

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Sociology 407

SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

FALL 2008

Instructor: **Dr. Leslie Miller**
Phone: 403 220-6506/6501
Classroom: SS
Office hours: TBA

Office: SS 910
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Time: Tues. & Thurs. 11 - 12:15

Course Materials. A package of readings is available for purchase in the bookstore. Occasional additional readings may be distributed in class.

Course content and objectives. This course is an introduction to the sociology of the body and considers the many ways that human bodies are socially and culturally significant. Although we feel that we know our bodies directly - - because we inhabit them -- I shall suggest in this course that knowledge of our bodies (and bodily practices) is only available to us through the many ways we have to think and talk about them. That is, what the body and its practices "mean" to us, and to others, is a matter of social and historical context. (Body piercing, for example, can be a fashion statement in one social setting, a means of spiritual enlightenment in another, and a mark of manhood in a third). But whatever its meanings, the body is crucial to how we see ourselves, how we represent ourselves to others, and how others come to know and judge us.

The course will familiarize students with important theoretical debates and perspectives in the sociology of the body. It will also sample a variety of substantive topics in this expanding area, including: the body in history; the body and social class; the body as a focus of regulation, of social stigma, and as a means of resistance; the body as a creative template for the performance of self; the body as a commodity in consumer society; the disabled body and the body in pain; the sexualized body; the body as a site of political contest. Our examples are drawn from everyday life and popular culture in the past and the present, and our emphasis is mainly on Western society.

Assignments and evaluation. Students are responsible for all lectures, text materials and films/videos. Exams are comprised of short answer and/or short essay questions. The course also includes an essay assignment, which will require students to apply course themes to an empirical example of their choice. It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of submitted essays/research projects. There is no registrar-controlled final examination. All components of this course must be completed for a passing grade.

WEEK

READING

1 Introduction: (week of course organization and themes - video: *Visions of Prophecy* Sept 9 Sept. 11)

2 & 3 The body in history: body regulation and (Sept. 16 * 23 the "civilizing process"
- "Changes in attitude toward the natural functions" (Elias)
- "The power of dirt" (Clark and Davis)
embodying social class in history - "Clean and proper"

(Frykman and Lofgren)

the body and social class today - "The body and physical capital"
(Shilling)

4 - 6 The body in consumer culture: (Sept. 30, body projects Oct 7 & 14)
body modification and power - "Talking bodies" (Miller and
"poaching" in sport Penz)

body modification and state politics - "Victims or offenders" (Bloul)

body modification and art: cosmetic surgery- "My body is my art":
cosmetic surgery as feminist utopia?" (Davis)

- video: *Bodywork*

7 **TEST # 1 TUES. OCT. 21 WEIGHT 30%**

- "The Gendered Body" (Kimmel) 8& 9 The sexualized body
- "Daring to desire" (Tolman) Oct. 28 & Nov. 4)
- "Breast feeding..." (Carter)
- "Men and muscles" (Glassner)

- video: *Internet Porn*

PAPER WILL BE ASSIGNED AT THIS TIME

- "Narratives of the gendered
body" (Gergen and Gergen)

-- THE BODY AND AUTO/BIOGRAPHY

NO CLASS TUESDAY NOV. 11 (reading days)

10 (Nov. 13) - "Women and their hair: seeking power through
resistance and accommodation" (Weitz)

11 (Nov. 18) The body in pain; "Coming to terms: masculinity
and disabilities and physical disability" (Gerschick)

bodies

- "Pain and the dys-appearing body"(Williams and Bendelow)

11 **TEST #2 THURSDAY NOVEMBER 20 WEIGHT 30%**

12 (Nov. 29) bodies and disabilities, cont'd. - "Faulty selves" (Benson)
- "Witty ticcay Ray" (Sacks)

13 **FINAL QUIZ THURS. DEC. 4 LAST CLASS 10%**

(Dec.4)

PAPER DUE: Monday, December 8, in my office SS 910, between 2 and 4:00 only

Summary of Tests/Assignments

Test #1	Tuesday	October 21	Weight 30%
Test #2	Thursday	November 20	Weight 30%
Final Quiz	Thursday	December 4	Weight 10%
Research paper	Due	December 8	Weight 30%

ALSO PLEASE NOTE:

Missed exams/assignments. Students who are unable to write tests or submit assignments at the scheduled time because of illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction **MUST** inform the instructor that they are seeking a deferral, and must produce medical certificates or other appropriate documentation as specified in the calendar.

Picking up exams/ assignments. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation (FOIP) disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., the department office, or outside an instructor's office. (So please ensure that your research paper gets to my office, as above). Mid-term exams will be returned individually to students in class time. Assignments handed in after the end of classes are normally returned to students through the mail.

Academic Accommodation. Students with a disability who require academic accommodation need to register with the Disability Resource Centre. Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a "make up" exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public

place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.