

History 38N/FS38N (Frosh Seminar)
Spring 2007, MW 1:15-3:05
5 units; Building 160, room 127

Professor Estelle Freedman
History 200-07 (723-4951)
Office hrs: Mon. 3:15-5:15

The Body: Historical and Feminist Perspectives

In addition to its physical properties, the body has cultural and social meanings. This seminar will explore how these meanings change over time, with particular reference to the ways that medicine, media, law, and culture construct our changing ideals of the body. A major goal of the course is to teach students how to apply both historical and feminist analysis, that is, to understand change over time and to recognize the difference that gender makes in the social and cultural construction of the body.

Course themes emphasize the shifting historical ideals for female and male bodies, the changing importance of body image in popular culture, and the intersections of gender and race in representations of the body. Each week we discuss books or articles on nineteenth and twentieth century U.S. history, including body image, athletics, race and medicine, performing the body, and disability. The topics move chronologically, from the nineteenth century to the present, and from historical to interdisciplinary works, with increasing use of personal testimony. We also incorporate several documentary films into the course.

Preparation for each class discussion is critical to the success of the course. Students will submit short (one page) reading responses before each class. Although they are ungraded, taking the responses seriously and submitting them promptly affects the class participation component of final grades. Each student will also write one graded mid-term paper and one graded final paper (5-7 pages each) and present a summary of their final paper or monologue to the class. Guidelines for reading responses appear at the end of the syllabus and will be provided in class for each paper. Approximate bases for final course grades are one-third each: class participation (including reading responses); mid-term paper; final paper and presentation.

The course can be taken for a grade only, and with the permission of the instructor. It is limited to 15 students. All work must be completed on time (no late papers or incompletes except for documented family and medical emergencies). Students are expected to arrive on time for each class and participate as fully as possible in the discussions. Each student should meet with me once and preferably twice during the quarter, either during my weekly office hours (Mondays 3:15-5:15) or by appointment.

Please let me know by the end of the first week of classes if you need any special accommodations because of physical or learning disabilities.

Reading assignments ordered at Green Reserves and Stanford Bookstore

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (1997)

Lynne Luciano, *Looking Good: Male Body Image in Modern America* (2001)

Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Women's Sports* (1994)

James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (1993 ed.)

Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues* (2001 ed.)

Nancy Mairs, *Waist High in the World : A Life Among the Non-Disabled* (1996)

Other assignments can be found in the Course Reader

DATES: TOPICS/READINGS

4/4: Introductions, goals, assignments

CHANGING FEMALE BODY IDEALS

4/9: Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project*, Introduction, chaps. 1-3 (pp. 1-95, including pictures)

4/11: Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project*, chaps. 4-6 (pp. 97-214)
Jan Krawitz, *Mirror, Mirror* (film in class)

ATHLETICS, FITNESS, and GENDER

4/16: Elliot J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (1986), chap. 6 (pp. 179-206)

Lynn Luciano, *Looking Good*, Chaps. 1, 5-6 (pp. 1-35, 133-209, and pictures)

4/18: Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, Introduction, chaps. 1, 7 (pp. 1-30, 164-184, and browse both picture sections)

MEDICINE and RACE: THE CASE OF THE TUSKEGEE STUDY

4/23: James H. Jones, *Bad Blood*, Chaps. 1-7 (pp. 1-112)

4/25: James H. Jones, *Bad Blood*, Chaps. 8-14 (pp. 113-241)

SIGN UP FOR OFFICE HOURS APRIL 30TH RE: FIRST PAPER, DUE MAY 5TH.

CHANGING THE BODY: TRANSEXUALITY

- 4/30: Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (2002), Intro, Chap 4 (pp. 1-13, 98-129)
Judith Schapiro, "Transsexualism: Reflections on the Persistence of Gender and the Mutability of Sex," pp. 248-279, in *Body Guards*, eds. Epstein and Straub (1991)
- 5/2: Jackie Goldsby, "Queens of Language: Paris is Burning," pp. 108-115, in *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video* eds. Gevertz, Parmar, and Greyson
Jenny Livingston, *Paris Is Burning* (film in class)

Mid-term course evaluations distributed in class

FIRST PAPER DUE BY NOON SATURDAY MAY 5 ON EMAIL (ebf@stanford.edu):

Choose one of the following questions and write a 5-7 page essay, citing the readings thus far and using specific examples to illustrate your points.

1. How do historians explain change over time in body ideals and the social control of the body? Choose two or three of the historians we have read (Brumberg, Gorn or Cahn, Luciano, Jones, Meyerowitz) and compare their interpretations of why popular ideas about the body (size, shape, ability, health) changed in the U.S. from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, using particular examples to illustrate their explanations.
2. Give your own historical explanation of how body ideals and social control of the body changed, drawing on a specific subject (such as size, sports, medicine) and citing various authors we have read.

In responding to either question, be sure to have the specific subject of your paper, and the authors you will draw from, approved during office hour appointments. Keep in mind the difference that both gender and race make in ideas about the body.

DISABILITIES: HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

- 5/7: Douglas C. Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," pp. 33-57 in Longmore and Umansky, eds, *The New Disability History* (2001)
Mary Felstiner, "Preview" and "Rights, 1999" from *Out of Joint: A Private and Public Story of Arthritis* (2006), pp.xi-xv, 169-173.
- 5/9: Nancy Mairs, *Waist High in the World* (pp. 19-106, 124-169)

FEMINIST PERFORMANCE: BODILY DANGERS AND PLEASURES

5/14: Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues* (read complete play)

5/16: Eve Ensler, *The Vagina Monologues* (video in class)

CAMPUS CONFERENCE: 5/16-5/19

FEMICIDE = SANCTIONED MURDER: GENDER, RACE AND VIOLENCE IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

Candle Light Vigil, White Plaza, 5/17

Speakers and Panels, 5/18-5/19 (Tressider, Oak West)

CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE: FROM CALVIN KLEIN TO BARBIE

5/21: Susan Bordo, "Beauty (Re)Discovers the Male Body," pp. 168-225 in *the Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private* (1999),
Bring examples of contemporary ads to class, whether in print or on the web

5/23: Ann duCille, "Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference," in Morag Shiach, *Feminism and Cultural Studies* (1999) 106-132
Susan Stern, *Barbie Nation* (film in class)

Final paper assignment (5-7 pages, due in class June 4)

Choose one of the following topics and prepare an oral presentation (5-10 minutes) based on your final paper.

1. Create a "Body Monologue" spoken by an historical figure (real or your creation) discussing the meaning of the body – including issues such as violence, race, and disability – during his or her lifetime. Be sure that the monologue is grounded in historical facts from the readings and films, particularly those in the second part of the course. Use "endnotes" to document sources.

2. From the readings that you have not written about before, choose a specific overlapping topic concerning violence, race, disability, or sexuality and compare the way that two authors explore this topic.

3. Propose another paper topic for approval; meet with me in office hours by May 21 for this option.

Think about the paper or monologue you would like to write and bring a one-page proposal and outline to present to the class next week. Review your reading and class notes to prepare for this assignment. Sign up for class presentations for 6/4 or 6/6.

5/28: Holiday, no class - work on paper topics/outlines!

5/30: Final paper outlines due in class; present paper topics for class feedback

6/4: Final paper/monologues DUE IN CLASS; student presentations

6/6: Complete presentations; class summary and evaluations

Reading response guidelines (one paragraph each - to be modified for certain readings):

1. What are the main points made by the author in this selection?
2. Which examples supporting these points were most compelling to you?
3. What questions do you hope to discuss in class?

Selected further reading (NOT required for papers)

Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty*

Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease*

Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*

Caroline Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender, Politics, and the Construction of Sexuality*

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women and Men*

Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (Part IV)

Sander Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*

John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*

Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*

Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*

Elaine Tyler May, *Barren in the Promised Land: Childless Americans and the Pursuit of Happiness*

Diane Middlebrook, *Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton*

Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*

Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, ed., *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: the Black Female Body in American Culture*

Recommended fiction for summer reading:

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*