

McMaster University
Department of Sociology
SOCIOLOGY 4EE3:
The Culture of Body Management
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Lin
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The main objective of this course is to reveal our human bodies as sociological inquiries through the lens of culture. It intends to show students how much culture matters relative to other variables in studying various examples of body management in different regions of the world. In this topic, Body management can be defined as a set of social practices, strategies or interventions on human bodies in order to obtain a specific cultural ideal prescribed by the dominant ideology in a given society. Body can also be used as a vehicle for making personal profits. Foucault's idea of bio-politics, in particular, will be used to study nuances in production, consumption and interpretation of body management across cultures.

In this course, students will learn to appreciate different cultures by examining the way people manage and monitor their own or others' body over the life course. The body will be addressed not as a physical entity, but as a bio-socio-political manifestation in different cultures. Through selected case studies, students will realize that body encompasses various forms of social significance, such as age discrimination, gendered power relations, transsexuality, skin color stratification, prevalence of cosmetic surgery, commercialization of surrogacy, etc.

Prerequisite(s): One of SOCIOL 3FF3, 3H06 A/B and enrolment in Level IV of any Honours Sociology program; enrolment in Level IV of the Honours Social Psychology (B.A.) program; or permission of the Department SOCIOL 4EE3 may be repeated, if on a different topic, to a total of six units.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Articulate the ways in which debates concerning the body are important sociological concerns.
- Demonstrate how social, cultural and historical factors affect ideas of the body.
- Evaluate and explicate how notions of the body influence ideas of subjectivity.
- Apply theoretical concepts related to the body to issues of everyday life.
- Examine the diverse ways in which bodies matter to critical, social thought.

Course Delivery: Asynchronous Remote Learning

I will cover the course content through weekly pre-recorded lectures which you can download from Avenue to Learn. You should try your best to complete the assigned reading and use the pre-recorded lectures to guide your learning at your time of convenience. The tutorial sections are designed to review the course content and provide opportunities for you to ask questions. Although tutorial attendance is not taken throughout the semester, it is beneficial to your exam and assignment preparation. Much of the course is cumulative, so failing to keep up with the weekly reading and lecture will put you at a disadvantaged position. Communication with the instructor and the teaching assistant is extremely important if you have special accommodation.

Reading

There will be selected scholarly articles available through Avenue to Learn.

Methods of Evaluation

Critical Reflection Assignment	20%
Recorded Oral Presentation.....	15%
Online Content Analysis Assignment.....	35%
Final-take Home Examination.....	30%

Evaluation Breakdown

Critical Reflection Assignment (20%) – October 23, by 11:59pm

Throughout this semester, students will select 2 themes from the weekly topics and write a critical reflection based on the reading. You must pick the themes from **September 23 until October 21**. Below are the two requirements:

- 1) Provide sociological meanings of the chosen topics (**2 pages**)
 - what do the chosen topics say about the social norm and value?
 - what do the chosen topics say about the social interaction between people?
 - what ideology do the chosen topic reveal?
- 2) Provide your own critical response to the ideas from the chosen topics (**2 pages**)
 - what ideas from the chosen topics inspire you?
 - what new ideas can you generate based on the chosen topics?

Important Notes

1. Please discuss the three topics concisely and condense ideas from the chosen topics.
2. Please follow the **APA** referencing format and submit your paper to the Avenue Dropbox.
3. This assignment should be **4 pages maximum (double spaced, 12 size font)**, excluding the cover and reference page.

Recorded Oral Presentation (15%) – November 27, by 11:59pm

In this course, students will select a topic **from October 28 until November 25** and record an oral presentation. Your presentation must meet the following criteria:

- briefly summarize the major points of the readings for that week
- raise key issues/debates associated with the readings
- prepare an additional scholarly article to supplement the existing content
- conclude your presentation with some take-home messages

Your recorded presentation must be **at a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes**.

Important Notes

1. You can use different softwares (e.g., Zoom) to record your presentation as long as it contains both visual and audio content
2. After recording your presentation, please upload the file to the Avenue Dropbox.
3. You will be evaluated on organization, critical thinking, idea cohesion and creativity.

Online Content Analysis Assignment (35%) – December 9, by 11:55pm

Based on your personal interest, you are asked to develop an online study with regards to the course theme on the culture of body management. The requirements are:

- First, **develop a research question** that deserves a public attention. You must justify the social importance of your research question: Which population is involved? From what social or cultural context does the focal issue emerge? How does the focal issue become a public issue? What is the relevance of the focal issue to our everyday life? **(1-2 pages)**
- Second, you will **define all the concepts** you select to explore the focal issue related to the culture of body management. By doing so, you will outline a sophisticated conceptual or theoretical framework that helps to analyze the focal issue. **(2 pages)**
- Third, you will **collect relevant online empirical data**, such as official statistics, public documents, narratives and pictures and images, and conduct in-depth sociological analysis to generate your knowledge of the focal issue. **(3-4 pages)**
- Fourth, you will **conclude your paper** by highlighting the key issues and suggesting future research to improve your understanding of the chosen topic **(1-2 pages)**

Note: The maximum length of this paper is **10 pages (double-spaced, 12-inch font)** and must be submitted electronically to the Avenue Dropbox.

Final Take-home Examination (30%) – Due Date TBA

This exam is designed to ensure you understand the core issues raised in the culture of body management. It will cover everything you have learned in this course. The specifics of this exam are listed as follows:

- You will be given a list of essay questions in which you will be asked to respond to both theoretical and empirical questions. In your answers, you must define all the concepts and critically address important themes or arguments from the questions.
- You are expected to draw references from the course reading, lectures and seminar presentation to demonstrate your answers.
- There is no need to use external references in this exam.
- The due date of this take-home exam will be provided near the end of this semester.

Course Schedule & Readings

September 9: Introduction

- Introduction to the course and expectation

September 16: The Body in Society: Theoretical Discussion

- Howson, A. (2012). "The Body in Everyday Life, pp. 16-49.
- Brown, N., & Gershon, S.A. (2017). Body Politics. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 50(1), 1-3.

September 23: The Aging Body

- Katz, S. Cultural Aging. Chapter 7: Busy Bodies: Activity, Aging, and the Management of Every Life (pp. 121-139).
- Vincent, J.A. (2006). Ageing Contested: Anti-ageing Science and the Cultural Construction of Old Age. *Sociology*, 40(4), 681-698.

September 30: The Gendered Body: Bodies of Female Sex Workers

- Kong, T.S.K. (2006). What It Feels Like for a Whore: The Body Politics of Women Performing Erotic Labour in Hong Kong. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 13(5), 409-434.
- Choudhury, S.M. (2010). 'As Prostitutes, We Control Our Bodies': Perceptions of Health and Body in the Lives of Establishment-based Female Sex Workers in Tijuana Mexico. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 12(6), 677-689.

October 7: The Gendered Body: Managing Males' Body

- Alexander, S.M. (2003). Stylish Hard Bodies: Branded Masculinity in Men's Health Magazine. *Sociological Perspectives*, 46(4), 535-554.
- Monahan, Lee. (2002). "Hard Men, Shop Boys and Others: Embodying Competence in a Masculinist Occupation." *The Sociological Review*, 50(3): 334-355.

October 14: Reading Week (No Class)

October 21: Sexuality and Body Management

- Marshall, B.L., & Katz, S. (2002). Forever Functional: Sexual Fitness and the Ageing Male Body. *Body & Society*, 8(4), 43-70.
- Tiefer, L. (2006). Female Sexual Dysfunction: A Case Study of Disease Mongering and Activist Resistance. *PLoS Medicine*, 3(4), e178.

**** Critical Response Assignment Due on Friday, October 23 by 11:55pm ****

October 28: The Racialized Body

- King, C. (2004). Race and Cultural Identity: Playing the Race Game inside Football. *Leisure Studies*, 23(1), 19-30.
- Guzman, I.M., & Valdivia, A.N. (2004). Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture." *Communications Review*, 7:205-221.

November 4: The Docile and Disciplined Body

- Lin, C-Y. (2012). Working Bodies, Performed Bodies: Marriage Migrant Women's Bodily Works. *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 4(4), 822-851.
- Yeoh, B.S.A., & Huang, S. (2010). Transnational Domestic Workers and the Negotiation of Mobility and Work Practices in Singapore's Home-Spaces. *Mobilities*, 5(2), 219-236.

November 11: The Disabled Body

- McLaughlin, J. (2016). The Medical Reshaping of Disabled Bodies as a response to Stigma and a Route to Normality. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 43(4), 244-250.
- McLaughlin, J., & Coleman-Fountain, E. (2014). The Unfinished Body: The Medical and Social Reshaping of Disabled Young Bodies. *Social Science & Medicine*, 120, 76-84.

November 18: Body on Display (Skin Whitening & Cosmetic Surgery)

- Li, E. et al. (2008). Skin Lightening and Beauty in Four Asian Cultures. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 35, 444-449.
- Lewis, K.M., Robkin, N., Gaska, K., Njoki, L.C. (2011). Investing Motivations for Women's Skin Bleaching in Tanaania. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 35(1), 29-37.
- Holliday, R., & Elfving-Hwang, J. (2012). Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea. *Body and Society*, 18(2), 58-81.

November 25: Trans-sexuality and Body Work

- Dozier, R. (2005). Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World. *Gender and Society*, 19(3), 297-316.
- Bishop, K. (2016). Body Modification and Trans Men: The Lived Realities of Gender Transition and Partner Intimacy. *Body & Society*, 22(1), 62-91.

**** Recorded Oral Presentation due on Friday, November 27 by 11:55pm ****

December 2: Body of Surrogate Mothers

- Teman, E. (2009). Embodying Surrogate Motherhood: Pregnancy as a Dyadic Body-project. *Body & Society*, 15(3), 47-69.
- Reddy, S., & Patel, T. (2015). "There are Many Eggs in My Body": Medical Markets and Commodified Bodies in India. *Global Bioethics*, 26(3-4), 218-231.

December 9: Final Paper Working Week

- Creative Online Content Analysis Assignment is due by 11:59pm, Wednesday December 9 via the Avenue Dropbox.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

All the assignments must be submitted through the dropbox available on Avenue to Learn.

Late Assignments

Note: late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless accommodation is given.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that

interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F