**Anthro 604: Bodies and Practices**

**SPRING TERM 2020**

Time: Wednesday 4 – 6:50

Place: KAP 165

Instructor: Professor Cheryl Mattingly

Office Hours: Wednesday 2 – 4

Room: KAP 348g

**Course Description**

What does it mean to think of the body as something relational – created in and through our interactions with others? What is revealed when we explore the body as a site and target of practices – at once personal, institutional, cultural, global? The course opens by considering the role of the body in enacting traditions and creating new traditions – as a site for practice and invention in a global world. In a related vein, we will consider the ethical stakes of embodied relationality. How is the body a site of responsibility, of care, of cultivation?

Throughout the course, special emphasis is given to the vulnerabilities of our human dependence upon others as this arises in situations of physical, social or emotional precariousness and marginalization. For example, in a number of the readings, we will consider how people’s lives, hopes and fragilities are shaped by the experience of chronic illness or disability. How might we think about the precarious body without reducing it to a “broken” or “diseased” body but to a body that is lived in, and lived through – the body as a “lived experience”?

The experience of stigma, understood as both a social and psychological phenomenon, is another course theme. Being stigmatized is widely recognized as one of the most pernicious challenges faced by individuals and groups who are labeled “deviant” and it is an important factor in the production of societal disparities. But how is stigma socially created? What are the processes at work? Conversely, what can an investigation of stigma teach us about the role of the intersubjective in self-making more generally? We will especially consider Goffman’s “performative” theory of intersubjectivity, but place it in conversation with considerations of stigma and shame drawn from phenomenology, narrative theory and feminist ethics. The topic of stigma is closely linked to the topic of otherness, that is the relational encounter with those who are experienced and categorized as “not like me.” What does it mean to be see others, or to be seen by others, as a “Stranger?”

How do social institutions and structural power shape intersubjective life? This question introduces another course theme that moves beyond the face-to-face encounter to the relational self as created through institutional structures. Foucault’s seminal work provides a central inspiration as he analyzes the rise of modernity’s new form of institutional power and its force in shaping what he calls “docile subjects.”

Anthropologists have introduced the term “social suffering” to speak of suffering that is created or exacerbated by social and economic forces that marginalize certain populations. In this class, we consider how social suffering can shape the most intimate personal and interpersonal experiences and emotions. When we turn to the topic of care, another major course theme, we will attend to how care practices have been developed to address suffering. At a meta level, we will also consider the function and limits of critical approaches to the body, suffering and care.

In addition to a number of articles, students will read two book length ethnographies. These ethnographies consider relationships between physical vulnerability and social vulnerability. They also (especially the Ralph work) explore local and community responses to challenging conditions and body precarities. Each work also asks how researchers can be effective storytellers, and what it means to represent the suffering but also the resilience, even the mystery, of those we study and write (or create films) about.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**CLASS CONTENT AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

ANTHRO 604 meets once a week as a 3 hour seminar. There will be some lectures but a great deal of the course will center upon discussions based upon assigned readings. Students will be expected to contribute to these conversations and, periodically, to lead them with short presentations.

**COURSE BOOKS**:

The following books are required reading for the course. In addition, journal articles and book chapters will be uploaded on blackboard as individual readings.

*Title: Life Beside Itself:  Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic (2014)*

Author:  Lisa Stevenson

Title: *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago* (2014)

Author: Laurence Ralph

**GRADING:**

**FINAL PAPER** (50% of Grade)

A final paper will be based upon analysis of a particular ethnographic or visual text that draws upon class readings and discussions. The analysis can be – and should be – a creative exercise. The final paper itself should be approximately twenty-five pages, double-spaced, including references. In the final two class sessions, students will be expected to orally present an early version of their final papers to the class where they can also receive some feedback that can help in the preparation of the paper.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION** (30% Grade)

Class attendance and meaningful participation will account for thirty percent of the course grade.

**WEEKLY READING RESPONSE PAPERS** (20%)

Students will be expected to turn in small weekly papers that address that week’s readings. The point of this weekly assignment is to learn to discern the theoretical structure and underlying arguments of an author. What are the author’s primary arguments? Who or what is the author arguing for and/or against? What kinds of evidence (especially ethnographic evidence) does the author draw upon to persuade readers of his or her position? During most weeks, there will be multiple readings by different authors. In this case, concentrate upon one author as a focus, but briefly mention (as a comparison) the other authors assigned for that week.

Sometimes “prompts” will be given to guide the weekly response paper. These will come in the form of emails alerting students to an announcement posted on blackboard about the prompt.

As part of the writing assignment, students will be expected to: 1) write a page (typed/double spaced) that identifies and summarizes the major points the focal author is making; and 2) write one question the student would like to put to the author. These papers, especially the questions and puzzles that students bring to class, will provide a focal point for class discussion. I will collect papers each week and comment upon them. These will not be officially graded, although I will sometimes add a “check plus” or a “check minus” if you have done an exceptionally good job or an inadequate one. In addition, once during the term, students will come prepared to discuss one or more of the day’s readings by bringing to class a documentary film or part of their own “film in the making” that illustrates and/or raises key points made in the reading(s).

**University Policies on Disability and Academic Integrity**

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from the DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is  located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am5:00pm, Monday through Friday.The phone nnumber for  DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Statement  on  Academic  Integrity—**USC  seeks  to  maintain  an  optimal  learning  environment.   General principles  of  academic  honesty  include  the  concept  of  respect  for  the  intellectual  property  of  others,  the  expectation  that  individual  work  will  be  submitted  unless  otherwise  allowed  by  the  instructor,  and  the  obligations  both  to  protect  one’s  own  academic  work  from  misuse  by  others  as  well  as  to  avoid  using  another’s  work  as  one’s  own.  All students are expected  to  understand  and  abide  by  these  principles.

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**SECTION ONE: The BODY AS CULTURAL ARTIFACT/CULTURAL PERFORMANCE**

**Class One**: 1/15 **Introduction**

An overview of the “body” and embodiment as conceived from multiple frameworks that have been anthropologically salient, especially interpretive, phenomenological, performative, feminist and critical traditions.

**Class Two: 1/22 The Cosmopolitan Body and the (Re)Invention of Culture**

Readings:

Abu-Lughod, “The Interpretation of Culture(s) After Television” in *The Fate of Culture* (1999)

Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (1996), ch 5 “Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket”

OPTIONAL:

Appadurai, chs 1 and 3

Geertz “Interpretation of Culture”

**SECTION TWO: POWER AND THE BODY – SUBJECTIVITY, SUBJUGATION, SUFFERING, STIGMA, PERFORMANCE**

One key topic that has had a long intellectual life and held prominence in the past few decades emphasizes the play of power in social life. While the topics of power, social hierarchy and political organization are certainly not new for anthropology, poststructualist theorists – especially Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault – have generated powerful ways of understanding the role of power in shaping social life, the body, and the self. Anthropologists who called upon sociopolitical traditions inspired by Marx, Foucault and an array of post-colonial theorists Foucault’s work cannot be underestimated in this regard.

From another direction, the seminal work of sociologist Erving Goffman, introduced a consideration of power through an exploration of social identities under threat and social life as a kind of performance of identity. In his classic book, *Stigma*, Goffman proceeds from a micro-level to explore social interactions in which the presence or possibility of stigma is front and center. His considerations of stigma have been taken up and re-considered in anthropology, especially among those who also adopt a performative framework of social identity.

**Class Three: 1/29 The Carceral Body**

Foucault, M. (1979) “Panopticism” In *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage

Garcia, Angela. “THE BLUE YEARS: An Ethnography of a Prison Archive.” *Cultural Anthropology* 31.4 (2016): 571–594.

Biehl, J. (2007) “A Life: Between Psychiatric Drugs and Social Abandonment. In *Subjectivity*. (Biehl et al, editors.) Berkeley: University of California Press.

**Class Four: 2/5 Performance, Shame and the Stigmatized Body**

Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Preface, Introduction, Ch I (Pages 1 – 47)

Goffman, *Stigma*, ch 1

Ochs, Elinor (2015). “Corporeal Reflexivity and Autism,” *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*.

**Class Five: 2/12 Critical Anthropology Examined and Re-Imagined**

Ortner “Dark Anthropology and its Others” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* (2016)

Stevenson, L. *Life Beside Itself* (Introduction, Chs 1, 2, 3)

OPTIONAL:

Robbins, “Beyond the Suffering Subject”

**Class Six: 2/19**

Stevenson, L. *Life Beside Itself* (Chs 4, 5, 6, Epilogue)

Mattingly, “Defrosting Concepts, Destabilizing Doxa: Critical Phenomenology and the Perplexing Particular” *Anthropological Theory (2019)*

**SECTION THREE: EMPATHY, IMAGINATION, AND PRACTICES OF CARE**

A great deal of critical anthropology has focused on the precarity of bodies, including their structurally produced precarities that intersect with and target certain populations disproportionately. In the following section of the course, we will continue to attend to this critical focus, but bring in some other voices, especially additional “experience near” ones (e.g. existentialist, phenomenological, or person-centered traditions). This section will be particularly concerned with issues of connection and care – and their failures – across embodied difference. As we have already seen in Stevenson’s ethnography, some of the most compelling scholarly work on “care” attempts to address large-scale forces without reducing the particularities of lived lives and lived bodies to subject positions predetermined by social categories.

**Class Seven: 2/26 The Challenge of Empathy: Interconnections and Disconnections Across Social and Embodied Difference**

Throop, “Latitudes of loss:On the vicissitudes of empathy.” *American Ethnologist*. (2010)

Hollan, Doug “Being There: On the Imaginative Aspects of Understanding Others and Being Understood” *Ethos*. (2008)

Zoanni, Tylor (2018) “The Possibilities of Failure: Personhood and Cognitive Disability in Northern Uganda” *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*.

Gron, Lone (2017) The Tipping of the Big Stone – and Life Itself: Obesity, Moral Work and Responsive Selves Over Time. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*

**Class Eight: 3/4 Care for the “Other”: The Ethical Stakes of Alterity**

Taylor, Chloe. “Levinasian Ethics and Feminist Care Ethics”

Benson, Peter and K. O’Neill (2007). “Facing Risk: Levinas, Ethnography and Ethics.” *Anthropology of Consciousness*. 18(2): 29-55.

Gammeltoft, Tine (2006). “Beyond Being: Emergent Narratives of Suffering in Vietnam.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 12: 589-605.

**Class Nine: 3/11 Alterity and Difference As Embodied Experiences**

Guenther, Lisa (2011). “The Ethics and Politics of Otherness.” philoSOPHIA 1(2): 195-214

Mattingly (Unpublished) “Aging as relational act: Inter-bodies, alterities, and the ethics of care”

Visiting PhD student Presents “Aging Among Tibetan Refugees in Dharamshala, India”

**SPRING BREAK WEEK: 3/18**

**Class Ten**: **3/25** **Practices of Care and the Politics of Response**

Ralph, Laurence. *Renegade Dreams*

**Class Eleven: 4/1 NO CLASS**

**SECTION FOUR: CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

The final “putting it all together” classes are opportunities for students to present their own on-going film work or other visual material in connection to the theoretical approaches we have been discussing in class. These last classes should really be considered “labs” in the sense of giving students a chance to experiment with how to think together both theoretically and aesthetically, with the senses.

**Class Twelve: 4/8**

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

**Class Thirteen: 4/15**

*STUDENT PRESENTATIONS*

**Class Fourteen: 4/29**

*STUDENT PRESENTATIONS*