

# Body Image and Art

Fall 2006

Instructor: Beverly Naidus, Assistant Professor, UWT  
[bnaidus@u.washington.edu](mailto:bnaidus@u.washington.edu)

Office phone: 253-692-4623

Office: Cherry Parkes 333

Office Hours: Tuesday 12:45-1:45 pm, or by appointment

Class Meeting Time: 2-4:15 Tuesday and Thursday      Classroom: WG 308

## Course Summary

Through reading, art practice and the analysis of contemporary media and art, we will examine notions of body image and why so many modern society are obsessed with their appearances. We will study the body through drawing, photography, photo-collage and site-specific installation to develop perceptual and conceptual skills. We will expand our ideas about what is a healthy relationship to our own bodies and to those of others.

## Course Objectives

- 🕒 To explore both a perceptual and conceptual approach to art making
- 🕒 To strengthen formal skills
- 🕒 To experience hands-on collaborative art processes
- 🕒 To be exposed to a wide variety of contemporary art forms including site-specific installations, culture jamming, artist's books, and photo-text work.
- 🕒 To develop facility with the terms *INTENTION*, *AUDIENCE* and *CONTEXT* when discussing the goals of an artwork
- 🕒 To become familiar with a variety ways of understanding body image as it relates to art and to contemporary society
- 🕒 To encourage critical thinking in relation to the art making process
- 🕒 To become more accepting of different body types and centered in one's own body

## Course Requirements

- 🕒 A journal with a minimum of bi-weekly entries, including drawings, photos, notes, and stories.
- 🕒 Reading: Assorted articles available on e-reserve. Listed in the bibliography.
- 🕒 Assigned drawings, photography, photo-collage, and site-specific projects – both in class projects and work done at home
- 🕒 A collaborative, site-specific project that explores some aspect of body image
- 🕒 A research project presented orally (7-10 minutes) on an artist whose work addresses body image issues. The choice of the artist must be discussed with the instructor AT LEAST 2 weeks before presentation time. Research must include journal articles. Students will be graded based on the depth of understanding of the artist's work, the ability to engage the audience with the subject matter, and sufficient research.
- 🕒 Class participation is essential and unexcused absences will affect grades.

## Classroom Behavior

Food and drink are acceptable as long as you do not disrupt the class or bother your neighbors. Please turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and pagers when you come to class. Please be respectful and attentive when others are speaking in class. Arriving late or leaving early should never happen except on rare occasions; if you must arrive late or leave early, please do so in as unobtrusive a way as possible

## **Grades and Self-evaluation**

Students will turn in a midterm portfolio that includes their journal documenting their work during the first 5 weeks of class (due Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>). That portfolio will be graded. A self-evaluation statement is required as part of that portfolio. The self-evaluation should reflect on their participation in class discussions, their art process in relation to collaborative and individual work, and the insights culled from writing, reading and research.

Students are required to share their studio projects during group feedback sessions and to participate in the discussions about their work.

All assignments are assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Familiarity with visual grammar in relation to the student's intention
2. Ability to be inventive both with content and form, and to take risks
3. Attention to craft and process
4. Responsiveness to suggestions to strengthen projects

Grades are distinguished by the following characteristics: 4 = OUTSTANDING work, significant extra time spent in developing work, risks taken, unity of concept and handling of materials to create an imaginative visual statement that challenges conventional thinking and image making

3= ABOVE AVERAGE work, solid concepts and skillful handling of materials, exploration of conceptual ideas evident with thought provoking results

2 = AVERAGE work, competent execution of ideas but not pushing conventions, craftsmanship acceptable with no outstanding qualities, overall investment fulfills requirement but no risk-taking apparent, no evidence of extra time invested to strengthen technical and conceptual issues

1 = BELOW AVERAGE, little involvement in exploration of ideas or misunderstanding of assignment with little attention to craftsmanship

0 = FAILING, no attempt to articulate ideas and total lack of regard for craftsmanship

The following factors will be considered when determining a final grade: amount of effort expended throughout the course, amount of progress made in creative development, development of focused and productive work attitude, lateness, absences, and attendance. Development of a critical language is essential to your constructive participation in group crits and discussions. Evidence of this skill in the discussion of your work and other's work is expected and will be considered in your final grade. Any assigned work not turned in on the due date will be reduced by one letter grade per class day late.

**Work created with little attention or care will be graded accordingly.**

Grades will be weighted in the following way: Body Outline Project: 10%, Midterm Portfolio: 20%, Midterm Journal 5%, Museum/Gallery Paper: 10%, Collaborative Work: 10%, Presentation: 10%, Final Journal 5%, Photocollage/Culture Jam project: 10%, Photo/text Piece: 10%, Participation: 10%

Grades will be given according to the grade point system. Please refer to this website for information about the grading scale: [http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading\\_Sys.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading_Sys.html)

Students are required to write two self-evaluations of their work in the course to be turned in for the midterm meeting and the final day of class. It should be 1-2 pages long and typed. Students must turn these in or receive an incomplete.

## Supplies

Blank page journal for biweekly drawings/photos/stories/notes (7x10" minimum), large drawing pad for pencil and charcoal studies - white(18x24 min), pencils (2B-6B, no H's), erasers (gum & kneaded), sharpener, glue stick, assorted junk for assemblage work, digital camera (they can be borrowed from media services)

Course fees will cover charcoal pencils, cutting boards, x-acto knives, old magazines, large rolls of paper, newsprint, digital ink and paper

## Miscellaneous

If you choose to drop the course, you are responsible for reporting the change to the registrar's office. If you stop coming to class and do not contact the registrar, you will end up receiving a failing grade even if you attended only once.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a temporary or permanent disability, contact Lisa Tice, Manager for Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Science Building, Suite 102. An appointment can be made through the front desk of Student Affairs (692-4400), through Student Services (692-4501), by phoning Lisa directly at 692-4493 (voice) or 692-4413 (TTY), or by e-mail (ltice@u.washington.edu). Appropriate accommodations are arranged after you've conferred with the DSS Manager, and presented the required documentation of your disability to DSS.

**Sept 28** - Introductions. Review course syllabus. Discuss the role of art in healing and social change. Slide show. Body Outline/Diagram – work in pairs. Share with your partner something you like about your body and something you dislike. Read out loud: *Meditation on the Body from Divining the Body by Jan Philips*.

**Homework:** Take home the body outline and fill it with words, drawings, photos. Draw from the inside, how do you feel at this moment – find the edge between personal iconography and self-revelation. Read the following: <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book/excerpt.asp?id=1> and the article on Body Image by Sarah Grogan. Make notes in your journal on both and on the experience of doing the body outline in class. AND email me some info about yourself: where you live, where you grew up, what kind of job(s) you have, what the focus of your studies at UWT is, and what you hope to gain from this course.

**Oct 3** – Bring in body outlines for discussion (they do NOT need to be finished). Begin contour drawings of hands. Discuss what makes collage work and what is visual grammar.

**Homework:** Practice contour drawings on large sheets of paper. Read Fatso.

**Oct 5** – Body meditation. Continue practice of contour drawings on large paper– do feet. Draw another person's feet. Discussion of reading.

**Homework:** On large sheet of paper do contour drawing of hands and feet. Think about the composition/design (and what makes an interesting one), overlapping, changes in scale, going of the

edge, line quality. Begin to distinguish between *seeing vs. looking vs. feeling*. Read about the objectification of the female body. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/gaze/gaze.html>  
<http://courses.washington.edu/englhtml/engl569/berger/bergersup.html>

**Oct 10** – More in class practice. Slide show: self-portraiture from art history. Discussion about the history of figure study and the objectification of the body. Draw facial expressions of partners. Contour.

**Homework:** Draw self portrait using contour.

**Oct 12** – Museum trip as a group – meet at class and then go together (as a group of 10 or more it only costs \$5.50 per student visitor at TAM). Visit the exhibition of Aminah Robinson at the Tacoma Art Museum or the exhibition of Joyce Scott at the Museum of Glass. You may visit both museums and compare and contrast the work of both artists. Bring journal and draw. Make notes on the artist's work and the way she uses marks, materials, shapes, symbols, text, collage, color, texture, composition, depth, etc. to tell a story.

**Homework:** Write an essay about your experience of Robinson's or Scott's work. Discuss visual grammar and how you feel her work discusses body image, gender and ethnicity. 1200 words double spaced, Paper due Oct 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Oct 17** – Turn in paper. Figure study with nude model - Gesture drawing

**Homework:** Practice gesture drawing of bodies in motion.

**Oct 19** – Figure study – Gesture

**Homework:** Practice gesture drawing of bodies in motion. Reading TBA

**Oct 24** – Figure study – Value Studies

**Homework:** Practice value studies of the body. Make sure to control the lighting.

**Oct 26** – Figure study – value studies

**Homework:** Practice value studies of the body. Search magazines for ads that objectify the body, Find ads that objectify the body, bring them into class. begin research for presentation about artist ) Reading TBA, Choose artist for oral presentation.

**Oct 31** – Media Literacy discussion. Discuss reading. Begin photocollage or culture jamming exercise.

**Homework:** Write self-evaluation, include name of artist chosen. Prepare portfolio. Reading TBA

**Nov 2** – Midterm due/ Individual conferences. Video: Killing Us Softly and Women artists the other side of the picture / director, Teresa MacInnes– discussion – work on photocollage exercise

**Homework:** Begin research on presentation about artist dealing with body image. A bibliography is required! Go to library and ask for help ordering journals, catalogs, etc. Questions to address in presentation: artist's education, why is s/he doing this body of work, what do you find meaningful about the work, how does s/he use visual grammar, what question do you have for us about the work.

**Nov 7** – Slide talk of photo/text projects. Discussion of reading. Discussion of collaborative, site-specific projects: installations, interventions and performance.

**Homework:** Finish photocollage. Develop concept for Photo/Text piece about the body, Readings:TBA

**Nov 9** – Discussion of photocollage. Collaborative projects.

**Homework:** Prepare presentation on artist. Work on photo/text series for the rest of quarter.

**Nov 14** – Oral presentation day. Collaborative project meeting.

**Nov 16** – Oral presentation day. Collaborative project meeting.

**Nov 21** – Collaborative project meeting. Instructor in NYC.

**Nov 23** – Thanksgiving vacation

**Nov 28** – Student Presentations about artist - Collaborative projects

**Nov 30** – Presentation of Collaborative projects for class feedback.

**Dec 5** – Public Presentation of Collaborative projects

**Dec 7** – Presentation of final photo/text projects. Submit final portfolio/journal

**Dec 12** – Journal/Portfolio pick up - Party

## **Bibliography:**

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- Brumberg, Joan Jacobs, **The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls**, New York : Vintage Books, 1998
- Bordo, Susan, **Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body**, University of California Press, 1990
- Cooke, Kaz, **Real Gorgeous: The Truth about Body and Beauty**, Australia: Rathdowne Book, 1994
- Dotson, Edisol W., **Behold the Man: The Hype and Selling of Male Beauty in Media and Culture**, New York : Haworth Press, c1999
- Dutton, Kenneth R.,**The Perfectible Body: The Western Ideal of Male Physical Development**, New York : Continuum, 1995
- Grogan, Sarah, **Body Image: Understanding Body Dissatisfaction in Men, Women and Children**, London and NY: Routledge, 1999
- Maine, Margo, **Body Wars: Making Peace with Women's Bodies: An Activist's Guide**, Carlsbad, CA: Gurze Books, c2000
- Naidus, Beverly, **One Size Does Not Fit All**, Aigis Publications, 1993
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- Poulton, Terry , **No Fat Chicks: How Big Business Profits by Making Women Hate Their Bodies – and How to Fight Back**. Secaucus, NJ: Carol Pub. Group, c1997
- Philips, Jan, **Divining the Body: Reclaim the Holiness of Your Physical Self**, Skylight Paths, 2005.
- Seid, Roberta Pollack, **Never Too Thin: Why Women Are at War with Their Bodies**, NY: Prentice Hall Press, 1989
- Stearns, Peter N., **Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West**, NY: NYU Press, 1997
- Thone, Ruth Raymond , **Fat – A Fate Worse Than Death: Women, Weight, and Appearance**, New York : The Haworth Press, 1997
- Wolf, Naomi, **The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women**, Perrenial, 2002

## Websites

[www.bodypositive.com/](http://www.bodypositive.com/)  
[www.4woman.gov/BodyImage](http://www.4woman.gov/BodyImage)  
<http://www.jeankilbourne.com/>  
[www.edreferral.com/body\\_image.htm](http://www.edreferral.com/body_image.htm)  
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<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/08/features-smith.php>  
<http://www.enfoco.org/photographers/aguilar/aguil02.htm>  
<http://www.digibodies.org/intimate.html>  
<http://makiabelikos.galeon.com/tunickbcn.jpg>  
<http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/women/womenart.html>

## Artists to Choose Among

Jenny Saville, Cindy Sherman, Rachel Lewis, Eleanor Antin, Jo Spence, Penelope Goodfriend, Nancy Fried, Guerilla Girls, Womanhouse, Valerie Export, Carolee Schneeman, Shigeko Kubota, Alice Neel, Niki de Sainte-Phalle, Alison Saar, Tanja Ostojic, Judy Chicago, Martha Rosler, Kiki Smith, Lorna Simpson, Laura Aguilar, Catherine Opie, Jana Sterbak, Janine Antoni, Tee Corinne, Laurie Toby Edison, Paula Modersohn Becker, Orlan