

**Sociology of the Body**

SYD 4804

3 Credits

Instructor: Dr. Laura Backstrom Term: Fall 2017

Email: lbackstrom@fau.edu Class Meetings: T 5:00-7:20pm

Phone: (561) 297-3270 Class Location: GS102

Office: Culture & Society Building (CU) 259

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30am -1:30pm and by appointment

Pre-requisites: 3 sociology classes at the 1000, 2000, or 3000 levels or permission of instructor.

Requirements fulfilled: This class counts towards the sociology major and minor.

Course Description

How do people use cultural meanings to make sense of their own bodies? How are bodies commodified? How are bodies connected to larger social structures such as race, class, gender, and sexuality? This course will interpret the body through the lens of culture and examine how constructions of the body are shaped by social forces. This course examines social and cultural factors and processes connected to prejudice, discrimination, oppression, social stratification and social/cultural change in connection to bodies. Further, we will look at the connection between the body and personal identity with an emphasis on stigma management and how identity is enacted through body projects. From performers in historical freak show to contemporary athletes and fashion models, extraordinary bodies can be a means of resistance and power or objects of social control or subjugation. Over the course of the semester, we will analyze representations of bodies that are pregnant, disabled, fat, tattooed, scarred, sick, diseased, surgically-modified, used for sport, used for personal profit, and used to sell products.

Required Texts

None. All readings are posted on Canvas.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

* Develop analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to better understand sociological approaches to understanding the body.
* Understand and utilize content analysis as a research method that sociologists use to study bodies and embodiment in the social world.
* Formulate critical and analytic responses to media depictions of bodies.
* Understand the ways in which sex, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, social

class, sexuality, age, ability and other factors shape embodied experiences.

* Describe social and cultural factors and processes connected to prejudice, discrimination, oppression, social stratification and social/cultural change in connection to bodies.
* Develop and improve writing and editing skills

Course Evaluation

Weekly Reflection JournalEach week, students will submit a reflection based on the week’s readings, in class activities, and application of the course material. The two lowest journal scores will be dropped. Each journal is worth 20 points (200 points total).

Discussion Group Students will be assigned to reading discussion groups, and each discussion group will be responsible for preparing questions to share with the class. Students will be responsible for 5 discussion group assignments, and each is worth 20 points (100 points total).

Papers: Students will write two short papers (4-6 pages) that correspond with course material from the first two sections of the course. Detailed paper prompts will be distributed and explained in class. Each paper is worth 100 points each. The papers are due on **September 19** and **October 17.**

Final Project: Students will produce an original content analysis based final paper (approximately 15-20 pages). A rough draft of the paper is due on **November 21.** Students will design a poster with their findings which they will present in class on **November 28**. The final paper is also due on **November 28**. The rough draft, poster, and final paper are worth 500 points.

10 Weekly Journals 200 points

Discussion Group 100 points

Paper #1 100 points

Paper #2 100 points

Final Project 500 points

Course Grading Scale

A = 95-100% (950-1000 pts) C = 73-76% (730-769 pts)

A- = 90-94% (900-949 pts) C- = 70-72% (700-729 pts)

B+ = 87-89% (870-899 pts) D+ = 67-69% (670-699 pts)

B = 83-86% (830-869 pts) D = 63-66% (630-669 pts)

B- = 80-82% (800-829 pts) D- = 60-62% (600-629 pts)

C+ = 77-79% (770-799 pts) F = 59% and below (599-0 pts)

Policy on Make-Up Exams, Late Work, and Incompletes.

I will only allow make up exams, late assignments, and course incompletes under exceptional circumstances and only if you contact me in advance of the deadline. If granted permission, late work will be penalized one-half letter grade per day.

Classroom Etiquette Policy

Please be respectful of your fellow classmates by turning off your cellphone and refraining from using your laptop and other technology during class. Sidebar conversations or sleeping during class will not be tolerated.

Attendance Policy

All students must attend class, be on time, and not leave early. An attendance sheet will be available at the beginning of every class and it is your responsibility to sign your name. If your name (signed by you!) is not on the attendance sheet, you will be counted absent. You may miss up to **two** class meetings with no attendance penalty, regardless of the reasons for the absences. For every class missed after two, *regardless of the reason*, except for university sanctioned absences such as religious holidays, there will be a one step reduction in your course grade (e.g. from an A- to a B+). If you do miss class, you are responsible for the material covered and any announcements that were made in class. My notes will not be available to students, so you should coordinate with a fellow classmate in order to make up notes. If you miss class, you will not be able to make up reading checks or any other graded in-class assignment. Do **NOT** take this course if you will not be able to meet the attendance requirements.

Disability Policy Statement

“In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) —and follow all SAS procedures.”  *See http://www.fau.edu/sas/*

Code of Academic Integrity Policy Statement

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

**Course Outline**

**Part I: Theories of the Body**

**Week One: The Body in Society**

8/22 How to Look Good (Nearly) Naked: The Performative Regulation of the Swimmer's Body by Susie Scott

**Week Two: Stigma and the Body**

8/29 Chapter 1 in *Stigma; Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* by Erving Goffman

*What’s Wrong with Fat?* Introduction, Ch. 2 and Conclusion in *What’s Wrong with Fat?* by Abigail Saguy

**Week Three: Regulating Bodies**

9/5 Docile Bodies and The Means of Correct Training by Michel Foucault

Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power by Sandra Lee Bartky

**Week Four: Body as Resistance**

9/12 Bear Bodies, Bear Masculinity: Recuperation, Resistance, or Retreat? by Peter Hennen

Visibly Queer: Body Technologies and Sexual Politics by Victoria Pitts Taylor

**Part II: Gender and the Body**

**Week Five Gender and the Body**

9/19 The Five Sexes by Anne Fausto-Sterling

How to Build a Man by Anne Fausto-Sterling

The Egg and the Sperm by Emily Martin

Believing Is Seeing: Biology as Ideology by Judith Lorber

**\*Project #1 Due**

**Week Six Doing Gender**

9/26 Doing Gender by Candace West and Don Zimmerman

Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World by Raine Dozier

**Week Seven Femininity**

10/3 The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls by Joan Jacobs Brumberg

Introduction: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body by Susan Bordo

**Week Eight Masculinity**

10/10 The Quality of Manhood: Masculinity and Embodiment in the Sociological Tradition by Anne Witz and Barbara L. Marshall

Manscaping: The Tangle of Nature, Culture, and Male Body Hair by Matthew Immergut

**Part III: The Body and the Lifecourse**

**Week Nine Reproductive Politics**

10/17 Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, Sperm Banks, and The Medical Market in Genetic Material by Rene Almeling

If Men Could Menstruate by Gloria Steinem

Motherhood under Patriarchy by Barbara Katz Rothman

***\*Project #2 Due***

**Week Ten Raced and Classed Bodies**

10/24 Reconstructing Race in Science and Society: Biology Textbooks, 1952- 2002 by Ann Morning *American Journal of Sociology*

The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotion in Korean Immigrant-Owned Nail Salons by Miliann Kang

Sander Gilman. 2000. The Racial Nose by Sander Gilman

**Week Eleven Healthy and Sick Bodies**

10/31 The Body’s Problem with Illness by Arthur Frank

**Week Twelve Dead Bodies**

11/7 Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach

**Week Thirteen Bodies of the Future**

11/14 A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century by Donna Haraway

Cyberpunk, Biomedicine, and the High-tech Body by Victoria Pitts

**Week Fourteen**

11/21 Paper Workshop

**Week Fifteen**

11/28 Final Project Poster Session