WOME 2111 WA -- The Skinny on Fat: An Introduction to Fat Studies, Feminism, and Body Image

Course Location: ATAC 1010

Class Times: Tues/Thurs 8:30-10:00

Instructor Information

- Instructor: Holly Morgan
- Office: RB 2039
- Telephone: 343-8033
- Email: hmorgan@lakeheadu.ca
- Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

Prerequisites: Women's Studies 1100, or permission of the instructor and Chair of the Department

Course Description/Overview

Amy Schumer recently reacted negatively to being labeled “plus-sized” by Glamour magazine. Barbie™ was released with three new figures to embrace body diversity. France recently passed a law to regulate the minimum weights of models, receiving accusations of discriminating against the thin. How do these issues relate to feminism? How do we read narratives and projects of body acceptance when we know that they are marketed by multimillion dollar corporations?

This course will encourage students to become critical consumers of the media by examining in greater detail the relationship between feminist theories and the regulation and representation of women’s bodies with a particular focus on issues surrounding weight. Students will be introduced to the field of Fat Studies, as well as consider other fields in which feminist theories intersect with representations of the body (for example, Disability Studies).

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop the skills to think critically about media representations of bodies, with an emphasis on weight biases and constructions of femininity
- Expand their knowledge of a wide range of feminist theories, as well as develop an understanding of the core tenets of Fat Studies
- Further their writing skills, with a particular emphasis on writing about popular culture, activism, and bodies
Course Resources

Required Course Texts (all versions are acceptable)

- Selected articles on MyCourseLink

Course Website(s)

- Desire2Learn/ MyCourseLink

Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic / Readings</th>
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| 1    | January 10/12 | **Course Introductions: What is Fat Studies, Why Are We Here?**  
Tuesday: No Readings  
Thursday: “Foreword” (ix-xxv) and “The Inner Corset” (11-14) |
| 2    | January 17/19 | Tuesday: Charlotte Cooper- “Fat Studies: Mapping the Field” (1020-1034, MyCourseLink)  
Thursday: Susan Bordo – “Reading the Slender Body” *Unbearable Weight* (185-212 MyCourseLink) |
| 3    | January 24/26 | **Fat Studies and Feminisms: Relationships, Overlaps, Challenges**  
Tuesday: “Is Fat a Feminist Issue?” Fikkan and Rothblum (575-592 MyCourseLink)  
Thursday: “Fat Should Be a Feminist Issue” Chrisler (608-616 MyCourseLink), “Fat is a Feminist Issue, But It’s Complicated” Roehling (593-599 MyCourseLink) |
| 4    | January 31 / February 2 | **Stereotypes, Stigmas, and Social Interactions**  
Tuesday: “Neoliberalism and the Constitution of Contemporary Bodies” (187-196)  
Thursday: Carla Rice “Becoming the ‘Fat Girl’” (158-174 MyCourseLink) |
| 5    | February 7 / 9 | **Student Presentations** |

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 14/16</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 21/23</td>
<td>Reading Week – No Class</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>February 28 / March 2</td>
<td>Health, Medicine, and Fat Identities</td>
<td>Murray “Pathologizing Fatness” (7-21 MyCourseLink), “What is ‘Health at Every Size’?” (42-53)</td>
<td>“Quest for a Cause” (65-74), “Prescription to Harm” (75-87)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 7/9</td>
<td>Fatness, Children, and Social Inequalities</td>
<td>Cramer and Steinwert “Thin is Good, Fat is Bad: How Early Does it Begin?” (429-451), “Fat Kids, Working Moms” (113-119)</td>
<td>“Access to the Sky” (176-186) <strong>NOTE</strong>: Friday, March 10 is the final date to withdraw without penalty</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>March 21/23</td>
<td>Fat Bodies and Sexuality</td>
<td>“Fattening Queer History” (15-22), “Double Stigma: Fat Men and Their Male Admirers” (143-150)</td>
<td>“I’m Allowed to Be a Sexual Being” (299-304), Graves and Kwan “More to Love” (47-60 MyCourseLink)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>April 3/5</td>
<td>Fat Activism, Justice, and the Revolution</td>
<td>“Embodying Fat Liberation” (305-311), “Are We Ready to Throw Our Weight Around?” (334-340)</td>
<td>Final Discussions</td>
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Assignments and Evaluation

Table of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15% (self assessment, small activities, and instructor assessment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representation Presentations</td>
<td>Feb 7/9/14/16</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation Responses</td>
<td>Feb 28th</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect-Connect-Create</td>
<td>March 9, March 28</td>
<td>30% (2 x 15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Assignment</td>
<td>April 5th</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Assignment Policies

- Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the dates indicated, via the D2L Assignment submission folder or on paper in class.
- All assignments are individual assignments unless clearly indicated on assignment outlines. Assignments completed by more than one person will not be accepted, and the submission of the same work as someone else constitutes plagiarism.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late assignments will be penalized by 3% per day (to a maximum of 30%), and will not be accepted after the end of classes.
- All assignments must be in MLA format (8th edition), double spaced, with 1” margins, and in 12 point font.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation.

Details of Assignments

Specific details for each assignment will be uploaded on D2L under the “Content” tab and then “Assignment Descriptions” heading.
Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else’s words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student’s work, or working together on an individual assignment all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you’ve submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Code of Student Behaviour¹.

Course Policies

Attendance is expected, and makes up a portion of your participation mark.

Participation involves active and enthusiastic engagement with course materials and your peers. You are expected not only to be physically present, but also to be mentally present. Likewise, participation involves both speaking and listening, and should demonstrate clear engagement with both discussion and readings. Avoid using cell phones/laptops in class unless for class-related activities, and be sure that your contributions to class discussion are relevant to the material being discussed.

A Note on Respect

Some of the materials in this course may evoke strong reactions based on your personal beliefs or experiences. It is important to remember that we all come to this space from different backgrounds, and we must maintain a respectful and professional environment at all times. This means that no one is discriminated against for any reason, including but not limited to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and religion. Moreover, some of the materials on this course may present you with information that is incongruent with your own beliefs. For this reason, it is important that we engage with ideas and concepts in such a way that both our tone and diction remain respectful.

You will not be assessed based on your personal beliefs or experiences, but you must be respectful of those of others and mindful of the existence of opposing views and demonstrate understandings of the texts and issues being considered.

¹ https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/skills-for-success/responsibilities
University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Code of Student Behaviour.

- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS)\(^2\) and register as early as possible.

- In accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code\(^3\), accommodations are decided through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

**Additional Information:**

There are many services available on campus to assist you if necessary, including but not limited to:

**The Student Health & Counselling Centre**
Assistance with medical and personal issues is available to you by contacting the Health and Counselling Centre: 343-8361, Prettie Building

**Student Accessibility Services**
Academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities/medical conditions can be obtained by contacting accessibility services. 343-8047 (SC0003)

**Student Success Centre**
Leadership and academic support is available to you in the Student Success Centre. Career advising and “Skills for Success Seminars” are also available. 343-8018 (SC0008)

This course outline is available online through the Women’s Studies Department Page and/or the Desire2Learn\(^4\) site for the course.

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\(^2\) [http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca](http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca)


\(^4\) [https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/d2l/home](https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/d2l/home)