

HUMA 889 - Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies II: Corporeal Inscriptions, Surface Readings

T-18:00-21:30
SGW Campus, EV-3.760

Instructor: Dr John Potvin
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Office Hours: Mondays: 2.45-3.45 and Tuesdays: 5.00-6.00

The best way to be in touch with Dr Potvin is either through email or during office hours.

Course Description:

The body is a contested site, a surface of conflicting ideals, images and representations. This seminar seeks to unpack how representational and performative practices (broadly understood) help and/or hinder humanistic study of the potentials and limits of the human body. As a cross-disciplinary field of research and inquiry, Body Studies emerged in the brutal climate of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Amidst a decade of political and social apathy, the 1980s saw scholars and activists alike demanding, rather successfully, the reinsertion - or acknowledgement of - the body into the discursive and political landscape, once absent in second-wave feminist and critical theories. The emergence of post-structuralist critique opened up the possibilities of re-investigating and re-inserting the body into theoretical debates within the academy and street activism in ways it never achieved before.

This seminar will explore important critical, racial, feminist and queer interventions into theories of representation, surface and performative readings that bodies necessarily elicit. As an important and meaningful extension of our discussions of the body, we will also explore the possibilities that vision, viewing and the senses in general offer in broadening our understanding of the corporeal landscape.

Course themes:

Themes include, **the body as:**

- inscriptive, meaningful surface
- fleshy and sensory
- designed, textured, fashioned and consumed
- site of activism
- racially marked
- disciplined, controlled, scrutinized and surveyed
- locus of identity
- choreographed and performative
- trafficked and sexual contest
- aberrant, abject, pathological and incomplete
- site of discrimination, violence and pain

Evaluation:	
Participation:	15%
Critical reading presentation and accompanying review paper: 20%	
Final paper abstract: [due at the beginning of class 25 February]	10%
Final research paper presentation:	15%
Final research paper: 40%	
[due 12.00-12.30 Monday 21 April]	
	100%

Class Participation:

Students will be expected to engage intelligently in group and class discussions. All students, *without exception*, are expected to have read and prepared notes on the assigned readings and/or chapters for effective participation. Finally, given that it is a seminar format, and given the nature of the material, *respectful and positive contributions* are a must in order to create a collegial environment.

Critical reading class presentation:

Each assigned reading will be prepared by a student to be formally presented to the class. This is a *critical engagement* with the text and its contents, not a simple regurgitated summary. Each presentation should take between 1hr and 1hr15 (excluding Q&A session), as there are two readings and subsequent presentations slated for each class. The point of the assignment is to: first, prepare a *succinct* overview of the article/chapter, outlining the major points, arguments, problems and contributions, and second, offer critical feedback as to the arguments presented, did the author successfully make his/her point, how?, explain. What is the core point, or thesis? What and how does the author set out to prove, narrate, interrogate or demonstrate his arguments/thesis? What sort of evidence does the author bring to light to prove his/her points [primary (archives, journals from the period etc.) and/or secondary (other scholar's work) sources?] What sort of corporeal theories and identities are being constructed, reconstructed, ignored and/or discussed? Might the methodology and theoretical framework the author used or developed pertain to another set of issues or objects from today or from the past? Bring in examples to elaborate. How might these ideas, thoughts and theories be adopted and adapted to any objects or issue of your choice? I want to know your thoughts on the issues the author is presenting - in general and concrete terms, and not what you feel!

In addition to the actual presentation, the presenter is expected to pose a series of intelligent questions to the class to elicit conversation. The questions should move beyond facts and allow the class to collectively launch into larger social, cultural, theoretical and/or historical discussions. For example, the case study that the author presents, how might it serve to expose current or more recent issues? Are there similar phenomena at play today or in another culture or historical moment? Are there other objects we might also be able to analyse in a similar way, if so, how? These are ONLY examples and are meant to help students devise their own set of 4 to 6 questions. In the end, these articles and the student's questions are meant to push us into a deeper and richer understanding of the complicated and on-going concerns and questions around the body as a modality for broader intellectual, socio-political and cultural

inquiry. In essence these questions should help to determine the trajectory the seminars will take. This is an opportunity to learn how to develop your skills in critical thinking as much as your presentation style. This is not to say you will not be subject to questions or re-direction by Dr Potvin.

In addition to the presentation, the student will be required to submit a polished, well-written paper version on the day of the presentation along with the questions posed (6-8 pages in length).

Final essay abstract and bibliography

Required for this initial stage is a **300 word abstract** detailing the premise, theoretical and methodological parameters and object(s) to be explored. The abstract is a way to start thinking about the final research essay topic early on. The topic must conform to the themes and issues central to the core of the course and its objectives. The goal of this assignment is to succinctly summarize the goals and objectives of your paper, while also providing evidence of preliminary research. What sort of research questions would you like to pose or you think the object(s) elicit? What is the rationale for your choices? How, exactly, do you plan to 'theorize', discuss and interrogate the object, its history, its context and its culture(s)? What are the various stages of your argument/discussion? Your bibliography should include no less than 12-15 scholarly entries (books, chapters and/or refereed articles) in addition to any other relevant sources.

You must use the bibliography for the course readings listed here as your style guide for your own bibliography.

A note on internet sources: Only legitimate academic internet journals are allowed as possible sources. Wikipedia, to name but one example, is NOT a legitimate research tool or academic source and should NOT form part of your research or bibliographical material. However, given we are dealing with bodies and representation, the internet does provide a rich resource of visual material as well as primary journal articles which are useful. Having said this, your research cannot begin and end there.

Final research essay presentation:

This is a *formal and professional* opportunity for students to present their research as a 'work in progress' to their peers. The presentation should last 20 minutes (it will be timed!) and should include a PowerPoint presentation relevant to your research topic. The presentation will be followed by a 10 to 15 minute Q&A session. It is the student's responsibility to have a PowerPoint presentation prepared and ready to go without problems or delay.

Final research essay:

A formal, academic and well-written 6,000-7,000 word (double-spaced and typed) research essay on any object(s) of your choice. The paper *MUST* be theoretically informed and *MUST* use the relevant theoretical models used specifically in the seminar's list of assigned readings. Keep in mind that not all theories are applicable to all objects. Therefore the choice of theories will be evaluated equally as to the quality of your writing and research.

Please feel free to discuss your topic with me to get a sense of the topic's feasibility, the material available and how you might approach it.

Formatting:

1. Your paper must have a separate cover page, which must include the following information: 1) Title of your paper (originality counts!); 2) your name; 3) student number; 4) number and name of the course; 5) name of professor; and 6) date of assignment.
2. Your paper should be double-spaced, in 12-point font in either New Times Roman or Garamond.
3. **In all and every instances:** when you quote or paraphrase from texts use the following format: (Garb 1998: 218); when quoting or paraphrasing from the course: (15 October). In both instances, the period comes not after the sentence, but the inserted citation (as seen in the previous sentence).
4. A bibliography of relevant texts is to be attached at the back of your essay in alphabetical order and in the format used in the course syllabus. You are not required to include lecture dates and titles in this bibliography.
5. Your paper must be stapled, with pages numbered beginning with the first page of actual text.
6. You are also expected to provide a reproduction of the images you discuss in your essay, appended at the back of your essay. Each figure should have a figure number and relevant data, i.e. Figure 1. Yves St. Laurent. Silk Dress with Organza Bodice, Spring/Summer 1999; or Figure 2. Paul Gauguin. *Breton Nude*, 1895.

Grading Assessment:

You will be graded on: 1) the sophistication of your reasoned argument(s) and development of logic to back it up; 2) the clarity of your **thesis statement** and lines of argumentation; 3) your **choice of** and how you use course reading materials; 4) the **detail and precision** of your evidence and arguments; 5) the way you construct a dialogue between the lectures and the reading materials; and 6) the writing and presentation style. Points will be deducted for poor writing or unintelligible arguments.

Reading schedule:

Readings have been made available at:

Fine Art History Reading Room, EV 2.785 [<http://readingroom.concordia.ca/>]

Opening hours: 10.00-6.00pm.

Week 1: Introduction (07 January)

Week 2: Histories, Penetrating the Surface (14 January)

Porter, Roy. 'History of the Body', in Peter Burke (ed.). *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991: 206-32.

Benthien, Claudia. 'Boundary metaphors' and 'Penetrations: Body boundaries and the production of knowledge in medicine and cultural practices', in *Skin: On the Cultural Border between Self and the World*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002: 17-62.

Week 3: Foucault's Body Politics (21 January)

Foucault, Michel. 'The Repressive Hypothesis' and 'Scientia Sexualis', in *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990: 17-72.

Foucault, Michel. 'The body of the condemned', in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Clinic*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995: 3-31

Week 4: Queer Bodies (28 January)

Halperin, David M. 'The Queer Politics of Michel Foucault', in *Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997: 15-126.

Butler, Judith. 'Ambivalent Drag', in *Bodies that Matter*. New York: Routledge, 1993: 124-37, 270-1.

hooks, bell. 'Is Paris Burning?', in *Black looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992: 145-56.

***** *Paris is Burning* is available in its entirety on www.youtube.com [everyone is expected to have watched the film for the class]

Week 5: Racial Markings (04 February)

Fanon, Frantz. 'The woman of colour and the white man', 'The man of colour and the white women' and 'The fact of blackness', in *Black Skins, White Masks*. New York: Pluto Press, [1952], 1988: 28-44, 45-60, 82-108.

hooks, bell. 'Representing whiteness in the black imagination'. *Cultural Studies*. Boston: South End Press, 1999: 338-46.

hooks, bell. 'The oppositional gaze: black female spectators', in *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992: 115-31.

Dyer, Richard. 'The matter of whiteness', in *White*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997: 1-40.

Week 6: Fleshy Bodies (11 February)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 'Situating the Body', in Donn Welton (ed.). *The Body*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999: 150-77.

Leder, Drew. 'Flesh and Blood: A proposed supplement to Merleau-Ponty', in Donn Welton (ed.). *The Body*. Malden and Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999: 200-10.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 'Lived Bodies: Phenomenology and the Flesh' in *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1994: 86-111.

Week 7 Reading Week (18 February)

Week 8: Bodies Fashioned (25 February)

Entwistle, Joanne. 'Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice'. *Fashion Theory* Volume 4, Issue 3 (2000): 323-48.

Warwick, Alexandra and Dani Cavallaro. 'Introduction: The Body in Philosophy and Theories of Representation' and 'Surface/Depth - Dress and the Mask', in *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998: 1-22, 128-56.

Evans, Caroline. 'Desire and Dread: Alexander McQueen and the Contemporary Femme Fatale', in Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (eds.). *Body Dressing*. Oxford and New York: Berg Press, 2002: 201-14.

Arnold, Rebecca. 'The Brutalized Body'. *Fashion Theory* Volume 3, Issue 4 (1999): 487-502.

Week 9: (04 March) Class Cancelled

Week 10: Movement and Cities (11 March)

Vilder, Anthony. 'Agoraphobia: Psychopathologies of Urban Space' in *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000: 25-50.

Hammergren, Lena. 'The Re-*turn* of the flâneuse', in S. L. Foster (ed.). *Corporealities*. New York and London: Routledge, 1996: 53-67.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 'Bodies-Cities', in *Space, Time and Perversion*. New York: Routledge, 1995: 83-101.

Week 11: Protest and Violence (18 March)

McKenzie, Jon. 'Abu Ghraib and the society of the spectacle of the scaffold', in Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon (eds.). *Violence Performed: Local roots and global roots of conflict*. New York and London: Routledge, 2011: 338-56.

Phelan, Peggy. 'Afterword: "In the valley of the shadow of death": The photographs of Abu Ghraib', in Patrick Anderson and Jisha Menon (eds.). *Violence Performed: Local roots and global roots of conflict*. New York and London: Routledge, 2011: 372-84.

Forster, Susan Leigh. 'Choreographies of Protest'. *Theatre Journal* Volume 55, Number 3 (October 2003): 395-41.

Week 12: (25 March) Research Presentations

Week 13: (01 April) Research Presentations

Week 14: (08 April) Research Presentations

Classroom and University Policies

Late assignment policy, penalties and return:

*** For students who hand in work late without prior approval from the instructor will not receive comments on their assignments. Students who have made special arrangements with Dr Potvin will receive minimal feedback and will likely be returned after the rest of the class has received their assignment.

There will be a penalty of 10 % per day for any and all late assignments, however, accommodations can be made only upon consultation with Dr Potvin. Excuses will not

be accepted after deadlines have passed, so please contact Dr Potvin before the due date to discuss the possibility of an extension. The only permissible exceptions are: death in the family and illness. Both require proof.

Email policy and office hours:

Office hours are established to allow students to ask questions, initiate private discussions regarding the content of the course. Office hours are based on a first come, first served basis. Every attempt will be made to meet with all students within the time slots available. It is also an invaluable opportunity to start engaging with faculty as you begin to create your future professional community. I strongly urge you to take the opportunity to use my office hours wisely, rather than resorting to email communication, especially if the nature of your questions or discussions are complex and/or personal. Every reasonable, human effort will be made to respond to emails within 24hrs, Monday through Thursday. Be sure to consult your syllabus before emailing questions about information that have been included.

Learning challenges

The quality of your writing (this includes grammar, spelling, sentence structure, clarity of ideas, strength of argument, etc.) is a vital component of your assignments. If you think you have writing problems or have concerns about writing visit the Student Learning Services and the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities for help. Please do not wait until the last minute and do not be ashamed, the best writers in the world, academic or otherwise, have all had to struggle at some point. It is far worse not to seek out help.

Counseling and Development, Hall Building, H-440 Tel. 848 2424, ext. 3545
Email: sls@alcor.concordia.ca

Email:

Web: <http://learning.concordia.ca/>

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities, Hall Building, room H-580 Tel. 848-2424
ext. 3525
Email: acsdinfo@alcor.concordia.ca
<http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities/>

Language

Course assignments can be submitted in either French or English.

Technology use in the classroom - Departmental policy

The Department of Art History supports student use of technology in the classroom only when that use is directly related to the lecture, such as using a laptop for the purpose of taking notes, or using the internet at the professor's request. Using technology to engage in email, gaming, text messaging, chatting or surfing the internet, etc., is not permitted during lectures/seminars.

Not only does this use interfere with the user's own capacity to listen, learn and participate, it also disturbs students sitting nearby. Any technology that captures images of other students or the professor without their permission is also in violation of Canadian privacy laws. Using handheld technology during in-class examinations is considered an academic offense.

Plagiarism:

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism which the Code defines as "the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement."

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely

resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources.

Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism.

In Simple Words:

DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU OBTAINED IT!

(Source: The Academic Integrity Website:

<http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/plagirism>

List of useful student services that the university provides

- **Concordia 8/30/12a Counseling and Development** offers career services, psychological services, student learning services, etc.
<http://cdev.concordia.ca/>
- **The Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides:**
<http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations.html>
- **Advocacy and Support Services:** <http://supportservices.concordia.ca/>
- **Student Transition Centre:** <http://stc.concordia.ca/>
- **New Student Program:** <http://newstudent.concordia.ca/>
- **Access Centre for Students with Disabilities:**
<http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities/>
- **Student Success Centre:** <http://studentsuccess.concordia.ca/>
- **The Academic Integrity Website:**
<http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/>
- **Financial Aid & Awards:** <http://web2.concordia.ca/financialaid/>
- **Health Services:** <http://www-health.concordia.ca/>

Grade Distribution:

A+ 90-100% Outstanding (GPA 4.3)
A 85-89% Exceptional (GPA 4.0)
A- 80-84% Excellent (GPA 3.7)
B+ 77-79% Very Good (GPA 3.3)
B 73-76% Good (GPA 3.0)
B- 70-72% Good (GPA 2.7)
C+ 67-69% Satisfactory (GPA 2.3)
C 63-66% Satisfactory (GPA 2.0)
C- 60-62% Satisfactory (GPA 1.7)
D+ 57-59% Marginal Pass (GPA 1.3)
D 53-56% Marginal Pass (GPA 1.0)
D- 50-52% Marginal Pass (GPA 0.7)
F 49% or lower - Fail (GPA 0)

Grade criteria

80-100 (A) Excellent

An outstanding performance in which the student demonstrates a superior grasp of the subject matter, and an ability to go beyond the given material in a critical and constructive manner. The student demonstrates a high degree of creative and/or logical thinking, a superior ability to organize, to analyze, and to integrate ideas, and a thorough familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.

70-79 (B) Good

A more than adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a thorough grasp of the subject matter, and an ability to organize and examine the material in a critical and constructive manner. The student demonstrates a good understanding of the relevant issues and a familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.

60-69 (C) Acceptable

An adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a generally adequate grasp of the subject matter and a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and constructive manner. The student displays an adequate understanding of the relevant issues, and a general familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.

50-59 (D) Minimally Acceptable

A barely adequate performance in which the student demonstrates a familiarity with the subject matter, but whose attempts to examine the material in a critical and constructive manner are only partially successful. The student displays some understanding of the relevant issues, and some familiarity with the appropriate literature and techniques.

0-49 (F) Fail

An inadequate performance.