The body is at once material and symbolic, an object of regulation and control and a site of contentious political struggle. It exists at the intersection of multiple discourses (e.g., occupational, reproductive, technoscientific, feminist, leisure, sport, aesthetic, and sexual). In this seminar, we will draw on an interdisciplinary literature and use a range of theoretical traditions to consider ways in which the body is constituted by these discourses. For example, what is “natural” about the body? How are distinctions made between the normal and pathological? Are bodies subordinate to the mind? How are bodies commodified? How are bodies categorized and constituted by discourses of race, class, gender, and sexuality?

Course Logistics

This is a seminar course. The quality of our discussions depends on your full participation.

Students must fulfill the following requirements

1) Over the course of the semester, each student will be expected to write a 1-2 page memo responding to each week’s readings. (single-space is fine.) These comments will be uploaded to the appropriate folder on sakai the day before class (Tuesday) by noon, so that everyone has time to read each other’s comments by Wednesday afternoon. Comments may be informal, but they must be a critical response. Memos will be graded as pass/fail. You can take three exemptions from writing these memos. If you choose to take an exemption, please let me know by email.

These memos should help you focus your ideas in a way that can contribute to our collective conversation during class time. In general, each memo should include: a) a brief summary of the main idea of the readings and how these claims were supported; b) a synthetic analysis of some dimension of the course readings that you found compelling and warrants further discussion; and c) two to three well-crafted questions for the class to consider as a group. These memos ought to compare readings within that particular week, but you may also bring 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. Finally, these memos are a great opportunity to develop a killer set of notes.

2) Each student will be responsible for helping me lead at least one weekly class discussion. Sign-up sheets will be passed around during the second week of class.
As a co-discussant, your job is to critically introduce the material and to come up with a few (3-5) substantive questions in the form of a one-page handout (to be electronically distributed to the rest of the group by 9 am on the day of class) to get the discussion rolling. Such questions may target what you consider the key issue/problematic raised by the author(s) in question, a shortcoming in the argument/evidence, a puzzling claim, broader implications, exciting/provocative comparisons, and so forth.

3) Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a 20-25 page paper on a topic related to this course. The paper can be analytical, critically reflecting on a substantive issue related to the sociology of the body or you may choose to write a research proposal, drawing on theoretical perspectives and existing empirical work to identify an interesting and until now unsolved empirical question.

In order to get approval for your topic, you must submit a 2-3 page memo describing your project, complete with a brief bibliography by March 4th, when you are expected to make an appointment to discuss this paper with me further. Of course, I’m happy to discuss this with you in advance. Final paper is due on May 8th. Late papers are strongly discouraged.

4) Students will present their research in progress in class on April 29th. These presentations are both an opportunity to share your work with the class and to receive feedback on your project.

Grade Allocation
Class participation 25%
Memos 25%
Presentation 10%
Final Paper 40%

Required Texts


Recommended Texts
Excerpts from these books will be posted online, but you may find it helpful to purchase your own copy:


**Week One: January 21st**

*Bringing in the Body*


**Week Two: January 28th**

*Phenomenology and the Lived Body*

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Selection from BBP.

Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl” and “Embodied Pregnancy.” *On Female Bodhrowing Like a Girl and Other Essays*.


*Recommended*


**Week Three: February 4th**

*Habitus and the Social Body*


*Recommended:*


**Week Four: February 11th**

*Normal & Pathological*
Michel Foucault, Docile Bodies from *Discipline & Punish*, excerpted in *The Foucault Reader*.

Margaret Shildrik. “Unreformed Bodies: Normative Anxiety and the Denial of Pleasure.” *Women’s Studies*. 34: 327-244.


*Recommended:*

**Week Five: February 18th**

*Medicalized Bodies, Bodies at Risk*


**Week Six: February 25th**

*Do Bodies Speak?*

Recommended:


Week Seven: March 4th
Are Bodies There? The Making of Biological Facts


Recommended:

Week Eight: March 11th
The Two Sex Problem


Recommended:


Week Nine: March 25th
Race in science

Anne Fausto-Sterling. 2008. The Bare Bones of Race. Social Studies of Science. 38: 67


*Recommended:*
Steven Epstein. 2007. Chapter 7 in *Inclusion*.

**Week Ten: April 1st**

**Technologies and the Body**


**Week Eleven: April 8th**

**Metaphors and the Body**


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**Biopower**

Michel Foucault, Part IV, History of Sexuality, vol. 1

-or-

*Mind and Body*

Rene Descartes. 1664. ‘Treatise on Man’ 1664.


**Week Twelve: April 15th**

*Commodifying Bodies*


**Week Thirteen: April 22nd**

*Embodied Fieldwork*


Loic Wacquant. 2003. *Body & Soul*. Oxford University Press, Section 1

**Week Fourteen: April 29th**

*Presentations*