

Cultural Studies Colloquium 2

(seminar for advanced students in American and British Cultural Studies):

The Body (and Bodies) in Cultural Studies and Cultural Practice

Regular meeting time: WED 10-12 // Philosophy building, room Ü 15
Study day on 22/01: 10-16 at the Graduate School for the Humanities

Course description

"For indeed, no one has determined what the Body can do," remarks the philosopher Baruch Spinoza in his *Ethics* (1677): a work that problematizes all too simple divisions as well as hierarchies of mind over body in the philosophical tradition. Three centuries later, a further philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, continues this problematization, but transforms Spinoza's observation into the more direct (and activating) form of a query: "What can a body do?" is the deciding question not only for Spinoza's philosophy according to Deleuze, but also for issues of ethics, dynamics of power, and a full accounting of the interrelations that constitute the worlds we live in (*Expressionism in Philosophy*, 1968).

This seminar takes up the call to explore what the body can do. Yet more particularly, the course is interested in what study of the body (or of specific bodies) can mean for cultural studies. The goal is, thus, not to neatly answer the question "What can a body do?", but rather to explore a multiplicity of approaches to 'the body' and 'the bodily'. Accordingly, the course has a two-part structure:

(1) After initial orientation in regards to "Frameworks and Intellectual Legacies" of thinking (through) the body, further sessions focus on "Theories of the Body/Bodies." Among other topics, we will explore the phenomenological project and the notion of "a queer phenomenology" (Ahmed), the civilizing process and concept of *habitus* in sociology (Elias & Bourdieu), body discipline and biopolitics (Foucault), the project of a "body without organs" (Deleuze & Guattari), and the possibility of posthumanist embodiment (Haraway & Wolfe).

(2) In the second block of the course – "Practices of the Body/Bodies" – our discussion will shift from general theories to specific case studies. As a first step we propose considering the bodily intricacies and implications of immunization by way of Eula Bliss's experimental text *On Immunity: An Inoculation* (2014). Further case studies will be developed by course participants and discussed during the end-of-term symposium or 'Study Day' which we have scheduled for Wednesday, 22 January from 10-16.

For further information on enrollment, course format and preparing for the course etc., please see information at the end of this document!

***** Frameworks & Intellectual Legacies *****

Introductory reading

- Lisa Blackman, "Introduction: Thinking through the Body." *The Body: Key Concepts*. Oxford/New York: Berg, 2008. 1-13.
- Bryan S. Turner, "Introduction: The Turn of the Body." *Routledge Handbook of Body Studies*. Ed. Bryan S. Turner. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2012. 1-17.

(See also the further titles mentioned at the end of this document.)

16 October

Introduction

Course concepts & structures

Discussion of participants' proposals

23 October

Intellectual histories & legacies

Tiffany Atkinson, introduction. *The Body*. Ed. and introd. by Atkinson. Readers in Cultural Criticism. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005. 1-11.

Jonathan Sawday, "The Renaissance Body: From Colonisation to Invention." *The Body*. Ed. Atkinson. 12-26.

René Descartes, "Second Meditation: Of the Nature of the Human Mind; and that it is Easier to Know than the Body." *The Body*. Ed. Atkinson. 27-33.

Sigmund Freud, "A Case of Hysteria: Fräulein Elisabeth von R." *The Body*. Ed. Atkinson. 34-40.

***** Theories *****

30 October

Civilizing processes & habitus

[From:] Norbert Elias, "Über die 'Zivilisation' als eine spezifische Veränderung des menschlichen Verhaltens." *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. 1939. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1997. 65-109.

Pierre Bourdieu, "Die Homologie der Räume." *Die feinen Unterschiede: Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*. 1979. Trans. Bernd Schwibs and Achim Russer. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2018. 286-331.

6 November

Phenomenology

Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Towards a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.4 (2006): 543-574.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Theory of the Body is Already a Theory of Perception." *Phenomenology of Perception*. 1945. Trans. Colin Smith. London/New York: Routledge 2005. 235-239.

Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution." *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-531.

13 November

Discipline, punishment, & biopower

Michel Foucault, "Discipline: Docile Bodies." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage, 1995. 135-169.

Concluding Lecture (17 March 1976). *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France*. 1997. Trans. David Macey. London: Penguin, 2004. 239-264.

[20 November

Buß- und Betttag / Tag der Lehre]

27 November

Bodies with/out organs – Deleuze & Guattari

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, "November 28, 1947: How do you Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?" *A Thousand Plateaus*. 1980. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 173-193.

4 December

Feminist | cyborg | posthuman embodiment

Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism." *Socialist Review* 8 (1985): 65-108.

Cary Wolfe, "Learning from Temple Grandin: Animal Studies, Disability Studies, and Who Comes After the Subject." *What is Posthumanism?* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2010. 127-144.

11 December

Flesh

Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Daddy's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17.2 (1987): 64-81.

Alexander Weheliye, "Bare Life: The Flesh." *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopower, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke, 2014. 33-45.

18 December

Bio | Cultural

Samantha Frost, [excerpt from:] *Biocultural Creatures: Towards New Theory of the Human*. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP, 2016.

===== **Holiday Break** =====

***** **Practices** *****

8 January

Immunization

Eula Bliss, *On Immunity: An Inoculation*. Minneapolis: Gray Wolf, 2014.

15 January

Preparation Day

22 January

Study day/Symposium

(with presentations by seminar participants and invited guests)

10-16 at The Graduate School for the Humanities

Confirmed speaker: **Jasper J. Verlinden, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin**

29 January

Course wrap-up & reflection on "The body (bodies) in cultural studies"

Enrolling for the course:

To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for this course, we ask students to compose a brief **statement of purpose** (of 1 to 1,5 pages) in which they **(1)** introduce themselves and **(2)** outline their interest/s in this semester's topic. Please mail your statement of purpose to both instructors (zeno.ackermann@uni-wuerzburg.de and maryann.snyder-koerber@uni-wuerzburg.de) by **October 6th**. After submission, we will get in touch with you and register you for the course. Please note that there is no self-registration for this course.

Format of the Cultural Studies Colloquia:

This course is a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies. The format of the joint Cultural Studies Colloquium is discussion-based. Participants are asked to actively bring in their own perspectives and interests. The choice of topics for each semester is based on both current scholarly discussions and the interests of participants. While the course format is particularly geared to advanced students and students with theoretical interests, our project profits from a range of insights and experiences. We would love to integrate perspectives from students with backgrounds in ethnological and performance disciplines, for example, in addition to philosophy and history. If you have questions about the course and its applicability to your studies, please do not hesitate to contact the instructors.

Participants' contributions:

- 1) In addition to engaged and regular participation, students are asked to specially prepare and co-moderate one seminar session ('**Impulsreferat**').
- 2) In terms of written work, participants have the opportunity to write **response papers** that can be composed in preparation for a session (such as the session one is moderating). Papers can also reflect back on previous discussions or bring in new perspectives.
- 3) Participants also have the opportunity to test out ideas and projects in 'work in progress'-style **presentations at the symposium** at the end of the semester

All written work for the seminar (response papers, presentation write-up, etc.) is submitted as a **portfolio** of ca. 20 pages at the end of the semester.

Introductory reading:

Lisa Blackman's *The Body*, published in the "Key Concepts" series by Berg in 2008, remains a good introduction to the broad range of our topic. Before the first meeting of the seminar – and ideally before penning your statement of purpose – all participants ought to have read at least the introduction to Blackman's book ("Introduction: Thinking through the Body"; 1-13) as well as the introduction to the ***Routledge Handbook of Body Studies***, edited by Bryan S. Turner ("Introduction: The Turn of the Body"; 1-17).

Further useful overviews have been offered in 'keyword' form by **Eva Cherniavsky** ([LINK](#)) and **Maureen McNeil** (in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Society in Culture*, which is available in various print editions in our libraries but also accessible in fairly extensive preview form online ([LINK](#))). See also **Tiffany Atkinson, ed. and introd., *The Body*** (Readers in Cultural Criticism; Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005), as well as **Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco, ed. and introd., *The Body: A Reader*** (Routledge Student Readers; London: Routledge, 2005).