

# History of the Modern Body and Sexuality

Dr. Katherine Ott

AU History 29.387-687.02  
Spring, 1998; TU/FR 11:20-12:35

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Over the last two hundred and fifty years the human body has been viewed, displayed, dissected, and discussed in ways that both reflect and contradict the culture and politics of the times. Whether cursed and dismembered or adorned and fetishized, the body has always been a site of intense meaning and the locus of immense power. This class surveys doctrines and theories about sexuality and the human body and their place in science, nature, and culture. The ideas and materials we will analyze are situated at the intersection of history, medicine, anthropology, art, philosophy, religion, politics, race, gender, and economics. For example, physical anthropologists measured skulls and muscle strength to construct a hierarchy of races. Industrialists and their agents sought to understand the worker's body as a machine which was subject to inefficiency and fatigue. Doctors saw the body as both a vessel for pathogens and illness as well as a tableaux for construction and correction, through amputation, plastic surgery, and orthopedics. Additionally, the built and lived environment was a constant hazard and a site of accidents, disaster, and explosions which literally catapulted individuals into new relationships with body aesthetics, social welfare, and economics.

Caution: This is not a class for the faint of heart or the squeamish. We will look at and discuss sometimes shocking, and at other times rather repulsive images and ideas. This involves the material culture of bodies, including medical instruments, and the texts that illustrate their use.

Grades will be based upon the following:

- Attendance and participation: 30%.  
You should come to each class with two or three questions you might pose to yourself and to the class in response to the readings and on-going discussions. Attendance and participation are crucial to your grade.
- Literature review on a topic of your choice: 35%.  
The essay should be 8-10 pages in length and include 8-10 sources. The literature review of graduate students should be 15-20 pages and include 15-20 sources. Due last week of class.
- Material or visual essay of 6-8 pages: 35%.  
This essay is an analysis/discussion of a non-print (that is, not book, article, manuscript) item related to sexuality. This might be an object, photograph, post card, engraving, etc.

### Required Texts

- *Reader*, compiled by the professor; in two volumes, available in the bookstore; v.I, \$51.15; v. II, \$38.90. A copy of the *Reader* is also on reserve in Bender Library.
- James T. Patterson; *The Dread Disease*; Harvard, ; \$17.95.
- Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ed., *Freakery; Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, NYU Press, 1996; \$24.94.
- Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor; Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*; Un. California, 1992; \$17.00.
- Thomas Lacqueur, *Making Sex; Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*; Harvard, 1992; \$14.00.

## Week 1. Introductions.

### Week 2. Overview of History of Medicine. What is Disease?

- Begin Patterson, *The Dread Disease*.
- **In Reader:** H.R. Wulff, "The Disease Concept and the Medical View of Man," [from A. Querido, et al., eds., *The Discipline of Medicine*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1994; p. 11-19]; Julia Epstein, "Defining Disease" [from Julia Epstein, *Altered Conditions; Disease, Medicine, and Storytelling*, NY: Routledge, 1995, p. 7-22]; Gary Seaman, "Winds, Waters, Seeds, and Souls: Folk Concepts of Physiology and Etiology in Chinese Geomancy" [from Charles Leslie and Allan Young, eds., *Paths to Asian Medical Knowledge*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, p. 74-97]; Stephen Morse, "AIDS and Beyond: Defining the Rules for Viral Traffic," [from Elizabeth Fee and Daniel Fox, ed. *AIDS; The Making of a Chronic Disease*, University of Cal., 1992, p.23-48].

### Week 3. More Background on History of Medicine

- Finish Patterson, *The Dread Disease*
- **In Reader:** Philip Cole, "Of Light Bulbs and Wine Glasses: Risk Factors and Mortality Trends," [from Russell Maulitz, ed. *Unnatural Causes: The Three Leading Killer Diseases in America*; New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1989, p. 95-102]; Stuart S. Blume, "Absolute Power and Clearest Insight," [from Blume, *Insight and Industry; On the Dynamics of Technological Change in Medicine*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993, p.1-37].

### Week 4. The Body Literature: Theory and Method

- **In Reader:** Bryan Turner, "Recent Developments in the Theory of the Body;" [from Featherstone, Hepworth, Turner, ed. *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, London: Sage, 1995, p. 2-35]; Mike Featherstone, "The Body in Consumer Culture." [*ibid.* p. 170-196]; Barbara Duden, "Preface" and "Toward a History of the Body," [from Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin; a Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. v-viii; 1-49]; Oliver Sacks, "Cupid's Disease," [from Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, NY: Summit Books, 1985, 97-102]; Barbara Babcock, "Pueblo Cultural Bodies" [from *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 44-54]; Marcel Mauss, "Techniques of the Body," [from *Economy and Society*, 2(1973):70-88].

## Week 5. Death, Dissection and Learning Anatomy

**NOTE: Field Trip. FRIDAY CLASS WILL MEET AT NMAH, WEST CONFERENCE ROOM**

- **In Reader:** The Doctors: H. M. Collins, "Dissecting Surgery: Forms of Life Depersonalized," [from *Social Studies of Science*, 24(1994): 311-333]; Joseph Lella and Dorothy Pawluch, "Medical Students and the Cadaver in Social and Cultural Context," [from M. Lock and D. R. Gordon, eds., *Biomedicine Examined*, Amsterdam: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1988, p. 125-153];
- The People: Ian Burney, "Viewing Bodies: Medicine, Public Order, and English Inquest Practice," [from *Configurations* 1(1994): 33-46]; Gussie L. Davis, "In the Baggage Coach Ahead," [sheet music, 1894]; Philippe Aries, "Forbidden Death," [from Aries, *Western Attitudes Towards Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974, p. 85-107]; Michael Lesy, "Undertakers," [from Lesey, *The Forbidden Zone*, NY: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1987, p. 225-250].

**Week 6. Imaging the Body.**

- In Thomson, *Freakery*: Ostman, "Photography and Persuasion."
- **In Reader:** Soraya de Chadarevian, "Graphical Method and Discipline: Self-Recording Instruments in Nineteenth-Century Physiology" [from *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 24(1993):267-291]; Stanley Joel Reiser, "Creating Form Out of Mass; The Development of the Medical Record" [from Everett Mendelsohn, ed., *Transformation and Tradition in the Sciences*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 303-316].

**Week 7. Monsters and Deviance.**

- In Thomson, *Freakery*: Thomson, "Introduction;" Bogdan, "The Social Construction of Freaks," Gerber, "The Careers of People Exhibited in Freak Shows," Fretz, "P. T. Barnum's Theatrical Selfhood,"; Cook, "Of Men, Missing Links, and Non-Descripts;" Pingree, "The Exceptions that Prove the Rule;" Hawkins, "One of Us;"
- **In Reader:** nothing

**Week 8. Disability Studies      Non-print essay due.**

- In Thomson, *Freakery*: Merish, "Cuteness and Commodity Aesthetics;" Rosenberg, "Teaching Freaks;" Dennett, "The Dime Museum Freak Show Reconfigured as Talk Show."
- **In Reader:** Colin Barnes, "Theories of Disability and the Origins of the Oppression of Disabled People in Western Society," [from Len Barton, ed. *Disability and Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, London: Longman, 1996, p. 43-60]; Mike Oliver, "Disability and Dependency: A Creation of Industrial Societies?" [from Len Barton, ed., *Disability and Dependency*, London: Falmer Press, 1995, p. 6-22]; Oliver Sacks, "Witty Ticky Ray" [from Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, NY: Summit, 1985, p. 87-96].

## Week 9. NO CLASS. Spring Break.

### Week 10. Ethnology of the Body: Culture Is, Culture Isn't.

- In Thomson, *Freakery*: Lindfors, "Ethnological Show Business;" Vaughn "Ogling Ingorots;" Frost, "The Circassian Beauty and the Circassian Slave;"
- **In Reader**: Melbourne Tapper, "Interrogating Bodies: Medico-Racial Knowledge, Politics, and the Study of a Disease" [from *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, 1995, p. 76-93].

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Gender, Race, and Nation: the Comparative Anatomy of Hottentot Women in Europe, 1815-1817," [from Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, ed., *Deviant Bodies*, Bloomington: Indiana Un. Press, 1995, p. 19-48].

### Week 11. Body Arts and Crafts.

- In Thomson, *Freakery*: Lindsay, "Bodybuilding;" Yuan, "The Celebrity Freak".
- Begin reading (for next week) Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*.
- **In Reader**: Kathy Davis, "The Rise of the Surgical Fix," [from Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body; The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*, NY: Routledge, 1995, p. 14-38]; Blair O. Rogers, "A Chronologic History of Cosmetic Surgery" [from *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 47(1971):265-302].

Jacqueline Urla and Alan Swedlund, "The Anthropometry of Barbie," [from Terry and Urla, *Deviant Bodies*, Bloomington: Indiana Un. Press, 1995, p. 277-313].

### Week 12. Constructing and Constituting the Body.

- Finish Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*.
- **In Reader**: Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," [from *Socialist Review* 15 (1985): 65-107]; Allen Weisse, "Turning Bad Luck into Good; The Alchemy of Willem Kolff, the First Successful Artificial Kidney and the Artificial Heart," [from Allen Weisse, *Medical Odysseys*, New Brunswick: Rutgers Un. Press, 1991, p. 87-105]; C. Don Keyes, "Four Ethical Concerns," and "Body and Self-Identity," [from C. Don Keyes, ed., *New Harvest: Transplanting Body Parts and Reaping the Benefits*, Clifton, N. J. : Humana Press, 1991, p. 3-13, 161-177].

### Week 13. Sexing the Body: The Sexes and Genders

- For Tuesday: Laqueur, *Making Sex*.

For Friday and next week:

- **In Reader**: Domna Stanton, "Introduction: The Subject of Sexuality" [from Domna Stanton, ed., *Discourses of Sexuality; From Aristotle to AIDS*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992]; Londa Schiebinger, "Mammals, Primatology and Sexology," [from Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, ed., *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 184-209].

**Week 14. Sexing the Body: Sex Acts**

- **In Reader:** Helen Bradford, "Herbs, Knives and Plastic: 150 Years of Abortion in South Africa" [from Teresa Meade and Mark Walker, ed., *Science, Medicine and Cultural Imperialism*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1991, p. 120-146]; Max Charlesworth, "Whose Body? Feminist Views on Reproductive Technology," [from Paul Komesaroff, ed. *Troubled Bodies; Critical Perspectives on Postmodernism, Medical Ethics, and the Body*, Duke Un. Press, 1995, p. 125-141]; Bernice Hausman, "Introduction: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender," and "Managing Intersexuality and Producing Gender," [from Hausman, *Changing Sex; Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*, Duke University Press, 1995, p. 1-19, 72-109].

**Week 15. Sexing the Body: So?**

- Friday: **Literature review due.**