

Rhetoric of the Body
CMST 7966
Fall 2014
LSU

Instructor: Stephanie Houston Grey, Ph.D.
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Course Description:

Understanding the body as a symbolic entity deeply complicates the modernist project. From this standpoint mind and body are not always separate, distinct entities. As the body is projected through various discursive fields, it becomes a site through which identity is navigated and contested. Further, the manner in which the body is represented shapes perceptions of self and society. This course will explore the intellectual trends that led to this reconfiguration of the body and its signal importance in understanding modern identity. We will then examine how that the contemporary “posthuman” body continues to shape society and the ethical imperatives that motivate social action. The body, we will discover, is a discursive medium that bears the marks of a world that freely mixes technologies, cultures, identities, emotions, and rationalities.

During the course of the semester we will accomplish the following objectives:

- Trace the intellectual development of the body as a discursive site
- Recognize how the body is navigated as a site for control
- Develop facility with modern theories of the body
- Explore the past, present and future of bodily representation
- Conduct original research dealing with the body

Readings:

Lauren Berlant. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke UP, 2011.

Rosi Braidotti. *The Posthuman*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2013.

Judith Butler. *Dispossession*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2013.

Michel Foucault. *The Birth of the Clinic*. New York: Vintage, 1994.

Michel Foucault. *Security, Territory and Population*. New York: Picador, 2009.

Geoffrey Harpham. *On the Grotesque*. Davies: Aurora, CO, 2006.

Julia Kristeva. *The Power of Horror*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

Peggy Phelan. *Mourning Sex*. London: Routledge, 1997.

John Sweet. *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in North America*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2003.

Marius Turda. *Modernism and Eugenics*. New York: Macmillan, 2010.

Bryan Turner. *The Body and Society*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 2008.

Jennifer Wingard. *Branded Bodies*. Lanham: Lexington 2013.

Assignments:

Facilitations: Each of you will be responsible for one course facilitation this semester. This involves providing two types of material to your classmates. 1) a one page outlines of the reading and 2) a set of discussion questions (4-6) that you find germane to the conversation (150 pts).

Paper Proposal: You will be asked to submit a one page paper proposal outlining a major research project you would like to pursue (100 pts).

Literature Review: Create an annotated bibliography of 10-15 texts central to your research project (150 pts).

First Draft: You will be asked to submit a first draft of your paper. This draft will be used as the centerpiece of an in-class workshop and will be 10-15 pages (250 pts).

Final Research Project: You will submit a 20-25 page research paper of convention quality for your final project (300 pts).

Participation: Engaging in class is important. Bringing your ideas to the table constitutes part of the academic life. Thus there will be an evaluation of your attendance and willingness to discuss the ideas that we will be exploring. You are expected to participate every class period whether you are the facilitator or a regular class member (50 pts).

Final Grade Breakdown:

901-1000 = A

801-900 = B

701-800 = C

600-700 = D

000-599 = F

Disability Services and Plagiarism:

LSU takes these issues very seriously. See these LSU portals for more information about policies. I will provide necessary accommodation to students in need. I will pursue concerns

about academic integrity in keeping with stated procedures. Please familiarize yourself with the information below.

<http://www.disability.lsu.edu>

<http://saa.lsu.edu/Plagiarism.html>

Schedule:

August 26: Introduction to Class

September 2: Read Turner, *Body and Society*.

September 9: Read Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*.

September 16: Read Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory and Population*.

September 23: Read Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics*. **Proposal Due**

September 30: Read Julia Kristeva, *The Power of Horror*.

October 7: Read Geoffrey Harpham, *On the Grotesque*.

October 14: Read Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex*.

October 21: Read John Sweet, *Bodies Politic*. **Literature Review Due**.

October 28: Read Judith Butler, *Dispossession*.

November 4: Read Jennifer Wingard, *Branded Bodies*.

November 11: Read Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*. **Rough Draft Due**

November 18: NCA

November 25: In Class Paper Workshop

December 2: Final Project Roundtable

Final Paper Due Date TBA

