

Bodies in Culture: Subjects, Technologies, Film

*Everyone of us is a machine
of the real, everyone of us is
a constructive machine*

Antonio Negri

*Every machine is a machine
of a machine*

Gilles Deleuze

Tutor:

John Lynch

Banner code: 08 19225



• Bodies in Culture:
Subjects, Technologies, Film (III)

This course is a sustained analysis of a diverse range of cultural formations of the body within Western society and is primarily informed by concepts deriving from the philosophical writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. It takes a case-by-case approach to develop knowledge of the processes enabling the production and circulation of specific bodies within contemporary film and media cultures. This approach will facilitate a critical evaluation of how the materiality of bodies, body-images, and technology have all interacted to produce the categories with which we are familiar. The medium of film is taken as the focus for interrogating these processes. Each week we will approach these issues through:

- Presentation and discussion based on close readings of key theoretical texts;
- The collection and presentation of relevant visual material including film, art and media;
- Investigation of independently researched material.

The intention is for the development of a cartographic approach to the subject and the identification of possibilities for further individual research.

Course of study	week
• Bodies in Culture: Concepts	(1)
• The Lived Body	(2)*
• The Biopolitical Body	(3)
• The Affective Body	(4)
• The Prosthetic Body	(5)*
READING WEEK	(6)
• The Reproductive Body	(7)*
• Discussion and analysis of independent research	(8)
• The Sick Body	(9)*
• The Cloned Body	(10)*
• Essay preparation	(11)
XMAS BREAK	
• The Perfect Body	(12)*
• The In-Love Body	(13)*
• The Facialized Body	(14)*
• The Listening Body	(15)
• Discussion and analysis of independent research	(16)
READING WEEK	(17)
• The Dancing Body	(18)*
• The Anorexic Body	(19)*
• The Adolescent Body	(20)*
• The Creative Body	(21)

- Examination preparation (22)

*A series of **film screenings** will be organised to run in parallel to the course. Attendance is a requirement, as they will form an essential part of the class discussion.

Week	
(2)	<i>Memento</i> (2000)
(5)	<i>Blade Runner</i> (1982)
(5)	<i>Alien Resurrection</i> (1997)
(9)	<i>Panic in the Streets</i> (1950)
(10)	<i>Teknolust</i> (2002)
(12)	<i>Fight Club</i> (1999)
(13)	<i>Punch Drunk Love</i> (2002)
(14)	<i>Badlands</i> (1973)
(16)	<i>Dancer in the Dark</i> (2000)
(18)	<i>Hunger</i> (2008)
(20)	<i>Elephant</i> (2003)

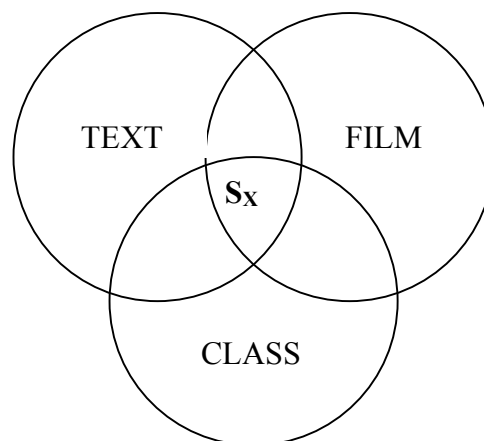


diagram of relationship between elements of the course

Assessment

The course is assessed by 4000 word **essay (50%)** & end of year **examination (50%)**

- **Essay**
- **Examination**

Independent Research

Throughout the first term you will be required to collect material relevant to the themes of the course that will be used for discussion in class and later as part of the first assignment. This could include material such as: newspaper or magazine articles, found images both historical and contemporary, extended readings, film clips, photographs. You will be asked to present material from your portfolio

on a regular basis. The purpose of this is to effectively and concretely relate the theoretical material to useful examples. It will also play a **central role** in your first **assessment**. The format of this is for you to write 200 words per article up to ten in total on an average of one/two per week.

Lecture Format

This class is designated as a workshop so we will take a different approach to that you are perhaps most familiar with from previous levels of study. Each session will be divided into the following sections the order of which, at times, will change:

- 11.00-11.10 **Introduction and summary of course material**
- 11.10-11.30 **Lecture (Concepts)**
- 11.30-11.50 **Discussion of set questions**
- 11.50-12.00 **Break**
- 12.00-12.20 **Lecture (Connections)**
- 12.20-12.40 **Discussion of further questions and the film**
- 12.40-12.50 **Brief examination of your ongoing portfolio research**
- 12.50 **Finish**



Solaris, (2002)

Week 1

Bodies in Culture: Concepts

Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come.

A Thousand Plateaus, Rhizome, p.5

This is our introductory class. As we go through the handbook it should be evident that this is not simply a conventional run-through of different ways of considering the body in society. It is theory intensive and will, at times, be quite demanding. At first, the language and imagery used will perhaps appear strange and unfamiliar, so, you will need to be prepared to work hard at understanding for yourself that which is being argued or suggested. By organizing each week around one theme we will be able to map out the co-ordinates of the issues in a productive fashion. I will serve as your guide through the labyrinths that open before us and always remember that uncertainty and confusion can drive us to new areas of thought. In this sense, then, this is a workshop or perhaps even a laboratory for ideas and you will need to get your hands dirty. You will need to prepare intensively and extensively for the classes and come with an open mind and as many questions as you can articulate. We will also be viewing some films that will give us other ways of thinking about the questions we have and it is essential you watch them.

Essential reading:

Guattari, F. 'A Cinema of Desire' *Soft Subversion*

Suggested further readings:

Connolly, W.B. (2002) *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus* London: Athlone Press.

Fraser, M. & Greco, M. *The Body: A Reader*

Guattari, F. 'Regimes, pathways, subjects' in Crary & Kwinter, *Incorporations: Zone 6*

Guattari, F. 'The Ecosophic Object' *Chaosmosis*

Mansfield, N. (2000) *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*, New York: New York University Press.

Rose, N. *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century*

Shilling, C. *The Body in Culture, Technology & Society*, London: Sage, 2005

Key points of today's class:

- Theoretical approaches to be considered on the course
- Relationship of readings, lectures, films
- Importance of portfolio research and its function
- Structure and format of class

Film Screening: Memento (2000)



Week 2

The Lived Body

What does it mean to 'be' a body? Philosophy has always dealt with the body as an abstract category but what should or can be said about how bodies actually 'live'? Sociology has tended to replicate this approach by focusing on the social as the determinant of being. This week, therefore we will begin to look at some of the critical approaches that address this issue.

Essential Readings:

Turner, B. 'Sociology and the Body' chapter 2 from *Body and Society*, London: Sage, 1996.

Lash, S. 'Genealogy and the Body: Foucault/Deleuze/Nietzsche' from Featherstone, M. et al *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, London: Sage, 1995.

Further Readings:

Johnson, G. 'The Situated Self And Utopian Thinking'

Burkitt, I. *Bodies of thought : embodiment, identity and modernity*

Weiss, G. *Body images : embodiment as intercorporeality*

Sobchack, V. *Carnal Thoughts : Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*

Featherstone, M. and Burrows, R. (eds)

Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk : Cultures of Technological Embodiment

Howson, A. *Embodying Gender*

Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects : Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*

U. Marks, L. *The Skin of the Film : Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*

Conboy, K. ,Medina, N.,and Stanbury. S. (eds)*Writing on the body : female embodiment and feminist theory*

Bendelow, G. & Williams, S. (1998) *The Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues* London: Routledge.

Questions for discussion in class:

1. What is so different about how Foucault approaches the issue of the body in society?
2. Why does Turner maintain so adamantly that a sociology of the body is a political sociology?
3. What different ways can we talk about a 'materiality' of the body?
4. What characterizes a Nietzschean study of the body?