FRAN 6200, 2015 | Embodiment and Bodily difference | Professor Carla Rice

Course Time: Thursday 8:30AM - 11:30AM  
Course Location: MACS 331  
Office Hours: Thursday: 11:30AM to 2:30PM | By appointment  
Email: carlar@uoguelph.ca  
Office Location: Macdonald Institute, MINS 231B | REDLAB, 103 Blackwood Hall

Course Description
This course examines theories and experiences of embodiment and bodily difference in westernized science and societies, focusing on understanding and positively intervening in misconceptions and marginalization of people living with differences¹ in social institutions and health care encounters. Drawing on feminist-informed gender, fat, disability, and critical race studies, the course introduces phenomenological, poststructuralist, and new materialist perspectives on the body, and interrogates the implications of diverse embodiments for human subjectivity and social life. Myths and misconceptions of differences that circulate throughout popular and professional cultures, and inform public policies and everyday practices are analyzed. Course readings and audio/visual texts emphasize the problematics of normalcy across the life span and among diverse populations, and reflect on issues of obesity and fatness, disability and difference, illness and disease, aging and racialized bodies, body management practices, eating disorders, cosmetic and plastic surgery, and gender, sex, and sexual variance.

Course Objectives
This course has eight objectives:

1. For students and instructor to become familiar with and revisit important questions and concerns surrounding bodies, embodiment, and bodily differences in contemporary science studies and in critical theory and praxis
2. For students and instructor to examine cultural representations, social relations, and lived realities of anomalous bodies and complex embodiments from the perspectives of those who embody difference
3. For students and instructor to understand the inter-subjective dynamics of differences in social and health care interactions between those who perceive themselves to embody and not embody differences
4. For students and instructor to examine the psychological, social, and cultural roots and consequences of bodily norms and exclusionary attitudes and actions, and to identify possible pathways for change with practice implications
5. For students and instructor to examine themes of the body and embodiment across the life span highlighting embodied experiences of children, youth, adults, and elders in social systems and medical encounters and implications of trajectories of complex embodiments for conceptualizations of the life course itself

¹ This includes people with mobility and sensory disabilities, chronic illness, facial and physical differences such as a birthmark or burn injury, size differences, sex and gender variance, as well as those perceived as racially or ethnically different from the dominant unmarked norm. Because what counts as ‘difference’ from the culturally idealized or normalized body varies across time and place, broad definition has been adopted.
6. For students and instructor to contribute to a community of learners engaged in critical and respectful dialogue on issues of bodily privilege, marginalization, and exclusion
7. For students and instructor to practice critical self-reflectivity in order to uncover some of the ways that issues of power, identity, and physical difference shape how they think, feel, act, and interact in their bodies and daily lives
8. For students and instructor to develop and hone critical reading, writing, communication, presentation, facilitation, and self-evaluation skills

Course Themes and Topics
Themes examined in the course include: theories of differences in critical disability, gender, race and fat studies; dynamics of differences and complex embodiments in social institutions and health care and social interactions; making and unmaking differences in cultural and scientific representations and social relations; critical and systematic perspectives on the development of bodies and bodily selves; understanding, experiencing, and responding to differences and complex embodiments; interrogating histories and operations of norms; and re-visioning differences in popular and professional cultures. Throughout readings, visual texts, and classroom discussions, we consider how social institutions and symbolic systems, including science, shape the embodied experiences of diverse subjects across the life span. Also highlighted are some of the ways that individuals and groups resist imposed meanings to create preferred accounts of their identities, selves, and lives. The course is organized into three parts:

Part 1 Histories and Approaches
Theoretical Frameworks I: In the Shadow of Difference
Theoretical Frameworks II: On the Linguistic Construction Of Gendered and Sexed Bodies
Theoretical Frameworks II: The Lived Body
Theoretical Frameworks III: The Body Becoming: Bringing the Biological Back In

Part 2: Dynamics of Bodily Differences
Fat or Fiction? Re-thinking Fat
Envisioning and Re-visioning Disability and Physical Difference
Racialized, Ill, and Aging Bodies
Biopedagogies: Regulating and Restraining Unruly Bodies

Part 3: Body Projects
Beyond the Binaries: Gender, Sex, and Sexual Variance

Required Texts
We will work with **four** texts and a course kit. The following course readings will be available for purchase from the Bookstore and/or accessed through the library:


*Embodiment and bodily difference* Readings, (2015). Developed by Professor Carla Rice. (To be accessed through the Guelph library system)

*Please note: Students are required to read all books assigned in this course. Student presenters and I will assign additional readings each week from among the articles listed in the “Schedule of Topics and Readings Fall 2015” below. This means that not all articles listed will be assigned; instead, articles will be chosen based on our research interests. All readings for foundational weeks’ 1 through 4 are required.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Reflection Due</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Oct 8 (in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Reflection Due</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Nov 5 (in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20% (Self Evaluation)</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>As assigned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Nov 26 (in class)</td>
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**Explanation of Assignments**

Students are expected to do assignments using interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches in undertaking course work. These involve:

- Understanding theories of *differences* and ability to use social difference variables such as gender, sexuality, disability, race, and bodily difference in analyses.
- Emphasis on *complexity* and *complex embodiments* in analyzing topics, demonstrating proficiency in applying theories introduced in the course.
- Considering *agency*, *capacity*, and *creativity* of individuals and groups in responding to social suffering and exclusions and in constituting alternative accounts of themselves.

**Class Presentation (with Self Evaluation)**

Topics assigned in week 2

Choose a topic that engages you. Develop and facilitate a workshop that includes your reflections on the topic and selected readings for the week. Your facilitation should include a brief introduction to the topic, an outline of theoretical/empirical critiques of conventional approaches to the topic, and a discussion starter. You can use visual aids, films or film clips, individual/group exercises, and/or questions to engage the class. Presentations should be well researched and organized. The assignment is intended for you to enter into generative conversations and get valuable feedback about key theoretical issues, empirical questions, and/or practice dilemmas in your area. As such, you are strongly encouraged to present on a topic related to your final project and more broadly, to your research programme. *Self Evaluation: As part of the assignment, you will be asked to submit a one-page written self-evaluation of your presentation along with a letter grade. Along with this, submit an outline of your presentation, a copy of the visuals, discussion questions or exercises you use, and copies of handouts given to the class.*

**Reflection Papers**

Write two polished reflections of 4 to 6 pages each on the readings you completed during the previous section of the course. Choose themes that interest, engage, move, challenge, puzzle, or bother you and/or associations and connections the readings have triggered for you.
Reflections will be graded on writing quality, originality, synthesis skills, and sensitivity of analyses. I strongly advise that you draft responses when you are immersed in the readings and then edit and synthesize your reflections before submission. Demonstration of reading comprehension, writing clarity, and consistency of effort is critical to success in this assignment.

**Final Project**

In this assignment, students are required to create an assignment focused on your area(s) of scholarly interest along with themes introduced the course, bringing together at least one theoretical framework introduced with a topic of your choice. Your assignment could be i) a conventional academic research paper; ii) a creative project; iii) a literature review useful to you in your MSc, MA or PhD work; or iv) another project YOU design. A creative project may be an artistic or activist intervention into a course theme combined with a theoretical case for the proposed intervention. You are encouraged to reflect on issues that engage – or plague – you!; to use your creativity in designing your project; and to come up with an idea that will enable you to advance your research agenda. I highly recommend that you consult with me and class members prior to defining your project.

**Participation**

Regular attendance is required and students must demonstrate they have done the reading.

**Commitment to Class Discussions and Course Materials**

The course is structured as a weekly 3-hour seminar, which works best when students are prepared to participate fully in discussions. Course assignments emphasize student engagement with course material.

**Note on Difficulty of Course Content**

In this class, we explore the intellectual, emotional, and social terrain of social constructions of normalcy and anomalous and complex embodiments including weight, physical, mobility, sensory, age, race, sex, gender, and other visible and invisible differences. Some of the readings we take up and films we watch can challenge and evoke strong responses in audiences. You are in the best position to decide whether this is right course at this time. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to me before deciding on this class.

**Course Policies on Late Submission of Work**

Assignments are accepted before or on the due date. Extensions are provided only if you contact me ahead of time or provide documentation of a medical or life emergency. Otherwise, there is a 2% penalty per day for late assignments.

**Accessibility**

The University of Guelph Accessibility Statement: The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation,
whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (soon to be re-named Student Accessibility Services) as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or refer to the CSD website.

**Course Accessibility Statement:** I expect that students in this class have many different intellectual, physical, mental, sensorial and emotional ways of being, learning, and engaging in the classroom. I also expect that as a class, we will collectively attend to and respect all of these needs. As such, we will begin this class with a discussion about accessibility and how we can collectively, and perhaps creatively, make the classroom accessible to everyone. If you do not feel comfortable sharing your accessibility needs in class, please talk to me or visit: Centre for Students with Disabilities at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or refer to the CSD website. If you want to pursue the question of access and accommodation more fully please consider checking out “Beyond Compliance” http://bcccsyracuse.wordpress.com/, which is a more radical accessibility statement.

**Timely Feedback on Work**
Feedback to students on work completed or in progress is an integral part of teaching and learning in that it allows you to measure your understanding of material and your progress on learning objectives. All University of Guelph instructors must provide meaningful and constructive feedback to students prior to the 40th class day.

**Academic Misconduct**
It is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University’s policy on academic misconduct; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Grad Calendar: http://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/gchandbook/academicmisconduct

**Email Contacts**
Every student is expected to have a Guelph email address and to check it regularly. If a class has to be cancelled, or if there is any other matter that you should know about prior to class, you will be sent an email on your Guelph account. It is your responsibility to attend class and if you have missed a class, seek out one of your classmates to inquire about missed course material. Email can be used to set up appointments with me, or to ask practical questions that require
brief answers. You are welcome to ask questions requiring detailed responses during class or office hours.

**Recording of Materials**
Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

**Resources**
The Graduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to graduate programs: http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/

**Classroom Interactions**
This is a feminist and social justice classroom, where we engage with each other in respectful and thoughtful conversations about social differences and the problematics of norms. Because a significant part of the course will be classroom discussion, a major assignment is keeping up with readings, participating in dialogue an informed way, and providing ethical feedback to other students. Your responses to other students should not be negative. As an engaged participant, your job is to enter into conversations about what was read/heard, and your responses to the ideas presented. You are asked to structure your responses along the following:

*Identifying the ideas that engage you:* As you read texts or listen to the lectures, presentations, and discussions which ideas caught your attention or captured your imagination? Which ones stuck a chord for you?

*Describing the intentions of the writer:* What values and principles regarding people, their differences, identities, selves, actions and interactions, and the social world more generally do these ideas evoke? What do the ideas suggest to you about the writers’ purposes and commitments?

*Situating your responses:* What is it about your own life experiences or interests that account for why these ideas caught your attention? Do you have a sense of which aspects of you own experiences resonated with these ideas?

*Identifying gaps and spaces:* What are some gaps and spaces that you notice in each reading? What areas do you think need further exploration in this topic area? What remains confusing, unclear, or underdeveloped? What suggestions in the form of other authors and ideas can you offer to help the analysis along?

*Recognizing your movement:* How have you been moved on account of engaging with these ideas? Where have these ideas taken you? How have you shifted as a result of listening to and participating in the development of these ideas?

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Embodiment and Bodily Difference
Schedule of Topics and Readings Fall 2015

Part 1: Histories and Approaches

SEPT 10
Introductory class
Review of course syllabus, grading system, and major assignments for course

SEPT 17: Theoretical Frameworks I –
In the Shadow of Difference
Gives a short history of the construction of bodily normalcy and difference in westernized science and societies


Optional Film Resources: Directed by Peter Cohen Homo Sapiens 1900, (First Run Features, 1999), 85 mins
Directed by Eric Neudal and Alison Gilkey, Lives Worth Living, (US, Storyline Pictures, 2011)

SEPT 24: Theoretical Frameworks II –
On the Linguistic Construction Of Gendered and Sexed Bodies

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3 Please note: Students are required to read all books assigned in this course. Student presenters and I will assign additional readings each week from among the articles listed in the “Schedule of Topics and Readings Fall 2015” below. This means that not all articles listed will be assigned; instead, these will be chosen based on student research interests. All readings for foundational weeks’ 1 through 4 are required.
Introduces the paradigm changing work of poststructuralist feminist philosopher Judith Butler and considers the implications of her scholarship for gender theory.


**OCT 1 Theoretical Frameworks III – The Lived Body**

Introduces phenomenological, gender and disability studies scholarship on the lived body as well as Julia Kristeva’s concept of abjection and its implications for understanding embodiment and bodily difference.


**Assignment of topics and texts for student presentations**

**Optional Film Resources:**

**OCT 8: Theoretical Frameworks IV – The Body Becoming: Bringing the Biological Back In**


**Optional Film Resources:**
Directed by Roz Mortimer, *Gender Trouble*. (Seventh Art Releasing, 2002), 24 mins
*Orchids: My Intersex Adventure* (Directed by Phoebe Hart, New York: Women Make Movies, 2010), 60 mins

**1st Reflections Due (including current week)**

**Part 2: Dynamics of Bodily Differences**

**OCT 15 Fat or Fiction?**

**Re-thinking Fat**

*Introduces diverse perspectives on ‘the obesity epidemic’ and considers their ethical consequences, and examines how critical obesity and fat studies shift the focus from obesity/overweight as a medical condition to fatness as a cultural and political identity*


**Optional Film Resources:**
Directed by Julie Wyman, *Bouyant* (Women Make Movies, 2004), 28 mins
Directed by Betty Ann McPherson and Beth Mairs *Does This Canoe Make Me Look Fat?* (BAM North Productions, 2011), 53 mins.

**OCT 22**

**Envisioning and Revisioning Disability and Difference**

*Introduces critical disability studies and examines cultural constructions of disability as a moral problem, medical condition, embodied difference and political and social identity*


**Optional Film Resources:**
Directed by Josh Aronson *Sound and Fury,* (Santa Monica, CA: Next Wave Films, 2000), 55 mins.
Directed by Catherine Scott, *Scarlet Road* (Australia, 2011), 70 mins.
Directed by Allie Light, *Dialogues with Mad Women* (US, 1993), 90 mins.
Directed by William Whiteford, *King Gimp: Long Live the King* (2012), 15 mins
*Tying Your Own Shoes* (Directed by Shira Avni, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2010), 16 mins

**OCT 29**

**Racializing Bodies and Boundaries**

*Theorizes the racialization of bodies and identities in white colonial societies, and analyzes the intersections of racialization and disablement*


**Optional Film Resources:**

Directed by Tracy Deer, *Club Native* (National Film Board of Canada, 2008), 78 mins.
Directed by Anne Marie Nakagawa, *Between: Living the Hyphen* (National Film board of Canada, 2006), 42 mins.
Directed by Mark Sandiford, *Qallunaat: Why white people are funny* (National Film Board and Beachwalker Films, 2006), 50 mins.
Regulating and Restraining Unruly Bodies

Examines social processes, policies and practices by which fat, trans, disabled and racialized bodies are regulated and confined in westernized contexts.


36. Nelson, Alison. (2012). ‘You don’t have to be black skinned to be black’: Indigenous young people's bodily practices. Sport, Education and Society, 17(1), 57-75. (ARES)


Optional Film Resources:

Directed by Sam Gregory, Forgotten People (Mental Disability Rights International/ WITNESS, 2012) 10 mins

Dominant and Counter-Stories of Ill and Aging Bodies

Considers the politics and poetics of ill and aging bodies


**Optional Film Resources:**
Directed by Mike Nichols, *Wit* (HBO Films and Avenue Pictures Production, 2001), 99 mins.
Directed by and featuring Gerry Rogers, *My Left Breast: An Unusual Film about Cancer*.
Directed by Cynthia Scott, *Company of Strangers*. (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1990), 100 mins.
A film by S Casper Wong, *The LuLu Sessions* (US, 2011), 86 minutes, Color
*Pink Ribbons, Inc* (Directed by Lea Pool, Montreal: National Film Board of Canada), 98 mins

2nd Reflections Due (including current week)

**Part 3: Body Projects**

**Nov 19**
*Body Modification and Normalization*
*Examines feminist debates on body modification practices as acts of conformity or agency*
*Explores how gendered power relations structure treatment regimes in hospital-based eating disorder treatment programs, and reveals the ways in which these “feed” anorexia and bulimia*


**Optional Film Resources:**
Directed by Anne Shin, *Western Eyes* (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 2000), 40 mins.
Directed by Sophie Bissonnette, *Sexy Inc, Our Children Under the Influence* (National Film Board of Canada), 35 mins.
Directed by Maria Yatskova, *Miss Gulag* (Neihausen-Yatskova & Vodar Films, 2007), 62 minutes
Directed by Inez Hofmann Kanna, *(Un)veiled: Muslim Women TalkSbout Hijab* (DER Documentary, 2007), 36 mins
Directed by Andrea Levy, *This is My Body: A Film by High School Girls*, (National Film Board of Canada and TRUE Power Media, 2006), 34 mins.

**Nov 26**

**Beyond the Binaries: Gender, Sex, and Sexual Variance**

*Explores the pathologization of gender, sex, and sexual diversity within dualistic systems and moves beyond binaries by centering the embodied experiences of people with gender and sex variance*


**Optional Film Resources**
Excerpt from Directed by Alain Berliner, *Ma Vie En Rose (My Life in Pink)*, (Haut et Court, 1997), From “Start” to “Snow White” 46 mins.  
Directed by Brooke Sebold, Benita Sills & Todd Sills, *Red Without Blue* (Indiepix & Cinema Libre), 74 mins.  
Directed by Kate Davis, *Southern Comfort*. (Santa Monica: Next Wave Films, 2003), 90 mins.  
Directed by Tom Murray, *Fish Can’t Fly, Conversations about God and struggling to be gay*, (T. Joe Murray Productions, 2005), 83 mins.  
Directed by Peter Barbosa, *I Exist: Voices from the Lesbian and Gay Middle Eastern Community in the US* (Arab Film Distribution and Eye Bite, 2004), 90 mins.  
Directed by Annie Goldson and Peter Wells, *Georgie Girl* (New Zealand, 2001), 70 minutes  
Directed by Spohie Bissonnette, *Sexy Inc, Our Children Under the Influence* (National Film Board of Canada), 35 mins.  
Directed by Liz Canner, *Orgasm Inc: The Strange Science of Female Pleasure* (First Run Features, 2009), 80 mins  
Directed by Grant Lahood, Intersexion (Ponsoy Productions, NZ, 2012), 68 mins  
*Sexual Madness* (1938) and *Historic Venereal Disease Films* (1944) (Quality Information Publishers, 2006), 30 mins.  
Directed by Wendy Slick & Emiko Omori, *Passion & Power: The Technology of the Orgasm* (First Run Features, 2008), 74 mins

**Final Project Due**