

# Body Studies

**Thu 11:00-12:30 R356**  
**Instructor: Prof. Enikő Bollobás**

This is a course surveying contemporary reflections on the cultural meaning of the body. We will read and discuss foundational texts on the following topics: body and soul, body and power; bodies male and female; techniques and languages of the body; bodies in consumer culture; dressing the body: clothing, fashion, dress codes; bodies and size; body and beauty; bodies and identities; the medicalization of the body; technologies of gender and race; “normalcy” and disability.

The REQUIRED READINGS have been collected in a PACKET available for xeroxing.

Grades will be based on (i) class participation, (ii) one book presentation, and (iii) the written exam.

*Reading the assigned texts.* Students are required to come prepared for class: having read their assignments for the day, they must be able to understand the texts (know the words as well as the main theses and arguments), remember details, and formulate their critical comments. When students do not read the assigned texts, they will be required to hand in the outline, no more than one page for each text, of the assigned readings for the following class.

*Active participation, visibility.* Be visible. Mere physical presence, even when you have read the assignments, is not enough: you have to prove your skills in reading, analysis, and argument in class discussions.

## **BOOK PRESENTATION**

In this 15-20 minute presentation you should

- (i) clarify the main theses of the text, find their originality and significance;
- (ii) explore the various arguments that support these theses, and
- (iii) You can be very creative and imaginative in adding your own findings (research, experience) to the theses of the essay.

You can use your notes while giving your presentation, but cannot read out complete sentences from them. Be sure to rehearse your presentation at home so that you know how long it is.

## Schedule of classes and assignments\*

### 1. Body studies (intro lecture)

### 2. Embodiment and the self (intro lecture)

### 3. What are bodies? Body and soul, body and power

Read: Elizabeth Grosz, “Refiguring Bodies” (PACKET)  
Mary Douglas, “The Two Bodies” (PACKET)

### 4. Presentations

John Berger et al., *Ways of Seeing* (1972)

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

The Boston Women’s Health Book Collective, *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1984)

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Bodies male and female I

Read: Carol M. Armstrong, “Edgar Degas and the Representation of the Female Body”

Presentations (two max.):

\*Kenneth Clark, *The Nude – A Study of Ideal Art* (1956)

Götz Eckhardt, *A női szépség az európai festészetben* (1970/1971)

Susan Bordo, *The Male Body* (1999)

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STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Bodies male and female II

Read: Ludmilla Jordanova, “Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality”

Presentations (three max.):

Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (1992)

\*Norma Broude & Mary D. Garrard (eds.), *The Expanding Discourse—Feminism and Art History*

\*Richard Leppert, *The Nude—The Cultural Rhetoric of the Body* (2007)

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\* Readings marked with an asterisk are to be taken by upper-level students.

**7. Techniques and languages of the body**

Read: Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body”

Erving Goffman, “Embodied Information in Face-to-Face Interaction”

Presentations (two max.):

\*Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender—Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (1987)

\*Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (1994) (esp. Ch.6, “The Body as Inscriptive Surface”)

*Orshi Drozdik, Adventure and Appropriation* (a Hungarian artist’s response to the masculinist corporeal regime)

\*Norma Broude & Mary G. Garrard, *Reclaiming Female Agency—Feminist Art after Postmodernism* (2005)

Allan and Barbara Pease, *Body Language* (2006)

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**8. Bodies in consumer culture, dressing the body: clothing, fashion, dress codes**

Read: Jean Baudrillard, “The Finest Consumer Object: The Body”

Presentations (two max.):

George B. Spores and Leslie Davis Burns, *Changing Appearance – Understanding Dress in Contemporary Society* (1989)

Susan Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing—Symbolic Appearances in Context* (1997)

Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication* (1996/2000)

Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Body Dressing* (2001)

Ruth P. Rubinstein, *Dress Codes* (2001)

Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion* (2004/2006)

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STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Bodies and size, body and beauty**

Read: Nicky Diamond, “Thin Is the Feminist Issue”

Noella Caskey, “Interpreting Anorexia Nervosa”

Presentations (three max.):

Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (1991)

\*Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (1993)

Virginia L. Blum, *Flesh Wounds—The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery* (2005)

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**10. “Normalcy” and disability; the medicalization of the body; body and race**

Read: Lannard J. Davis, “Visualizing the Disabled Body: The Classical Nude and the Fragmented Torso”

Ellen L. Bassuk, “The Rest Cure: Repetition or Resolution of Victorian Women’s Conflicts?”

Presentations (two max.):

\*Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, Sally Shuttleworth (eds.), *Body/Politics—Women and the*  
James Allen, et al. (eds.), *Without Sanctuary. Lynching Photography in America* (2000)

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. IN-CLASS WRITTEN EXAM**

**11. Grade books signed**

**PACKET OF READINGS**

1. Elizabeth Grosz, "Refiguring Bodies." *The Body—A Reader*. 47-51.
2. Mary Douglas, "The Two Bodies." *The Body—A Reader*. 78-81.
3. Carol M. Armstrong, "Edgar Degas and the Representation of the Female Body." *The Female Body in Western Culture—Contemporary Perspectives*. 223-242.
4. Ludmilla Jordanova, "Natural Facts: A Historical Perspective on Science and Sexuality." *Feminist Theory and the Body—A Reader*. 157-168.
5. Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body." *The Body—A Reader*. 73-77.
6. Erving Goffman, "Embodied Information in Face-to-Face Interaction." *The Body—A Reader*. 82-86.
7. Jean Baudrillard, "The Finest Consumer Object: The Body." *The Body—A Reader*. 277-282.
8. Nicky Diamond, "Thin Is the Feminist Issue." *The Body—A Reader*. 115-116.
9. Noella Caskey, "Interpreting Anorexia Nervosa." *The Female Body in Western Culture—Contemporary Perspectives*. 175-189.
10. Lannard J. Davis, "Visualizing the Disabled Body: The Classical Nude and the Fragmented Torso." *The Body—A Reader*. 167-181.
11. Ellen L. Bassuk, "The Rest Cure: Repetition or Resolution of Victorian Women's Conflicts?" *The Female Body in Western Culture—Contemporary Perspectives*. 139-151.

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The following anthologies have been used:

1. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco, eds. *The Body—A Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2005.
2. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds. *Feminist Theory and the Body—A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
3. Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed. *The Female Body in Western Culture—Contemporary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985.