

**Ambedkar University Delhi**

**Course Outline**

**Winter Semester (January-May 2018)**

**School:** School of Human Studies

**Programme with title:** Gender Studies

**Semester to which offered:** IV

**Course Title:** Bodies

**Credits:** 2

**Course Code (new):**

**Course Code (old):** SHS202809

**Type of Course:** Core

**For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):**

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)           X
4. Discipline (Elective)            X
5. Elective

**Course Coordinator and Team:**

**Email of course coordinator:**

**Pre-requisites:** None

**Aim:**

This course will explore the concept of the body from a gendered perspective. It will ask the question what is body? Is it a biological base of the self that is irreducible further?, isn't it the right material of study for disciplines like biology or medical science? What does Human Studies, veering right now, towards Humanities and Social Sciences, have to do with Bodies?

The course further asks the question, is this “base” available to us apart from the stories that make us see the body in particular ways? Is the irreducibility of the flesh – the biological base – itself a story? Who says this story? Society/culture? Or, persons in the body-self, who are written by society/culture but who are also telling their own stories, sometimes in assonance, sometimes, rarely in dissonance of this master story? In other words, is flesh a finished product on which culture writes stories? Or, is flesh itself an unfinished process constantly interacting with culture and telling stories about itself (and others)?

How does one hear these stories? What are the meanings sent out by different bodies? Are bodies saying gendered stories? Always?

Are bodies and minds different? Which is above which? Who says so? From when onwards? What are the implications of this story? Especially for gender subordinated like women, trans people, queers etc? Or, race and caste subordinated in society? What does all this mean for the imperfect(ed) bodies? Would that allow an escape into the mind for them,? Or prevent it altogether?

What about self and other? Do we start and end with the surface of our skins? Then, why do people end themselves for relationships? What is this connectedness that we experience with each other that makes our own inhabitation of particular bodies meaningful? Are we so separate from each other? Does this connection extend only to humans? What about humans and animals? Are we so distant and distinct from each other? What about technology and body that mediate with each other? Do we need a human body to feel having a self? Or, does a “selfie” suffice? Or, is the selfie more important than the materially bodied self itself? Was it always so? Or, only in the time of facebook?

To come back to the questions we started with: Are bodies writing their own stories that might be compliant with large narratives that make them possible? What happens when they do not completely comply? Will it be recognized as a body at all? Will it be abjection itself? Will it break the boundary of the human, a little bit?

Is the body available to us only through these stories? Are we caught in the flesh or the stories of being caught in the flesh? What is the “real” question about the body? Is it the classic question of who are we? or who am I? Is it a question of subjectivity or identity itself?

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

**1. "Seeing" the Body: Introductory Lecture**

**2. "Thinking" through the Body**

1. The Problem of Dualism – Descartes Meditations – 2
2. Grosz, Elizabeth. . "Refiguring Bodies." In *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1994. pp:3-26.

**3. "Talking" the Body: Science as Rhetoric**

**a. Biology**

1. Martin. Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring, 1991), pp. 485-501Published

**4. "Making" the Body: Social Construction and the Body**

1. Turner, Bryan S. "Virtue and the Body: The Debate over Nature and Nurture" *Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008.pp: 1-15
2. Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversiion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Pp: 1-33. And "Notes."pp: 150-157.
3. Butler, Judith. "Preface." *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*.

**Critique of Feminist Social Construction Theories of the Body**

**Dieting**

1. Orbach, Susie. *On Eating: Change your Eating, Change your Life*. London: Penguin Books, 2002.
2. Schilling, C. 1993. "The Distorted Body." In *The Body and Social Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 1993. 63-68.

## **5. Body Language**

1. Ted Talks: Amy Cuddy. "Your body language shapes who you are."  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en#t-3567](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en#t-3567)
2. Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. excerpts
3. Turner, Critique of Goffman in Turner, Bryan S. *Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008.
5. Despret, Vinciane. "The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthro-zoo-genesis."  
*Body & Society*. Vol. 10(2-3): 111-13, 2004. Pp: 111-134.

## **6. "Other" Bodies**

### **Embodiment of caste**

1. Tharu, Susie. "The Impossible Subject: Caste and the Gendered Body."  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/4404206?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4404206?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
2. Rao, Anupama. "The Sexual Politics of Caste: Violence and the Ritual-Archaic." *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. University of California Press, 2009. Pp: 217-240.

### **Disability**

1. Ghai, Anita. "Locating Disability in the Feminist Discourse: The Epistemic Contingency of the Disabled Feminists." In *(Dis)embodied Form: Issues of Disabled Women*. Shakti Books, 2003. Pp: 91-113.

### **Sexuality**

1. Puri, Jyoti. "Docile and Disruptive: Narratives of Menarche and Menstruation." In *Woman, Body, Desire in Postcolonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1999. Pp: 43-74.

## **7. Visuality and Female Body**

1. "Body" in Nivedita Menon's seeing like a feminist
3. Foucault, Michel *The Birth of the Clinic*. London: Routledge, 2003. – Introduction.
4. Oyeronko Oyewumi. "Introduction."

2. Connor, Liz. "Introduction." *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. pp: 1-13. "Notes." pp: 257-258.

## **8. The Body not as Singular**

1. Mol, Annmarie. "Doing Disease" by in *Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Systems*. London: Duke University Press, 2002. Pp: 1-28.

## **9. Bodyless Bodies: Cyborgs**

1. Haraway, Donna. *The Cyborg Manifesto*.  
<https://wayback.archive.org/web/20120214194015/http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

### Assesment

Bring Body as an analytical category to work on a tentative chapter of your dissertaiton. First give a version of the paper as a presentation and the final assessment is a 5 page paper.

### References:

- Bordo, S. (1990). 'Material Girl': The Effacements of Postmodern Culture. In Bordo, S. (Ed.). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. pp. 245-275. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Butalia, U. (2000). *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Clare, E. (1999). *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Donn Welton (1998). *Body and Flesh: A Philosophical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Docile Bodies*. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ghai, A. (2003). Locating disability in the feminist discourse: The epistemic contingency of the disabled feminists. In A. Ghai. *(Dis)embodied form: Issues of disabled women*. (pp. 91-112). New Dehli: Shakti Books.
- Ghai, A. (2003). Some unresolved issues. In A. Ghai. *(Dis)embodied form: Issues of disabled women*.(pp.113-145). New Dehli: Shakti Books.
- Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hoad, N. (2004). World Piece: What the Miss World Pageant Can Teach About Globalization. *Cultural Critique*, 58: 56-81.

Jain, K. (2004). Muscularity and its Ramifications: Mimetic Male Bodies in Indian Mass Culture. In Sanjay Srivastava (Ed.). *Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes. Sexualities, Masculinities and Culture in South Asia.* (300-341).New Delhi: Sage.

Martin, E. and Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Oza, R. (2006). Showcasing India: Sexuality and the Nation in the 1996 Miss World Pageant. In *The Making of Neo-liberal India. Nationalism, gender and the Paradoxes of Globalization.* London and New York: Routledge.

Price, J. and Shildrick, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader.* New York: Routledge.

Puri, J. (1999). Docile and Disruptive. Narratives on Menarche and Menstruation. In *Women, Body and Desire in Postcolonial India.* (pp-43-74).London and New York: Routledge.

Ramaswamy, S. (2003). Visualising India's Geo-Body. Globes, Maps and Bodyscapes. In *Beyond Appearances? Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India.* New Delhi: Sage.

Snyder, S.L. and Mitchell, D.T. (2001). Re-engaging the Body: Disability Studies and the Resistance to Embodiment. *Public Culture*, 13(3): 367-389.

Thapan, M. (2009). Embodiment, identity and Womanhood. In *Living the Body: Embodiment, Womanhood and Identity and Womanhood in Contemporary India.* Pp. 1-25.New Delhi: Sage.

Turner, B. (2008). The Mode of Desire. In *The Body and Society (3rd edition).* (Pp-17-32). London: Sage.

Turner, B. S. (1996). *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory.* 1984. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

#### **Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date/period in which Assessment will take place</b>	<b>Weightage</b>
1	Assessment 1	22-2-2017	35%
2	Assessment 2	12-04-2017	40%
3	Assessment 3	26-04-2017	25%