**Introduction**

This course introduces the sociological study of the body and the many varied sites at which it is implicated in health and illness. Drawing on the framing of Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987), this course considers three perspectives on the body: 1) the lived experience of the body/self, which is shaped through social experience and interaction 2) a social body, which is a symbol for articulating relationships between nature, society, and culture; and 3) a body politic, that is, the (individual and collective) body that is subject to regulation, surveillance, and control across multiple domains of life (e.g., sex & reproduction, medical treatment, leisure, sport). These understandings of the body represent not only overlapping units of analysis, but also different theoretical approaches to studying the body and health.

**Learning Goals**

In this course, students will

1. Explore diverse theoretical perspectives on the body as a lived experience, a social phenomenon, and a political subject;
2. Gain insight into core sociological concepts -- including stigma, identity, gender, and medicalization -- as they apply to the body, health and illness;
3. Consider how race, class, gender, religion, and other dimensions of social organization shape individual experiences and social understandings of the body and health;
4. Apply these insights to their own lives and to a research topic of their choice.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Attendance and Respectful Participation**

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 participation grade.

As soon as we have been assigned discussion section rooms, we will meet in discussion sections during class time each Thursday. We will announce the beginning of sections in class, and we will post section assignments on LATTE. These smaller discussion sections will provide an important opportunity to further explore and develop your thoughts, questions, and critiques. Your section leader will take attendance.
I expect that you will be respectful of others in class. Examples include arriving on time, not leaving early, listening when others speak, not monopolizing discussion time, and not having side-discussions. Please turn cell phones and pagers off.

2. Response Papers

During the course of the semester, you are required to turn in five response papers which address the set of readings for that week. Your paper should concisely summarize the key themes presented in the week’s readings (~1 page) and then either raise questions about these themes or provide an analysis, elaboration, or critique in your own words (1-2 pp). You may refer to other readings, personal examples, current events and newspaper articles, or other sources to reinforce your point(s). You should engage directly with the readings and not simply reiterate information from lecture. These papers should not exceed 3 pages each.

In order to help you to help you stay on track through the semester, you are required to write a response paper for one of the weeks in each of the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Paper 1 -- Week 3</th>
<th>DUE</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper 2 -- Week 6</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>10/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper 3 -- Week 9</td>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>10/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper 4 -- Week 11</td>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>11/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper 5 -- Week 14</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>or</td>
<td>11/21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must turn your paper in the week the readings are being discussed. Late response papers will not be accepted.

3. Experiment in Living/Body Work Paper – Due October 17

This 4-page paper will describe the results of an experiment that you will conduct during the first part of the course. For one week, you will change one concrete aspect of your bodily practices (e.g., how you eat, how you work, how you exercise, how you dress, how you do your hair or make-up, etc.) and report on the effects on your well-being, your sense of self, your social interactions, etc. Please do not undertake any changes that you perceive to pose a risk to your health or wellbeing. Be sure to reference at least three course readings in describing your experience and provide complete citations to each. Your serious and accurate use of these readings is a key component of the assignment (and your grade). A detailed handout will be given in class describing further the requirements of this assignment.

4. What Do We Know About Health? Paper – Due November 28

The purpose of this paper is to give you the opportunity to explore the evidence base, policy recommendations, and controversies surrounding a specific claim about human health and illness. You can choose to focus on any individual behavior or social factors which scientists, medical providers, or policy makers claim is associated with the health of the human body. These may include individual behaviors (e.g., smoking, drinking, exercising, eating a specific kind of diet) or the social contexts in which behaviors occur (e.g., living in an urban or a rural neighborhood, working in a specific kind of industry, being part of a family or a social network, etc.). For the purposes of this assignment, please do NOT focus on the broad biosocial categories we use to categorize individuals (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, age). Also, please note that whatever behavior or context you choose must allow you to answer the questions posed by the assignment. If sufficient data are not available for any of these questions, you should choose another focus for your paper. Be sure to reference at least three course readings in describing your experience and provide complete citations to each. Your serious and accurate use of these
readings is a key component of the assignment (and your grade). A detailed handout will be given in class describing further the requirements of this assignment.

5. Final Exam

During the final week of the semester, I will distribute a broad essay question designed to tie together key sets of ideas about the sociology of the body and health. You will need to hand in your response by noon on December 16. Late exams will not be accepted and will receive no credit.

Evaluation

**Grades will be computed on the following basis:**

- Attendance and Class Participation 10%
- Response Papers (5 @ 3 points each) 15%
- Body Work Paper 20%
- What Do We Know? Paper 25%
- Final Exam 30%

**Final grades will be calculated using the following distribution:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Policies

**Policies for Written Work**

All written papers are to be typed, double-spaced, using a 11-12-pt. Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, and must include page numbers, proper use of citations, and bibliographies. I place a high premium on careful research and clear organization and writing. We will spend time in class talking about how to do each of these assignments. Papers may not be re-written. This means you should offer your best effort the first time and ask questions if you need clarification before completing any of the assignments. I encourage you to use the Writing Center as you work on your papers.

Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. I will NOT accept your assignments through e-mail. I only accept hard copies. If you have an emergency and are unable to complete an assignment, you must speak with me as soon as possible so we can discuss how you will complete the assignment. Do not assume that you may hand in all of your assignments at the end of the course, or that you will be granted an extension.

You will lose one full letter grade for each 24 hours after the due date the assignment is turned in (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.
Academic Integrity

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/index.html). I will refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty 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.

Reasonable Accommodations

If you are a student who has academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and give me a copy of your letter of accommodation in the first two weeks of the semester. If you have questions about documenting a disability, please contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in the Academic Affairs Office (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu).

Books available at the campus bookstore and on reserve at the library


All other readings will be posted on Latte.
## Schedule of Sessions and Assigned Readings

**Weeks 1&2  Introduction and Theorizing Bodies I**

- **September 1**
  Overview and Introductions

- **September 7**
  Available at URL: [http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~thompsoc/Body.html](http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~thompsoc/Body.html)
  

- **September 8**
  

**Week 3  Body, Self, and Identity – Historical Perspectives**

- **September 12**
    Introduction & Chapter 1

- **September 14**
    Chapters 3 & 4

  *Film: “Killing Us Softly 3” (2000)*

- **September 15**
    Chapters 1&2

**Week 4  Body, Self, and Identity – Body Work**

- **September 19**
    Chapters 1 & 2

- **September 21**
    Chapters 3&4

- **September 22**
    Conclusion

*First Sections* [tentative]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Body, Self, and Identity – Being an Athlete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Body, Self, and Identity – Interventions and Their Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Chapter 3: The Racial Nose  
Chapter 4: “Corsetry and the Reality of Female Complaints” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7&amp;8</th>
<th>The Body and Medicine – Medicalization and Enhancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**NOTE:** October 11 is a Brandeis Thursday, so we will meet in sections

| October 13 | NO CLASS |
October 17  


*Film (clips): “Short”* Available at URL: [http://www.notes.co.il/alterman/27320.asp](http://www.notes.co.il/alterman/27320.asp)

**NOTE:** October 17 is a Brandeis Thursday, so we will meet in sections

**Experiment in Living/Body Work Paper Due**

October 19  


Chapter 3: “Fixing the Broken Male Machine”

October 20  
**NO CLASS**

**Week 9  The Body and Medicine – Sex and Gender**

October 24  

Chapter 1-3

*Film: “Sex Unknown”*

October 26  

Chapter 4-6

October 27  


**Week 10  The Body and Medicine – Making Sense of the Mind**

October 31  

Chapter 4 – “Broken By Modern Life”

November 2  

**Week 11  The Body Politic -- Sex and Reproduction**


**Week 12&13  The Body Politic -- Obesity and Eating Disorders**


November 23 & 24  **NO CLASS**
Week 14  The Body Politic: The Social Construction of Disability

       Chapters 1-4

*Film: “Sound and Fury”*

**What Do We Know About Health? Paper Due**

       Chapters 5-8


Week 15&16  The Body Politic: Embodied Health Movements


*Guest Lecture: Thomas Mackie*


December 12  Concluding Discussion and Distribution of Final Exam [Due: December 16, before noon, to Pearlman 207]