Course Description:

This course samples some of the scholarship about bodies and sexualities and their multiple contexts. The readings and our discussions focus on a multitude of theoretical perspectives, sources and methods of analysis, and perhaps most important, significant questions, both today and in prior years. What are bodies, and how are they framed, constructed, deployed? How do we get beyond the materialist-discursive binary, as well as other categoricals (e.g., representation, subject and object, text and template, icon and commodity) and the limits of the ever-growing list of dimensions of cultural identity that we claim are shaped in and by the body and sexuality? What are the intellectual significations we do, can, and might attribute to bodies and sexualities, as well as the contexts, complications, and cultural ways of real bodies in real life and real cultural contests? What analytical resources (e.g., metaphors, concepts, theories, methods) need fleshed out or developed so that we might understand the body in different ways and more fully. What kinds of questions about bodies and sexualities haven’t we even asked yet, and how might we go about generating “new” knowledge (if there is such a thing) about bodies and sexualities and, thus, culture and society?

I have intentionally drawn the readings from many disciplines and interdisciplinary fields, and I have also selected works that offer varied premises, perspectives, and problematics. In conjunction with what you all bring to the table, this selection strategy will, hopefully, help us come to grips with both what scholars know and what we do not know.

Special Note: I will say up front that Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* (vols. 1-2) and Judith Butler’s *Bodies That Matter* are critical texts that underlie much contemporary thinking about bodies and sexualities. If you are not conversant with both works, please become so quickly!

Course Schedule:

*Jan. 28 – Introductions, Issues of Knowledge Production, Focus & Possibilities, Interests & Questions*
Feb. 4 – Thinking Broadly About the Body/Bodies
All read:

Select two:

Feb. 11 – Thinking About Sexuality/Sexualities
All read:
Select two:

Feb. 18 – Bodies, Sexualities, & the State
All read:

Select one:
Feb. 25 – Resistance, Crossing Boundaries, Queering the State

All read:

Roderick Ferguson, Aberrations in Black. Toward a Queer of Color Critique (University of Minnesota Press, 2004), pp. 1-29.


Shannon Winnubst, Queering Freedom (Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 23-57

Select one:


Mar. 4 – The Cultural Work of “Other” Bodies

All read:


Select one:


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**Mar. 11 – Body Cultures**

All read:


Select one:


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**Mar. 18 – Spring Break**

**Mar. 25 – Body & Affect**

All read:


Select one:
Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism,” *Differences* 17 (Fall 2006):20-36.

**Apr. 1 – Technologies, Bodies, Sexualities**
All read:
Judith Halberstam, “Technotopias: Representing Transgender Bodies in Contemporary Art,” in *In a Queer Time and Place*, pp. 97-124.

Select one:

**Apr. 8 – Cyborgs, Virtual Bodies, & the Internet**
All read:
Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*
(Routledge, 1990), pp. 149-82.

Select two:

**Apr. 15 – Thinking Transnationally**

**All read:**

**Select one:**
Michelle V. Rowley, *Feminist Advocacy and Gender Equity in the Anglophone Caribbean. Envisioning a*

**Apr. 22 – Body, Sexuality, & Citizenship**  
**All read:**  

**Select one:**  

**April 29 -- Sex Work & Sex Trafficking**  
**All read:**  
Alicja Jac-Kucharski, “The Determinants of Human Trafficking: A US Case Study,”

Select one:

May 6, 13 – Presentations of Research Proposals

Course Requirements:

1. Weekly, insightful participation in the discussions (30% of course grade).
2. Construct four week-based critical syntheses (all the readings, each of four weeks). These should be uploaded to our Canvas course site by Sunday noon preceding the Monday on which we discuss a given week’s readings. (30%)
3. Complete a research proposal that, once completed, will become the basis for a scholarly article or a dissertation/thesis chapter (c. 20 pages min., typed, double spaced, footnotes or endnotes; 40%). Oral presentation in class; final written version due Sunday, May 19, 12 noon. I expect that the paper will, at a minimum, do the following: (a) introduce and situate the topic, (b) include appropriate and adequate framing/theorizing, (c) discuss pertinent literature and situate/derive research questions from the literature (flaccid literature reviews are not acceptable), (d) lay out and discuss your research questions, and (e) identify and discuss sources/evidence and research methods/strategies.