Course Description:
In classical philosophy and social theory, the body and the intellect have been separated through an artificial binary that ranks the intellect superior and erases the body. A central tenant of feminist theory has been to incorporate the body within its theoretical projects. This course aims to understand the ways in which feminist theory has articulated the relationship between the body and society. The themes of the course include: body politics, gender performance, Michel Foucault’s contribution to theories of the body, adornment and identity, reproduction, eugenics, inter/sexuality, disability, medicalization, transnational feminism and postmodern bodies. This course is reading and writing intensive and will stress critical thinking and the development of academic writing skills.

Course Objectives:
After completing this course, students will gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the body has been erased from classical social theory and that feminist theory has centralized the body and material life. Additionally, students will gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the body is significantly shaped by history, society, institutions, belief systems, and capitalism. Students will become more familiar with the ways in which feminist theory has understood the body, sex, gender, race, sexuality, disability, and identity. In particular, students will learn the ways in which society and human bodies have interacted and constructed one another differently, depending on
social location and power structures. Students will gain a complex understanding of how bodies are influenced and expressed socially within feminist theory; and therefore, be able to conduct scholarly feminist research that is inclusive of theories of the body.

**Required Texts:**
Susan Bordo (2004) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*
Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*
Margaret A. McLaren (2002) *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*
Jael Silliman and Anannya Bhattacharjee (2002) *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender, and Criminalization*
Harriet A. Washington (2008), *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*

**Disability Support Services:** If you need any accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, please register with the Office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements may impact your ability to fully participate.

**Course Conduct:** Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU Libraries at http://www.twu.edu/library/tutorial/plagiarism/player.html.

Additionally, while the class relies on discussion about potentially sensitive topics, it is important to be respectful towards one another. Talk in turn, one at a time, and listen to what each person says. Please direct comments to the entire class. You will need to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. You are required to attend each session, read the assigned text, and participate in the discussion.

**TWU Write Site:** For writing assistance, please visit the TWU Write Site, located at CFO 131. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am–5pm; call 898-2341 for appointment.
Assignments:
Comparison Paper [3 drafts (each missing/late draft drop 10 points); presentation 10 pts; 10-12 pages total] 100 points
Attendance [15 x 10 pts] 150 points
Reading Summaries on Personal Blog [14 x 5 pts] 70 points
Leading Discussions [twice x 25 points; also post on Blackboard] 50 points
Blackboard Responses [5 x 5 pts] 25 points
Wiki Posting [10 x 1 pt] 10 points

Total— 405 points

Points/grades
A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F 0-68%

Comparison Paper— [100 total points; any late or missing drafts will be penalized 10 points] This project consists of: 1 short proposal 1-4 pages long; 1st paper draft 6 pages minimum; and a final draft of 10-12 pages, citing 10 sources minimum. The references will be written in the MLA format. Late or missing drafts will be docked 10 points from the overall 100 points possible.

For the comparison paper, pick two assigned authors (or other body theorists with prior approval) and compare and contrast their primary theories with each other. Include further reading of these authors’ other materials and provide a detailed understanding of the authors’ background and primary written works. How do they contribute to social theories of the body? What do the authors’ theories have in common and where do they differ? What do we learn about the body from these authors? How are their theories “feminist” in the author’s own definition?

The short proposal will be 2-4 pages long, due on 2/23. This proposal should describe your main argument, supporting examples, and include a reference list with five sources.

The 1st paper draft will be due on 4/6. It will be 6 pages minimum and include a reference list with eight sources. This will be the beginning of your final paper, so it should consist of the introduction and beginning of your main argument, and then it may end abruptly.

The final paper will be 10-12 pages, due on 5/4. Include a reference list with at least 10 citations (7 from assigned reading materials).

Comparison paper presentation [10 points]: On the last day of the course you will present your research to your classmates in no more than 10 minutes, less time is desirable. Present a very brief overview of your primary argument and paper content, not an overtly detailed summary. Base your presentation on a few notes written on notecards and do not use a PowerPoint.
**Attendance**— [15 sessions x 10 points] Attendance is required for this course. The class meets only once a week; it is important to be there. With a total of 15 sessions, each class period is equal to ten points, with a total of 150 possible. You are also required to attend the entire class period. Attendance will be taken each class. If you have a legitimate reason for absence, please go to the Office of Student Life to get a written excused absence memo; do not show me your doctor’s note. Even if excused, points will not be awarded if you do not attend class. You will still be required to obtain the information that you missed from your classmates or through your own research. If more than two classes are missed then additional penalties may apply. The penalty may be ½ letter grade for each additional absence.

**Reading Summaries on Personal Blog**— [14 summaries x 5 points] For each class, you will write a summary of the assigned readings, including the author’s main point, outline of argument, and your personal reflection or understanding of the material. Also include your reactions, opinions, and thoughts on the material. The summaries should be a balance between a summary and your reaction, but only one of these will not suffice. Please also include a potential discussion question that is thought provoking (not a short-answer question). These reading summaries will be written on your personal blog in Blackboard (which I will establish for you) and are due **before** class begins at 2:30 pm. They are a minimum of 500 words. Each is worth five points.

**Discussion Leader**— [2 x 25 points] During each class period, two students will lead a discussion of the assigned readings for a portion of the session. Please write up notes for your discussion that include a detailed summary of the readings, your impressions of the text, three discussion questions, and additional contextual information about the texts (info on the author’s life, the particular text, the issue at hand, competing theories, anything referenced in the text.). The discussion leaders should contribute additional outside information that can assist us with understanding the text (all discussion leaders will post their separate or combined documents/handouts). The discussion leader must also post their notes on Blackboard 24 hours before the class session begins, include links to Web sites and a list of Works Cited (minimum of 250 words). During the first week of class, please e-mail me with which class period you would like to lead, by sending me a list with your top four choices. Aim to lead the class discussion for approximately 30-45 minutes. Coordinate the presentation with your session partner. Each session you lead is worth 25 points.

**Blackboard Responses**— [5 x 5 points] Each student must respond to the discussion leader’s Blackboard posting on five different occasions throughout the semester. These can be posted when the discussion leader has posted their notes (24 hours before the session) or after the class period has passed. Each posting should include a thoughtful response to the particularities of the discussion leader’s summary, the material, and the student’s own perspective. Remember to keep a balance between summarizing the material and including your own perspective. Each response must be a minimum of 200 words. Please plan ahead and do not wait until the end of the semester to post your responses. You are welcome to post more than five responses, but will only get credit for five. Responses to a particular topic should be posted that same week that the topic was
discussed, due by Saturday at midnight. Each posting is worth five points. Once you have made your posting, please send me an e-mail letting me know so that I will update your grade book.

Wiki Postings: *U.S. history of laws regulating bodies (reproduction, race, marriage, medicine, etc.)* — [10 x 1 point] Each student will contribute ten different entries into our group wiki. This wiki will be listed on the left-hand side in the menu of Blackboard. Each entry can be around 2-3 sentences including the name of the law, the date it was implemented and what it accomplished.

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### Class Schedule

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---1/19---

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (no class)

---1/26--- Introduction

- Introduction to course and students, overview of syllabus, demonstration of Blackboard blog, discussion board, and wiki tools.
- Bordo: “In the Empire of Images,” p. xiii-xxxvi.

(Total Pages 75)

---2/2--- Body Politics

- Bordo: “Whose Body is This? Feminism, Medicine, and the Conceptualization of Eating Disorders,” p. 45-69.

(Total Pages 114)

Student Presenters Lauren Volpe & ________________________.

---2/9--- Gender Performance and Body Politics


(Total Pages 87)

Student Presenters Lesley Regalado & Samantha Marconi

---2/16--- Foucault on Embodiment


(Total Pages 100)

Student Presenters Samantha Marconi & Maia Cudhea

---2/23--- Bodily Adornment and Identity


DUE: Comparison Paper Proposal

(Total Pages 162)

Student Presenters Lesley Regalado & Marc Fernandez

---3/2--- Women in Sports and Fitness

Student Presenters Marc Fernandez & Ragen Roberts

---3/9--- Politics of Reproduction

- Movie: The Business of Being Born
- Guest Speaker: Dr. Jane Grassley will lead a discussion on natural childbirth following the movie

(Total Pages 66)

---3/16--- Spring Break

- Spring break (no class)

---3/23--- Eugenics and the Politics of Reproduction


(Total Pages 140)

Student Presenters Ragen Roberts & Susan Bradley

---3/30--- Intersex and the Social Construction of Gender

- Fausto-Sterling: “Should There Be Only Two Sexes?” p. 78-114.
---4/6--- Women and Disability

- Guest Speaker: Dr. Judy Rohrer on Disability Studies
- **DUE:** First Draft Comparison Paper

---4/13--- Medicalization and Dis-Ease

- Price and Shildrick: “A Burst of Light: Living With Cancer,” Audre Lorde, p. 149-152.

---4/20--- Medicalization and Dis-Ease

(Total Pages 113)

Student Presenters Kris Bowman & Phillip Ogle

---4/27--- (Post)Colonialism and Embodiment

• Price and Shildrick: “Interview from Warrior Marks,” Pratibjha Parmar and Alice Walker, p. 302-308.
• Davis: “Reclaiming Women’s Bodies: Colonialist Trope or Critical Epistemology?” p. 120-141.
(Total Pages 148)

Student Presenters ___________________ & ________________________.

---5/4--- Transnationalism and Postmodern Bodies

• Bordo: “Postmodern Subjects, Postmodern Bodies, Postmodern Resistance,” p. 277-300.
• DUE: Final Comparison Paper
(Total Pages 99)

Student Presenters ___________________ & ________________________.

---5/11--- Student Presentations

• DUE: Student presentations (10 minutes max)