

Soci 5651- FA Sociology of the Body

Time: Mon 14:30- 17:30

Location: RB 3023

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Office hours: T/Th: 14:30-15:30

Course Aims and Overview

Interest in ‘the body’ as a focal area of study in the social sciences has been fostered by the foundational work of theorists Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Bryan Turner, Terence Turner, Kathy Davis, Margaret Lock, Raewyn Connell and Judith Butler to name just a few. Global demographic shifts of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, in combination with transitions in consumer and pop culture, social media, and the human/bio/technological interface, have led to an increasing degree of uncertainty about the borders and boundaries of individual, social and political bodies in our post/modern world.

The aim of this course will be to introduce students to sociological theories and approaches to ‘the body’ through a close reading of key texts in the field. A review of topical case studies will allow us to explore the links between specific theories of the body and the processes and experiences of embodiment in everyday life. Seminar discussion will focus around the core themes of subjectivity and identity; domination, resistance and vulnerable bodies; visualizing and negotiating labouring bodies in time and place; and the movement of contemporary bodies, body parts and body traces in the global medical arena.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on a combination of written work and seminar participation. Students are expected to do assigned readings prior to each week’s class and come prepared with discussion points for the seminar. Where relevant you are encouraged to also bring examples from contemporary news/events/social media/pop culture which link to our weekly theme. Class participation marks will be based on a combination of your attendance, your preparedness for class and your active participation and active listening in our weekly sessions.

Written evaluation components of the course include:

Summaries of weekly assigned readings (2 pages, double-spaced)	
- 5 weeks X 5 marks each, due at beginning of class	25%
Weekly class participation	20%
Final roundtable presentation and written summary (10 minutes -2 pages)	15%
Major research paper (10-12 pages) due December 8 by 4 p.m.	40%

Required Texts

Howson, Alexandra (2012) *The Body in Society: An Introduction, 2nd ed.* London: Polity Press. Available to purchase from LU Bookstore.

Additional assigned readings are available to download as pdfs from the Ejournal section of the LU library website or, where noted on the course syllabus.

Course Website – D2L

A D2L (Desire 2 Learn) site has been set up for this course and will be used a repository for course materials, optional readings, web links and announcements of interest. Please ensure that you have access to the Web site (through your MyInfo page) and check it regularly for class announcements and information. Also please send along any postings you think would be of interest for your classmates. Email links or news postings to me at: pam.wakewich@lakeheadu.ca

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism:

The University takes a most serious view of offences against academic honesty such as plagiarism, cheating and impersonation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: paraphrasing of an author without citing them; directly reproducing an author without citing them; the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained; improper collaboration in group work; copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations. The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct and regulations regarding academic dishonesty:

<http://calendar.lakeheadu.ca/current/contents/regulations/univregsIXacdishon.html>

Weekly Reading Schedule:

Week 1 (Sept. 8): Introductions and overview

Week 2 (Sept. 13): Bodies in a Social Landscape

Readings:

Howson, A. (2012) Chapter 1 "The Body in Everyday Life";

Turner, T. (1980) "The Social Skin." In J. Chermans and R. Lewin, eds. *Not Work Alone*. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp. 112-140 [available to photocopy from instructor].

Week 3 (Sept 22): Bringing the Body back into Social Theory

Readings:

Howson, A. (2012) Chapter 3 "The Civilized Body";

Davis, Kathy (1997) "Embody-ing Theory: Beyond Modernist and Postmodernist Readings of the Body." In Davis, K., ed. *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: Sage, pp. 1-26 [available to photocopy from instructor].

Week 4 (Sept 29): *Body, subjectivity and domination - constituting gender*

Readings:

Howson, A. (2012) Chapter 2 "The Body, Gender, and Sex";

Cavanagh and Sykes (2006), "Transsexual Bodies at the Olympics: the International Olympic Committee's Policy on Transsexual Athletes at the 2004 Athens Summer Games, *Body & Society* 12(3):75-102 [ejournal]

Week 5 (Oct. 6): *Negotiating the Labouring Body in Time and Place*

Readings:

Margolis, Eric (2004) "Looking at discipline, looking at labour: photographic representations of Indian boarding schools." *Visual Studies* vol. 19(1):pp.72-96 [Ejournal];

Smith, Helen and Pamela Wakewich (2013) "Trans/Forming the Citizen Body in Wartime: National and Local Public Discourse on Women's Bodies and "Body Work" for women during the Second World War." In Patrizia Gentile and Jane Nicholas (eds.) *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canadian History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 305-327 [available to copy from instructor];

Wolkowitz, C. "Customer Services," in *Bodies at Work*, London: Sage, pp. (available from instructor);

Week 6 (Oct. 13): *Thanksgiving - NO CLASS*

Week 7 (Oct. 20): *Subjectivity and domination - vulnerable bodies;*

Readings:

Howson, A. "Chapter 6 "Vulnerable Bodies";

Poudrier, J. and J. Kennedy (2008) "Embodiment and the Meaning of the "Healthy" Body" *Journal of Aboriginal Health* (January):15-24;

Russell, A. (2013) "Embodiment and Abjection: Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation" *Body & Society* 19(1):82-107 [ejournal].

Week 7 (Oct 27): *Subjectivity and domination - classed bodies*

Readings:

Wacquant, L.J. (1994) "Pugs at Work: Bodily Capital and Bodily Labour among Professional Boxers." *Body & Society* 1(1):65-94 [available from instructor];

Nettleton, S. and M. Hardey (2006) "Running Away with Health: The Urban Marathon and the Construction of Charitable Bodies" *Health* 10(4):441-460 [ejournal].

Week 8 (Nov. 3): *Imaging and imagining the body in science, medicine and biotechnology*

Readings:

Waldby, Catherine (1997) "The Body and the Digital Archive: the Visible Human Project and the Computerization of Medicine." *Health* 1(2):227-244 [ejournal];

Kruger, E., S. Magnet and J. Van Loon (2008) "Biometric Revisions of the 'Body' in Airports and US Welfare Reform." *Body & Society* 14(2):99-121;

and Either:

Hirschauer, Stefan (2006) "Animated Corpses: Communicating with Post Mortals in an Anatomical Exhibition." *Body & Society* 12(4):25-52 [ejournal]; Or
Lock, Margaret (2004) "Living Cadavers and the Calculation of Death." *Body & Society* 10(2/3):135-152 [ejournal].

Week 9 (Nov 10): The Body in Consumer and Pop Culture

Readings:

Howson, A. "Chapter 4. The Body in Consumer Culture";
Pitts, Victoria L. (2008) "Cyberpunk, Biomedicine and the High-tech Body" in Malacrida, C. and J. Low, *The Sociology of the Body*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 360-368 [available from instructor];
Webb, Jen and San Brynand (2008) "Some Kind of Virus: The Zombie as Body and as Trope." *Body & Society* 14(2):83-98.

Week 10 (Nov 17): Bodies and Body Traces in the Global Medical Market

Readings:

Wilson, Ara (2011) "Foreign Bodies and National Scales: Medical Tourism in Thailand." *Body & Society* 17 (2&3):121-137. [Ejournal];
Ticktin, Miriam (2011) "How Biology Travels: A Humanitarian Trip." *Body and Society* 17 (2&3):39-158. [Ejournal];
Russell, Amy M. (2013) "Embodiment and Abjection: Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation." *Body & Society* 19 (1):82-107. [Ejournal]

Week 11 (Nov 24): Self review and prep for Summary roundtable

Week 12 (Dec. 1): Summary roundtable and course review

Williams, S.J. (2006) "Medical Sociology and the Biological Body: Where are We Now and Where Do We Go from Here." *Health* 10(1)5-30; and
TBA.