

SOAN 160: ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE BODY

Winter 2019

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton College

Instructor: Dr. Meryl Lauer
Email: mlauer2@carleton.edu
Office Location: 233 Leighton
Office Hours*: W: 3:30-4:30pm; Th: 1-3 pm
*or by appointment

Class Location: Leighton 330
Meeting Times: M/W 1:50-3:00pm
F 2:20-3:20pm

“The body is our general medium for having a world.”

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*



Wangechi Mutu
In Killing Fields Sweet Butterfly Ascend,
2003



Kiki Smith
How I know I'm here (4 works),
1985-2000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We often think about our bodies as natural and self-evident. But, what bodies can do and how bodies are understood changes dramatically across historical and cultural contexts. In many Euro-American societies, we operate from a notion known as “Cartesian dualism,” the idea that the mind and body are separate entities, however interrelated. This basic assumption provides the basis for philosophical, cultural, social, and political orientations toward the world. But, there are many ways to negotiate the porousness between bodies and worlds.

In this class, we investigate how human bodies are valued, transformed, and experienced around the world. Through engagements with ethnographic research on such topics as sports training, bodily modification and beauty, and biomedical technologies, the class demonstrates how bodies are key sites for understanding politics, economics, and social change in our contemporary world.

Lectures, discussions, class materials, and assignments are all geared toward broadening your understandings of bodies in motion, in space, and in stasis. While bodily knowledge is central to many academic disciplines and perspectives, it is also yours and always contingent. You will have an opportunity to engage this knowledge through anthropological theory and method, demonstrating the intersections of practice and theory.

COURSE GOALS

You will understand the core concepts, theories, and methods that anthropologists use to make sense of the body as means and medium of culture. You will learn a diversity of perspectives on human bodies and their relationship to their broader social worlds. You will use these concepts and perspectives to synthesize experiences in your everyday life. You will develop and hone good research, reading, and writing skills.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As part of Carleton's assessment initiative, the SOAN Department has identified six Student Learning Outcomes for SOAN majors. In this course, you will learn four of these outcomes:

1. *Articulate* the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon in their many dimensions (e.g. temporal, structural, spatial and symbolic).
2. *Formulate* appropriate sociological and/or anthropological research questions about socio-cultural phenomena.
3. *Apply* sociological and anthropological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.
4. *Engage* the world by drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Participation and Attendance	10%
Moodle Posts	20%
Group Reflections	20% (2/10% each)
Bodily Practice Research Project	40%

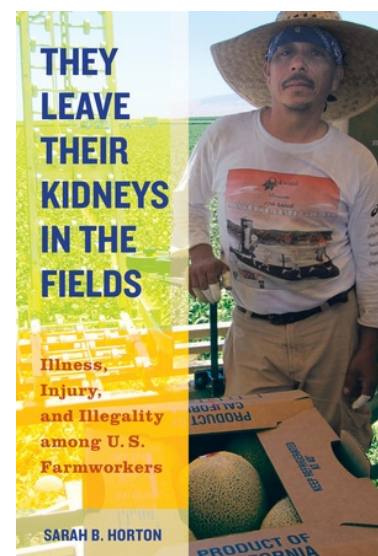
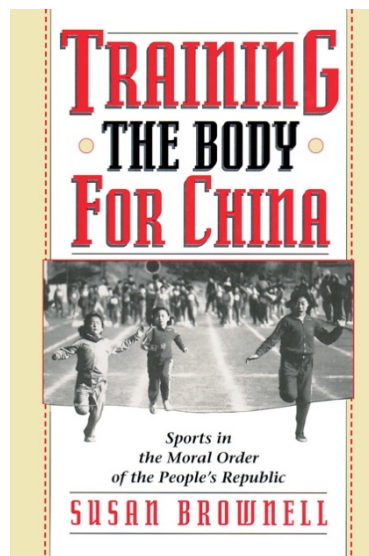
All assignments and exams will be discussed in class in detail. I will distribute assignment sheets for all projects well in advance of their deadlines.

YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL CLASS ASSIGNMENTS IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS.

GRADE SCALE

A+	97-100%	C+	77-79%
A	93-96%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
		F	< 60%

REQUIRED TEXTS



1. Farquhar, Judith and Margaret Lock, ed. 2007. *Beyond the Body Proper*. Duke Press.
2. Brownell, Susan. 1995. *Training the Body for China*. U Chicago Press.
3. Horton, Sarah. 2016. *They Leave their Kidneys in the Field*. UC Press.

**Books are available at the bookstore for purchase.*

COURSE MATERIALS ASSISTANCE

I recognize the potential financial burden of books and printing. If you need assistance to cover course expenses, please speak with me.

LATE AND MAKE-UP POLICY

Please note that I am very strict about due dates. Unless you have a legitimate excuse for turning in an assignment late or missing an exam, I will either not accept the assignment or deduct points from your grade. Although I am certainly sympathetic to emergencies, I do ask you to try to let me know what is happening before the assignment or exam comes around in order to avoid misunderstandings.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to adhere to Carleton's code of academic honesty. Even in the event of participating in team projects, your final work should still reflect your own ideas and other people's ideas should always be credited. If you have any questions regarding this policy please visit <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/> or come speak to me. Failure to follow Carleton's expectation will result in a failing grade and formal action with the administration.

PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE

At Carleton, we are extraordinarily lucky to have small classes where students and professors can critically engage each other and class material in a substantial manner. But, that can only happen if we come to class, come to class prepared, and contribute to class in an effective manner. We will collaborate to decide what preparedness and effectiveness mean in our classroom at the beginning of the term.

You are expected to be present in class on a regular basis; failure to do so will adversely affect your grade. Attendance will be taken each class. *Points will be deducted from your grade after **THREE** absences.* Absences will be considered excused only in the following cases: illness verified by a doctor's note, religious observance, or participation in scheduled activities of official college student organizations. In all cases, please make every effort to inform me of your impending absence before class. You are expected to arrive to class on time and stay for the duration of class. *If you are more than five minutes late or if you leave before the conclusion of class without prior permission, you will be counted absent.*

OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATIONS

You can sign up for office hours via my google calendar. I hope you will all come see me during office hours to discuss the course, ideas for projects, or career plans. Interacting with students is one of my favorite parts of my job so please DO NOT BE SHY and take

advantage of office hours! If you cannot make office hours, let me know and we can always schedule an alternative time to meet.

Please note that I will try to answer emails within a day and I tend to not answer emails during the weekend. Finally, although I encourage you to contact me via email with questions, if the Question requires a long answer, I may ask you to come see me personally so I can give you a proper response.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Jan Foley, Student Accessibility Specialist (x4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (x5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

WRITING ASSISTANCE

The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website. You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system. Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, Multilingual Writing Coordinator, call her at x5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a writing consultant throughout the term.

STUDENT HEALTH

Carleton College urges you to make yourself—your own health and well-being—your priority throughout this ten-week term and your career here. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such as Student Health and Counseling or the Office of Health Promotion.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE & COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM

My primary goal as an educator and a scholar is to foster a joy for learning and prepare students for their future professional paths. Although joyful, the process is not necessarily always fun or easy. Learning is a convoluted process that is difficult, as it requires us to push our intellectual limits, take risks, and face our—and others'—legacies straight on. The “reward” that results from this process is not always readily apparent and it may take years to manifest.

I also believe that learning should not be painful or hurtful to those involved in the process. I can assure you that I make a conscious effort to consider the possible consequences or impacts of what happens in my courses. The problem is that even though I try to avoid these situations, it is very difficult for anyone to be error-free. Trying to accommodate or predict the reactions of a diverse and ever-changing group of individuals that venture to take my classes is impossible and overwhelming at times.

For these reasons, a belief in the academic process and a commitment to creating a compassionate learning space, I avoid an explicit policy of providing trigger warnings in my courses. I will give some background of the readings and will certainly give a heads up when certain kinds of difficult material approaches but I will not give trigger warnings. In a nutshell, the fundamental reason is that what might *to you* merit an obvious trigger warning may not be for others and vice versa. For example, a common occurrence in my courses is that issues of sexual violence depicted in a North American context will elicit multiple requests for trigger warning, yet material that discusses extreme cases of violence and genocide in regions of the world that we refer to as the Global South are consumed by most with a dry analytical stance and almost no consideration or acknowledgement of the emotional implications this may have to others in the room (including the instructor or visitor).

This is a very delicate issue and there is no magic bullet. What I ask you is to engage in this journey with me and trust me (and this may mean giving me or your peers multiple chances). I will definitely address issues that are brought to my attention in a constructive manner. I do my best to teach and model the manner in which difficult material can be engaged within the classroom, but more importantly please know that ***I am willing to learn with you, but this can only happen in a compassionate and honest environment.*** I hope you are willing to learn with me as well!

READING SCHEDULE

- Assigned readings are due in class on the day listed.
- Please bring a copy of the readings to class ***IN HARD COPY***.
- Other than the required books (both available at the bookstore), all readings will be posted to moodle.
- This schedule is subject to change. Please check moodle for the most up-to-date readings and assignments. Any changes will also be announced in class or via email.

7-Jan **Introduction**

9-Jan **Doing Anthropology of the Body**

Mauss, Marcel. "Techniques of the Body" in *Beyond the Body Proper*

11-Jan **Embodiment and Ethnography**

Frankish, Keith. 2016. "The mind isn't locked in the brain but extends far beyond it." Aeon.com: Jul 7.

14-Jan **Habitus and Training the Body**

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. "The peasant and his body." *Ethnography*, Vol 5(4), p. 579-99.

16-Jan **Guest Lecture:** Tracie Canada

18-Jan **Sports and Training: Anthropology of Sport**

Selections from Wacquant, Loic. 2006. *Body and Soul*. Oxford University Press.

21-Jan *Training the Body for China*

23-Jan *Training the Body for China*

25-Jan *Training the Body for China*

28-Jan Group meetings

30-Jan **Illness**

Gravlee, Clarence. 2009. "How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol. 139(1), p. 47-57.

Villarosa, Linda. 2018. "Why America's Black Mothers and Babies are in a Life-or-Death Crisis)," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 11.

Martin, Nina. 2017. "Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth. Shalon Irving's Story Explains Why," *NPR's All Things Considered*, December 7, 7:51 pm.

- 1-Feb **Illness**
 Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Margaret M. Lock, "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology" *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), pp. 6-41
- 4-Feb **Labor**
 Thompson, E.P. "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" in *Beyond the Body Proper* (495-511)
 Ong, Aihwa. "The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia" in *Beyond the Body Proper* (512-530)
- 6-Feb Group Meetings
- 8-Feb *They Leave Their Kidneys in the Field*
- 11-Feb **Midterm Break**
- 13-Feb *They Leave Their Kidneys in the Field*
- 15-Feb *They Leave Their Kidneys in the Field*
- 18-Feb **Modification/Beauty**
 Turner, Terence. "The Social Skin" in *Beyond the Body Proper* (83-106)
- 20-Feb **Modification/Beauty**
 TBD
- 22-Feb Group Meetings
- 25-Feb **In Parts: DNA**
 Lock, Margaret. "Alienation of Body Parts and the Biopolitics of Immortalized Cell Lines" in *Beyond the Body Proper* (567-583)
- 27-Feb **In Parts: Organ Donation**
 Hamdy, Sherine. 2016. "All Eyes on Egypt: Islam and the Medical Use of Dead Bodies Amidst Cairo's Political Unrest" *Medical Anthropology*.
- 1-Mar **In Space**
 NASA's (2017) "The Human Body in Space"
 Roach, Mary. 2010. Selections from *Packing for Mars*. Norton Press.

- 4-Mar **In Space:** *The Martian*
- 6-Mar **In Space:** *The Martian*
- 8-Mar **In Space/**Group Meetings
- 11-Mar Class Presentations
- 13-Mar Class Presentations