

## **ANTH 136: The Biology of Everyday Life**

M/W: 5-6:45; Social Science 2, room 75

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Office hours: M/W: 3:30-5, Th: 1:30-3, by appointment only

### Course Overview:

What are the politics of eating? Of sleeping? Drinking? Breathing? Procreation and growth? Sanitation and excretion? These elements are the very essence of human biological life, and structure social life, but over the course of human history the ways they have been monitored, legislated, and controlled by the state has altered dramatically, and vary quite dramatically from culture to culture. This course is intended to give students an introduction to the history and contemporary politics of these essential components of human social life, ranging between the north and south, the east and west, showing their interconnections, their differences, and their shared bases in human biology.

The taming of the human body has been a central concern of Western modernity, from (at least) the early industrial periods in the 1800s through the present day (but more likely since the Ancient Greeks, albeit with some interruptions). This effort has taken many forms – from industrial hygiene projects to public health regimes, from psychoanalytic therapy to modern forms of imprisonment – and in each case worked also to reify dominant expectations about bodies and their relationships with society. What bodies matter and how they matter depended in large part upon their value to society, as laborers, procreators, sacred objects, and unruly subjects. This course takes the form of a survey of this problem of the body in modernity, and asks about the specificities of a variety of human functions (excretion, sleeping, procreation, breathing, & eating) and their social meaning and control in the West and elsewhere.

In this course we explore the question of the body and its relationship to society through a variety of texts, some historical, some philosophical, and some ethnographic; in each case, we pursue dominant understandings of the body, and how human biology relates to society, with its dangers, its precariousness, and its possibilities. Our primary concern is how human biology is being conceived of, how it is being harnessed and deployed, and – in some cases – how it is being erased. Many scholars have taken the body as a primary locus for elaborating the concerns of the West; equally many have taken great lengths to avoid the body. In this course we will accept the challenge of both the fetishization of the body and the bodily taboo that has seemingly scared many from its messiness, its unruliness, and its extremes, and explore the potentials of both positions, as well as working collectively to come to a balanced understanding of human biology, its past and its futures.

### Required Texts:

Course readings will be made available through a course pack. In addition, students are expected to purchase the following texts, available at the Literary Guillotine. One copy of each of the course texts will be on 2-hour reserve at the McHenry Library. However, it is strongly advised that you purchase copies of the texts, as the amount of reading is demanding.

Briggs, Jean

1999 *Inuit Morality Play: The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Douglas, Mary

2002 [1966] *Purity and Danger*. New York: Routledge.

Elias, Norbert

2000 [1939] *The Civilizing Process*. E. Jephcott, transl. Malden: Blackwell.

Laporte, Dominique

2000 [1978] *History of Shit*. N. Benabid and R. el-Khoury, transl. Cambridge: MIT Press.

### Grading and Assignments:

**Participation and Attendance** -- Students are expected to attend all classes and to regularly participate. Two absences are allowed; each absence beyond these two will reduce the student's final grade by 5%. Sign-in sheets will be passed through class at random times.

**Reading Questions (50%)** -- Each week students will receive 4-8 reading questions through eCommons. Each question is worth 1% of your final grade. Answers are due the day of the assigned reading, and must be 4-6 sentences long and include examples from the reading. Questions will appear 1 week before the assignment is due.

**Group Work (10%)** -- Occasionally, students will be asked to work together in groups on active learning exercises so as to prepare for class discussions. There will be 5 group work assignments, each worth 2% of the final grade. Group work assignments cannot be made up.

*You have two options for the remainder of your grade:*

**Option One: Midterm & Final Exam (20% each; 40% total)** – Each exam will have both an in-class and take-home portion. In the case of the midterm, students will have a 2-3 page take-home essay question, which they will receive one week before it is due. The final exam will ask students to apply concepts from the course – through a series of prompts – to course content. This paper will be 4-5 pages long. Both exams will have in-class portions that include short answer and multiple choice questions.

**Option Two: Original Ethnological Research Paper (40% total)**. Drawing on research conducted over the course of the semester using the Human Relations Area File, students are expected to turn in a 15-20 page (excluding bibliography) final paper. The paper must relate to the content of the course; its focus is left to the student's determination, but must be approved by the professor. Additionally, the paper must have a theoretically-informed argument which is defended by the paper's contents. The final paper is worth 20% of the final grade, and students will turn in a Paper Brainstorm (5%), Outline (5%), and Rough Draft (10%). Final papers will be due on the final exam day, and must be submitted by email no later than noon. Resources to guide your preparation of these assignments will be available through eCommons.

Policies:

**No late work will be accepted for credit. All assignments must be turned in to receive a passing grade in the course (i.e. a C).**

**There is no extra credit available.**

**A curve will be applied to the final grades in the course based upon the highest attained grade. Students who choose Option Two are exempt from this curve.**

Workload: The expectation within the University of California system is that for each credit hour of a course, students spend 3 hours in preparation during the week. For a 5 credit course, this means that students should be spending about 15 hours per week preparing for class. I assume that undergraduate students can read 1 page of academic writing in 3 minutes; 200 pages of reading should require about 600 minutes, or 10 hours. In most cases, should expect to be reading about 150-200 pages per week in addition to other course requirements.

Attendance: Students who miss any class during the first week of class will be administratively dropped from the course. Students who miss three consecutive classes will be notified that they will be dropped from the course within 48 hours unless they respond to the email sent by the instructor.

Good Faith Grades: If you complete all of the course work to at least its minimum criteria and turn it in on time, and if you have no excessive absences (i.e. more than 2), you are guaranteed a C in this course. The curve does not apply over and above this.

Academic Integrity – Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Evidence of plagiarism will result in an immediate failing grade in the course and actions as dictated by university policy regarding academic integrity on undergraduate students. Please see <http://library.ucsc.edu/science/instruction/CitingSources.pdf> if you have any questions about what qualifies as plagiarism and strategies for avoiding such. For a description of the plagiarism review process, see [http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic\\_integrity/undergraduate\\_students/](http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/undergraduate_students/).

Style Matters: All submitted work should follow the guidelines set forth in the American Anthropological Association's style guide (available at [aaanet.org](http://aaanet.org)). All papers should be double-spaced, 12 point font, in Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins on all sides, and page numbers. Citation should look like this: (Author Year: Page), e.g. (Wolf-Meyer 2009: 408). Failure to meet these standards will result in a reduced grade.

Contacting Me: I only check my email between 8-11 PM on weekday nights and during my office hours. I only respond to emails that follow conventions of correspondence (i.e. it should begin 'Dear Professor Wolf-Meyer,...' and end with your signature). I will always respond to emails within 24 hours, except for emails received on Fridays (which will be responded to on the following Monday). If you plan to stop by my office hours, please contact me ahead of time, either by email ([mwolfmey@ucsc.edu](mailto:mwolfmey@ucsc.edu)) or at my office telephone number (459-2365).

## Course Schedule:

### Week One: Some Foundational Perspectives

*October 1<sup>st</sup>*: Introduction

*October 3<sup>rd</sup>*: Key Ideas: The Everyday, the Body, and Desirability

Lefebvre, Henri

1987 The Everyday and Everydayness. *Yale French Studies* 73:7-11.

Mauss, Marcel

1979 The Notion of Body Techniques. *In Sociology and Psychology: Essays*. Pp. 95-119. London: Routledge.

Sahlins, Marshall

1976 *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4

In Class: NFBC's *Four Families* (available at McHenry)

Listen to: This American Life's "Number One Party School" --

[http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio\\_Episode.aspx?episode=396](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=396)

### Week Two: The Body, Desire and Bodies Politic

*October 8<sup>th</sup>*: The Contours of the Body

Armstrong, David

2002 *A New History of Identity: A Sociology of Medical Knowledge*. New York: Palgrave. Chapters 2, 6 & 11

Douglas, Mary

2002 [1966] *Purity and Danger*. New York: Routledge. Introduction, Chapters 1 + 2.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Margaret Lock

1987 The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(1):6-41.

Strathern, Marilyn

1992 *Reproducing the Future: Anthropology, Kinship, and the New Reproductive Technologies*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 6: Partners & Consumers

*October 10<sup>th</sup>*: the Surveillance of Dirt

Douglas, Mary

2002 [1966] *Purity and Danger*. New York: Routledge. Chapters 3-6.

In Class:

Listen to: This American Life's "Ruining it for the Rest of Us" --

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/370/ruining-it-for-the-rest-of-us>

### Week Three: Behavior and Civilization

October 15<sup>th</sup>: the Surveillance of Society

Douglas, Mary

2002 [1966] Purity and Danger. New York: Routledge. Chapters 7-10.

October 17<sup>th</sup>: The Body Known and Unknown

Jackson, Michael

1983 Knowledge of the Body. *Man* 18(2):327-345.

Leder, Drew

1990 The Absent Body. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2

Miller, William Ian

1997 The Anatomy of Disgust. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 5

Elias, Norbert

2000 [1939] The Civilizing Process. Part 1

In Class: Tobin, Wu & Donaldson's *Preschool in Three Cultures* (available at McHenry)

Watch: Videos on Elimination Communication (available via eCommons Resources)

### Week Four: Between Culture and the State

October 22<sup>nd</sup>:

Briggs, Jean

1999 Inuit Morality Play: The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old. New Haven: Yale University Press. People, Place & Homes, Introduction, Chapters 1-2

October 24<sup>th</sup>:

Option Two: Paper Brainstorm Due

Option One: Midterm Distributed

Elias, Norbert

2000 [1939] The Civilizing Process. Part 2

In Class: Paul Almond's *7 Up!* (1964) & Michael Apted's *7 Plus 7* (1970)

Watch: Videos on parenting styles (available through eCommons Resources)

## Week Five: Shaping the Individual

October 29<sup>th</sup>:

Briggs, Jean

1999 *Inuit Morality Play: The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 3-5

October 31<sup>st</sup>:

Option One: Midterm Due + In-Class Midterm

Briggs, Jean

1999 *Inuit Morality Play: The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapter 6 + Conclusion

In Class: David Cronenberg's *Shivers* (1975)

Watch: *Nanook of the North* -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaDVovGjNOc>

## Week Six: From Civilization to the Biopolitical

November 5<sup>th</sup>:

Elias, Norbert

2000 [1939] *The Civilizing Process*. Part 4, Postscript

November 7<sup>th</sup>:

Option Two: Paper Outline Due

Braun, Bruce

2007 *Biopolitics and the Molecularization of Life*. *Cultural Geographies* 14(1):6-28.

Deleuze, Gilles

1995 [1990] *Negotiations*. M. Joughin, transl. New York: Columbia University Press. "Control & Becoming" and "Postscript on Control Societies"

Foucault, Michel

1990 [1976] *The History of Sexuality*. R. Hurley, transl. Volume 1. New York: Vintage. Part 4.2 & Part 5

—

1995 [1975] *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. A. Sheridan, transl. New York: Vintage. Part 3.3

Harden, Jacalyn

Forthcoming *Milk Will Tell: A Biopolitical Love Story*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 2

In Class:

Watch: NOVA videos on pandemics (available through eCommons Resources)

## Week Seven: Controlling Desire

November 12<sup>th</sup>: No Class -- Holiday

November 14<sup>th</sup>:

Allison, Anne

2000 [1996] Permitted and Prohibited Desires: Mothers, Comics, and Censorship in Japan. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 7

Bordo, Susan

1999 The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and Private. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 1

Bunzl, Matti

2005 Chasers. *In Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession*. D. Kulick and A. Meneley, eds. Pp. 199-210. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.

Findlay, Heather

1992 Freud's "Fetishism" and the Lesbian Dildo Debates. *Feminist Studies* 18(3):563-579.

Herd, Gilbert

1994 [1981] Guardians of the Flutes, Volume 1: Idioms of Masculinity. Chicago: University of Chicago. Chapter 7

Kulick, Don

2005 Four Hundred Thousand Swedish Perverts. *GLQ* 11(2):205-35.

Rubin, Gayle

1997 Elegy for the Valley of Kings: AIDS and the Leather Community in San Francisco, 1981-1986. *In In Changing Times: Gay Men and Lesbians Encounter HIV/AIDS*. M.P. Levine, P.M. Nardi, and J.H. Gagnon, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Troyer, John

2008 Abuse of a Corpse: A Brief History and Re-Theorization of Necrophilia Laws in the USA. *Mortality* 13(2):132-152.

In Class: Bill Condon's *Kinsey* (2004)

Listen to: This American Life's episode called "81 Words":

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/204/81-words>

**Please Note:** The American Anthropological Association meetings are this week in San Francisco. I will be unavailable for meetings and email from the morning of Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> through the evening of Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Information on the meeting can be found [here](#). (You don't need to register in order to sit in on presentations, which I encourage you to do.)

## Week Eight: Corpopolitics – Bodies & Food

*November 19<sup>th</sup>:*

Leatherman, Thomas, and Alan Goodman

2005 Coca-colonization of Diets in the Yucatan. *Social Science & Medicine* 61:833-846.

Lindenbaum, Shirley

1979 *Kuru Sorcery: Disease and Danger in the New Guinea Highlands*. Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Company. Chapters 1 & 2

Rouse, Carolyn, and Janet Hoskins

2004 Purity, Soul Food, and Sunni Islam: Explorations at the Intersection of Consumption and Resistance. *Cultural Anthropology* 19(2):226-249.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

1985 Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking: Maternal Detachment and Infant Survival in a Brazilian Shantytown. *Ethos* 13(4):291-317.

Stearns, Peter N.

2002 [1997] *Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West*. New York: New York University Press. Chapter 6

Vaughan, Megan

1987 *The Story of an African Famine: Gender and Famine in Twentieth-Century Malawi*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5

*November 21<sup>st</sup>:* No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Option Two: Rough Draft Due

In Class: David Cronenberg's *The Fly* (available at McHenry)

Listen to & Watch: Science Friday & NOVA segments on obesity (available through eCommons Resources)

## Week Nine: Dormancy & Rhythm

*November 26<sup>th</sup>:*

Brown, Megan

2004 Taking Care of Business: Self-Help and Sleep Medicine in American Corporate Culture. *Journal of Medical Humanities* 25(3):173-187.

Kroll-Smith, Steve, and Valerie Gunter

2005 Governing Sleepiness: Somnolent Bodies, Discourse, and Liquid Modernity. *Sociological Inquiry* 75(3):346-371.

Steger, Brigitte

2003 Getting *Away* with Sleep -- Social and Cultural Aspects of Dozing in Parliament. *Social Science Japan Journal* 6(2):181-197.



November 28<sup>th</sup>:

Akin, David

2003 Concealment, Confession, and Innovation in Kwaio Women's Taboos. *American Ethnologist* 30(3):381-400.

Hoskins, Janet

2002 The Menstrual Hut and the Witch's Lair in Two Eastern Indonesian Societies. *Ethnology* 41(4):317-333.

Martin, Emily

1992 [1987] *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*. Boston: Beacon Press. Chapters 3 & 6

In Class:

Listen to: Radiolab's episode on "Sleep" --

<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/radiolab/episodes/2008/01/11>.

Week Ten: Excremental Politics

December 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Al-Mohammad, Hayder

2007 *Ordure and Disorder: The Case of Basra and the Anthropology of Excrement*. *Anthropology of the Middle East* 2(2):1-23.

Corbin, Alain

1986 *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1

Laporte, Dominique

2000 [1978] *History of Shit*. N. Benabid and R. el-Khoury, transl. Cambridge: MIT Press. Introduction, Chapters 1-3

December 5<sup>th</sup>:

Choy, Tim

*Ecologies of Comparison*. Durham: Duke University Press. Chapter 6

Jewitt, Sarah

*Geographies of Shit: Spatio and Temporal Variations in Attitudes towards Human Waste*. *Progress in Human Geography*:1-19.

Laporte, Dominique

2000 [1978] *History of Shit*. N. Benabid and R. el-Khoury, transl. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapters 4-6

Rhodes, Lorna A.

2004 *Total Confinement: Madness and Reason in the Maximum Security Prison*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1

In Class: *Crapshoot* (not available at McHenry)

Listen to: Freakonomics' episode on "The Power of Poop" --

<http://freakonomicsradio.com/the-power-of-poop.html>

Final Exam Week

December 10<sup>th</sup>:

Option One: Final Exam Due at time of In-Class Final from 7:30-10:30 PM

Option Two: Final Draft Due by Noon