MAKING OF THE MODERN BODY
Emese Lafferton

Department of Gender Studies
Level: Master's
Course Status: Elective
CEU credits: 2
ECTS credits:
Academic year: 2015/2016
Semester: Fall
CEU Instructor(s): Emese Lafferton

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Do bodies have histories? How are modern bodies different? It is generally acknowledged that the human body and the everyday experience of embodiment was for a long time largely ignored in both classical historical scholarship and sociological theory. In the past decades, however, the history and sociology of the human body have emerged as distinct areas of study. The course provides an introduction to this comparatively new and growing field. It explores some of the ways in which the human body has been and is being used as a social and political resource in European societies. Chronologically, the course will focus upon the modern period from the 17th century on, though with some reference made to classical and medieval frameworks.

The course surveys how the making of the modern world transformed the everyday experience of our bodily existence, and concepts and images of the body. The lectures begin by exploring the sociogenesis of the 'civilized' body (the gradual historical evolvement of the self-disciplined modern wo/man with internalized values and inhibitions), and discuss how modern techniques of power (e.g. of bureaucracy, administration and institutions) produced 'docile', disciplined bodies through which surveillance of the body politic could be achieved. The course then examines how gender, racial and class differences were constructed through different scientific and political endeavors focused on the body in order to legitimate the social order or respond to social change. Our contemporary bodily experience is explored through the study of how consumerism has reshaped our attitudes to and uses of our bodies (including topics such as diet, exercise, body building, clothing, and plastic surgery). Finally, the social role of modern medicine is studied critically through the focus on how women and men’s bodies have been medicalized and related to pathology in medical knowledge and practices. Topics discussed in this section include, among others, bodily disabilities, illnesses and bodily experiences related to aging, and technological and moral issues concerning human reproduction and organ transplantation. The course is intended to be comparative, both geographically and chronologically. The geographical focus will primarily be the western body (within the contexts of Europe and North America), with some additional discussion of the colonial body.
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The course develops a critical understanding of the complexity of the apparently obvious concept of the human body and the extent to which this seemingly pre-social biological entity is in fact socially constructed, experienced and regulated. It provides a comprehensive overview of the role of social and political changes in our shifting conceptions of and attitudes towards human bodies across time and place. The course provides familiarity with current research in the field and a range of historical and interdisciplinary approaches prevalent in the scholarship. It improves students’ sensitivity towards and ability to employ class, racial and gender categories in their analysis. Through discussing the key concepts and theoretical approaches in the history and sociology of the human body, students will be provided sophisticated insights into the sociology of knowledge and recent currents in the history of science.

Course requirements and assessment:

The course combines lectures (which introduce the intellectual and historical context, together with a wide range of material and methodological approaches) with seminars. Seminars include student presentations and the discussion of key issues based on the mandatory readings.

Students are expected to attend the seminars, read the assigned mandatory readings, and prepare two questions for each class based on the readings in order to help them actively participate in seminar discussions. Each student will be required to give at least one presentation (a c. 15 minute talk proposing issues to be discussed in the particular class meeting as gathered from the weekly readings), and to write a seminar paper.

There are two options concerning the seminar paper. Option 1: student writes a seminar paper which is between 3000-3500 words long (min. and max. length, including footnotes and bibliography). Option 2: Student writes a shorter paper, between 2000-2500 words long AND an appr. 2 pages long critical feedback on a peer's paper in writing. In each case, the topic for the seminar paper must be developed in consultation with the instructors. Exact submission deadlines and further details will be provided in due time.

The grade will emerge from the combination of the student presentation (10%), class activity (40%) and the seminar paper (50%).

Class Attendance:

Regular attendance is mandatory in all classes. A student who misses more than two units (two 100 min sessions) in any 2 or 4 credit class without a verified reason beyond the student's control must submit an 8-10 page paper assigned by the Professor which as a rule should cover the material in the missed class. The paper is due no later than 3 weeks after the missed class.
COURSE STRUCTURE

Week 1., Body Politic(s) I: Images of the Body and Images of Society

Week 2: The Sociogenesis of the Modern Body I: Bodies Closed and Civilized

Week 3: The Sociogenesis of the Modern Body II: Bodies Disciplined and Docile

Week 4: Constructing Difference I: Sexual Difference and Gender Politics

Week 5: Constructing Difference II: Racial Difference and the Colonized Other

Week 6: The Consumerized Body I.: Self-mastery and Learned Anxiety: Refashioning the Body

Week 7: The Consumerized Body II: Reconstructive and Aesthetic/Elective Surgery

Week 8: The Medicalized Body I: Fragile and Disabled Bodies

Week 9: The Medicalized Body II: The Aging Body

Week 10: The Medicalized Body III: The Dead Body and Organ Transplantation

Week 11. The Medicalized Body IV: The Reproductive Body

Week 12: Relevant current issues based on student interest
**Week 1., Body Politic(s) I: Images of the Body and Images of Society**

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


**Week 2: The Sociogenesis of the Modern Body I: Bodies Closed and Civilized**

Mandatory readings:


Recommended (not mandatory!) readings:


Additional readings:


Week 3: The Sociogenesis of the Modern Body II: Bodies Disciplined and Docile

Mandatory readings:

Recommended (not mandatory!) readings:

Additional readings:

Week 4: Constructing Difference I: Sexual Difference and Gender Politics

Mandatory readings:

Additional readings:
Week 5: Constructing Difference II: Racial Difference and the Colonized Other

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


Week 6: The Consumerized Body I.: Self-mastery and Learned Anxiety: Refashioning the Body

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


**Week 7: The Consumerized Body II: Reconstructive and Aesthetic/Elective Surgery**

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


**Week 8: The Medicalized Body I: Fragile and Disabled Bodies**

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


**Week 9: The Medicalized Body II: The Aging Body**

Mandatory readings:


Additional readings:


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**Week 10: The Medicalized Body III: The Dead Body and Organ Transplantation**

Mandatory:

Listen to the first 16 minutes to podcast with Margaret Lock:

http://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/how-to-think-about-science-part-3-1.465009


Additional readings:


**Week 11. The Medicalized Body IV: The Reproductive Body**

Mandatory readings:

Additional readings:

**Week 12: Relevant current issues based on student interest**

Brief student presentations.