Body Politics and Representations  
(Fall 2019)

Venue: LSK 201  
Lecture Time: Thurs, 10:30 to 12:15pm

Lecturer: Prof. PANG Laikwan  
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Tutor: TBA  
Email:

DESCRIPTION:
In this course students learn how to read and fathom the representations of the human body in various cultural forms, including literature, cinema, art, photography, advertisings, medical discourses as well as government policies. We critically interrogate and examine the logic and implications of these representations through close textual and contextual studies. With the help of contemporary cultural theories, we engage in theoretical discussions about the complex issues related to the human body, explore various related cultural myths, in order to reach richer understandings of identity, gender, and sexuality, as well as the formation of a better society.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Students are expected to understand how our cultural and social orders are made up of and maintained by representations of and various forms of discipline on human bodies. Students should be able to critically understand the many interests invested on the body, and critically evaluate the meanings of such diversity of values. With close studies of literary, film, and art texts, students are expected to develop literacy in visual and literary expressions. Reading theoretical texts from different disciplines, students are also expected to appreciate the richness and the usefulness of interdisciplinary approach.

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. All student assignments in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes should be submitted via VeriGuide with effect from September 2008: https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/
CONTENTS:

1. Sept 5  Introduction: Body, Politics, and Representation

2. Sept 12  The Patriarchal Gaze
   Reading: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema,” in Erens (ed) Issues in Feminist Film Criticism
   Film: Alfred Hitchcock (dir), Rear Window

3. Sept 19  Body and Performance
   Reading: Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, 134-141;
            Amelia Jones, “Tracing the Subject with Cindy Sherman,” in Cruz, Smith, and Jones (eds) Cindy Sherman Retrospective

4. Sept 26  Nudity and Pornography
   Film: Jerry Gerard (dir), Deep Throat

5. Oct 3  The Male Body
   Reading: Stephen Whitehead, Men and Masculinities, 181-204
   Film: David Fincher (dir), Fight Club

6. Oct 10  The Disabled Body
            Kaja Silverman, “Historical Trauma and Male Subjectivity,” in Kaplan (ed) Psychoanalysis and Cinema;
   Film: William Wyler (dir), The Best Years of Our Lives

7. Oct 17  Deforming the Body
   Reading: Leslie Heywood, Bodymakers: A Cultural Anatomy of Women’s Body Building, 18-60;

Oct 24  Lecturer attending overseas seminar – no class
8. Oct 31 Representing Body Pain
   Reading: Jane Kilby, “Carved in Skin: Bearing Witness to Self-Harm” in Ahmed and Stacey (eds) Thinking Through the Skin;
   Film: 蔡明亮 Tsai Ming-liang (dir), 《河流》River

Nov 7 University Congregation – no class

9. Nov 14 Political Assembly
   Reading: Judith Butler, Notes Toward A Performative Theory of Assembly, 66–98

10. Nov 21 Body and Technology
    Reading: Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs” in The Haraway Reader

11. Nov 28 Bio-Politics and Governance
    Reading: Michel Foucault, “Governmentality” in The Foucault Effect

TUTORIALS:
There will be 6 tutorial sessions, and each session will last 1 hr and 45 minutes. Periods and locations will be decided upon consensus. Except the first introductory session, each group is responsible for the research and the presentation of one of the following topics, and students must consult their tutors before presentation. Upon the agreement with the tutor, groups are also welcome to work on a project outside the scope of the listed.
- Introduction
- Representation of Female Bodies
- Representation of Male Bodies
- Representation of Queer Bodies
- Abled vs Disabled
- Body and Technology

PAPERS:
This course requires all students to produce a final paper, which will be submitted in two forms. A list of suggested topics will be offered in the third week of the semester, and students should submit the first draft on October 31. Comments will be given, and students are expected to submit the final paper on December 13.

ASSESSMENT:
20% Paper, first draft
40% Paper, final submission
30% Presentation
10% Class Participation
SELECTED REFERENCE:


