

**History 4095/6095**  
**The Body and the State in Modern Britain**

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This course will explore the relationship between the bodies of different types of citizens--as they were imagined and experienced--and the British state. It begins with the British Anatomy Act of 1832, which allowed for the dissection of the poor, and ends with the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948. Paying close attention to issues of gender, sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity, this course examines both governmental policies for managing, disciplining, and providing for the bodies of citizens, and the reaction of the public to these methods. The course is organized thematically but it attempts to situate chronologically the rise of different types of bodies as historically problematic and in need of regulation. The lectures for this course will focus on the British case, however, readings will also be drawn from Continental European history in order to place the British case in a broader historical context.

**Texts to purchase:**

Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute*  
Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*  
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

*The book store will send the books back after 6 weeks so please buy them early.*

**Course goals:**

I hope this course will:

- introduce you to the debates and issues in the historical scholarship of the body
- encourage you to share your ideas with fellow students
- improve your reading, writing, and analytical skills
- develop your ability to work with primary historical documents

**Assignments:**

- Attendance and class participation (20%)
- A paper of 4-5 pages analyzing a primary source document that I will distribute. (20%)
- A final paper of 10 pages discussing a theme relevant to this course will be due at

the end of the semester. You will be expected to read additional secondary material drawn from outside the syllabus and to evaluate the arguments of historians. You will not be expected to do your own primary source research. (30%)

- A take home final exam (30%)

**Aug 20, 22**

### **Introduction**

Barbara Duden, "Towards a History of the Body"  
Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method?"

**Aug 25, 27**

### **The Poor**

In what ways did doctors and government administrators portray and treat the poor as physically different "others"? How and why did the state manage these bodies?

Alain Corbin, "The Stench of the Poor" in *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*

Marjorie Levine-Clark, "Engendering Relief: Women, Ablebodiedness, and the New Poor Law in Early Victorian England"

Lisa Forman Cody, "The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform"

**Sept 3**

### **The Corpse**

Who owns the dead body? Focusing on the treatment of bodies after death, we will explore the issue of rights to bodily integrity by examining contests over bodysnatching and anatomical dissection in the early nineteenth century.

Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection, and the Destitute*

**Sept 8, 10**

### **The Worker**

Labour can also be a bodily enterprise. How did sexual differentiation inform the kinds of work that women and men did and did not do?

Robert Gray, "Factory Slavery" in *The Factory Question and Industrial England*

Judith Coffin, "Social Science Meets Sweated Labour: Reinterpreting Women's Work in Late Nineteenth-Century France"

Sonya Rose, "Protective Labour Legislation in Nineteenth Century Britain"

**Sept 15, 17**

### **The Patient**

Sickness can make one acutely aware of the vulnerability of the body. Why did some people choose one type of medical practitioner over another to care for their ailing bodies? How is medicine linked to the state?

Mary Fissell, "The Disappearance of the Patient's Narrative and the Invention of Hospital Medicine"

J.F.C. Harrison, "Early Victorian Radicals and the Medical Fringe"

David Armstrong, "The Clinical Gaze" in *The Political Anatomy of the Body*

**Sept 22, 24**

### **The Social Body**

What constituted the social body in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? This week we will explore how the 19thc "public health" initiatives imagined the relationship between bodies, and their strategies for dealing with the problems of "contagion."

David S. Barnes, "Social Anxiety, Social Disease, and the Question of Contagion" in *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France*

Nancy Tomes, "The Private Side of Public Health: Sanitary Science, Domestic Hygiene, and the Germ Theory, 1870-1900"

Michael Sigsworth and Michael Worboys, "The Public's View of Public Health"

**Sept 29, Oct 1**

### **The Prostitute**

From the second half of the nineteenth century both prostitution and homosexuality were identified as social problems. What role did the state play in the regulation of sexuality?

Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*

**Oct 6, 8**

### **The Homosexual Body**

Ivan Dalley Crozier, "The Medical Construction of Homosexuality and Its Relation to the Law in Nineteenth-Century England"

Ed Cohen, "Legislating the Norm"

Chris Waters, "Havellock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and the State"

Oct 13, 15

### **The Animal Body**

Animals became the subject of a contentious debate in the nineteenth century as animal rights activists began to protest the state-sanctioning of animal dissection. Why did animal rights suddenly become an issue of state concern?

Hilda Kean, "The Smooth Cool Men of Science"

Brian Harrison, "Animals and the State in 19thc England"

Oct 20, 22

### **The Criminal**

How was criminality inscribed upon the body? What roles did gender, race, class, and ethnicity play in identifying some physical bodies as inherently criminal?

Ann-Louise Shapiro, "Disordered Bodies/Disorderly Acts: Medical Discourse and the Female Criminal in Nineteenth Century Paris"

Ronald Thomas, "The Fingerprint of the Foreigner: Colonizing the Criminal Body in 1890s Detective Fiction and Criminal Anthropology"

Peter Becker, "Changing Images: The Criminal as Seen By the German Police in the 19thc"

Oct 27, 29

### **The Colonial Body**

In an age of imperial expansion, how did Europeans imagine and manage the bodies of colonial "others"? In what ways did increased contact with other races alter Europeans' relationship to their own bodies?

Phillipa Levine, "Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India"

Jean Comaroff, "The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body"

John Nauright, "Sport and the Image of Colonial Manhood in the British Mind"

Nov 3, 5

### **The Ideal Body**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, partially in response to imperial ventures, many Europeans raised the spectre of racial deterioration. How did eugenics and social hygiene movements characterize the "degenerate" and what solutions did they offer?

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

**Nov 10, 12**

### **The Mother and the Infant**

Since mothers produce the next generation of citizens, motherhood came to be seen as a legitimate sphere for state intervention. In what ways did mothers accept these interventions, and how did they resist, adjust, or accommodate them to their own ends?

Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood"

Margaret L. Arnot, "Infant Death, Child Care and the State"

Marilyn Yalom, "The Political Breast: Bosoms for the Nation"

**Nov 17, 19**

### **The Child and the Adolescent**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century children and adolescents became a new focus for governmental legislation as future citizens in need of protection and discipline. How did the state seek to balance this dual role of caring for children and disciplining them and how did children respond to these interventions?

Deborah Dwork, "School Meals and Medical Inspection"

Matthew Hilton, "Tabs, Fags, and the Boy Labour Problem in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain"

Michelle Cale, "Girls and the Perception of Sexual Danger in the Victorian Reformatory System"

**Nov 24, 26**

### **The Soldier and the Civilian**

The two World Wars profoundly impacted the male bodies of soldiers on the front lines. But war also altered civilian's experiences of their own bodies. Here we will examine the ways in which war mutilated some bodies and idealized others.

Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers, and the Great War in Great Britain"

Sonya Rose, "Sex, Citizenship, and the Nation in World War II Britain"

Joanna Bourke, "Inspecting" in *Dismembering the Male*

**Dec 1, 3**

### **Everybody: The National Health Service**

In the post-WWII era a trend towards the Welfare State was evident across Europe. Britain's National Health Service reformulated the relationship between the body and the state in important ways by legislating that all citizens had rights to a minimum level of health care paid for by the state. This week we will explore the impact of the NHS on British society.

Virginia Berridge, "Health policy, health and society, 1948-1974"