CUL 322
Ab/Normal Bodies
S1 Day 2016
Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

Contents

General Information 2
Learning Outcomes 2
General Assessment Information 3
Assessment Tasks 3
Delivery and Resources 8
Unit Schedule 8
Policies and Procedures 12
Graduate Capabilities 13
Changes from Previous Offering 17

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General Information

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3.30-4.30 Mondays.

Tutor
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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://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes

1. identify the ways in which ‘the body’ is understood and experienced across a range of contexts
2. interrogate key concepts around ‘the body’ and normalising practices, showing an awareness of debates around definitions of these terms
3. effectively communicate a theoretically-informed account of the relationship between forms of knowledge and forms of embodied subjectivity and sociality
4. use key methods of critical analysis to discuss social, economic, legal and/or medical practices which focus on bodily-being
5. critically discuss ethics in contemporary practices and debates around normalisation of ‘the body’
6. actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

General Assessment Information

• Additional information

• MMCCS website https://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/faculties_and_departments/faculty_of_arts/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

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective summaries</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Midnight Wed Wks 2-6,8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay outline</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>midnight Tues May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final essay</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>midnight Thursday June 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflective summaries

Due: **Midnight Wed Wks 2-6,8-12**
Weighting: **10%**

Students will be required to submit, online via iLearn, ten 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 Wednesday. Students will also be required to bring in a copy of their summaries for sharing in the tutorial in Week 5. Sharing your summary in the Week 5 tutorial is part of the assessment, and failure to bring the summary will impact on your participation mark.
Reflections should be between 200 and 350 words in length, and should summarise key ideas from the weekly reading. Reflections should include detailed reference to at least one of the readings for the week, and students are encouraged to make comparisons or connections between the essential readings, even where there is not space to fully develop an summary of all readings. Students who choose to read the extension reading for that week are encouraged to include comparisons and connections between essential and extension reading in their reflection. 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. Reflective summaries are not expected to reflect a perfect understanding of the essential readings, but to be a starting point for further thinking and discussion.

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

This Assessment Task relates to the following 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
- actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

Essay outline
Due: midnight Tues May 3
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 should write 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. You may choose whatever referencing system you prefer, though Harvard style will be warmly received.

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 and positioning essay within those debates
- Appropriate reading and research, including both key readings and peer reviewed independent sources within the discipline
- Identification of appropriate practices to discuss in essay
- Clarity of expression and use of appropriate genres of academic communication
- Effectively mapping out an argument

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
- 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
- Actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

**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 quality of participation. While attendance is not sufficient for participation, in most cases it is a necessary precondition for participation.
Attendance in both lectures and tutorials will be recorded each week.

If you are unable to attend a particular lecture you will be required to submit 5 discussion questions relating to the material in the lecture and associated reading to an iLearn discussion forum by 10 am on the Thursday immediately after the lecture they have missed.

Criteria for participation grade:

- Evidence of undertaking action to identify learning needs such as attendance and active participation in tutorials, attendance and participation in lectures or uploading of lecture-based discussion questions

- Evidence of engagement in the process of learning and preparation for learning, 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

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• 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
• actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

Final essay

Due: midnight Thursday June 9
Weighting: 50%

Length: 1800-2200 words. Essay questions will be posted on unit webpage by the end of Week 6.

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.

You will be required to attach a completed reflective overview sheet at the beginning of your essay. The form for the reflective overview will be available on iLearn by Week 6. Non submission of your reflective overview sheet will result in a 5% penalty on your final essay. You will need to indicate on the sheet

* how you have responded in the final essay to the feedback provided on your essay outline
* how your essay demonstrates your achievement of the learning outcomes for the unit
* whether you intend to read written feedback your tutor provides on your essay

* if you are likely to read feedback on your essay, what elements of your essay you would like to receive feedback about

Answers will be brief - your responses on the overview sheet should include between 200 and 400 words.

**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

6) submission of a completed reflective overview sheet

This Assessment Task relates to the following 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’
- actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify
opportunities for further development

**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.

We understand that sometimes there are compelling reasons why students cannot attend lectures, such as caring responsibilities or medical conditions. 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 10 am on the Thursday immediately 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 a summary in for sharing in Week 5.

The readings for the unit will be available on eReserve. The reader will be available via Print on Demand for those who prefer a paper reader.

**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 (Wednesday) 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 Week 5.

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”**

Note that there WILL be a tutorial this week

**Week 1 (29 Feb): Introduction to the unit**

Essential reading:
Week 2 (7 Mar) Biopower and perfect babies

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wed Mar 9.


Extension reading


Week 3 (14 March): ab/normalcy

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wed Mar 16


Extension reading


Week 4 (21 March): dis/ability

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wed Mar 23

- Goodley, Dan (2011) “Introduction: global disability studies” from Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction, Sage, pp.1-21

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 (29 March): the personal is political is philosophical
There is no lecture but there will be a tutorial. In addition to posting your reading summary from this week online by the due date, please also bring a print out of your summary to class.

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday Mar 31

Eve Kittay (2009) “The personal is philosophical is political: a philosopher and mother of a cognitively disabled person sends notes from the battlefield” from Metaphilosophy, 40(3-4) 606-627

Week 6 (4 April): from eugenics to genetics

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday April 6


Extension reading


MID SEMESTER BREAK

Week 7 (April 26)
Because of the ANZAC day public holiday there will be no lecture this week. However there WILL be a tutorial that will focus on developing your essay outline – due for submission in Week 8. There will be no set reading for the week’s tutorial (and consequently no reading summary) but please bring along your essay outline as it currently stands to class.

Week 8 (May 2): Intersex bodies

Essay outline due for submission to Turnitin by midnight Tuesday May 3

Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday May 4


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**Week 9 (9 May) Bodies in space and time**

*Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wed May 11*


**Week 10 (16 May): Bodies at work**

*Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday May 18*

- 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

*Extension reading*


**Week 11 (23 May): Ageing bodies, bare lives?**

*Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday May 25*


**Week 12 (30 May): Whose body? The human biome**

*Reflective summary of reading due by midnight Wednesday June 1*

- Roeder, Mark (2013) *Unnatural Selection: why the geeks will inherit the earth,*
Week 13 (6 June): Revision week

Revision and writing week – you can make an arrangement to meet your tutor 1:1.

Final essay due: midnight Thursday June 9, 2016

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


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_arts/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 Enquiry Service
For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

Equity 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.

IT Help
For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources 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
• actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

Assessment tasks
• Reflective summaries
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
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- actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

**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’
• actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

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’
- actively engage with the process of learning and reflect on own work to identify opportunities for further development

**Assessment tasks**

- Reflective summaries
- Participation
- Final essay

**Changes from Previous Offering**

Very positive feedback on the unit in 2015 means only minor changes have been made in 2016.

In response to the two weeks in which lectures will not run because of public holidays, there is a tutorial in Week 5 focussed on student responses to a key reading which will provide feedback on reflective summaries and understanding of key themes, and a tutorial in Week 7 which will provide detailed feedback on draft essay outlines in anticipation of their submission in Week 8.

The number of reflective summaries has been increased from 9 to 10 in the light of positive feedback on this assessment strategy.

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. Due to the word length required on the reflective overview sheet (200-400 words), the word length required for the final essay has been reduced from 2000-2500 words to 1800-2200 words.