

IDST89: In the Flesh: The Constructed Body in Medieval and Renaissance Europe

Tuesday / Thursday 11–12:15 | Spring 2020
Bingham 309



Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1534

Instructors

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Course Description

What are bodies? This may seem like a simple question to ask given that each of us has one. But the body you inhabit as you read this paragraph is more than a living system of flesh and blood; indeed, your body is as much a cultural, political, and social symbol as it is a biological animal. This course will explore the construction of bodies over a period of a thousand years, from c. 700 to c. 1700, through three interdisciplinary lenses: the historical, the art-historical, and the literary. The class will focus on reading and viewing primary source evidence, from plays and poems to chronicles and works of art, and analyzing how this material speaks to persisting or innovative ways of understanding the human body and what is “normal.” For example, how are “normal” and “natural” constructed and defined? Who decides what is normal? Students will consider these questions and how the documents and the works of art left behind by people in medieval and Renaissance Europe reveal ideas about bodies. Ultimately, students will use the three

disciplines to generate a working definition of bodies and their meanings in the world, both then and now. Major themes include gender, race, religion, and the “Other.”

Course Objectives

- Students will question what are considered “normal” or “normative” bodies across historical and cultural contexts.
- Students will understand how studying the medieval and Renaissance world can provide insights into understanding and appreciating these constructions of the body.
- Students will be able to identify the methods of analysis from historical, art historical, and literary disciplines and apply them to understanding primary and secondary source material.

Expectations and Policies

Materials:

- Please bring a paper notebook and take your notes by hand. Approved laptop usage will be determined by the instructor for each unit. (Please see electronics policy.)
- Readings are posted on Sakai. Please print and bring a hard copy of the day’s reading(s) with you to class.
- You will need a hard copy of *The Merchant of Venice*. Inexpensive editions are available on Amazon and at used bookstores. The Oxford edition of the play (ed. by Jay Halio, 2008) is particularly well-suited for undergraduate work, but feel free to use any scholarly edition that you already own or can acquire at a low cost.

Attendance and Punctuality: Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Each unexcused absence beyond two will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third letter grade (e.g., A becomes an A-). Two instances of tardiness will count as an unexcused absence. Class will start on time, so please plan accordingly. If you must miss class or be late, please inform us beforehand, turn in any work due ahead of time, and make sure you catch up on any missed work and get notes from a classmate. Excused absences will not count against your final grade.

Late Papers and Late Work: Work not submitted in hard copy at the specified time is considered late unless we make prior arrangements or in the case of an emergency. If you find yourself in such a situation, let the instructor in charge of the relevant unit know. Failure to submit a complete assignment in hard copy by the time it is due will incur a penalty of one third letter grade for every calendar day, including weekend days, that it is late. Excessively late work will receive a zero.

Plagiarism: The honor code applies to everything that you—and we—do at this university, including our use of outside sources in our research and writing. Our work in this class will conform to the principles and procedures defined in the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* (<http://instrument.unc.edu/>). The research that we do this semester, whether primary or secondary, print or online, formal or informal, will require careful documentation on your

part. The need to cite your sources applies to all your work, *including drafts*, as well as final versions of your projects. If we suspect you of plagiarizing all or part of a paper or exam, even unintentionally, we are required to report the possible offense to the Honor Court.

Classroom Environment: Our FYS class is a community. Much of our time over this semester will be spent in discussion, and for those discussions to be productive, it will be important to respect each other and the time you put into your readings and assignments. People in the classroom will likely have different ideas from you, and you are welcome to disagree with one another. You must, however, be considerate and civil in your language.

Electronics: Misuse of electronic devices—texting, emailing, etc.—during class will result in a reduction of your course participation grade. Laptops will only be allowed only at the instructor’s discretion. All other devices should be put away in your bags during class.

Reasonable Accommodations: Any student in this course who has a disability, chronic medical conditions, or a temporary disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact ARS as soon as possible to discuss accommodations.

Non-Discrimination Policy: This university does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. The University’s policy states that sexual orientation be treated in the same manner. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences. We value the opinions and perspectives of individuals from all diverse backgrounds and value your input to improve the climate of our classroom.

Office Hours

Each instructor will hold regular office hours during the unit that she will be teaching. If you are coming to office hours, please sign up on Sakai in order to avoid a queue. You are welcome to make an appointment with any instructor throughout the semester. Regular office hours are listed below:

Weeks 3-6	Allison Gose, Hamilton 503, Tuesday, 3:30–4:30 PM, Thursday, 2:45–3:45 PM
Weeks 7-11	Jennifer Wu, Hanes Art Center 205, Tuesday, 2–4 PM
Weeks 12-15	Lanier Walker, Greenlaw 311, Thursday, 1:45–3:45 PM

General Guidelines for Projects

You will receive details about your unit projects at the beginning of each unit. Your final project will involve synthesizing ideas discussed over the entirety of the course; details will be announced in the final week of class.

All projects must be printed and turned in hard copy on the due date. The unit projects are 3–4 full pages in length while the final project is 1–2 full pages. The standard formatting guidelines

for this course require double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1” margins. Please number the pages and staple your assignment. Headings are excluded from the page requirements. Images (where applicable) are placed after the essay and are also excluded from the page requirements. Each instructor will post additional information regarding each unit project on Sakai.

Case Study

In Week 16, students will work on a case study on the constructed body in contemporary society. Students will be put into small groups and expected to collaborate on a 5-minute presentation. The bulk of this assignment will be completed in class. More details will be announced.

Participation

Because this discussion-based class depends on the input of all class members, your participation will be evaluated. If you are struggling to participate in class, please speak to one of us. You can participate in a number of ways:

- Completing your readings and assignments for class
- Bringing your printed readings, notebook, and taking detailed notes
- Using class time productively
- Contributing actively to class discussions
- Listening to and supporting others’ contributions to class discussions
- Participating in group activities

Assessment

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation	10%
History Project, due 2/18	20%
Art History Project, due 3/24	20%
Literature Project, due 4/21	20%
Case Study	10%
Final Project, due 4/27 at noon	20%

Assignments will receive letter grades, which will be entered into Sakai with the following number values:

A	95	A-	91	B+	88
B	85	B-	82	C+	78
C	75	C-	72	D+	68

D	65	F	59 and below		
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Your final letter grade for the course is based on the scale below:

A	100-93	A-	92-90	B+	89-87
B	86-83	B-	82-80	C+	79-77
C	76-73	C-	72-70	D+	69-67
D	66-60	F	59 and below		

Grades for each unit project will be determined by the lead instructor. All other grades (participation, case study, and final project) will be determined by consensus among the three instructors.

Schedule

Introductions

Week 1

- Thursday, January 9: Syllabus and introduction to medieval and Renaissance Europe
 - Mark Johnson, “Meaning is More than Words and Deeper Than Concepts,” 2007, 1-15.

Week 2

- Tuesday, January 14: The Human Figure in Renaissance Art
 - Jill Burke, “The Body in Artistic Theory and Practice,” *The Renaissance Nude*, 2018, 55–77.
- Thursday, January 16: Embodiment and the Text
 - Andrew Strathern and Pamela Stewart, “Embodiment and Personhood,” *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*, 2010, 388-402.
 - Justyna Jajszczok and Aleksandra Musial, “‘The Past Is Written on My Body’: Bodies and History,” *The Body in History, Culture, and the Arts*, 2019, 1-8.
 - Philip Stubbes, “On Pride of Apparel,” *The Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583.
 - Excerpt from Angela of Foligno, *Memorial*, 1298.
 - British Library Add. MS 37049 f. 23r.

The Constructed Body in Medieval History: 700–1300

This unit will explore historical constructs of the body from the early medieval period to the High Middle Ages as well as the memory of this era by later thinkers. It will ask, what is the ideal expression of gender? How does this differ among religious vocations, and what is its significance on sexuality? It will then explore the Crusades as a case study of the interaction with the “Other,” asking how these events shaped Western European thought about its diverse

population and neighbors from the Middle Ages into the early modern era. Ultimately, this unit seeks to use the body as a medium to discuss larger social and religious culture of this period.

Week 3: Masculine and Feminine in the Medieval World

- Tuesday, January 21: Idealized Lay Bodies
 - *Waltharius*, 41-75.
 - Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, 28-53.
- Thursday, January 23: Idealized Religious Bodies
 - “Life of Blessed Anstrude,” 291-303.
 - Excerpts from Smaragdus of St. Mihiel, “On the Instruments of Good Works,” *Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, 163-179.
 - Excerpt from Thomas of Celano, *The Treatise on the Miracles of Saint Francis*, 401-408.
 - Hildegard of Bingen, *Hildegard of Bingen’s Book of Divine Works with Letters and Songs*, 5-6; 271-273.

Week 4: Eroticism

- Tuesday, January 28: Corporeal Eroticism
 - Abelard, “The Calamities of Peter Abelard,” *Abelard and Heloise: The Letters and Other Writings*, 2007, 10-20.
 - Heloise, “First Letter,” *Abelard and Heloise: The Letters and Other Writings*, 49-62.
 - “Letters of Two Lovers,” *Abelard and Heloise: The Letters and Other Writings*, 315-328.
- Thursday, January 30: Spiritual Eroticism
 - Hadewijch, *Poetry of Hadewijch*, 1998, 103-107; 119-23; 125-131; 159-163; 179-183.
 - Meister Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart: Selected Writings*, 1994, 60-79.

Week 5: Conflict with the Religious “Other”

- Tuesday, February 4: Religious “Other,” Violence, and the Crusades
 - “The Revelation of Pseudo-Methodius: Christian Prophecy about Jerusalem and the Apocalypse,” *The First Crusade: A Brief History*, 46-51.
 - “A Map of Jerusalem from Time of Crusades,” *The First Crusade: A Brief History*, 44-45.
 - “Urban II’s Call for a Crusade,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 34-42.
 - “Albert of Aachen on the Peasants’ Crusade,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 42-48.
 - “The Battle for Jerusalem,” *The First Crusade: A Brief History*, 2015, 145-147.
 - “The Treatment of Prisoners,” *The First Crusade: A Brief History*, 151-152.
 - “Solomon Bar Samson’s *On the Massacres of Jews*,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 48-51.

- Thursday, February 6: “Othering” Inwards
 - “Accounts of the Fourth Crusade,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 220-228.
 - “Documents on the Sack of Constantinople,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 228-234.
 - “Bernard of Gui’s *Manual for Inquisitors*,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 234-239.
 - “William of Tuldela’s *Song of the Cathar Wars*,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 239-241.

Week 6: *Convivencia* and Contact with the “Other”

- Tuesday, February 11: Living and Eating Together in Spain
 - “Christian Laws,” *The Crusades: A Reader*, 306-313.
 - Jilliam Williams “Boundaries of Faith,” *Food and Religious Identities in Spain, 1400-1600*, 28-58.
- Thursday, February 13: Remembering the Crusades
 - Robert Rouse, “Romance and Crusade in Late Medieval England,” *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, 217-231.
 - Lee Manion, “Renaissance Crusading Literature: Memory Translation, and Adaptation,” *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, 232-247.

The Constructed Body in Italian Renaissance Art: 1300–1600

In this unit, we will investigate the critical issue of corporeality in Italian Renaissance art. What do the representations of bodies in these works of art tell us about Italian Renaissance and European culture and society? How does art express the spiritual concerns and the biological mechanics of the body?

Week 7: Generative Bodies

- Tuesday, February 18
 - Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, “Imaginative Conceptions in Renaissance Italy,” *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, 1997, 42–60.
 - **History project due**
- Thursday, February 20 ACKLAND VISIT
 - Sylvan Barnett, “Formal Analysis and Style,” *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 2011, 46-68.

Week 8: Gendered Roles in Florentine Society

- Tuesday, February 25: Women
- Thursday, February 27: Men
 - Christopher Fulton, “The Boy Stripped Bare by His Elders: Art and Adolescence in Renaissance Florence,” *Art Journal* 56, no. 2 (1997): 31–40.

Week 9: Bodies and Borders

- Tuesday, March 3: Otherness
- Thursday, March 5: Divine Bodies

- Yael Even, “The Heroine as Hero in Michelangelo’s Art,” *Women’s Art Journal* 11, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1990): 29–33.

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11: Death, Disease, and Dismemberment

- Tuesday, March 17: Plague and Pestilence
 - “Introduction,” *The Decameron*, p. 4-23
- Thursday, March 19: Leonardo da Vinci’s Notebooks
 - Katharine Park, “The Criminal and the Saintly Body: Autopsy and Dissection in Renaissance Italy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1994): 1–33.

The Constructed Body in Literature of the English Renaissance: 1600–1700

This unit explores the many ways in which literature engages with the body. What questions do writers of the English Renaissance ask of the body? To what extent does the body provide reliable answers to these questions? What is an ideal body and what does it mean to have one? And what does a consideration of the many real bodies related to these works—those of actors, readers, writers, printers—bring to our understanding of literary texts?

Week 12: Bodies, Real and Imagined

- Tuesday, March 24: The Body Emblazoned
 - Thomas Campion, “There Is a Garden in Her Face,” 1617.
 - William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 130,” 1609.
 - **Art History project due**
- Thursday, March 26: The Body and the Book - MEET AT WILSON LIBRARY
 - Francis Bacon, “On Studies,” 1625.
 - Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday, “Paperworlds: Imagining the Renaissance Computer,” in *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*, 1-17.

Week 13: *The Merchant of Venice*

- Tuesday, March 31
 - William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1605, Act 1.
- Thursday, April 2
 - *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 2.

Week 14: *The Merchant of Venice*, cont.

- Tuesday, April 7
 - *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 3.
- Thursday, April 9
 - *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts 4 and 5.

Week 15: The Changing Body

- Tuesday, April 14: The Body Remembered

- Selections from Margaret Cavendish, *A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding and Life*, 1656.
- Thursday, April 16: The Body Examined
 - Selections from John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1624.

Conclusions

Week 16: The Constructed Body: A Contemporary Case Study

- Tuesday, April 21: Workshop
 - **English project due**
- Thursday, April 23: Presentations
 - Readings to be determined in class on Tuesday

Final Exam Period: Monday April 27, 12 pm, Graham Memorial 210

The instructors reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.