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Office hours: M/W by appt  
043 Davison

Spring 2013  
01:920:422:04  
M/W 1:40-3:00 pm  
Classroom: 253 Beck Hall

## **SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY & HEALTH**

We are accustomed to thinking about our bodies in fixed biological terms. But everything about the body is constructed by social and cultural forces, including its shape, its health and even how it moves. In this seminar, we will draw on an interdisciplinary literature to understand how bodies are at once material and symbolic, an object of regulation and control, and a site of contentious political struggle. We will explore questions like: What is “natural” about the body? How do we decide which bodies are “normal” and which need medical intervention? How does the social world change the ways that we move within our bodies? Is it possible to distinguish between the mind and the body, or are they the same thing? How are bodies categorized and constituted by discourses of race, class, gender and sexuality? How are bodies an object of regulation, surveillance, and social and political control?

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

I have required articles that are available on the course website (sakai). These articles are identified below with an asterisk.

### **COURSE LOGISTICS**

#### **REQUIRED BOOKS**

The following books are available from the Rutgers Book Store and on reserve in the Douglass Campus library:

Nora Ellen Groce. 1985. *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Harvard University Press.

Alice Dreger. 2005. *One of Us: Conjoined Twins and the Future of Normal*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge University Press.

**Articles on sakai are indicated with an asterisk \***

#### **CLASS FORMAT**

This is a seminar course. The quality of our discussions depends on your **full** participation in class. **All** reading must be completed before the class for which it is assigned.

Students must fulfill the following requirements:

1) **Attendance and Participation – 10% of grade**

The quality of this class depends on your full participation. You may miss up to three classes for any reason. Any additional absences will affect your grade, unless you have a documented and approved excuse.

2) **Response Memos - 30% of grade**

Each student is responsible for submitting **ten response “memos”** over the course of the semester. These 1-2 page memos (double-spaced) respond to a class reading. Comments may be informal, but they must be a critical response. They are due **by 9pm** on the day before we discuss the reading, and they will not be accepted after. You should not summarize the arguments of the book or article. Rather you should contend with the author's arguments, and give your own critical opinion. I don't mean: "I like X, I don't like Y," but something more analytic. What do you think of the author's argument? Do you agree, disagree? Why? You should also include two to three well-crafted questions for the class to consider as a group. You may also compare that week's readings to themes and theories discussed earlier in the semester. This is also a good opportunity to raise questions and concerns about the substance of the readings. Each memo will be given a grade from A-F.

You may choose to respond to whichever ten readings you please, but **5 memos must be completed by spring break.**

**Please email these responses to me and include “Response Memo” in the subject line.**

3) **Short Paper – 25% of grade**

You will write a 5-7 page paper (double-spaced) on the ways in which the movie Avatar presents the body. You may address one of the following questions: Do the bodies in the fantasy world presented in Avatar embody or transcend race and ethnicity? Are the Na'vi cyborgs? How are prostheses used in Avatar? More details will be discussed in class. This assignment is **due April 10th.**

4) **Research paper – 35% of grade**

You will write a 12-15 page paper (double-spaced) on a research topic that pertains to the sociology of the body. You will clear the topic with me ahead of time by providing me with a 1 paragraph summary of the topic, complete with 5 references by March 13th. (This will be worth 5% of your grade). After submitting this memo, you are required to make an appointment with me to discuss your paper. The total paper will contain **at least** 10 academic references. **The final paper is due May 10<sup>th</sup>.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I follow the Rutgers University's policy on academic integrity. You can familiarize yourself with this policy at this website: <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and I am obligated to report such conduct and violations of this policy to the Undergraduate Director of the Sociology Department and the Dean of your colleague.

## CLASS CONDUCT AND GROUND RULES

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted and strongly encouraged.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

January 23 - Introduction

### **Living in the Body**

January 28 – Arthur Frank, *The Body's Problem with Illness*\*

January 30 – \*Iris B. Young, *Throwing Like a Girl*.

February 4 – \*Sandra L. Bartky, *Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power*

### **Embodied Knowledge and Habitus**

February 6 - \*Matthew Desmond. 2006. *Becoming a Firefighter*.

February 11 – \* Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. *Intimate Apartheid: Ethnic dimensions of habitus among heroin injectors*

### **Medicalized Bodies**

February 13 – \*Peter Conrad, *The Shifting Engines of Medicalization*, JHSB

February 18 – \*Jennifer Fishman, *Manufacturing Desire: The Commodification of Female Sexual Dysfunction*, SSS

### **Monstrous Bodies**

February 20 – Dreger, *One of Us*, Chapters 1 & 2

February 25 – Dreger. *One of Us*, Chapters 3 & 5

### **What Makes a Body Normal?**

February 27 – Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language, Chapters 1 & 5

March 4 - Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language, Chapters 6, 7, & 8

March 6 – Library session, Livingston Library

### **Eating Disorders**

March 11 – \*Le’a Kent, Fighting Abjection: Representing Fat Women.

- \*Paul Campos, Our Imaginary Weight Problem, New York Times

March 13 – \*Karen Dias, The Ana Sanctuary: Women’s Pro-Anorexic Narratives in Cyberspace

**March 13th – Submit One Paragraph Summary of Research Paper**

**Spring Break: Woohoo! Half of all response papers ought to have been submitted by now!**

### **Racialized Bodies**

March 25 – \*Ann Morning, The Nature of Race, selections to be announced.

March 27 – \*Patricia Hill Collins, “Get Your Freak On”: Sex, Babies and Images of Femininity.

### **Cyborg Theory**

April 1 – \*Donna Haraway: A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century.

April 3 – \*Sarah S. Jain, The Prosthetic Imagination: Enabling and Disabling the Prosthesis Trope

April 8 - Class Canceled

**April 10 – Short papers on Avatar due**

### **Reproductive Bodies**

April 10 – \*Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, Chapters 3 and 4, Medical Metaphors and Women’s Bodies.

April 15 - \*Barbara Katz Rothman, *Laboring Now: Current Cultural Constructions of Pregnancy, Birth, and Mothering*

### **Sexed Bodies**

April 17 – \*Fausto-Sterling, Should There Only Be Two Sexes?

April 22 - \*Sharon Preves, Intersex and Identity, Chapter 3, Stigma, Secrecy and Shame

### **Sporting Bodies**

April 24 - Viewing – The Wrestler

April 29 – \*Tyson Smith, Producing Gendered Spectacle: Male Wrestlers Managing the Male Gaze

### **The Body Politics**

May 1 – \*Brückner, Hannah and Peter Bearman. 2005. "After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginity pledges." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36:271-278.

\*Talbot, Margaret. 3 November 2008. "Red Sex, Blue Sex: Why do so many evangelical teen-agers become pregnant?" *The New Yorker*.

May 6 – \*Casper, Monica J. and Laura M. Carpenter. 2008. "Sex, drugs, and politics: the HPV vaccine for cervical cancer." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 30:886-899.

**Final Papers Due May 10<sup>th</sup>**