

Dr. Peter J. Capuano
ENGL/ HIST/ MODL, (etc.) 918
Spring 2022
Body Studies

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At once object and subject, material and symbolic, our bodies exist at the intersection of multiple competing discourses, including the philosophical, the juridical, the techno-scientific, and the biopolitical (to mention just a few!). In this course, we will draw upon broad historical, philosophical, literary, sociological, and other interdisciplinary disciplinary literatures to consider some of the ways in which the body is constituted by such discourses, and how it itself serves as perhaps *the* material substratum for social and cultural life writ large. Among the key questions we will consider, study, discuss, and research are the following: What is “natural” about the body, and how much does that matter? What does a “socialized” body entail? How do historical and political-economic forces shape the perception and meaning of bodily existence? How are bodies “sexualized”? How are distinctions made between “normal” and “(dis)abled” or pathological bodies? What are the origins and implications surrounding the relationship between psychic and somatic experiences? Is language (and rhetoric) itself inherently bodily? What does body augmentation mean, and what are its consequences? And finally: how do bodies that are multiply constituted by competing logics of gender, race, and class offer up resistance to these and other categorizations?

Reading list includes: René Descartes, Michel Foucault, Marcel Mauss, Judith Butler, Iris Marion Young, Pierre Bourdieu, Susan Bordo, Thomas Laquer, Judith Halberstam, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Anne McClintock, Anthony Appiah, Sarah Ahmed, Lennard Davis, George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and more.

Requirements: weekly analytical posts; a presentation; and a final research paper.