

Course Code:

SOCI 448

Course Title:

CULTURE AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Course Credit

3 Credits

**Session Number &
Session Title:**

**Session Two: Approaches to the Study of
Reproductive Health**

Semester/Year:

Second Semester, 2018/2019

Course Information (contd.)

Provide the following information:

Lecture Period(s)

Insert Lecture Period(s): *(Online how many online interactions per week)*

Prerequisites

Insert Course Prerequisites: *(if applicable)*

Teaching Assistant

Insert Teaching Assistant's Information: *(where applicable, provide name and contact information)*



Course Instructor's Contact

Provide the following information:

**Course Instructor(s)
Name**

Dr Fidelia Ohemeng

Office Location

Insert Office Number:

Office Hours

Insert Office Hours: (Tuesday: 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm)

Phone

Phone Number:

E-mail

Your Email: fohemeng@ug.edu.gh

Session Overview

Every subject or course can be studied from different views or perspectives. It is the same with reproductive health. The subject can be studied from the human rights view, from the cultural perspective or from the empowerment perspective. This course is particularly studied from the cultural perspective. It is important that other perspectives are also considered. Also, the perspectives can also be used to conduct research in reproductive health.

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One—Reproductive Health Rights approach
- Topic Two—Empowerment approach
- Topic Three—Cultural approach



Session Learning Goals

- This session seeks to introduce students to some approaches and theories used to study Reproductive Health. Students should be able to explain the strengths and the weaknesses inherent in each approach. Some of the theories to be discussed are the human rights approach, the empowerment approach and the cultural approach.



Session Learning Objectives

- Objective One: students should be able to explain the main tenets of the various theories
- Objective Two: students should be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective

Session Learning Outcomes

- Explain the approaches
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each approach
- Use the approaches to design one's own research on reproductive health
- Use the approaches to explain one of the components of reproductive health



Session Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:

- **Log onto the UG Sakai LMS course site:**
 - <http://sakai.ug.edu.gh/XXXXXXXXXX>
- **Read** Pillai, V. & Gupta, R. 2011. Reproductive Rights Approach to Reproductive Health in Developing Countries. *Global Health Action*, 4: 8423.
- **Watch** the Videos for Session 2 – Approaches to the Study of Reproductive Health
- **Review** Lecture Slides: Session 2 – Approaches to the Study of Reproductive Health
- **Visit the Chat Room** and **discuss** the **Forum question** for Session
- **Complete** the **Individual Assignment** for Session 2

Creating Blended Assignment Instructions

Recommended eight (8) elements to include in written assignment instructions distributed to students online:

1. **Assignment title** (exactly the same as title used in syllabus and other course documents)
2. **Learning objective(s)** to which the assignment relates
3. **Assignment due date** (if receiving electronic submissions, include time/time zone also)
4. **Submission details** (electronic submissions only? required file format? via email? via assignment upload?)
5. **Scoring criteria/rubric**
6. **Level of group participation** (individual assignments, group or team projects, and entire class projects).
7. **Mechanical details** (number of words/pages, preferred style guide for citations, number/type of citations, etc.)
8. **Any supporting resources** necessary for assignment completion

Reading List

- **Required Text**

- Pillai, V. & Gupta, R. 2011. Reproductive Rights Approach to Reproductive Health in Developing Countries. *Global Health Action*, 4: 8423.



Topic One

EMPOWERMENT APPROACH



Reproductive Health Rights Approach Defined

- WHO defines Reproductive Health Rights (RR) as a basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and the means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.



Reproductive Health Rights Approach II

- Rights based approach means the realization and adherence to human rights principles as reflected in the universal declaration of Human rights and other human rights instruments



Adoption of RHR

- The Reproductive health rights approach is based on a series of legally binding national laws, international laws, international human rights documents, regional agreements and consensus.
 - Egs CEDAW, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the international Convention on the Elimination of the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the 2001 UN General Assembly's Declaration of the Commitment on HIV and AIDS reinforced in the ICPD commitment on sexual and reproductive health needs



Obligations of Governments

- Governments have three levels of obligations towards their citizens: to respect, protect and fulfil every right.
 - **Respect:** a right means to refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of the right.
 - **Protect:** means enacting laws that create mechanisms to prevent violation of the rights by state authorities or by non-state actors. The protection is to be equally enjoyed by all.
 - **Fulfil:** the right means to take active steps to put in place institutions and procedures, including the allocation of resources to enable people enjoy the right. A rights based approach develops the capacity of duty-bearers to meet their obligation and encourages right holders to claim their rights.



Components of Reproductive Health Rights I

Individuals must be able to exercise control over their sexual and reproductive lives. These include the right to:

- Reproductive health as a component of overall health throughout the life cycle, for both men and women
- Reproductive decision making, including voluntary choice in marriage, family formation and determination of the number, timing and spacing of one's children and the right to have access to the information and means needed to exercise voluntary choice



Components of Reproductive Health Rights Components II

- Equality and equity for men and women, to enable individuals to make free and informed choices in all spheres of life, free from discrimination based on gender
- Sexual and reproductive security, including freedom from sexual violence and coercion and the right to privacy.



Components of Reproductive Health Rights III

- By emphasising fundamental values and human rights, most notably the respect for clients and their reproductive decisions, a rights based approach can shape humane and effective reproductive health programmes and policies.
- By taking advantage of the international human rights treaty system, a rights based approach can challenge the status quo and pressure governments into working proactively for the reproductive health needs for its citizens.



Components of Reproductive Health Rights IV

- A right not fulfilled leads to a violation, and its redress or reparation can be legally and legitimately claimed.
- A rights based approach implies that issues of injustices are dealt with appropriately through the demand for protection backed by Human Rights conventions



Sample Question

- Should individuals have absolute freedom to decide if, when and how to have sex and also to reproduce?
- Is population control still relevant today?



Topic Two

EMPOWERMENT APPROACH



Empowerment defined

- Empowerment is the process through which men and women in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, and decision-making power, and raise awareness of the different needs, constraints and priorities of men and women.



Empowerment Approach

- This concept, evolved in the middle of the 1980s, among women's movement in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Advocated for women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in decision-making process and access to power.



Dimensions of Empowerment

- Three experimental approaches to empowerment in South Asia have been tried: integrated development, economic empowerment, and consciousness raising (Batliwala, 1994)



Consciousness Raising

- Consciousness raising has been implemented in awareness groups and education that have led to a new consciousness, self worth, societal and gender analysis, and access to skills and information.



Access to Economic Resources

- The economic empowerment approach has relied on improving women's control over economic resources and strengthening women's economic security. Grameen Bank has provided one example of organizing women around savings and credit, income generation, and skill training activities.



Integrated Development

- Integrated development approaches have encouraged women's collectives that have engaged in development and social problem resolution and formed specialized activity groups as means of mobilization of women.



Sample Question

- What is the main tenet of the empowerment approach?
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this approach



Topic Three

THE CULTURAL APPROACH



Cultural Approach

- UNESCO (1982) defines culture “...a set of distinctive, spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional characteristics, which define a society or social group. In addition to the arts and letters, it encompasses ways of life, the fundamental rights of a person, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.
- UNESCO has used and advanced the cultural approach since the term was approved in 1982 at the Mexico declaration on cultural policies.



Cultural Approach II

- Taking a cultural approach is important because culture is considered the core and foundation for any economic and social transformation.
- Cultural approach enables the lifestyles, beliefs and practices become essential references to the creation of action plans and policy. This is indispensable if behaviour patterns are to be changed on a long term basis.



Cultural Approach III

- It has become evident that despite massive action to inform the public about risks, behavioural changes are not occurring as expected.
- Some cultural issues are related to traditions, religious beliefs, representations of health and disease, life and death, sexual norms and practices.



Cultural approach as applied to RH

- An effective response to Reproductive Health components needs to take into consideration a wide range of cultural issues. These are:
 - Cultural perceptions and knowledge about Reproductive Health
 - Cultural barriers and practices that may help in spreading some sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS
 - Cultural dimensions of gender influence reproductive health. for instance, some cultural practices such as widowhood rites, polygyny, wife sharing, widowhood inheritance expose women to some diseases
 - Addressing stigma is an effective way of addressing some reproductive health challenges. Studying the cultural dimensions of stigma and discrimination will go along way to help people living with highly stigmatised diseases such as HIV/AIDS. This will also help in the voluntary counselling and testing of HIV status as well as help AIDS patients to disclose their status to others.



Sample Question

- Outline the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches.
- Which approach would you choose and why?

