Course description
In what ways can localized interventions and grassroots initiatives focused on health lead to
gender justice, equality, and empowerment? Answering this requires understanding how
empowerment is conceptualized and the methods by which it is observed in practise. We are also
centrally concerned with health, broadly defined to encompass not just preventing, treating, and
coping with illnesses, and securing sexual and reproductive health, but also the quality and
accessibility health-care, access to farmland for food production, masculinities and violence, and
the status of sexual minorities. Many of the case studies we examine, including those in the
edited collection *Women’s Empowerment and Global Health*, focus on development
programming by NGOs, often acting in conjunction with grassroots community actors. What do
development scholars and practitioners consider to be best practises in such initiatives? When it
comes to bottom-up collective action, what can be learned from the kinds of consciousness
transformation that occurs among people who are oppressed or simply not usually politically
active? And can grassroots activism benefit from support and resources provided by formal
organizations such as NGOs? Geographically much of our focus in this seminar is on the global
south, but we also step back to look at global patterns and general, world-wide debates on
particular issues.

Evaluation scheme
Seminar participation: 20%
Presentation: 10%
Critical reflections on readings (10% x 3): 30%
Research Paper proposal
(concept map and annotated bibliography) 10%
Research paper 30%
Total: 100%

Required Readings
❖ Dworkin, Shari L, Monica Gandhi, and Paige Passanno (Eds.), *Women’s Empowerment and

❖ A set of readings (journal articles and book chapters) available online via ARES.