



Lakehead University, Winter 2021
Department of Sociology

SOCI 3111: Sociology of the Body

Web-based: <https://mycourselink.lakeheadu.ca/d2l/home/71321>

Course Director

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Course Description

The body has in many ways been at the core of all sociological research but it has only been given the explicit attention it deserves in the last few decades. Beyond creating the subfield known as the sociology of the body, the increasing popularity of research on embodiment can be seen within a number of other disciplines in social science such as critical disability studies, women's studies, and biopolitics. In fact, even mind-based disciplines like cognitive science and philosophy have begun to take seriously the physiological body in its various dimensions.

This course will explore the significance of the body in everyday life and the various ways that embodiment affects social interaction. In this capacity, it will cover a number of core sociological themes, including sexuality and gender, race and ethnicity, class, and power. It will also draw on a diverse array of perspectives outside sociology to showcase the multiple ways that meaning resides in and is made possible by the human body.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to offer students the chance to explore the relationship between embodiment and society. The objective is to challenge commonly held assumptions and critically evaluate how bodies are produced, managed, and enacted in contemporary social life. To achieve this, students will engage in conceptual research and discussion about key topics relating to embodiment as well as carry out their own fieldwork and research study about an aspect of bodily life.

One particular goal of this class is to stress that the lived realities of people need to be given special attention through any act of social theorizing. As a result, specific emphasis will be placed on relating theoretical material to everyday experience. A caveat though. In many cases we will be explicitly drawing attention to aspects of embodiment that are normally kept private and confidential. The topic under study is deeply familiar, indeed intimate, so specific care needs to be made to ensure that classroom dialogue remains considerate of the different bodies that will populate the classroom.

Course Organization

Class each week will be broken into two parts. In the first, a lecture will be provided that outlines a particular topic or theoretical framework that can be used to think through the relationship between embodiment and social life. In the second, a film will be shown that picks up on the topics discussed in lecture and provides a focal point to direct our critical analysis.

Evaluation

Final grades will be based on the following breakdown:

1. Analytic Paper #1	17%	February 7, 11:59 pm
1. Analytic Paper #2	17%	February 21, 11:59 pm
1. Analytic Paper #3	17%	March 14, 11:59 pm
1. Analytic Paper #4	17%	April 4, 11:59 pm
2. Final Paper	32%	April 18, 11:59 pm

1. Students will write four **analytic papers**. Each must connect the material from lecture to a given week's readings and film. Emphasis should be on critical analysis, not personal opinion, so be sure to support and demonstrate your arguments. External sources are a good idea. Each paper should be 4 pages long, not including bibliography or title. All assignments are due on the course D2L site before the days/times listed above. Please see the Analytic Paper Grading Schedule for more detail. For all papers, please: follow standard conventions concerning writing and citation; use 1" margins and Times New Roman 12 font; upload MS Word or Apple Pages files only (no PDFs or Google Docs). When uploading files, please follow this naming convention: [Last name] - SOCI 3111 - [Assignment name].
2. For the **final paper**, students can either write an autoethnography based on their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic or a standard academic essay exploring some aspect of the relationship between body and society. Either way, the paper should be 15 pages long, not including bibliography and title, and make reference to at least three course readings. Detailed requirements for the final paper and an overview of how to conduct autoethnographic research will be provided in Week 12.

Students are expected to make every effort to hand in their work on time, so assignments received later than the due date will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends. In those rare instances where circumstances beyond the student's control have prevented an assignment from being submitted on time, exceptions to the lateness penalty may be granted. Such situations will require supporting documentation and be at the sole discretion of the professor or teaching assistant.

Numeric grades will be assigned in conformance with Lakehead's standard grading structure. For a rough breakdown of the expectations associated with each letter grade, please consult the 'Literature & Theory' section of this reference:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marking-standards>

Ethics

Students who wish to write an autoethnography for their final paper must first complete ethics training developed by the Government of Canada. Copies of completed TCPS-2 certificates must be uploaded to the course D2L. You cannot write the final paper without this certificate. If you have already completed a TCPS-2 certificate, you do not need to do the training again; simply upload your certificate to the D2L site.

Email Policy

Please include a subject line that begins with "SOCI 3111" in every email you send me or our TA. This will draw attention to your message and help us respond to it more quickly.

Academic Misconduct

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information concerning student behaviour and disciplinary procedures. Pay specific attention to the guidelines and restrictions surrounding plagiarism; it will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism is where someone else's idea is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given to the originator through a reference, footnote, or endnote.

For more details, please see Lakehead's policy for Academic Misconduct:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/.../academic-integrity>

Class and Reading Schedule

There are no texts to purchase. All readings are posted on the course D2L website.

Week 1 January 13 **Course Introduction**

Syllabus

Week 2 January 20 **Reflected Bodies**

Charmaz, K. & Rosenfeld, D. (2006). Reflections of the body, images of self: Visibility and invisibility in chronic illness and disability. In D.D. Waskul, & P. Vannini (Eds.), *Body/Embodiment: Symbolic interaction and the sociology of the body*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing. (pp. 35-50)

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Hodgins, A. (2019, August 14). *Sometimes you can't always see a person's disability - be generous*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/first-person/article-sometimes-you-cant-always-see-a-persons-disability-be-generous/>

Week 3 January 27 **Performed Bodies**

Shilling, C. & Bunsell, T. (2009) The female bodybuilder as a gender outlaw. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1(2), 141-159.

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Imray, G. (2019, June 18). *IIFAF argued in court that Caster Semenya is 'biologically male'*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/olympics/summer/trackandfield/caster-semenya-iaaf-1.5179748>

Week 4 February 3 **Phenomenological Bodies**

Lundgren, C & Wahlberg, V. (1999). The experience of pregnancy: A hermeneutical/phenomenological study. *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 8(3), 12-20.

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Svenaesus, F. (2018). Phenomenology of pregnancy and the ethics of abortion. *Med Health Care and Philos*, 21(1), 77-87.

Week 5 February 10 **Semiotic Bodies**

Marx, P. (2015, March 23). *About face: Why is South Korea the world's plastic-surgery capital?* Retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/23/about-face>

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Lovelock, M. (2017, January 24). *The makeover trap*. Retrieved from <https://aeon.co/essays/whats-behind-the-urge-to-uncover-an-authentic-self>

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Besner, L. (2018, December 28). *A nose by any other name*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-a-nose-is-not-just-a-nose/>

Week 6 February 17 **Reading Week—No Class**

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Week 7 February 24 **Storied Bodies**

Cann, C. (2014). *Virtual Afterlives*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press. (pp. 49-80)

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Rudoren, J. (2012, September 30). *Proudly bearing elders' scars, their skin says 'never forget'*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/world/middleeast/with-tattoos-young-israelis-bear-holocaust-scars-of-relatives.html>

