

SOC 189a: SOCIOLOGY OF BODY AND HEALTH
Brandeis University
Fall 2009

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OVERVIEW

We typically think of the human body as a fixed biological reality; however, the body also constructs and is constructed by profound social and cultural forces. The body may serve as a vehicle for self expression, resistance, or power; it may also function as an object of social control or subjugation. Using the perspective of medical sociology in this course, we develop an analytical understanding of the body and health in contemporary society. This course draws heavily on three perspectives on the body, as outlined by Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987): 1) the individual body, or the phenomenological embodied life experience; 2) the social body, which symbolically articulates relationships between nature, society, and culture; and 3) the body politic, that is, the (individual and collective) body that functions as an object of regulation, surveillance, and social and political control. This course is designed for students to develop a critical and analytical understanding of the body and its varied meanings in relation to health, illness, pathology, and medicine. Through various readings, films, and discussions, we will pay particular attention to how race, class, and gender shape, and are shaped by, social and cultural meanings of the body and health.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. 1998 [1997]. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Dworkin, Shari L. and Faye Linda Wachs. 2009. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York: New York University Press.
- Groce, Nora Ellen. 2003 [1985]. *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2007. *Surgery Junkies: Wellness and Pathology in Cosmetic Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Preves, Sharon. 2005 [2003]. *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

All other readings for the course are available on LATTE.

EVALUATION

10%	Attendance and Class Participation
15%	Response Papers (3 @ 5 points each)
25%	Midterm Exam
20%	Media Analysis Paper
30%	Final Exam

ASSIGNMENTS

Response Papers: During the course of the semester, you are required to turn in **three** response papers which address the set of readings for that week. Your paper should concisely summarize the key themes and/or arguments presented in the week's readings; following the brief summary, you should provide a critique or analysis of the reading in your own words. You may refer to other readings, personal examples, popular examples, or other sources to reinforce your point(s). You should engage directly with the readings and not simply reiterate information from lecture. You may choose which weeks to write response papers, but the paper should be handed in before or on the last class day of the week that the readings are being discussed. Late response papers will not be accepted. These papers should not exceed 2 pages each. Only excellent papers will receive full points.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will be handed out on Wednesday, October 7, and will be due one week later on October 14. The essay question(s) will address material covered in class Weeks 1-7. Late exams will not be accepted.

Media Analysis Paper: This paper will be completed outside of class and is due on Thursday, November 12. You are to find an article, either in print or online (using LexisNexis or the paper's online archive), from a reputable newspaper or news magazine (e.g., *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, etc.) that addresses an issue related to the body and health and write a brief essay about this article as informed by a sociological lens. The article you choose should allow you to answer the questions below. Your analysis should address, though is certainly not limited to, the following points:

- Briefly identify and describe the condition, illness, or health problem you have chosen. If there are population groups most affected by this illness, physical condition or health status, please describe this group (or groups).
- What are the biological factors that are important to understanding this condition or health status?
- What are the social factors or social processes that are important to understanding this condition of health status?
- How, if at all, do people with this condition (and their families) interact with the health care system? Are other social institutions important to the discussion of the body/health topic in the article?
- If you were given the task of editing or rewriting this piece, what suggestions or changes would you make? Would you emphasize aspects of this article differently?
- Use at least three relevant class readings to support your analysis. Provide proper citations for these readings.

This paper should be 5 pages, double-spaced, and please attach the news article to your essay.

Final Exam: The final exam is a take-home essay that will be handed out the last class day and will be due Wednesday, December 9, before noon. The question(s) will be broad and intended to tie together key themes or ideas about the sociology of the body and health. Late exams will not be accepted.

POLICIES

Attendance: This course covers a lot of material, and attendance to both lecture and discussion section is expected. You are also expected to bring readings, along with your notes on the readings, to class. Consistent absences will be noted and reflected in your final grade. Laptops are allowed but **ONLY** for taking notes or examining readings. Other observed uses of your laptop will result in a reduction of your overall participation grade.

Discussion Sections: Beginning with Week 4, on September 17, we will meet in discussion sections during class time each Thursday. Your section assignment and location will be announced in class and posted on LATTE prior to this first section. These smaller discussion sections will provide a fuller opportunity to contribute your thoughts, questions, and critiques. Participation in section is a key component of your grade, and your section leader will record both attendance and participation each week.

For both lecture and discussion section, you are expected to be respectful of others in class and to arrive on time. Turn off cell phones in lecture and in section.

Written Assignments: All written papers should be typed, double-spaced, using 11 or 12-pt. Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Papers must include page numbers, proper use of citations, and bibliographies. **I will NOT accept your assignments through e-mail. I only accept hard copies.** Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. The final essay is due on or before noon on December 9, 2009. For late papers, you will lose one full letter grade for each 24 hours after the due date (i.e., if you would have received an A but your paper is turned in within the first 24 hours after it is due, you will receive a B, etc.). Documented personal illness and personal/family emergencies constitute the only acceptable grounds for late papers. I do not give extra credit assignments.

Final grades will be calculated using the following distribution:

94-99	A	74-76	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	60-63	D-
77-79	C+	<63	F

Academic Integrity: In the academic setting it is critical that the work you present is original and that when you use outside sources you cite them appropriately. The Brandeis policy on academic integrity is available in Section 3 of the *Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* (available at <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/sdc/rr/>). Instances of suspected dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to failure in the course, failure on the assignment in question, suspension from the University and/or educational programs. If you have questions about plagiarism or academic standards of originality, please see me.

Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Thursday, Aug 27

Overview and Introduction

Week 2: Theorizing Bodies I

Monday, Aug 31

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." *The American Anthropologist* 58:503-507.

Available at URL: <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~thompsoc/Body.html>

Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs* 16:485-501.

Wednesday, Sept 2

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Margaret M. Lock. 1987. "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1:6-41.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 2005. "Refiguring Bodies." Pp. 47-51 in *The Body: A Reader*, edited by M. Fraser and M. Greco. New York: Routledge.

Thursday, Sept 3

Conrad, Peter. 1992. "Medicalization and Social Control." *Annual Review of Sociology* 18:209-232.

Becker, G. and R. D. Nachtigall. 1992. "Eager for Medicalisation: The Social Production of Infertility as a Disease." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 14:456-471.

Week 3: Theorizing Bodies II

Monday, Sept 7

No Class (Labor Day)

Wednesday, Sept 9
[Brandeis Monday]

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Touchstone Press.
Chapter 1: "Stigma and Social Identity"

Thursday, Sept 10

Foucault, Michel. 1990 [1978]. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by R. Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.
"Right of Death and Power over Life"

Nettleton, Sarah. 1994. "Inventing Mouths: Disciplinary Power and Dentistry." Pp. 73-88 in *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine and the Body*, edited by C. Jones and R. Porter. London: Routledge.

Week 4: Body, Self, and Identity – Body Projects

Monday, Sept 14

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. 1998 [1997]. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York: Vintage Books.
Introduction & Chapter 1

Wednesday, Sept 16
Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. 1998 [1997]. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York: Vintage Books.
Chapters 3 & 4

Thursday, Sept 17
Craig, Maxine Leeds. 2002. *Ain't I a Beauty Queen? Black Women, Beauty, and the Politics of Race*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Chapters 1 & 2

Discussion Sections Begin

Week 5: Body, Self, and Identity – Body Panic and Body Work

Monday, Sept 21
Dworkin, Shari L and Faye Linda Wachs. 2009. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York: New York University Press.
Chapters 1 & 2

Film: “Killing Us Softly 3” (2000)

Wednesday, Sept 23
Dworkin, Shari L and Faye Linda Wachs. 2009. *Body Panic: Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York: New York University Press.
Chapters 3 & 4

Thursday, Sept 24
Gimlin, Debra L. 2002. *Body Work: Beauty and Self-Image in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Chapter 2: “Aerobics: Neutralizing the Body and Renegotiating the Self”

Week 6: Bodies, Identities, and Society – Obesity and Eating Disorders in America

Monday, Sept 28
No Class (Yom Kippur)

Tuesday, Sept 29
[Brandeis Monday]
Saguy, A. C. and K. W. Riley. 2005. "Weighing both sides: Morality, mortality, and framing contests over obesity." *Journal of Health Politics Policy and Law* 30:869-921.

Recommended:

Saguy, A. C. and R. Almeling. 2008. "Fat in the fire? Science, the news media, and the "Obesity epidemic"." *Sociological Forum* 23:53-83.

Wednesday, Sept 30
Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. 2008 [2000]. "Anorexia Nervosa in Context." Pp. 112-126 in *Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives (8th ed.)*, edited by P. Conrad. New York: Worth Publishers.

Bordo, Susan. 2003 [1993]. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

“Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture”

Thursday, Oct 1 Lovejoy, Meg. 2001. "Disturbances in the social body - Differences in body image and eating problems among African American and white women." *Gender & Society* 15:239-261.

Week 7: Bodies and Medical Intervention – Making Sex and Gender

Monday, Oct 5 No Class (Sukkot)

Wednesday, Oct 7 Almeling, R. 2007. "Selling genes, selling gender: Egg agencies, sperm banks, and the medical market in genetic material." *American Sociological Review* 72:319-340.

Midterm exam will be handed out in class

Thursday, Oct 8 Elson, Jean. 2003. "Hormonal Hierarchy: Hysterectomy and Stratified Stigma." *Gender & Society* 17:750-770.

Gurevich, Maria, Scott Bishop, Jo Bower, Monika Malka, and Joyce Nyhof-Young. 2004. "(Dis)embodying gender and sexuality in testicular cancer." *Social Science & Medicine* 58:1597-1607.

Week 8: Bodies and Medical Intervention – Making Sex and Gender (continued)

Monday, Oct 12 Petersen, Alan. 1998. "Sexing the Body: Representations of Sex Differences in Gray's Anatomy, 1858 to the Present." *Body & Society* 4:1-15.

Film: "Sex: Unknown" (2001)

Wednesday, Oct 14 Preves, Sharon. 2005 [2003]. *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Chapters 1-3

Midterm Due

Thursday, Oct 15 Preves, Sharon. 2005 [2003]. *Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Chapters 4-6

Week 9: Bodies and Medicine – Sexual Dysfunction and Enhancement

Monday, Oct 19 Mamo, Laura and Jennifer R Fishman. 2001. "Potency in All the Right Places: Viagra as a Technology of the Gendered Body." *Body & Society* 7:13-35.

Loe, Meika. 2004. *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. New York: New York University Press.
Chapter 3: "Fixing the Broken Male Machine"

Wednesday, Oct 21 Hartley, Heather. 2003. "'Big Pharma' in our bedrooms: an analysis of the medicalization of women's sexual problems." Pp. 89-129 in *Gender Perspectives on Health and Medicine: Key Themes*, vol. Advances in Gender Research, v.7: Elsevier.

Thursday, Oct 22

Conrad, Peter and Deborah Potter. 2004. "Human growth hormone and the temptations of biomedical enhancement." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 26:184-215.

Gura, Trisha with Julie Goodman. 14 January 2009. "The Short End of the Stick" in *The Huffington Post*. Available at URL:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/trisha-gura/the-short-end-of-the-stic_b_157832.html

Week 10: Bodies, Identities, and Medical Intervention – Cosmetic Surgery

Monday, Oct 26

Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2007. *Surgery Junkies: Wellness and Pathology in Cosmetic Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Chapters 1 & 2 (skim Introduction)

Film: "Absolutely Safe" (2007)

Wednesday, Oct 28

Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2007. *Surgery Junkies: Wellness and Pathology in Cosmetic Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Chapters 3 & 4

Thursday, Oct 29

Gilman, Sander L. 2000. *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Chapter 3: "The Racial Nose"

Kaw, Eugenia. 1993. "Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 7:74-89.

Week 11: The Body Politic – Social Construction of Disability

Monday, Nov 2

Groce, Nora Ellen. 2003 [1985]. *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Chapters 1-4

Film: "Sound and Fury" (2000)

Wednesday, Nov 4

Groce, Nora Ellen. 2003 [1985]. *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Chapters 5-8

Thursday, Nov 5

Rapp, Rayna. 1998. "Refusing prenatal diagnosis: the meanings of bioscience in a multicultural world." *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 23:45-70.

Parens, Erik and Adrienne Asch. 2003. "Disability rights critique of prenatal genetic testing: Reflections and recommendations." *Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews* 9:40-47.

Week 12: The Body Politic – (Re)producing a Healthy Nation

Monday, Nov 9

Kukla, Rebecca. 2005. *Mass Hysteria: Medicine, Culture, and Mothers' Bodies*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
Chapter 4: "The Uterus as Public Theater"

Wednesday, Nov 11

Wolf, Joan B. 2007. "Is Breast Really Best? Risk and Total Motherhood in the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 32:595-636.

Thursday, Nov 12

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1996. "Women and the Biological Reproduction of "The Nation"." *Women's Studies International Forum* 19:17-24.

Media Analysis Paper Due

Week 13: The Body Politic – Bodies and Politics

Monday, Nov 16

Brückner, Hannah and Peter Bearman. 2005. "After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginity pledges." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36:271-278.

Talbot, Margaret. 3 November 2008. "Red Sex, Blue Sex: Why do so many evangelical teen-agers become pregnant?" *The New Yorker*.

Optional:

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs. 1998 [1997]. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York: Vintage Books.
Chapter 5

Wednesday, Nov 18

The following article is forthcoming and is not to be used outside of this class. Do not distribute elsewhere:

Mamo, Laura, Amber Nelson, and Aleia Clark. forthcoming. "Producing and Protecting Risky Girlhoods." in *The HPV Vaccine and Sexual Risk: Citizens and States at the Crossroads of Cancer Prevention*, edited by K. Wailoo, J. Livingston, S. Epstein, and Aronowitz. Rutgers University Press.

Casper, Monica J. and Laura M. Carpenter. 2008. "Sex, drugs, and politics: the HPV vaccine for cervical cancer." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 30:886-899.

Thursday, Nov 19

Epstein, Steven. 2004. "Bodily Differences and Collective Identities: the Politics of Gender and Race in Biomedical Research in the United States." *Body & Society* 10:183-203.

Week 14: Embodied Subjugation/Conformity/Resistance

Monday, Nov 23

Cummings, S. R., X. Ling, and K. Stone. 1997. "Consequences of foot binding among older women in Beijing, China." *American Journal of Public Health* 87:1677-1679.

Summers, Leigh. 2001. *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
Chapter 4: "Corsetry and the Reality of 'Female Complaints'"

Wednesday, Nov 25

Pitts, Victoria. 1998. "'Reclaiming' the Female Body: Embodied Identity Work, Resistance and the Grotesque." *Body & Society* 4:67-84.

Thursday, Nov 26

No Class (Thanksgiving)

Week 15: Future Directions

Monday, Nov 30

Shostak, S., P. Conrad, and A. V. Horwitz. 2008. "Sequencing and Its Consequences: Path Dependence and the Relationships between Genetics and Medicalization." *American Journal of Sociology* 114:S287-S316.

Wednesday, Dec 2

no readings

[Last class day]

Final exam will be distributed in class

FINAL DUE DECEMBER 9, BEFORE NOON

Acknowledgment note: this syllabus draws on the previous courses of Emily Kolker and Sara Shostak.