\*\*\* This Syllabus is Subject to Change\*\*\*

Course Syllabus

**Feminist Biopolitics and Cultural Practice**

Winter 2016-17, MA, 4 Credits | Tue Thu 3:30-5:10, Z412

Hyaesin Yoon

Email: YoonH@ceu.edu

Office: Zrinyi 14, 510A

Office Hours: TBA

What do memorial displays for those who died from AIDS tell us about public mourning as a political measure of the (disavowed) sexuality? How might performances of dancers and other artists with disabilities challenge the normative perception of gendered and racialized desire/desirability? How do bio-artistic, cinematic, scientific rendering of “life” reanimate certain mode of life? How do the relationship between women and other animals in the circuits of biotechnology is re-imagined in some feminist literature and philosophy? This course examines how the biopolitical operations im/materialize through various forms of cultural practice – especially at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, species, and disability. For the purpose, this course enters the conversation between feminist and queer theories and the theories of biopolitics, which traditionally concern the relavance of the biological life/death (and what exceeds such dichotomous conceptualization) to the realms of the political. We will pay particular attention to the entwinement between the biological, technological, and cultural as an important constituent of biopolitics, as most dramatically shown in – but not limited to – the emergence of bioarts and biomedia. From this perspective, the course explores a number of sites of cultural practice including bioart, eating (and starving), performance, tattoo, biometrics, prosthetics, reproductive technology, and graphic medicine as sites of feminist criticisms and creative interventions.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Students will familiarize themselves with the major concepts and arguments in biopolitical theories, and their connections to and implications for gender studies in particular and critical theories in general.
* Students will better understand and be able to analyze some of the important ways in which biopolitical power relations substantiate and operate through cultural practices in the contemporary world.
* Students will be able to experiment with transdisciplinary theories and methods in order to engage with various forms of cultural practice, such as dance, bioart, cloning, and biometrics.
* Students will improve their skills in analytical reading and writing, verbal discussion, and other forms of presentation.

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

1. Attendance and Participation (15%): Please complete the reading and screening assignment each week, and come to class on time and prepared for class discussion. Curiosity, humility, generosity, respect, and risk-taking are expected for our collective journey. Attendance is mandatory. Absences due to medical problems must be officially documented. Missing a class without an official document will negatively affect your grade, and missing more than three classes might result in failing the course.

2. Text Responses (40%): You are required to write four text responses on the assigned readings and other materials. A TR is 500-600 words long, and should be posted under the corresponding weekly thread *by 10pm the day before the relevant class*. The purpose of TR is to think about the texts, to articulate your questions, interpretations, and critiques, and to share them with other participants. A TR is expected to demonstrate your analytic engagement with the texts – more than simple summaries or criticisms based on an already-assumed position of truth and/or justice. You are encouraged to read your colleagues’ responses before we meet. These response papers won’t receive extensive written comments, but will be incorporated into class discussions.

3. Conference presentation and response (20%): You will give a presentation that is directly relevant to your upcoming term paper (10%). You are welcome to present the work-in-progress that you are developing into the paper, but you may also present a media, art, or performance project that will be complemented by the paper. The point of the class conference is to have the opportunity to share your work and offer collective input into each other’s projects. Therefore, your responses to fellow students’ presentation are also important contributions to the conference and will be factored into the grade (10%).

4. Term Paper (25%): You will write a term paper (around 2000 words) on a topic of your choice that is directly relevant to the theme of the course. The term paper is not a standard research paper, and should demonstrate conceptual, methodological, and epistemological engagement with the course materials and discussion. You may write the paper as part of a larger research project of yours, but you should nonetheless focus on course materials in a significant manner.

**Course Policies and Logistics**

1. Please turn off or silence all cell phones before class begins (vibration-mode does *not* constitute turning off). I also have a no-laptop, no-tablet, no-recording policy during class discussions, so that we can fully engage with and pay attention to other participants. However, if you need a laptop (or any other device) for disability-related or other meaningful reasons, you’re welcome to use it; just let me know in advance.

2. I’d like everyone to visit my office hours at least once during the semester and encourage more visits. These meetings are to go over classroom discussions, assignments, and any other thoughts you might have related to the course. You’re welcome to come in small groups as well as individually. To reserve a time slot during my office hours, use the sign-up sheet on my office door without prior communication. Open time slots are available for drop-ins during the office hours. If you have conflicting class schedule with my regular office hours, please send me an e-mail to set an appointment.

3. I’ll be communicating with you by e-mail during the term, and you’re responsible for knowing what is in those emails. You may write me at YoonH@ceu.edu; please use the subject line “[Feminist Biopolitics]” or there is a good chance that I’ll loose your email.

4. If you have any disability-related needs, please discuss them with me ASAP. Access needs can be shared with the class without shame. We, as a learning community, will try to support each other’s access needs.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1. The Birth of Biopolitics and Tactical Media**

Jan 10 Course Introduction

Jan 12 • Michel Foucault, lecture eleven (17 March 1976), in *“Society Must Be Defended”: Lectures at the Collège De France 1975-1976* (Picador, 2003).

• Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip, “Introduction,” and subRosa, “Common Knowledge and Political Love,” in da Costa and Philip ed. *Tactical Biopolitics* (MIT Press, 2008).

**Week 2. Practices of Body/Technology**

Jan 17 • Karen Barad, “Agential Realism: Feminist Interventions in Understanding Scientific Practices,” in Mario Biagioli ed. *The Science Studies Reader* (Routledge, 1999).

\* suggested reading: Ilya Parkins, “Building a Feminist Theory of Fashion,” Austrian Feminist Studies 23 (58), 2008.\*

Jan 19 • Nikki Sullivan, “The Somatechnics of Bodily Inscription: Tattooing,” *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 10 (3), 2009.

• Shoshana Magnet, “Biometric Failure,” *When Biometrics Fail* (Duke, 2011).

**Week 3. Bare Life and Work of Water**

Jan 24 • Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer* (Stanford University Press, 1998), excerpts.

Jan 26 • Alexander G. Weheliye, “Pornotropes,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 7(1), 2008.

• Suvendrini Perera, “Oceanic corpo-graphies, Refugee Bodies and the Making and Unmaking of Waters,” *Feminist Review* 103, 2013.

**Week 4. Horizons of Death**

Jan 31 • Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15 (1), 2003.

Feb 2 • Lauren Berlant, “Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, and Lateral Agency),” *Critical Inquiry* 33 (4), 2007.

\* suggested reading: Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive,” *Narrative* 6 (1), 1998.

**Week 5. Precarity of Life and Elegiac Politics**

Feb 7 • Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” “Precarious Life,” *Precarious Life* (New York: Verso, 2006)*.*

Feb 9 • Sarah Lochlann Jain, “Living in Prognosis: Toward and Elegiac Politics,” *Representations* 98 (1), 2007.

• Michelle Dizon, Ex Utero (2015), in-class screening.

**Week 6. Immunitary Paradigm**

Feb 14 • Ed Cohen, “Myself as an Other: on Autoimmunity and ‘Other’ Paradoxes,” *Medical Humanities* 30 (7-11), 2004.

• Roberto Esposito, “Community, Immunity, Biopolitics,” *Angelaki* 18(3), 201

Feb 16 • Shoshana Magnet and Corinne Mason, “Of Trojan Horses and Terrorist Representations: Mom Bombs, Cross-Dressing Terrorists, and Other Queer Orientalisms,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 39 (2), 2014.

**Week 7. Bodies, Forces, and Affect**

Feb 21 • Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (Columbia University Press, 1982), excerpts.

• Elspeth Probyn, “Eating Disgust, Feeding Shame,” *Carnal Appetites* (Routledge, 2003).

Feb 23 •Rosi Braidotti, “The Politics of Life as Bios/Zoe”

• José Esteban Muñoz, “Vitalism’s After Burn: The Sense of Ana Mendieta,” in *Women and Performance* 21 (2), 2011.

**Week 8. Trans-species Entanglements and Rendering “Life”**

Feb 28 • Charis Thompson Cussins, “Confessions of a Bioterrorist: Subject Position and Reproductive Technologies,” *Playing Dolly* (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

• Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, “The Ethics of Experiential Engagement with the Manipulation of Life,” *Tactical Biopolitics*; *Tissue Culture and Art Project* website: http://www.tca.uwa.edu.au/.

Mar 2 • Beatriz Preciado, “Pharmaco-Pornographic Politics,” *Parallax* 14 (1), 2008.

• Michelle Murphy, “Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency,” *The Scholar & Feminist Online* 11 (3), 2013.

**Week 9. *SinsInvalid and Crip Theory***

Mar 7 • *SinsInvalid:Un Ashamed Claim to Beauty* (film, 2013), in-class screening.

• Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Ablebodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence,” in Lennard J. Davis ed. *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2006).

Mar 9 • Jasbir Puar, “Bodies with New Organs: Becoming Trans, Becoming Disabled,” Social Texts 33 (3), 2015.

**Week 10. Gender and Aging**

Mar 14 • readings on Alzheimer, TBA

Mar 16 • readings form *Poetic Biopolitics*, TBA.

**Week 11. Conference A**

Mar 21 Presentations

Mar 23 Presentations

**Week 12. Conference B**

Mar 28 Presentations

Mar 30 Presentations

**\*\*\* Final Paper Due on 7th April \*\*\***