Rutgers University
Department of Anthropology
Spring 2020

Body Politics

01:070:372 (3 credits)
Tues 5:35-8:35pm
BIO 205
Prerequisite: 01:070:101

Instructor:	Prof. Bridget Purcell
Contact:	bridget.purcell@rutgers.edu
Office hours:	Tuesday 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment BIO 307 (32 Bishop Street)

Course description: What is political about the body? This course introduces students to humanistic and social scientific approaches to studying the body. We will explore the multiple meanings, practices and constructions of the body across diverse sociocultural environments. For example, how might we understand the differing ways in which individuals and communities shape their bodies to negotiate and express their desires and identities? How do varying operations of power influence how the body is experienced? Through an engagement with anthropological and multidisciplinary works on politics, religion, gender, race, health, science and technology (to name a few), we will learn how the body is understood, experienced and expressed across different sociocultural environments, throughout history, and within various configurations of power and governance. In addition, throughout the course, you will pursue individual research projects that will allow you to deepen your understanding of a specific question pertaining to the body and gain training in research, writing and presentation skills. By the end of this course, you will have gained the theoretical knowledge and analytical tools that enable you to critically examine the sociocultural dimensions of the body and situate them within historical and global contexts.

Please note: This is an internet and laptop-free class. Please turn off or silence all electronic devices before entering the classroom.

Assignments and Grading: The success of this seminar relies on your commitment to complete all required readings, to be fully present at each class meeting, and to engage creatively with course themes in your responses and workshops. Grading will be based on:

- **Attendance and Participation (20%)**: Your wakeful, engaged presence in class is both encouraged and expected. You should arrive prepared to discuss your understanding of the readings, to articulate the author's key arguments, and to pose questions on points of particular interest or confusion. Please note that I take attendance and participation very seriously; any unexcused absence will affect your participation grade.

- **Weekly Workshops (30%)**: A major goal of this seminar is to think critically and creatively about our own bodily contexts and practices. To this end, students will engage in applied exercises and mini-ethnographic assignments throughout the semester. These informal and often collaborative activities are key to the seminar's success, and an important part of your overall grade. For most activities, I will ask you to include a "deliverable" (a short description, a hand-drawn map, a photograph), and to post it on Sakai each Sunday by midnight. You should expect to spend about 1-2 hours weekly on these activities, in addition to class readings.

- **Final paper (30%):** Beginning in the middle of the course, you are required to think about a final research project. The final paper (7-9 double-spaced pages) is to be a written analysis that illustrates how anthropological approaches for interpreting a particular body-related phenomenon can be useful for further understanding a social issue of interest to you. The paper must demonstrate a grasp of the concepts you engage, contain a clearly stated research question, and provide a discussion of findings in relation to course readings. Week 10 (3/30), you will submit a short, preliminary description of your proposed research topic. Week 12 (4/14), you will submit a revised proposal, along with 3-5 scholarly sources. The final paper is due by electronic submission on Sunday 5/10, at 11:59pm.

- **Presentation (20%)**: During our last class meeting (Week 14, 4/28), you will present your research project to the class. This will allow you to share your research with your peers, further conceptualize your project, receive critical feedback, and gain the opportunity to develop your public speaking skills. The presentation should incorporate visual or audiovisual elements that enrich and/or support the main argument.

Week 1 (1/21)
The (ab)Normal Body

Benedict, Ruth. 1959. "Anthropology and the Abnormal." *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp. 1-4.

Bures, Frank. "Is PMS Real?" *Slate* November 28, 2016.

Week 2 (1/28)
The Mindful Body

Grosz, Elizabeth. 2005 (1994). "Refiguring Bodies," In *The Body: A Reader*, Ed. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco, Routledge, pp. 47-51.

Silberman, Steve. 2009. "Placebos Are Getting More Effective: Drugmakers Are Desperate to Know Why." *Wired* 17(9).

Pilcher, Helen. 2009. "Beware Witch Doctors." *New Scientist* 202(2708), pp. 30-33.

Mauss, Marcel. 1935. "Techniques of the Body." *Economy and Society.* 2(1), pp. 70-88.

Workshop: Body Techniques

Week 3 (2/4)
The Body & Society
(symbolic approaches)

Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and Danger*. Introduction. Routledge. pp. 1-7.

Douglas, Mary. "The Two Bodies." In Fraser and Greco, *The Body: A Reader*, pp. 78-81.

Hertz, Robert. 2007 (1907). "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity," In *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*, Ed. Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar. Duke University Press, pp. 30-41.

Turner, Victor. 1964. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*" pp. 46-55.

Turner, Victor. 1977. "Variations on Liminality." In *Secular Ritual* (Eds Sally F Moore and Barbara G Myerhoff). pp. 36-52.

Workshop: Liminality

Week 4 (2/11)

The Body & Space
(phenomenological approaches)

Casey, Edward. 1993. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Indiana University Press, pp. 47-56.

Goffman, Erving. 2009 (1971). "The Individual as a Unit." In *Relations in Public*. Transaction, pp. 3-27.

Freund, Peter. 2001. "Bodies, Disabilities, and Spaces: The Social Model and Disabling Spatial Organizations." In *The Body: A Reader* (2005). Eds. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco. Routledge, pp. 182-186.

Workshop: Ways of Walking

Week 5 (2/18)
Sex & Gender

Gill, Rosalind. 2007. *Gender and the Media.* Polity Press, pp. 7-41.

Butler, Judith. 1993. "Bodies that Matter." In *The Body: A Reader* (2005). Eds. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco. Routledge, pp. 62-65.

Kulick, Don. 1997. "Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes. *American Anthropologist* 99(3): 574-585.

Workshop: Doing Gender

Week 6 (2/25)
Class & Consumption

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Selections on Sakai.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1998. "The Finest Consumer Object: The Body." In *The Body: A Reader* (2005). Eds. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco. Routledge, pp. 277-282.

Gill, Rosalind. 2007. "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10(2), pp. 153-158.

Workshop: Cultural Capital

Week 7 (3/3)

Race & Racism

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2006. *Racism without Racists*. Rowman & Littlefield. Selections.

Pearson, Heath. 2015. "The Prickly Skin of White Supremacy: Race in the 'Real America.'" *Transforming Anthropology* 24(1), pp. 43-58.

Baldwin, James. 1963. "A Talk to Teachers." In *Collected Essays*. The Library of America. pp. 678-686.

Film screening in lieu of workshop: *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)

Week 8 (3/10

No reading; in-class film and discussion.

****SPRING BREAK****

Week 9 (3/24)
Disciplined Bodies

Foucault, Michel. 1979. "Panopticism" in *Discipline and Punish*. Vintage, pp. 195-228.

Thompson, E.P. 1967. "Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism." *Past & Present* 38(1), pp. 56-63, 70-97.

Workshop: Time Discipline

Week 10 (3/31)
Knowledgeable Bodies

Hacking, Ian. 1986. "Making Up People." *The Science Studies Reader*, pp. 161-171

Dumit, Joseph. 2012. *Drugs for Life*. Duke University Press. Selections.

Schüll, Natasha. 2016. "Data for Life: Wearable Technology and the Design of Self-Care." *Biosocieties* 11(3), pp. 317-333.

Koopman, C. 2015. "The Algorithm and the Watchtower." *The New Inquiry* 29 September.

Workshop: Self-tracking Technologies

Week 11 (4/7)
Dangerous Bodies

Foucault, Michel. 1976. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France*. pp. 239-263.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Excerpts.

Film in lieu of workshop: *Let the Fire Burn* (Jason Osder, 2013)

Week 12 (4/14)
Vulnerable Bodies

Bourgois, Philippe and Jeff Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend.* Introductions, Ch. 1, Ch. 3, Conclusion. University of California Press. pp. 1-46; 79-115; 297-320.

Goldstein, Daniel. 2014. "Laying the Body on the Line: Activist Anthropology and the Deportation of the Undocumented." *American Anthropologist* 116:4, pp. 839-842.

Workshop: Space and Danger

Week 13 (4/21)
Bodies at War

Fassin, Didier and Mariella Pandolfi. 2010. "Military and Humanitarian Government in the Age of Intervention" in *Contemporary States of Emergency.* Zone Books, pp. 9-25.

MacLeish, Kenneth T. 2013. *Making War at Fort Hood: Life and Uncertainty in a Military Community*. Princeton University Press. pp. 27-92.

Butler, Judith. 2004. "Violence, Mourning, Politics." In *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. Verso, pp. 19-49.

Workshop: Humanitarian Reason

Week 14 (4/28)
Student Presentations

Final paper due Sunday 5/10 at 11:59pm

Appendix A
Learning Goals

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

- To introduce students to the study of the body within anthropology and across a variety of disciplines [CITE 1 see http://anthro.rutgers.edu/undergrad-program/department-learning-goals]
- To provide students an awareness of body politics within diverse cultural environments in the U.S., and at international and global scales
- To enable students to understand the imbrication of the body in social life as both practice and representation
- To encourage critical thinking on a range of dilemmas posed by readings and films [CITE 2]
- To develop students' proficiency in speaking critically and effectively about the body, its cultures and politics [CITE 5]
- To develop students' ability to research and write cogently and/or persuasively about the sociocultural dimensions of the body [CITE 3 & 4]

Appendix B
Additional Course Policies

Absence reporting: If you should need to miss class for any reason, submit an absence report indicating the date and reason at http://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra. You should do this prior to the class meeting, or on the day of the absence, at the latest. This is a courtesy that facilitates communication with your instructors, but it does not excuse the absence. In very limited circumstances (religious observance, serious illness, certain athletic events), your absence may be formally excused, given appropriate documentation.

Academic Integrity: I take this very seriously. Any violation of University principles of academic integrity will result in an automatic F in the course, and referral to the university disciplinary committee. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with these principles and policies, which are detailed at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/.

Accommodations: Students seeking accommodations should consult the Office of Disability Services at http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu, dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu, or (848) 445-6800. Requests for accommodations must be submitted before tests or assignments. Students who suspect they may have an undiagnosed learning disability or other disability may visit the Office of Disability Services for assessment and guidance.