Description:

How is gender embodied and how are bodies gendered? How can we understand gendered bodies in relationship to other categories of difference like sexuality, social class, race/ethnicity, and religion? What are the broader implications of these issues in terms of power and resistance? We will explore recent scholarship on the cultural and political dimensions of the complicated relationship between gender, bodies and society. The course first examines theoretical perspectives used to understand gender and embodiment. These theories conceptualize the body as a socially constructed phenomenon, which allows us to understand the body as a cultural symbol, site of ideological struggles and force for resistance. The second half of the course applies these theoretical insights to a number of specific case studies such as cosmetic surgery, reproductive politics, veiling and sports. We will contextualize the place of the body in relation to various institutions such as the media, medicine, and the market. The course will end with a discussion of the implications of this field to feminist theorizing.

Required Texts:


All other readings will be posted on BlackBoard

Recommended Texts ***All Recommended Readings are Required for Graduate Students***


Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- Identify and Synthesize key arguments related to the course materials
- Analyze and Evaluate the strengths and limits of different theoretical approaches and empirical evidence
- Apply theoretical concepts to real-life examples
Course Requirements:

25% Participation, Attendance, and Oral Presentations: Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings. Numerous absences or habitual lateness will ultimately lower students’ grades. Students are expected to actively participate, for example by raising thoughtful questions, synthesizing new material with past material, noting contradictions, bringing up concrete examples from your experiences or observations, actively listening, voicing your reaction to the content of the course, defining key concepts etc. Enrolled graduate students will sign up in pairs to lead one class discussion over the course of the semester, which will count towards their participation grades.

20% Reading Responses: Students must submit 500 word memos focused on the week’s readings. You will briefly summarize the key points of the reading and then provide your own analytical commentary or reflection on the issues raised by the authors. For instance you may suggest links to previous readings, note contradictions, highlight gaps, and/or discuss the implications of the author’s arguments to other relevant issues and current events. Each memo should end with a substantive question or point that will spark discussion. The responses will be turned in every other week on Mondays by 5PM. When you are not submitting a memo, you are expected to write a 100 word comment in response to at least two classmates’ reading responses. These comments are due by 12PM on Tuesday. Responses must focus on the readings assigned for that week.

20% Analytical Paper (due October 18th by 5PM): Students must write a 3-5 page analytical paper that synthesizes the key theoretical approaches of understanding gender and the body. Post on BlackBoard via Assignments.

15% Photo Blog (due weeks of November 11th and November 18th): Students must write a photo blog essay based on at least 6 photographs of real or symbolic ways that gendered is embodied in everyday life and in various institutional settings. These photos must be original and not taken from the Internet. You must read and comment on at least three other blogs by November 22nd. Post on BlackBoard Blogs. This assignment is for undergraduate students.

OR

15% Book Review (due November 15th by 5PM): Graduate Students must write a 2-3 page book review that critically engages with a recent book in the field. You will summarize the main contents of the book, note how it connects to themes explored throughout the course, and assess how it contributes to the field. The instructor will supply a list of possible books for review. Students can pick a book outside of this list in consultation with the instructor. You must read and comment on at least two other blog posts by November 22nd. Post on BlackBoard Blogs.

20% Final Paper (due December 11th by 5PM): Students must write a 6-8 page final paper. Graduate students must write a 12-20 page paper which could take the form of a research proposal, theoretical piece, or empirical/research paper. Post on BlackBoard Assignments.
Course Schedule & Readings

I. Theoretical Orientations

Introduction

Tuesday October 1st

No Assigned Readings

Biological and Medical Perspectives

Thursday October 3rd


****Meet in 141 Allen Hall for “In the Wrong Body” Film Screening with Director Marilyn Solaya****

Recommended Readings (Graduate Students Meeting #1)


Laurel Westbrook and Kristin Schilt. 2013 “Doing Gender, Determining Gender Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System” *Gender & Society* (Online First)

Cultural Representation

Tuesday October 8th


Power, Resistance and the Disciplined Body

Thursday October 10th

Michel Foucault, “Docile Bodies” and “The Means of Correct Training”, pages 135-141 and 170-194 in Discipline and Punish


Recommended Readings (Graduate Students Meeting #2)


II. Thematic Discussions of Bodily Practices

Body Work

Tuesday October 15th


Cosmetic Surgery and Body Modification

Thursday October 17th


**Recommended Readings (Graduate Meeting #3)**


**Modeling and Beauty Pageants**

**Tuesday October 22nd**


**Thursday October 24th**

Ashley Mears 2011 Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model ch. 5 ch. 6 ch. 7

**Recommended Readings (Graduate Meeting #4)**


**Veiling**

**Tuesday October 29th**


Dieting, Eating Disorders, and Obesity

Thursday October 31st


Guest Lecture: CJ Pascoe, Professor of Sociology

Recommended Readings (Graduate Meeting #5)


Sports

Tuesday November 5th


Dis/ability

Thursday November 7th


The Sex Industry

Tuesday November 12th


Thursday November 14th

Reproductive Politics


Tuesday November 19th

Embodied Politics


Guest Lecture: Elizabeth Reis, Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies

Thursday, November 21st


Tuesday November 26th


Thursday November 28th

Thanksgiving - No Class
Embodying Feminist Theory

Tuesday, December 3rd

Denise Riley “Bodies, Identities, and Feminism” in Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader edited by Janet Price, Margrit Shildrick Edinburgh University Press


Thursday, December 5th

In Class Film: Juggling Gender

Policies and Expectations

Attendance:
Your presence is mandatory at all meetings. However, I realize that unforeseen circumstances do arise over the course of the term, so please do contact me in advance (via email is the best) if you expect to miss class. Three or more absences will result in an automatic deduction from your class participation grade. Please note that I will take attendance at the beginning of each class, thus if you are late you run the risk of being marked absent. Habitual lateness will also lower your grade.

Participation:
This is a seminar course and we will primarily learn from the readings and from each other through our class discussions. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings and you should be prepared to comment extensively on the readings during class discussion. The quality of this course will depend in large part on the effort that each individual student puts into actively engaging and participating during our discussions. Your participation grade will be based on your effort and ability to regularly share your thoughts, observations, and questions about the readings while engaging with the other students in the course. Remember to bring the relevant texts with you. I encourage you to jot down notes, questions, and key passages as you do the reading. I will work hard to ensure that our class is a supportive environment wherein we all feel comfortable sharing our perspectives and build a collective learning environment for all students. This class will often deal with politically and emotionally charged subject matters; I want this class to be a safe and stimulating forum for discussion for all students. We must all work together to foster a respectful classroom environment where diverse opinions can be freely shared to create a constructive space for open dialogue. Please be open-minded with your classmates and me.

Missed or Late Assignments:
Late Assignments will automatically lose points for each day they are late (1/3 of a grade per day). If you anticipate needing an extension please communicate with me as early as possible, but no later than two days before the deadline. Except in the case of a real and verifiable emergency accompanied by
appropriate and official documentation students will NOT be allowed to make up or complete assignments one week passed the deadline.

**Academic Integrity**
Much of your learning in this class will come from the contributions and ideas of your classmates; in this respect, collaboration is encouraged. However, plagiarism in any form will result in the automatic failure of the assignment. Additionally, an incident report or complaint will be sent to appropriate offices at the University of Oregon. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own (including copying other students’ work or using Internet resources without proper citation).

**Accessible Education Program and Special Accommodations**
If you have a documented need for special accommodations in class or on assignments, I will be happy to work out these arrangements with you. If this applies to you, please make arrangements as soon as possible with the Accessible Education Center. Others whose commitments might affect their ability to attend class or complete assignments on time should also speak to me about possible conflicts ahead of time.