

Fall 2020  
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Office hours: By appt

## **Sociology of the Body**

The body is at once material and symbolic, an object of regulation and control and a site of contentious political struggle. It exists at the intersection of multiple discourses (e.g., occupational, reproductive, technoscientific, feminist, leisure, sport, and sexual). In this seminar, we will draw on an interdisciplinary literature and use a range of theoretical traditions to consider ways in which the body is constituted by these discourses. For example, what is “natural” about the body? How are distinctions made between the normal and the pathological? Are bodies subordinate to the mind? How are bodies commodified? How are bodies categorized and constituted by discourses of race, class, gender and sexuality?

## **Learning Goals**

Students will

- Be versed in a wide range of theory and research in the sociology of the body
- Critically assess how the body is shaped and produced through social, political, economic and cultural forces on a macro, meso and micro level.
- Bring research on the body to bear on other areas of sociology
- Conduct original, theoretically engaged research in the area of the body.
- Practice the skills needed to enter the sociological profession as accomplished scholars and teachers engaged in knowledge production and critical intervention in academic, policy and/or public arenas.

## **Course Logistics**

Students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation (15%)
2. Seven weekly memos (20%)
3. Moderate a class discussion (5%)
4. (re)Create the Canon assignment (20%)
5. Final Essay (Maximum 4,000 words) (35%)
6. Presenting Final Project (10 minutes tops) (5%)

1) This is a seminar course. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to show up to every class having read all required material. The quality of our discussions depends on your full participation. This is a seminar and each of you are expected to contribute to the discussion.

**Note on computer use: I understand that many of you read the articles electronically and like to take notes on your computer. However, there is a ton of research that demonstrates that note-taking by hand is far more useful. In addition, it is very distracting when students are surfing the Internet, IM'ing or otherwise not participating during class. I will allow laptop use, but I reserve the right to change my mind and I urge you to use your computers sparingly.**

**\*If you really love electronic note-taking, but find yourself highly distractable (same), there are a number of relatively inexpensive technologies that might help, like Rocket Notebooks**

2) Over the course of the semester, each student will be expected to write a 300-500 word (1-2 page) memo responding to each week's readings. **You are expected to submit memos for *eight* of our 11 substantive weeks of readings. These comments will be uploaded to Sakai blogs by 10am on Monday, so that everyone has time to read each other's comments by class.** Comments may be informal, but they must be a *critical* response. Memos will be graded as check/check plus/check minus (which will be translated in a number: 0, 1, 2, or 3).

These memos should help you focus your ideas in a way that can contribute to our collective conversation during class time. In general, each memo should include: a) a brief summary of the main idea of the readings and how these claims were supported; b) a synthetic analysis of some dimension of the course readings that you found compelling and warrants further discussion; and c) two to three well-crafted questions for the class to consider as a group. These memos ought to compare readings within that particular week, but you may also bring compare that week's readings to themes and theories discussed earlier in the semester. This is also a good opportunity to raise questions and concerns about the substance of the readings. Finally, these memos are a great opportunity to develop a killer set of notes.

3) Everyone in the class is expected to moderate one weekly class discussion for a single article assigned that week. Sign-up sheets will be passed around during the first week of class. As a codiscussant, your job is to introduce critically the material and to come up with a few (3) substantive questions in the form of a one-page handout (to be electronically distributed to the rest of the group by 12pm on the day of class) to get the discussion rolling. Such questions may target what you consider the key issue/problematic raised by the author(s) in question, a shortcoming in the argument/evidence, a puzzling claim, broader implications, exciting/provocative comparisons, and so forth. You will meet with me 10 minutes before class to go over our approach to discussion for the day.

4) (re)Create the Canon assignment (20%)

Sociology of the Body is a relatively new subfield in sociology. In this assignment, you will develop one week of a graduate-level syllabus for a course on the Body, which will include an appropriate number of readings, arranged around a theme and a set of

discussion questions. Your assignment will also include a brief annotated bibliography. Complete instructions can be found under Assignments in Sakai.

Be careful what you suggest for seminar reading because it might end up on our syllabus! After assignments are submitted to Sakai on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will all vote (anonymously) on our top three “lesson plans.” The top two will become our readings in Weeks Twelve and Thirteen of this semester.

5) Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a 4000 word (15 page double-spaced) paper on a topic related to this course. The paper can be analytical, critically reflecting on a substantive issue related to the sociology of the body or you may choose to write a research proposal, drawing on theoretical perspectives and existing empirical work to identify an interesting and, as of yet, unsolved empirical question.

Your topic must be approved in advance. Approval will be granted via a 2-3 page memo that describes your project, complete with a brief bibliography by **March 6th**. At that time, please make an appointment with me, so that we can discuss the paper in greater detail. Of course, I’m happy to discuss this with you in advance. **Final paper is due on May 8th**. Late papers are strongly discouraged. Please submit your paper via Sakai Assignments.

6) Students will present their research in progress in class on May 4th. These presentations are both an opportunity to share your work with the class and to receive feedback on your project.

### **Required Texts**

Arlene Stein. 2019. *Unbound: Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity*. New York: Vintage.

All additional required readings available on sakai.

### **Diversity Statement**

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

### **DISCUSSIONS AND RESPECT**

Graduate classes involve a lot of reading, critique and discussion. We will likely encounter disrespectful or harmful comments, assumptions and ideas in the material we’re reading or in our class discussions or in conversations we have with one another. Sometimes, we just mishear or misunderstand each other – and these misunderstandings could be easily clarified with a follow-up question: “Can you explain further?” These situations shouldn’t be dismissed or ignored, and likewise, fear of offending our

colleagues should not silence us. Therefore, starting on the first day of class, will work collectively to develop a system for handling such moments so we can all feel welcome in the classroom, participate openly and respectfully, and learn from one another's histories, perspectives and backgrounds.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week One: Tuesday, January 27**

##### ***Bringing in the Body***

Introduction and Course Overview

#### **Week Two: Monday, February 3rd**

##### ***Phenomenology and the Lived Body***

Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Selections.

Iris Marion Young, "Throwing Like a Girl." *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays*.

Audre Lorde, 1981. "Uses of Anger." *Women Studies Quarterly*.

S. Kay Toombs. 1995. "The Lived Experience of Disability." *Human Studies*. 18, 1: 9-23.

#### **Week Three: Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Class Canceled – Perhaps use this time to prepare for next week's class.

#### **Week Four: Monday, February 17th**

##### ***Habitus and the Social Body***

Guest speaker: Karen Cerulo

Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. The Habitus and the Space of Lifestyles in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.

Karen Cerulo. 2018. Scents and Sensibility: Olfaction, Sense-Making, and Meaning Attribution. *American Sociological Review*. 83(2): 361-389.

Matthew Desmond. 2006. Becoming a Firefighter. *Ethnography*. 7(4). 387-421.

Maxine Leeds Craig. 2013. Sorry I Don't Dance: Why Men Refuse to Move. Chapter 6 "Home Schooling."

#### **Week Five: Monday, February 24th**

##### ***Normal & Pathological***

Foucault, Michel. 1984. "Docile Bodies," in *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, pp. 179-213.

Margaret Shildrik. 2005. "Unreformed Bodies: Normative Anxiety and the Denial of

Pleasure.” *Women’s Studies*. 34: 327-244.

Alice Dreger. 2004. *One of Us: Conjoined Twins and the Future of the Normal*. Harvard University Press. Chapters 1-3, 5

*Recommended:*

“The Means of Correct Training,” and “Panopticism,” in *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, pp. 179-213.

### **Week Six: Monday, March 2nd**

#### ***Are Bodies There? Theorizing the biosocial***

Ian Hacking. 1986. “Making Up People.” Reproduced in *Beyond the Body Proper*, edited by Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar.

Judith Butler. 1993. “Bodies That Matter.” Reproduced in *Beyond the Body Proper*, edited by Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar.

Bruno Latour. 1999. “Do You Believe in Reality?” Reproduced in *Beyond the Body Proper*, edited by Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar.

Michel Foucault. “Truth and Power.” *The Foucault Reader*. Paul Rabinow, editor.

Anne Fausto-Sterling. 2005. “The Bare Bones of Race” *Science and Technology Studies*. 38(5). Pp. 657-694.

### **Week Seven: Monday, March 9th**

#### ***The Social Construction of Sex***

Londa Schiebinger, 1986. “Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy.” *Representations*. (14), pp. 42-82.

Sarah Richardson, 2012. Sexing the X: How the X Became the Female Chromosome.” *Signs*.

Katrina Karkazis and Rebecca Jordan-Young. 2018. The Powers of Testosterone: Obscuring Race and Regional Bias in the Regulation of Women Athletes. *Feminist Formations*. 30(2).

Rene Almeling and Miranda Waggoner. 2013. More and Less than Equal: How Men Factor into the Reproductive Equation. *27(6)*: 821-842.

### **Week Eight: Monday, March 23rd**

#### ***Technologies and the Body***

Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*: 149-81.

Sarah S. Jain, 1999, “The Prosthetic Imagination: Enabling and Disabling the

Prosthesis Trope” *Body & Society*. 24(1). 31-54.

Stephen Horrocks. 2019. Materializing Datafied Body Doubles: Insulin Pumps, Blood Glucose Testing, and the Production of Usable Bodies. *Catalyst*. April 1, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.28968/cftt.v5i1.29613>

**Skim:** Vivian Sobchack. 2006. “A Leg to Stand On: Prosthetics, Metaphor and Materiality.” *The Prosthetic Imagination: From a Posthuman Present to a Biocultural Future*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Week Nine: Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>**

***Embodied Resistance***

Anthony Hatch. 2019. Billions Served: Prison Food Regimes, Nutritional Punishment, and Gastronomical Resistance.

Zakia Salime. 2014. New Feminism as Personal Revolutions: Microrebellious Bodies. *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture in Society*. 40:1

Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2019. “In The Name of Beauty.” *Thick*.

Maxine Leeds Craig. 2006. Race, beauty, and the tangled knot of a guilty pleasure. *Feminist Theory*. 7(2) 159-177.

**Week Ten: Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**

***Neuroscience***

Benjamin, Ruha. 2016. “Catching Our Breath: Critical Race STS and the Carceral Imagination.” *Engaging Science, Technology and Society* 2: 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.17351/ests2016.70>.

Gil-Peterson, J. 2016. “Neurofeminism: An Eco-Pharmacology of ADHD.” In Victoria Pitts-Taylor (ed.), *Mattering: Feminism, Science and Materialism*: pp. 188–203. New York: New York University Press.

Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2019. “Neurologically Poor? Brain Phenotypes, Inequality, and Biosocial Determinism.” *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 44: 4: 660–685. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243919841695>.

Farah, Martha. 2018. “Socioeconomic Status and the Brain: Prospects for Neuroscience-Informed Policy.” *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 19: 7: 430–438. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41583-018-0023-2>.

**Recommended:**

Farah, Martha. 2017. “The Neuroscience of Socioeconomic Status: Correlates, Causes and Consequences.” *Neuron* 96: 1: 56–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuron.2017.08.034>

**Week Eleven: Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

***Embodied Knowledges.***

Judith Okely. 2007. Fieldwork Embodied, *Sociological Review*. 55(s1). 65-79.

Joanna Kempner. 2014. *Not Tonight: Migraine and the Politics of Gender and Health*. Chicago. Preface.

Joanna Kempner and John Bailey. 2019. Collective self-experimentation in patient-led research: How online health communities foster innovation. *Social Science & Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112366>

Kris Paap. 2006. *Working Construction: Why Working Class Men Put Themselves And the Labor Movement In Harm's Way*. Cornell University Press. Appendix.

Seth Holmes. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*: University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

*Recommended:*

Jennifer A. Reich. 2003. "Pregnant with Possibility: Reflections on Embodiment, Access, and Inclusion in Field Research." *Qualitative Sociology*. 26: 351-367.

Jean E. Jackson. "I Am A Fieldnote": Fieldnotes as a Symbol of Professional Identity." *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*. Ithaca. Cornell University Press. Pp. 3-33.

**Week Twelve: Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Class-generated reading**

**Week Thirteen: Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Trans Bodies**

Guest speaker: Arlene Stein

Arlene Stein. 2019. *Unbound: Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity*. New York: Vintage.

**Week Fourteen: Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**

***Presentations***

**Final paper due on May 8<sup>th</sup>.**