

Sam Houston State University
Honors College

THE WORD: BODY

HONR 3342-02

3 Credit Hours

Fall Semester, 2017

Class Location: Lee Drain Building, Room 215
Class Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00–9:20am
Instructor: Dr. Barbara Kaminska, Assistant Professor
Office Location: Art Building D, Room 118
Instructor Contact Information: (936) 294-1194
E-Mail: bak018@shsu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday, 12–1:30pm, and upon appointment

Course Description

This course will introduce you to selected topics related to the understanding of the body throughout history, with the emphasis on the early modern period (ca. 1400-1750). It will investigate the concept of the body in artistic, socio-political, medical, and theological discourses by analyzing pictorial and textual representations of the body/bodies. It will focus, on the one hand, on the understanding of the body as a physical phenomenon and, on the other hand, on a variety of metaphorical applications of the concept of the body. The entire seminar will be roughly divided in five thematic sections: 1) Body in the Visual Arts, 2) Body and Religion, 3) Body, Society, and Politics, 4) Body, Medicine, and Fitness, 5) Body and Anatomy in Visual Arts. Although there's a strong emphasis on the visual culture in this course, you are encouraged to pursue research projects related to your major.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how religion, visual arts, science, and everyday life practices shaped perceptions of the body throughout centuries
2. Investigate metaphorical understanding of the body in socio-political and theological discourses
3. Analyze depictions of the body as a subject of sensory and sensual experiences and the construction of a perfect body in visual arts
4. Develop research, writing, and presentation skills through a variety of activities and assignments

Assessment and Grade Distribution (100% = 200 points)

- Attendance and participation: 25% (50 points)
- Homework assignments (short reading responses, abstracts and questions on the reading, etc.): 25% (50 points)
- Short formal analysis essay: 10% (20 points)
- Research paper: 30% (60 points)
- In-class presentation: 10% (20 points)

Readings, Homework Assignments, Format of Classes

Readings, homework assignments, and other resources will be posted on the course website.

Homework assignments must be submitted online on Blackboard before the beginning of class (submission panel will close at 8am). Late submissions will not be accepted. Each seminar will consist of a short lecture, discussion, and other active learning components. Readings and homework assignments are meant to prepare you for class discussion; it is thus essential that you complete them before the seminar. Please consult the schedule and the course website for the list of readings and deadlines.

Papers and Presentation

In this class, you will write two papers and give one presentation.

Short formal analysis essay: in this paper, you will analyze a work of art related to the theme of the class. The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first, to practice visual analysis skills we will be developing in this course, and second, to practice writing and receive feedback before you begin working on your research paper.

Length: 3 pages, Times New Roman 12, double space, 1" margins.

Research paper: this paper will give you the opportunity to explore more in-depth a topic of your choice related to the concept of the body, and possibly to your major (e.g. if your major is psychology, you may want to work on the mind-body problem). Please consider presenting your research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in April 2018. All topics must be approved by dr. Kaminska. Before submitting the final version of the paper, you will submit its topic, annotated bibliography, and outline (see the schedule for dates). In October, you will participate in a library instruction session, during which you will have an opportunity to learn more about conducting primary research and library resources.

Length of the research paper: 8 pages + bibliography and images, Times New Roman 12, double space, 1" margins. Further details TBA.

Presentation: at the end of the semester, you will give a short presentation of your research project. Presentations will be scheduled by Dr. Kaminska according to their themes. You will learn the date of your presentation in Week Nine. More details TBA.

Plagiarism

Your papers and homework assignments must present your original ideas and be written by you. Do not plagiarize any part of any of your assignments. Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: downloading work of another person and submitting as one's own; failure to acknowledge authorship when using sources such as books and textbooks, websites, journal articles, online term papers, dictionaries, emails; using someone else's words or phrases, ideas or thoughts, copying data etc. without a proper citation. If you copy content of a website or textbook, and simply change a few words or the order of sentences, this will still count as plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered a fraud and constitutes a serious academic offence. It will result in a failing grade for the assignment (0 points), and, in serious cases, in failing the course, and will be reported to the Dean.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are essential to the success of this seminar. You can have two unexcused absences; any further unexcused absences will result in the deduction of 10 points from the “Attendance and Participation” portion of your grade. If you’re absent, you’re not partaking in class activities, which means that in addition to the 10 points automatically deducted you will also lose points for the lack of participation. For your absence to be excused, you must provide valid documentation, e.g. doctor’s note (illness, appointment), jury duty summons, note from a coach or professor if you’re participating in a competition, workshop, or other SHSU-sponsored activities out of town. If you send me an email stating that you’re not feeling well and will not be class, but don’t produce a doctor’s note, your absence will still count as unexcused.

Attendance and Participation mean that you arrive on time, pay attention, and contribute to the discussion. Repeated lateness will result in the deduction of points from this portion of your grade. You can use laptop to take notes and consult readings. If you are caught using it for any other purpose, this privilege will be revoked. All other electronic devices must be turned off and put away. Absolutely no texting in class. If you don’t put away your cell phone after the first warning, you will be asked to leave the classroom and marked as absent.

We will begin most meetings with a brief review of the main points of the previous class session (max. five-minute-long presentations). Each student will do such a summary twice in the semester: one time with two other students, one time individually. Sign-up sheet will be circulated on Tuesday, August 29. If you are not able to present on the assigned date, you must find someone to switch with you.

You are expected to check your SHSU email account and the course website on Blackboard on a daily basis. Please note: I will not respond to emails to which the answer can be found in this syllabus or on the course website (e.g. how many points do I lose if I miss more than two classes).

You’re always welcome to stop by my office during my office hours or schedule an appointment to discuss material from class, your research paper, or simply to introduce yourself.

Students with Disabilities Policies

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for

Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

Schedule (subject to change):

Week One

Thursday, 08/24: Introduction

Week Two: Body in the Visual Arts

Tuesday, 08/29: The myth of bodily perfection, then and now: Greek and Roman heritage in Western culture

Thursday, 08/31: Monsters and metaphors: body in the Middle Ages

Reading: Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 29–59, 79–93.

Week Three: Body in the Visual Arts

Tuesday, 09/05: Body – Embodiment - Personification

Thursday, 09/07: Metamorphoses: bodily transformations in Renaissance and Baroque art

Reading: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdnPdZMZ9PU> (Khan Academy; Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*).

Week Four: Body in the Visual Arts

Tuesday, 09/12: Sensory and sensual experiences in Renaissance and Baroque art; neuroaesthetics; formal analysis activity

Thursday, 09/14: Women agency, female nude, and the myth of the male gaze

Reading: Rona Goffen, “Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love and Marriage*,” in *The Expanding Discourse. Feminism and Art History*, ed. by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Haper Collins, 1992), 111–125.

Week Five: Body and Religion

Tuesday, 09/19: Body, soul, and the mind-body problem

Formal analysis paper due

Thursday, 09/21: Catholicism and Protestantism. The cult of relics and the contestation of corporality.

Reading: selection of excerpts on the course website.

Week Six: Body, Society, Politics

Tuesday, 09/26: Body as a political metaphor

Thursday, 09/28: Body, spectacle, and rituals of violence

Reading: Mitchell T. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 1999). (excerpts)

Week Seven: Body, Society, Politics

Tuesday, 10/03: Geographical discoveries, cannibalism, and indigenous bodies

Thursday, 10/05: Geographical discoveries, cannibalism, and indigenous bodies

Reading: Merrall L. Price, *Consuming Passions: the Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 1991). (excerpts)

Week Eight: Body, Society, Politics

Tuesday, 10/10: Body and gender

Research paper topic due.

Thursday, 10/12: Anatomy and erotic imagery

Reading: Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: on the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton University Press, 1999). (excerpts)

Week Nine: Body, Society, Politics

Tuesday, 10/17: Social control and race in visual arts

Reading: Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting. Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2004), 39–62.

Thursday, 10/19 Library instruction session

Week Ten: Body, Society, Politics

Tuesday, 10/24: Body ownership

Reading: Donna Dickenson, *Body Shopping: the Economy Fueled by Flesh and Blood* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008). (excerpts)

Thursday, 10/26: Class cancelled: please use this time to work on the bibliography to your research paper

Week Eleven: Body, Medicine, Fitness

Tuesday, 10/31: Diet and exercise in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Annotated bibliography due

Thursday, 11/02 Disease and disability

Reading: Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: an Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). (excerpts)

Week Twelve: Guest seminars

Tuesday, 11/07: Dr. Emily Roper, Department of Kinesiology

Female athletic body and its representation, Reading TBA

Thursday, 11/09: Dr. Emily Roper, Department of Kinesiology
Female athletic body and its representation

Week Thirteen: Medicine, Anatomy and Visual Arts

Tuesday, 11/14: Hospital Care: guest seminar via Skype with Margaret Bell, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a research fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence
Research paper outline due.

Thursday, 11/16: Anatomy in the seventeenth-century: guest seminar via Skype with Erin Travers, a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a research fellow at the Leiden University

Reading: Julie V. Hansen, "Resurrecting Death: Anatomical Art in the Cabinet of Dr. Frederik Ruysch," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 78 (1996): 663–679.

Week Fourteen: Student Presentations

Tuesday, 11/21: Student Presentations

Thursday, 11/23 Thanksgiving

Week Fifteen: Student Presentations

Tuesday, 11/28: Student Presentations

Thursday, 11/30: Student Presentations

Research paper due in hard copy in class