WOMEN AND THE BODY
SC089
Fall 2011
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Course Description

This course addresses the socio-cultural construction of the female body and addresses the issue of “anatomy as destiny” through an examination of biological and sociological literature on this topic. We will address women’s self-esteem and the factors that serve to enhance or detract from women feeling good about their physical bodies. We will also focus on race, class, health, and sexuality and discuss issues of power and authority over women's bodies.

I employ a feminist pedagogy that includes short lectures, classroom and small group discussions, group projects. We will enhance the course with a variety of multimedia data (including films, images, and YouTube clips) to illuminate specific topics addressed throughout the readings.

Course Objectives

1. To provide students with a sociological understanding of women's bodies and to address how the female body is socially and historically constructed.
   a. Breakdown ideologies of sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, and ageism as they pertain to women’s embodiment.
   b. Assess socio-biological arguments regarding women’s bodies.
   c. Develop a historical understanding of how women’s bodies have been shaped and reshaped by the political economy and mass media.
2. To develop an understanding of the ways in which body image is increasingly an extension of women’s self-identity.
3. To develop research skills in content analysis of multi-media data as a method for understanding the objectification of the female body.
4. To understand the etiology of disordered eating and eating disorders.
5. To challenge stereotypical messages about women’s bodies by questioning and challenging our own standpoint through developing a wider appreciation and understanding of “difference.”
6. To apply knowledge in the classroom beyond academia into activism toward social justice goals.
7. To assist students with their writing skills through faculty and peer evaluations of writing and to encourage undergraduate students to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals.

Course Requirements

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<th>Class Participation</th>
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<td>Note Cards</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Course Exams</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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See the next page for more detailed assignment information.

Late Assignments

All papers must be handed in at the start of the class period. Please do not hand in your paper or give your paper to someone else to hand in. No email attachments of papers are accepted. 5 percent will be deducted from your assignment grade for each day the assignment is late. No exceptions or extensions will be granted except in cases of documented emergencies.

Academic Integrity:
Students need to be aware and practice academic integrity in their work. Please visit the B.C. academic integrity website for more information. [http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html](http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html).

Students are expected to be aware of exactly what it means to plagiarize their work (for instance using someone else’s words, ideas without adequate attribution) Also: Be sure that you don’t submit the work of one course to another without the explicit permission of the instructors teaching these courses.

Classroom Environment

I would like to have a classroom that is open to differing points of view. When a peer is talking, I would appreciate it very much if you listen and do not engage in other activities that will take away from your ability to fully listen to others. Let’s make our class a safe space of respect and intellectual creativity!

Students are expected to come to class on time and not leave until class is finished.

Assignments

Class Participation (15%)

Your participation is vital to our course. Excused absences are given only in cases of documented emergencies or sickness. You must arrive on time ready for class, and please turn off your cell phones. Two (2) participation points will be deducted for each missed class.

Please come to class with the readings for that day. Our course will be structured around discussion these readings.

For each class period, you are also required to bring one 3x5 index card on which you write:

- Your name
- One (1) specific discussion question (be sure to cite what specific reading/s prompted that question)
- Two (2) quotes from the readings—one you particularly resonated with in a positive way, and one you disagreed with.

Be prepared to state your opinion regarding these two quotes during class discussion.

I have found that when students hand in an index card it is a great way to promote a more focused classroom discussion of the readings especially when students quote material from the readings that they resonated with or strongly disagreed with. It is the tension in engaging with new ideas that learning takes place. The index cards are also an important way to engage with the readings as well as to share that engagement with the class.

We will collect index cards at the beginning of class and choose several to start the discussion off. Index cards will be collected right when class starts and I will not accept cards after that. Please bring a duplicate card if you want to refer to your information during our class discussion. Points will be deducted for missing cards.

You must also prepare four 4 additional note cards (2 for the midterm and 2 for the final). As you go through the readings, make 4 index cards with one (1) term or concept from the readings. Write your last name on the front, lower right-hand corner of the card. Provide a definition of the term and give an example of its use from the course readings. Be sure to cite the reading and page number.

You are also expected to attend several outside speaker events that will be announced during the semester.

Book Review (15%)

Length: 3-4 pages
Due: The day your book is assigned for reading in class

You have a choice of which book you would like to review:

- Hesse-Biber, The Cult of Thinness
- Knapp, Appetites: Why Women Want
- Rodriguez, Kabul Beauty School: An American Woman Goes Behind the Veil
- Sharpley-Whiting, Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women
- Pascoe, Dude, You're a Fag
At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for the book you would like to review. I want to divide the book reviews so that at least four students cover each book, in order to have a panel discussion for each book. I will hold you to working on the book review for the assigned day, since we expect you to specifically discuss the book in class and your specific ideas/thesis regarding this book will be vital to our classroom discussion.

Contained within your review should be answers to the following:

1. What is the thesis or general argument of this book? In this question, address the forest, not the trees. What larger issue concerns this author?
2. Why is this issue relevant to our course? Be sure to tie in at least 2 to 3 other course readings that show a connection to this reading.
3. How well does the author support her argument?

Tips for Reading the Books: My strong advice before doing this assignment is not to wait until the last minute. You need time to focus on each author’s ideas/argument. Therefore read in segments and take notes after each segment: What did you find interesting? How does the author make her point? (Write a short summary/memo about each segment that you can use later for your review.) Be sure to take notes on the specific information you will need to answer ALL the book review questions. As you read over your review be sure to make sure you include material that will answer the three questions required for the book review.

Course Exams (40%)
There will be a midterm and final each worth 20% of your final grade.

You will be given a study guide ahead of time with 8-10 questions and 15 terms to study. I will select 2 questions and 3 terms out of those on the guide for the midterm, and 3 questions and 8 terms for the final.

The midterm will be October 11 during class.
The final will be December 15 at 12:30PM (our classroom)

Final Paper (30%): Gender, Justice, and Women’s Bodies
Length: 12-15 pages (including references)

Paper Deadlines:

November 15 Paper draft is due.
November 29 Feedback from Instructor
December 6 Paper Abstract (Name, title and summary of paper)
            Hand in beginning of class (250 words or less)
December 8 Final paper due handed in beginning of class. NO EXCEPTIONS

All papers must be handed in at the start of class. Late papers will not be accepted.

This term paper requires you to select one current problem/issue with regard to the general area of “women and the body” that you feel needs to be tackled or addressed. Discuss what strategies and potential solutions you feel have been useful in moving towards a resolution of this problem, and how you would address this issue in your own community.

State your research problem. You are to use:
- At least 5 current event sources (newspaper, web news, etc.) that define the problem and the extent of this problem. To what extent do they discuss any solutions? If so, what type/s of solutions? Be sure to assess the credibility of these media/news articles.
- At least 4 academic (peer-reviewed) journal articles (not discussed in this class) published in 2008 or later. What research has been done on this problem and what are their findings? What solutions are addressed?

Please use the following research paper rubric in putting together your paper:

1) Define the problem you are interested in solving that deals with women and the body
2) Summarize what you have learned from the current events/media articles and describe how these articles alerted you to the problem and whether or not they suggest solutions. Address the solutions and evaluate them.

3) Summarize four (4) academic journal articles not from this course. How do they address the issue you are interested in and any solutions regarding this problem? Critically evaluate these articles in terms of their overall usefulness to you in understanding the problem and solutions to the problem. Be specific in your evaluation (here you might discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article). Do not use extensive quotes from these articles when summarizing them, but use your own words.

4) In your paper, envision an “action-plan”: what you might do to redress the problem. What can a larger entity (an organization, public or private) do to address this problem? In answering this fourth part of your paper, assess the feasibility of your solution and your organization’s solution to this problem. Be sure to consider issues of cost. What could go wrong? Be sure to address issues of difference among women with regard to race/class/ethnicity/sexual orientation in your implementation for social change.

In addition, you can draw on the readings, YouTube clips and books from class in answering your research problem and its solution.

NOTE: All work must be 12 pt font New Times Roman, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Use APA format. I will provide you with the specifics on this in a class handout.
Class Schedule: Topics and Required Reading
Note: The schedule and readings may change as we move through the course.
*All articles (asterisked) are available on Blackboard.

Tuesday, September 6th. Introduction to Course: The Politics of Women’s Bodies
-Weitz Chapter 1-A History of Women’s Bodies (Weitz)

Thursday, September 8th. Cultural and Scientific Constructions of the Body
-Weitz: Chapter 2 –Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology (Lorber)
- Weitz: Chapter 3- Becoming a Gendered Body (Martin)

Tuesday, September 13th. Cultural and Scientific Constructions of the Body
-Weitz: Chapter 20
-*Messner, Michael A. 2007 “Barbie Girls Versus Sea Monsters”

NOTE: Drop/add period ends on Wednesday, September 14th

Thursday, September 15th. The Disciplined Body
-Weitz: Chapter 5 –Affronting Reason (Chase)
- Weitz: Chapter 6- Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power (Bartky).

Tuesday, September 20th. Feminist Theories and the Body: Understanding Embodied Practices
-Weitz , Chapter 12 “ Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling (Young)
-Weitz, Chapter14 Women and their Hair Seeking Power through resistance and Accommodation (Weitz).

Thursday, September 22nd. Taking into Account Differences Among Women

*Hesse-Biber et. al. “Racial identity and body image among Black female college students attending predominately White colleges”

Begin Reading:  -Hesse-Biber, *The Cult of Thinness*: chapters 1-4

Tuesday, September 27th. *Cult of Thinness: Mass Mediated Images and The Cultural Pressures to be Thin*

-Finish The Cult of Thinness; discussion and presentation of the book Panel Today.

-Weitz: Chapter 4 Women and Medicalization (Riessman)

-*Martin, Emily. 1999. “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-
Begin Reading -Loomer, The Waiting Room: Pages 1-40

Tuesday, October 4th. *The Waiting Room*

-Finish The Waiting Room; panel discussion of The Waiting Room

Thursday, October 6th : *Alteration of the Female Body: Cosmetic Surgery, Tattooing and Body Piercing*

-*Weitz: Chapter 13 Designing Women: Cultural Hegemony and the Exercise of Power Among Women Who Have Undergone Elective Mammoplasty (Gagne and McGaughey).
*Adams, Josh” Bodies of Change: A comparative Analysis of Media Representations of Body Modification Practices “

Tuesday, October 11th. **MIDTERM EXAM**

Thursday, October 13th. *Alteration of the Female Body: Cosmetic Surgery ( continued)*

- Weitz, Chapter 18. Reclaiming the Female Body: Women Body Modifiers and Feminist Debates (Pitts)
-*Davis, Simone Weil. 2007. “Designer Vaginas”

Tuesday, October 18th. *The Body and Violence Against Women*

-Weitz, Chapter 22 Till Death Us Do Part (Wilson and Daly)


Thursday, October 20\textsuperscript{th}. \textit{Violence Against Women, continued}


-*Gross, Alan et al. 2006. “An Examination of Sexual Violence Against College Women”

-*Kahn, Arnold. 2007. “What College Women Do and Do Not Experience as Rape”

Tuesday, October 25\textsuperscript{th}. Is Biology Destiny: Somatotyping Bodies and Human Behavior


Begin Reading -Sharpley-Whiting, Pimps Up, Ho’s Down: Chapters 1-4

Thursday, October 27\textsuperscript{th}. \textit{Pimps Up, Ho’s Down, continued}

-Pimps Up, Ho’s Down: finish reading; panel presentation

Tuesday, November 1\textsuperscript{st}. \textit{The Marking of Race & Sexual Orientation on the Body}


Weitz, Chapter 19. From the “Muscle Moll” to the "Butch" Ballplayer (Cahn)

-*Vertinsky, Patricia. 1998. “More Myth Than History: American Culture and Representation of the Black Female’s Athletic Ability”

Thursday, November 3\textsuperscript{rd}. Marking Race continued

Film Screening: The Life And Times Of Sara Baartman: The Hottentot Venus


Weitz Chapter 9 “Get Your Freak On”: Sex, Babies and Images of Black Femininity. (Hill Collins)

Tuesday, November 8\textsuperscript{th}. Middle Eastern Women and the Veil


-Rodriguez, Kabul Beauty School: Chapters 1-4

Thursday, November 10\textsuperscript{th}. \textit{Kabul, Beauty School}

-Finish the book Kabul Beauty School; panel presentation today
Tuesday, November 15th. **Constructing Ethnic Bodies:**
*Latina, and Asian Women*


Weitz, Chapter 10 Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture. (Guzman and Valdivia)

  -Chapter 4: The Latina Mystique
  -Chapter 7: How Latina are You?*

Thursday, November 17th. **Sexualizing of the Female Body**

Weitz, Chapter 7. “Menarche and the (Hetero) sexualization of the Female Body (Lee)
Weitz, Chapter 8. Daring to Desire: Culture and the Bodies of Adolescent Girls. (Tolman)
-White, Emily Fast Girls: Teenage Tribes and the Myth of the Slut
  Chapters 1-6

Tuesday, November 22nd. **The Social Construction of the Teenage Slut**

-White, Emily: Finish Book for Today, Panel Discussion

**Thursday, November 24th: NO CLASS**

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

Tuesday, November 29th: **The Body and Women’s Reproductive Rights**

-*Silliman, Jael “Women of Color and their Struggle for Reproductive Justice”*

-Knapp, *Appetites: Why Women Want*-- Chapters 1-4

Thursday, December 1st. **Women & Food: Appetites Panel Presentation**

- Finish Appetites; panel presentation today
- Pascoe, Dude, *You’re a Fag*: read first half of book

Tuesday, December 6th. **Men and Masculinity: Dude, You’re a Fag,**

- Finish Dude, You’re a Fag; panel presentation

Thursday, December 8th. **Paper Abstract Presentations**

- Final paper due
- Class presentations of paper abstracts

**Tuesday, December 15th. FINAL EXAM  GOOD LUCK!  CARNEY 103 (OUR CLASSROOM)**