



CUL 322

Ab/Normal Bodies

S1 Day 2015

Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	11
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	12
<u>Changes from Previous Offering</u>	16

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Nicole Matthews

nicole.matthews@mq.edu.au

Contact via nicole.matthews@mq.edu.au

3.30-4.30 Mondays.

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Our bodies give us a world, and already have meaning, both for ourselves and others. We are directed at every level to align our bodies with cultural norms – but what about modes of embodiment that don't conform to what we generally understand as 'normal'? In this course, we turn our attention to unquestioned assumptions about what constitutes a 'normal' body, consider how these norms are created and think through the experiences of people whose modes of bodily being challenge the boundaries of the 'normative'. The aim of this unit is to critically examine the ways in which various forms of (ab)normal embodiment are understood in contemporary culture and to explore the social, political and ethical effects of such understandings. Our critical examination may cover disability, pregnancy, fatness, ageing, surgical interventions and other forms of body modification.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts

interrogate key concepts around 'the body' and normalising practices, showing an

awareness of debates around definitions of these terms

effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality

use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being

critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'

reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Reflective summaries</u>	10%	midnight Thurs Weeks 2-5,7-12
<u>Essay outline</u>	20%	midnight Monday April 27
<u>Participation</u>	20%	Ongoing
<u>Final essay</u>	50%	midnight Monday June 1

Reflective summaries

Due: **midnight Thurs Weeks 2-5,7-12**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will be required to submit, online via iLearn, nine short reflections on weekly readings. Summaries should be submitted weekly in Weeks 2-5 and 7-11. Reflective summaries should be submitted by midnight each Thursday. Students will also be required to bring in a copy of their summaries for sharing and discussion in Weeks 2, 3 and 4. Sharing summaries in tutorials for these three weeks is part of the assessment, and failure to bring the summary for these weeks will impact on the summary mark.

Reflections should be between 200 and 350 words in length, and should summarise key ideas from the weekly reading. Reflections may also include connections between weekly readings and lectures and readings for previous weeks and comments on the relationship between readings and embodied practices or experiences.

The aim of this exercise is to ensure that students read and engage with the set readings so that they develop a scholarly understanding of issue and debates, and that class discussion is informed and productive. Consequently reflections posted after midnight on Thursday on the week the reading is set will not be assessed, unless a student presents a medical certificate.

Criteria for summaries:

- Timely production of summary
- Engagement with appropriate readings
- Fulfilling the writing brief

On successful completion you will be able to:

- identify the ways in which ‘the body’ is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- interrogate key concepts around ‘the body’ and normalising practices, showing an awareness of debates around definitions of these terms
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Essay outline

Due: **midnight Monday April 27**

Weighting: **20%**

This outline should be no longer than 500 words. It should clearly outline the question or problem to be discussed, line of argument or position, key theoretical perspectives to be used, and the case study or cultural practice which will be the focus of your essay. Your outline should map out key points in your argument in the order in which you will present them in the final essay. You may choose to write in bullet form or in paragraphs.

The outline should include a bibliography no less than five sources which you plan to use in your essay. At least two of these sources should be from the key or extended readings in the unit. At least two should be from your independent research. You should use in-text referencing as appropriate in your outline.

Late assignments will be penalised by 5% of the mark allocated per day, unless the student has documented medical or personal reasons for late submission. Extensions for personal or medical reasons must be negotiated before the assignment.

Criteria for essay outline:

- Understanding of key concepts around embodiment
- Awareness of theories and debates, drawing on appropriate reading and research, and positioning essay within those debates
- Identification of appropriate practices to discuss in essay
- effectively mapping out an argument

On successful completion you will be able to:

- identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

All students are expected to attend face-to-face lectures and tutorials and participate in discussions in class. Your grade will depend on the quantity and the quality of participation.

Attendance in both lectures and tutorials will be recorded each week, and students who are unable to attend a particularly lecture will be required to submit 5 discussion questions relating to the material in the lecture and associated reading to an iLearn discussion forum by the Tuesday after the lecture they have missed.

Criteria for participation grade:

- Demonstration of ability to identify learning needs and course requirements through reflection and undertake action such as attendance and participation in lectures and tutorials or uploading of lecture-based in response to identified needs
- Preparation, including reading and reflection, before lectures and tutorials to allow effective learning to take place
- Thoughtful and ethical engagement with peers, lecturer and/or tutor in lectures and tutorials

On successful completion you will be able to:

- identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Final essay

Due: **midnight Monday June 1**

Weighting: **50%**

Length: 2,000-2,500 words. Essay questions will be posted on unit webpage after the mid-semester break.

Late assignments will be penalised by 5% of the mark allocated per day, unless the student has documented medical or personal reasons for late submission. Extensions for personal or medical reasons must be negotiated before the assignment.

Criteria for the essay

- 1) effective engagement with the chosen question, including clarity of expression, structure of argument, range and quality of research undertaken and complete and accurate referencing
- 2) selection, understanding and effective use of appropriate concepts, theorists and debates from lectures and essential readings
- 3) relevance, originality and effective analysis of case study materials chosen
- 4) consideration of question of ethics
- 5) reflection on the perspective and limitations of sources and on own position and perspective

On successful completion you will be able to:

- identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Delivery and Resources

This unit will use iLearn for submission of assignments, including reflections. However, attendance at lectures and tutorials is important as indicated by the participation mark.

Lectures are interactive and class discussion in lectures is poorly recorded on iLecture, making

face-to-face attendance highly valuable for students. A roll will be taken in both lectures and tutorials will be recorded.

Those who have compelling reasons for being regularly unable to attend the face-to-face lecture (such as illness or family responsibilities) should contact the convenor. Students who cannot attend the lecture but wish to maintain a high participation mark for the unit will be required to five discussion questions relating to the lecture and reading material for that week to a discussion board on iLearn by the Tuesday following the lecture they have missed.

Equally, reading the set texts for the week is essential for completion of the unit. Reflective summaries of key readings must be submitted on-line before tutorials. Timely submission of summaries is an important part of the assessment for the unit, and for good marks on this component, students will need to bring summaries in to tutorials for discussion in Weeks 2, 3 and 4.

The readings for the unit will be available on eReserve. If students require printed copies of readings, a list of names will be taken and copies ordered in Week 2.

Unit Schedule

CUL322 Ab/normal bodies

The readings for each week relate to that week's lecture.

You **MUST** attempt the essential reading before attending class. Completion of a reflective summary of your reading by the day before tutorials (Thursday) is an important component of assessment, and to obtain a full range of marks for your summary assessment, you will also need to bring a copy of your weekly summaries to class in Weeks 2, 3 and 4.

Your preparation for and participation in tutorials will be assessed. You will probably need to read most of these articles twice – the material is challenging! If you are struggling, make a note of what confuses you and bring it to class for us to discuss.

Those who are confident with cultural studies arguments or want to aim for very high marks should read the extension reading in addition to the essential reading. We will often work through passages of the extension reading in detail in class, but it will not be assumed that everyone has read these articles beforehand.

Block 1: Creating “normal”

Week 1 (27 Feb): Introduction to the unit

Essential reading:

* Urla, Jacqueline and Terry, Jennifer (1995) "Introduction: Mapping Embodied Deviance" (exerpts) from *Deviant Bodies*, Indiana University Press

Week 2 (6 Mar) Biopower and perfect babies

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs Mar 5.

Please bring a copy of your summary to your tutorial.

Essential Readings:

- Perron, A., Fluet, C., Holmes, D. (2004) "Agents of care and agents of the state: bio-power and nursing practice" *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 50(5), pp.536-44
- Landsman, Gail (2009) "Chapter Two: Doing everything right: choice, control and mother blame" pp.15-49 from *Reconstructing motherhood and disability in the age of "perfect babies"*, London, Routledge

Extension reading:

- Rabinow, P. and Rose, N. (2006) "Biopower now" from *Biosocieties* 1, 195-217

Week 3 (13 March): ab/normalcy

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs Mar 12

Please bring a copy of your summary to your tutorial

Essential readings:

- Davis, Lennard (1995) "Constructing Normalcy", in *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body*, New York: Verso
- Dreger, A. (1998) "The limits of individuality: ritual and sacrifice in the lives and medical treatment of conjoined twins" *Studies in the history and philosophy of biology and biomedical science* 29(1) 1-29

Extension reading

- Sharpe, Andrew (2007) "Structured Like a Monster: Understanding Human Difference Through a Legal Category", *Law and Critique* 18:2

Week 4 (20 March): dis/ability

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs Mar 19

Please bring a copy of your summary to your tutorial

Essential Readings:

- Goodley, Dan (2011) "Introduction: global disability studies" from *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, Sage, pp.1-21
- Longmore, Paul. (1997) 'Conspicuous Contribution and American Cultural Dilemma: Telethon Rituals of Cleansing and Renewal' *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of*

Disability (eds) David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (eds) Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 134-158

Extension reading:

- Mitchell, David and Snyder, Sharon (2001) "Re-engaging the body: disability studies and the resistance to embodiment" from *Public Culture*, Vol.13 No.3

Week 5 (27 March): from eugenics to genetics

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs Mar 26

Essential readings:

- Snyder, S. L. & D. Mitchell (2002) "Out of the Ashes of Eugenics: Diagnostic Regimes in the United States and the Making of a Disability Minority", *Patterns of Prejudice*, 36:1.
- Novas, Carlos and Rose, N. (2000) "Genetic Risk and the Birth of the Somatic Individual", *Economy and Society*, 29:4.

Extension reading:

- Garland-Thomson, R. (2012) "The Case for Conserving Disability" *Bioethical Inquiry* (2012) 9:339–355

Week 6 (30 March): No lecture or tutorial - Easter Friday

MID SEMESTER BREAK

Week 7 (April 24): Intersex bodies

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs April 23

Essential Readings:

- Preves, Sharon (2002) "Sexing the Intersexed: An Analysis of Sociocultural Responses to Intersexuality", *Signs*, 27:2, pp.523-56.
- Dreger, Alice Domurat (2000) "Jarring Bodies: thoughts on the Display of Unusual Anatomies", *Perspective in Biology and Medicine*, 43:2, pp.161-72.

Block 2: The experience of embodiment: spaces, emotions and social life

Week 8 (1 May) Bodies in space and time

Essay proposal due for submission by midnight Monday April 27

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs April 30

Essential readings:

- Crook, Tim (2008) "Norms, Forms and Beds: Spatializing Sleep in Victorian Britain", *Body & Society*, 14:4, pp.15-35.
- Thompson, E.P. (1967) "Work Discipline and Industrial capitalism" *Past and Present* 38 pp.56-97

Week 9 (8 May): Bodies at work

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs May 7

Essential readings:

- Dyer, S., McDowell, Banitzky, A. (2008) "Emotional labour/body work: the caring labours of migrants in the UK's National Health Service" from *Geoforum* 39, 2030-2038
- Collinson, David and Collinson, Margaret (1997) "'De layering managers': time-space surveillance and its gendered effects" *Organization* August 1997 vol. 4 no. 3 375-407

Week10 (15 May): Ageing bodies, bare lives?

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs May 14

Essential readings:

- Crichton, J. (2007) "Living with dementia: curating self identity" *Dementia*, 2007, Vol.6(3), pp.365-381
- Lanoix (2006) "No Room for abuse" *Cultural Studies* Vol. 19, No. 6 November 2005, pp. 719-736

Week 11 (22 May): Whose body? The human biome

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Thurs May 21

Essential reading

- No author "The human biome: me, myself, us" from *The Economist* Aug 18 2012 <http://www.economist.com/node/21560523>
- Flannery, Tim "The Superior Civilisation", *New York Review of Books*, 26 February, 2009, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/feb/26/the-superior-civilization/?pagination=false>
- Roeder, Mark (2013) *Unnatural Selection: why the geeks will inherit the earth*, Sydney: Harper Collins Australia, 2013, "The Anthropocene" from pp. 15-29.

Week12 (29 May): Revision and writing week

There will be no lecture or tutorial this week, but Nicole will be available in her office between 10 am and 4 for one to one meetings with students.

Final essay due: midnight Monday June 1, 2014

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_art_s/department_of_media_music_communication_and_cultural_studies/

MMCCS Session Re-mark Application <http://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/public/download/?id=167914>

Information is correct at the time of publication

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- interrogate key concepts around 'the body' and normalising practices, showing an awareness of debates around definitions of these terms
- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between

forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality

- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Essay outline
- Participation
- Final essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- identify the ways in which 'the body' is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- interrogate key concepts around 'the body' and normalising practices, showing an awareness of debates around definitions of these terms
- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Essay outline
- Participation
- Final essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- identify the ways in which ‘the body’ is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
- interrogate key concepts around ‘the body’ and normalising practices, showing an awareness of debates around definitions of these terms
- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of ‘the body’
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Essay outline
- Participation
- Final essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- interrogate key concepts around ‘the body’ and normalising practices, showing an

awareness of debates around definitions of these terms

- effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
- use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Essay outline
- Participation
- Final essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Participation
- Final essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of 'the body'
- reflect on their own work, in relation to the work and input of others, as a way of further developing their learning

Assessment tasks

- Reflective summaries
- Participation
- Final essay

Changes from Previous Offering

Very positive feedback on the unit in 2014 means changes have only been made where required to ensure that students are being asked to complete an appropriate level of work, given the staff support and class time available to them.

The order of lectures has been slightly changed, and one topic (on parents of disabled children) has been removed in the light of the limited availability of guest lecturers.

Tutorials have been cut from 90 to 60 minutes. Consequently tutorials have been redesigned to focus more tightly on core concepts and assessment. The take-home exam has been removed and the essay reduced from 3,000 to 2,000-2,500 words in length to reflect the shorter period of class time to prepare for such assessments.

To ensure preparedness for classes, students will be required to submit 9 reflective summaries of readings, and each student will need to bring their summary of the readings for Weeks 2, 3 and 4 into class for sharing, discussion and problem solving. This discussion of summaries will enable conceptual confusion to be identified and feedback provided early in the semester.

The essay outline is to be submitted earlier in 2015 to allow staff to provide feedback in good time before the final essay deadline.

A submission cover sheet will be included with the final essay, with students indicating to staff where they feel they have demonstrated learning outcomes, and what feedback they would like on their final essay. The aim of this cover sheet will be to promote student reflection and to use staff marking time efficiently.