

GENDER, BODIES, AND HEALTH

Women's Studies 801.10, CRN 14239

Fall 2005

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:10 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.

Rome Hall 202

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In this class we will examine how gender is “worn” on the body. By reading interdisciplinary literature from the humanities and social sciences we will explore questions such as: What marks bodies as “feminine” or “masculine” (e.g., in terms of weight, figure, muscles)? How are the incidence, diagnosis, and treatment of particular diseases (e.g., breast cancer, cardiovascular disease, eating disorders) shaped by gender, race, and class? What are the conditions that lead to optimal health and well-being for both women and men? Students will have the opportunity to work in small groups on a social change project related to gender and health.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop an understanding of
 - distinctions between sex and gender
 - ways in which bodies, health and illness are gendered
 - intersectionality of identity statuses (e.g., gender, race, class, etc.) with bodies and health
 - social vs. biological constructions of health
- Improve your ability to
 - read widely
 - read theoretical writing
 - read arguments that rely on qualitative and quantitative data
 - analyze well
 - understand, question, and analyze theoretical writing
 - understand, question, and analyze writing that relies on qualitative and quantitative data
 - write analytically
 - apply knowledge to the “real world” – e.g., analyze images in magazines and movies, change students’ attitudes and behaviors regarding smoking, body image, etc.
 - adopt a variety of work styles
 - work independently
 - cooperate and manage conflict with others in a group
 - locate and use a variety of knowledge sources (e.g., library materials, peers, experts in the field)
 - develop good college skills
 - budget time
 - break down large projects into small, accomplishable pieces
 - utilize campus resources such as Blackboard

Required Readings:

Books:

- The Boston Women's Health Book Collective (2005). *Our bodies, ourselves: A new edition for a new era*. New York: Simon & Schuster. [Referred to below as "OBOS."].
- Lorber, J., & Moore, L. J. (2002). *Gender and the social construction of illness, 2nd edition*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Thompson, B. W. (1994). *A hunger so wide and so deep: A multiracial view of women's eating problems*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Articles and Chapters are available on Blackboard:

- Anderson, A. E., & DiDomenico, L. (1992). Diet vs. shape content of popular male and female magazines: A dose-response relationship to the incidence of eating disorders? *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 11*, 283-287.
- Angier, N. (1999). Cheap meat: Learning to make a muscle. In *Woman: An intimate geography* (pp. 311-327). New York: Anchor Books.
- Avery, B. Y. (1990). Breathing life into ourselves: The evolution of the National Black Women's Health Project. In E. C. White (Ed.), *The Black women's health book* (pp. 4-10). Seattle: Seal Press.
- Caplan, P. J. (1992). Driving us crazy: How oppression damages women's mental health and what we can do about it. *Women & Therapy, 12*, 5-28.
- Chesney, M. A., & Nealy, J. B. (1996). Smoking and cardiovascular disease risk in women: Issues for prevention and women's health. In P. M. Kato & T. Mann (Eds.), *Handbook of diversity issues in health psychology* (pp. 199-218). New York: Plenum Press.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Roberts, T., Noll, S. M., Quinn, D. M., & Twenge, J. M. (1998). That swimsuit becomes you: Sex differences in self-objectification, restrained eating, and math performance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*, 269-284.
- Kilbourne, J. (1994). Still killing us softly: Advertising and the obsession with thinness. In P. Fallon, M. A. Katzman, & S. C. Wooley (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on eating disorders* (pp. 395-418). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Krieger, N., & Fee, E. (1994). Man-made medicine and women's health: The biopolitics of sex/gender and race/ethnicity. In E. Fee, & N. Krieger (Eds.), *Women's health, politics, and power: Essays on sex/gender, medicine, and public health* (pp. 11-29). Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing Company.
- Landrine, H., & Klonoff, E. A. (1996). The schedule of racist events: A measure of racial discrimination and a study of its negative physical and mental health consequences. *Journal of Black Psychology, 22*, 144-168.
- Mairs, N. (1986). On being a cripple. In *Plaintext* (pp. 9-20). Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Malcom, N. L. (2003). Constructing female athleticism: A study of girls' recreational softball. *American Behavioral Scientist, 46*, 1387-1404.
- Mutrie, N. & Choi, P. Y. L. (2000). Is 'fit' a feminist issue? Dilemmas for exercise psychology. *Feminism & Psychology, 10*, 544-551.
- Neath, J. (1997). Social causes of impairment, disability, and abuse: A feminist perspective. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 8*, 195-230.

- Norsigian, J., Diskin, V., Doress-Worters, P., Pincus, J., Sanford, W., & Swenson, N. (1999). The Boston women's health book collective and *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A brief history and reflection*. *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 54, 35-39.
- Peplau, L. A., & Garnets, L. D. (2000). A new paradigm for understanding women's sexuality and sexual orientation. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, 329-350.
- Rothblum, E. D. (2003). "Somewhere in Des Moines or San Antonio" Historical perspectives on lesbian, gay, and bisexual mental health. In L. D. Garnets, & D. C. Kimmel (Eds.), *Psychological perspectives on lesbian, gay and bisexual experiences*, 2nd edition (pp. 655-680). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Samuels, E. (2003). Excerpts from: *Body of mine: A mother-daughter love story* (memoir in progress). *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 31, 190-193.
- Specter, M. (2001, December 17). India's plague. *The New Yorker*, 74-85.
- Steingraber, S. (1997). Space. In *Living downstream: An ecologist looks at cancer and the environment* (pp. 57-86). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.
- Surgeon General (2001). Health Consequence of Tobacco Use Among Women — Fact Sheet. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr_forwomen/factsheet_consequences.htm
- Tolman, D. L. (2002). Getting beyond "It just happened." In *Dilemmas of desire: Teenage girls talk about sexuality* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Course Policies:

- **Academic integrity:** I expect all students to know and work in compliance with the GW Code of Academic Integrity. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html> for more information.
- **Late Work:** You may not receive extensions on work in the class, except in the most extraordinary circumstances (in which you will need documentation from the Dean's Office or Health Services). Work that is turned in late for any other reason will have a third of a grade taken off for each day that it is late (e.g., a B+ would become a B if you hand in work any time after the exact time that it is due—the "day late" begins immediately after the time the assignment is due).
- **Incompletes:** I will grant incompletes only under extraordinary circumstances that occur in the second part of the semester.
- **Written assignments:** Please type, double-spaced with 12-point font, all of your written assignments for this course. Margins should be one inch all around.
- **Religious observances:** If you will miss class because of a religious observance, please let me know in advance to make alternate arrangements.
- **Accommodations for students with disabilities:** I will provide any reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities that will assist in making this course accessible and will provide an optimal educational experience for everyone. I will expect to receive documentation about the kinds of accommodations that you require. Please speak to me at the beginning of the semester so that we can make an effective plan.
- **Access to Electronic resources:** All students are required to use Blackboard to access electronic resources for the course (including many required readings and the gradebook). Blackboard is available at <https://gwu.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> or through <http://my.gwu.edu/> and your login information is the same as for Colonial Mail.

Assignments:

- **Class Participation:** This class is small and discussion-based, so your active participation is necessary to make things go well. In order to participate you must be in regular attendance and contribute thoughtfully to class discussion and activities.
- **Personal Essays:** You will have the opportunity to write a an essay about your personal relationship to/ thoughts about the topic of gender, bodies, and health twice during the semester. The first essay, due September 6th, should be based on your own thoughts, observations, and experiences. Your second essay, due December 8th, should revisit the themes of your first essay and reflect on what has changed in your thinking as a result of being in the class. Both essays should be approximately 2 pages long.
- **Short Paper:** A short paper (3-5 pages) will be due at the beginning of class on September 22nd. The paper assignment is on p. 8 of this syllabus.
- **Take-home Mid-term:** A take-home mid-term exam will be distributed on October 11th. The completed exam will be due at your group meeting on October 25th. Part of the assignment will include an analysis of the films *A Hero for Daisy* and *Bend It Like Beckham*, which will be shown on October 20th.
- **Social Change Project:** Over the course of the semester, you will work in small groups on a social change project related to a gendered health issue on campus. See pp. 5-7 for specific details.
- **Take-home Final:** Your take-home final will be distributed on December 8th, the last day of class, and will be due by 5 p.m. on December 13th, the first day of finals period.

Summary of grading percentage points:

Class participation	5%
Personal essays	10% (total)
Short paper	15%
Take-home mid-term	20%
Social change project	25% (total)
Take-home final	25%

Social Change Project Assignment

One of your major assignments this semester is to work in small groups on a social change project. Based on a shared interest, you will work with a few of your classmates on addressing a gender-based health issue (e.g., eating disorders, sexual violence, smoking) on campus.

The project will be broken down into many sub-components, which are due throughout the semester:

1. Rank order topic choices (due 9/8)

- Individually, go to Blackboard and take the “SCP test;” you will be asked to rank order your preferences for the topic for your social change project.

2. Statement of interest (due 9/15)

- Individually, write 1-2 paragraphs indicating why you are interested in your assigned topic.

All components below should be done as a group effort; you only need to turn in one copy of each assignment per group.

3. Defining the problem (due 9/20)

- what is the scope of the problem on the GW campus (e.g., frequency, percentages, etc.)? Your response can be in list or narrative form, approximately ½ to 1 page long.

4a. Literature Review 1 (due 10/4, via e-mail by 5 p.m.)

- Based on your library searches, please address:
 - what is the general problem you worked on?
 - what is the scope of the problem at GW?
 - how is the problem “gendered”?
 - what interventions have people tried in the past? Were they effective?
- Write a draft answer to these questions in narrative form, including citations in the text (approx. 1-3 pages). In addition, attach computer printouts of the citations and abstracts for the sources you found at the library.
- See the sample paper on Blackboard for a model of one way to write an introduction section.

4b. Literature Review 2 (due 10/20)

- Revise 4a based on feedback.

5. Proposing a solution (due 10/20)

- based on the information you gained above, what are three possible ways your group could take action to create social change on this issue? Be as specific as possible.
- Instead of class on 10/25, each group will have a meeting with Prof. Zucker to discuss your three choices. In this meeting, we will settle on one option and draft a timeline, a method of evaluating the project’s effectiveness, and a budget.

6. Setting up the project (due 11/1)

- Document how you have set up your project (e.g., reserved a room, invited speakers), including who did each task.
- Submit a formal budget based on previous conversations.

7. Implementing the project (ongoing, 11/8-11/22)

- During this period you should carry out your project. Feel free to check in with Prof. Zucker if you need help.

8a. Presenting your project (12/6)

- A rough draft of your final project is due. This should include:
 - Introduction
 - what is the general problem you worked on?
 - what is the scope of the problem at GW?
 - how is the problem “gendered”?
 - what interventions have people tried in the past? Were they effective?
 - what did you decide to do for your project?
 - Method
 - what did you do to carry out your project?
 - include a description of any materials (e.g., posters, questionnaires) you used.
 - You can also provide copies of those documents in an appendix.
 - Results
 - what happened?
 - You can include statistics or general descriptions as appropriate
 - Discussion
 - how does your project contribute to the general knowledge of this problem?
 - would you do things differently if you got to do it over again?
 - has your thinking about this topic changed over the course of your project?
 - References
 - include a reference for each source you cited
- Each group will also make a 10 minute presentation about their project. You should cover most of the topics listed above, but do not simply read your report!

8b. Final write-up of your project (12/13 by 5 p.m.)

Based on the feedback from 8a, turn in a revised version of your report with your final (only one copy is needed per group).

A note on working in groups

Working in groups can be both challenging and exciting. It sometimes feels hard to have to coordinate with others whose working styles may be different than your own. It may be hard to arrange an equitable distribution of labor. On the other hand, you get a chance to be exposed to other people's thinking in a way that can be exciting and can move your own thinking forward. There is also the opportunity to have more fun—perhaps working feels less lonely or less like a chore, and more like an interesting project that helps build relationships. **The goal of the social change projects is to work collaboratively as much as possible; don't just divide up the tasks.** You will get a chance to evaluate and be evaluated by every other member in your group on both 10/25 and 12/13. This will help me make sure things are going well in the groups (and address problems if they are not) and include your evaluation of how things are going in determining the final grade for your project. The evaluation form is available on Blackboard and is also reproduced below.

Peer Evaluation for Cooperative Learning Research

Group Project: _____

Member Being Assessed: _____

Instructions: Using the key that follows, circle the number that represents your opinion on the group member's performance on each item:

Scale:

3- Outstanding

2- More than satisfactory

1- Satisfactory

0- Less than satisfactory

WORK-RELATED performance and INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS	<i>SCORE</i>			
<u>Issue Identification and Solution:</u> Participated in identifying and defining problems/issues and working toward solutions	0	1	2	3
<u>Acceptance of responsibility:</u> Shared responsibility for tasks to be accomplished	0	1	2	3
<u>Initiative/Motivation:</u> Made suggestions, sought feedback, showed interest in group decision making and planning	0	1	2	3
<u>Task Completion:</u> Followed through in completing own contributions to group project	0	1	2	3
<u>Attendance:</u> Attended planning sessions, was prompt, and participated in decision-making	0	1	2	3
<u>Collaboration:</u> Worked cooperatively with others	0	1	2	3
<u>Attitude:</u> Displayed positive approach and made constructive comments in working toward goal	0	1	2	3

Additional comments you would like to make:

Name of evaluator: _____

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Short Paper Assignment

- Your short paper (3-5 pages) is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 22nd. Please choose *one* of the options below for your paper topic. You do not need to do any additional reading for your paper, but are expected to use at least *three* readings from class in your analysis. I will be evaluating your papers based on the learning objectives stated in the syllabus.

Paper Topic Choices

1. Find an advertisement or magazine story that is related to one of the class topics from 9/15 or 9/20 (Menarche/menstruation/PMS/PMDD, sexuality). Briefly describe the image/story and provide a critical analysis of how it portrays gender and health. Please include a copy of the ad/story with your paper.
2. Imagine you have a younger sister or female cousin who has reached puberty and is just beginning to consider dating and sexual activity. Based on course readings, write her a letter providing information and support.

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
9/1, Thurs	Introduction to the course and each other		
9/6, Tues	Overview of women's health and the women's health movement	Lorber & Moore, ch. 2 Norsigian et al. Avery	Personal essay 1
9/8, Thurs	Systems of oppression and women's health, I	Krieger & Fee OBOS, ch. 31	Social Change 1
9/13, Tues	Systems of oppression and women's health, II	Landrine & Klonoff	
9/15, Thurs	Menarche/menstruation/ PMS/PMDD	OBOS, ch. 13 Lorber & Moore, ch. 5	Social Change 2
9/20, Tues	Sexuality	Tolman Peplau & Garnets	Social Change 3
9/22, Thurs, Gelman 300	Library visit/social change groups		Short paper
9/27, Tues	Sexism, bodies, and eating, I	Kilbourne Anderson & DiDomenico	
9/29, Thurs	Sexism, bodies, and eating, II	Fredrickson et al.	
10/4, Tues	No class—Rosh Hashanah		Social Change 4a (via e-mail by 5 p.m.)
10/6, Thurs	Social Change Group Meetings		
10/6, Thurs 7 p.m., GG 402	Film screening: Real Women Have Curves*		
10/11, Tues	Sexism, bodies, and eating, III	Thompson, ch. 1-3 (start reading in advance...it's long)	
10/13, Thurs	No class—Yom Kippur		
10/18, Tues	Exercise, sports, and athleticism, I	Mutrie & Choi OBOS, ch. 4 Malcom	
10/20, Thurs	Exercise, sports, and athleticism, II In class film: A Hero for Daisy	Angier	Social Change 4b & 5
10/20, Thurs 7 p.m., GG 402	Film screening: Bend It Like Beckham*		
10/25, Tues	Social Change Group Meetings		Take-home mid- term; assessment of group members

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
10/27, Thurs	Disability, I	Lorber & Moore, ch. 4 Mairs	
11/1, Tues	Disability, II	Neath	Social Change 6
11/3, Thurs	HIV and AIDS, I	OBOS, ch. 16 Lorber & Moore, ch. 7	
11/8, Tues	HIV and AIDS, II	Specter	
11/8, Tues 7 p.m., GG 402	Film screening: Heart of the Sea*		
11/10, Thurs	Cancer, I	Steingraber	Social Change 7
11/15, Tues	Cancer, II Guest speaker: Juanita Lyle	Samuels	
11/17, Thurs	Cardiovascular system and smoking	Surgeon General Chesney & Nealy	
11/22, Tues	Mental health, I	Rothblum	
11/24, Thurs	No Class—Thanksgiving Break		
11/29, Tues	Mental health, II	Caplan	
12/1, Thurs	Activism	OBOS, ch. 32	
12/6, Tues	Social Change Group Presentations		Social Change 8a
12/8, Thurs	Wrap up		Personal essay 2
12/13 Tues			Take-home final, assessment of group members, and social change 8b due by 5 p.m.

***You are responsible for watching each of the assigned videos. If you cannot come to the film screening, you may rent them on your own or watch them in Gelman Library. The film screenings will take place in the Psychology Department (building GG), 2125 G St NW, room 402.**