The Body in Culture and Society
ANTD01

Professor: Maggie Cummings
Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-2pm; Tuesdays 2:30-3:30; or by appointment
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We often take our bodies for granted as “natural” and self-evident—but are they? This course examines anthropological contributions to theoretical and ethnographic understandings of the body, not just as a given, but as something that is continuously created and contested. In particular, we will focus on the lived body; the body as an assemblage of “practices, discourses, images, institutional arrangements, and specific places and projects” (Farquhar and Lock 2007: 1). We will examine the social, historical and cultural forces that shape the body in different aspects of everyday life. Students will be encouraged to discuss and to think critically about their own experiences of embodiment. The course examines different themes in the anthropological study of the body including gender and sexuality, race, beauty, and the commodification of the body. Our goal is not to separate theory from ethnography (or “real-life” examples in context), but to develop a theoretical and ethnographic “toolbox”, through discussion, reflection, and critical analysis, with which to think about the body.

Required Reading Materials:

- Susan Bordo, Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body (U California Press)
- Any additional readings will be posted on the course Blackboard site under "Course Readings"

Evaluation:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/Facilitation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Journals (3x10)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance, Participation, and Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take-home exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Class Topics and Reading Schedule:

January 7  Introduction and Overview/Division of Labour

January 14   Social Bodies

Readings:
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy & Margaret Lock
(1987), The Mindful Body, Medical Anthropology Quarterly1(1): 6-41

Hertz, Robert

Douglas, Mary

January 21   The Universal and the Particular

Turner, Terence

Bamford, Sandra

Bordo, Susan

January 28   Habitus

Bourdieu, Pierre

Bourdieu, Pierre
Wacquant, Loïc

February 4   Phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice

Young, Iris

Csordas, Thomas

February 11   Biopower

Protevi, John

Foucault, Michel

Rose, Nikolas

February 18: Reading Week, no classes

February 25   Gender and the Slender Body

Susan Bordo in Unbearable Weight
Hunger as Ideology; Anorexia Nervosa; The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity; and Reading the Slender Body (pages 99-212)

Writing Assignment #1 due on Blackboard before class.
March 4  Gender and the Muscle-Bound Body

Jefferson, Tony

Bey, Sharif

March 11  Colonialism

Boddy, Janice

Widmer, Alexandra

March 18  Racialization

Fassin, Didier

Bordo, Susan
Material Girl: The Effacements of Postmodern Culture

Ramos-Zayas, Ana Yolanda

March 25  Neoliberalism

Freeman, Carla

Edmonds, Alexander
April 1   Capitalism and the Commodification of Bodily Life

Ong, Aihwa

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

Weiss, Brad

Evaluation and Assignments

Presentation/Facilitation 15%
Reading Journals (3x10) 30%
Short Essay 20%
Class Attendance, Participation, and Discussion 10%
Final take-home exam 25%

Presentation/Facilitation (15%)

On the first day of classes, you (alone or in pairs) will sign up to take the lead in the discussion of one of the listed readings. As part of this assignment, you will be expected to:

1. Provide context to both the article and the author and how they relate to the theme of the seminar;
2. Provide two or more questions for class discussion on Blackboard at least 2 days in advance of the class; and
3. Facilitate and lead that discussion.

Each seminar will probably have at least two presentations. Each will have approximately 30 minutes for both presentation and discussion. The manner in which this time is structured is up to the presenter (tip: a presentation should not exceed 15 minutes).

I will assess your presentations based on preparedness, comprehension, critical analysis and presentation style.
Reading Journal 3 X 10% (30%)

To facilitate engagement and discussion, you will keep a reading response journal, using the journal tool on Blackboard. I will collect and grade your journal three times throughout the semester. Your goal in this journal is to respond to the weekly readings, raise points of interest, and to develop questions and ideas that flow throughout the course and/or relate to your research paper topic that will constitute your final assignment. You can also suggest the contemporary or everyday relevance of the readings, given the current political climate, new popular culture, etc. Aim to write at least 500 words each week.

You are expected to write about each week’s readings, but I will only evaluate your reading journal three times: January 28, March 4, and April 1. However, you should be writing your reading journals each week. Don’t allow yourself to fall behind.

I will assess your reading journal based on content, critical analysis and insight, and writing style.

Short Essay (5 pages; due February 25)

The essay will have two parts: analysis and application. Choose either one of the themes or one of the specific articles from the first six weeks of the class. Briefly summarize the overall theme and main argument(s) of the article or the key aspects of the theme; then analyze and critique the main arguments and insights. For the second part of the essay, you should choose a relevant everyday example, situation, or scenario (from your day-to-day experience, from the media, from popular culture, etc.). Apply your analysis of the article to the example you have chosen.

I will assess your paper based on content, critical analysis and insight, and writing style.

Participation (10%) means:

• Attending class having read and being prepared to discuss the readings. A seminar is a cooperative venture and each student’s willingness to join the debate is vital to its success. This course requires a steady pace of reading and thinking. Students will sign in each week, so your absence will be noted; please inform me in advance when extraordinary circumstances occur.

• Leading one discussion (alone or with teammates): a 20 minute (approx.) presentation of issues raised in one or more assigned readings for the week and preparing discussion points as a stimulus to debate.

• Checking Blackboard regularly for course updates and fellow students’ posted discussion points.

• Keeping up to date with your readings and response journals. Note that a response journal is not a summary of readings but your exploration of one or more issues that the readings address. A good strategy would be to query a key issue or idea that contributes to our goals in the course – something that could be further developed in
class discussion.

• Being respectful of other students by turning off your cell phones, tabs, and computers (for most weeks, bring a pad and pencil for keeping notes) unless you have obtained permission from the instructor.

**Take-home final exam (25%); due April 1**

This will be an essay-style take home exam based on the material from after Reading Week (although you may be required to integrate some of the theories from the first half of the term). Answers should be approximately 12-15 pages long.

**Other useful information and policies:**

**AccessAbility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office as soon as possible. I will work with you and AccessAbility Services to ensure you can achieve your learning goals in this course. Enquiries are confidential. The UTSC AccessAbility Services staff (located in S302) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (416) 287-7560 or ability@utsc.utoronto.ca.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

• Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
• Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
• Making up sources or facts.
• Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

• Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
• Looking at someone else’s answers during an exam or test.
• Misrepresenting your identity.
In academic work:

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor’s notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources (see http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/).