

The Body and Beyond in European History
Spring 2013
Tuesdays, 5-8 pm

Sara Ritchey
Office Hours: TR: 10:15-3:15

This seminar explores the body as a distinctive subject of inquiry in European historiography. In recent years, the body has become a locus through which to examine the historical constructions of the intersection of gender, sexuality, affect, public policy, knowledge-making, and consciousness. The course will introduce students to theoretical underpinnings, methodological developments, key thinkers, and important applications in the history of the body in order to demonstrate the direction in which European historiography has developed since the 1970s. Along the way we will encounter shifts in historical focus. We will begin by reading early attempts to recover the lives of women in the past, then move to evaluate how the application of feminist theory to European history introduced new methods and enabled scholars to ascertain systems of oppression; we will explore the emergence of gender as a social construct enshrined in institutional and biological models of the body and its maintenance, and we will discuss the future course of European historiography and the role in it of scholarship on the body, its gendered personae, and its affects.

Course Requirements:

Each student is responsible for being prepared to discuss the entirety of the assigned readings in an active and engaged fashion each week. Discussion should be on-topic, respectful, and related to the assigned readings. You should always prepare yourself for discussion by reviewing the authors' main arguments, the evidence s/he uses to support those arguments, the precise historiographical trends in which s/he situates her work and to which s/he responds, and the key theoretical underpinnings on which s/he relies. It is perfectly acceptable to have a different opinion or interpretation of the assigned reading than a classmate or myself. You must, however, articulate your interpretation in a supportive, clear and productive manner.

Each week, unless otherwise indicated, students will submit a two-page review of the assigned monograph. The review must follow Dr. Ritchey's guidelines for writing book reviews, which can be found on Moodle.

In addition to weekly written assignments, students will turn in one final historiographical paper of roughly 15 pages. During the course of the semester, Dr. Ritchey will meet individually with students in order to present the topics that may be covered by this paper, and to help students refine their reading list and annotated bibliography, both assignments of which will be assessed as part of the final paper grade.

Grading Policy:

Weekly reviews: 35%
Discussion questions and leadership: 15%
Discussion: 15%

Final Paper: 35%

For each written assignment, I grade for content, argument, and clarity. Under “clarity,” I consider, and value highly, grammar and style. After the third grammatical or spelling error, I will stop reading your paper. You may revise and resubmit it once. You may wish to use the free services provided by the writing center, which may be found at: <http://english.louisiana.edu/about-us/writing-center/>

Each student will be assigned a week for which s/he is responsible for leading discussion and disseminating a series of discussion questions three days prior (Sunday morning by 10 am) to our seminar. Students will be graded for their ability to ascertain the salient themes of the reading and pose critical, evaluative questions about the reading. These questions should address the main arguments of the reading, the theoretical underpinnings, and the historiographical context in which it emerged. Furthermore, students will be graded on their ability to direct discussion according to the class’s responses to the posed questions. It is in the students’ very best interest to meet with Prof. Ritchey after having completed the assigned reading but before posing the questions. Thursday office hours will be reserved for these meetings.

The final paper will ask students to explore one principle research area (ex: illness, prostitution, citizenship, masculinity, queer theory, pain, disability, critical race studies, animal studies, thing theory or object-oriented ontologies) that has been shaped and defined as a product of feminist and gender theory and an overall interest in the history of the body. The paper must explain how this research area has emerged from the last thirty years of feminist and gender theory and, moreover, how it has become situated in the contemporary practice of European historiography. Topics must be approved by Prof. Ritchey, and a working book list and annotated bibliography will be due, respectively, on March 5 and April 9.

Schedule:

Jan. 22: Introduction to the course

Jan. 29: Read in this order:

- Lee Patterson, “On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History and Medieval Studies” *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990): 87-108.
- Gabrielle Spiegel and Paul Freedman, "Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998): 677-704.
- Caroline Bynum, “Why All the Fuss about the Body: A Medievalist’s Perspective” *Critical Inquiry* 22, no. 1 (1995): 1-33.
- Kathleen Canning, “The Body as Method: Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History” *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 499-513.

Feb. 5: From Women to Gender

- Joan Kelly, “The Social Relations of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women’s History,” *Signs* 1, no. 1 (1976): 809-823.

- Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges” *Feminist Studies* 3 (1975):5-14
- Judith Bennett, “Feminist History and Women’s History” and “Less Money Than a Man Would Take” in History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism (MOODLE)
- Gisela Bock, “Women’s History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate” Gender and History 1, no. 1 (1989): 7-30.

Feb. 19: The Place of Sexuality

- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1
- David Halperin, “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality” GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 6, no. 1 (2000): 87-123.

Feb. 26: The Deconstructionist Approach

- Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: The Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)
- Leah Devun, “The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69:2 (2008): 193-218.

March 5: The Body and Sexuality ****Preliminary Booklist Due**

- Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

March 12: Key Research Areas in the History of the Body I: Medicine

- Barbara Ehrenreich, Introduction to *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (ON MOODLE)
- Monica Green, *Making Women’s Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

March 19: Key Research Areas in the History of the Body II: Sanctity

- Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

March 26: New Directions for Research I: Materiality

- Caroline Bynum, *Christian Materiality: A Lesson on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (Boston: Zone Books, 2011)
- Caroline Bynum, “Perspectives, Connections, and Objects: What’s Happening in History Now” *Daedalus* 138, no. 1 (2009): 71-86.

April 9: New Directions for Research II: Emotions/Affect *****Annotated bibliography due**

- Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009)
- Selections from: Melissa Gregg, ed. *The Affect Theory Reader* (On Moodle)

April 16: Beyond the Body

- Ellen Arnold, *Negotiating the Landscape: Environment and Monastic Identity in Medieval Ardennes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)

April 23: Nothing Beyond the Body

- Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

April 30: Student Projects Grand Finale

Final Exam Due: May 8 at noon

Two copies