

English 680G: Gender, Rhetoric, and the Body Spring 2004

Details	Meeting time: Tuesdays, 3:00 p.m.-5:50 p.m. Location: 210 Heavilon Hall Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Bay Office: 301C Heavilon Hall Phone: 494-8122 E-mail: jbay@purdue.edu Office hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays 1:30-3:00 p.m. or by appointment Class email: engl680g0101032-class@relay.cc.purdue.edu Class website: http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~jbay/680G/
Description	<p>Gender. Rhetoric. Body. These three words point to incredibly important concepts in critical and cultural theory. Recent years have witnessed the emergence of an interdisciplinary field that might be called "body studies," which centers on the impact of the material body on the world. The perceived postmodern neglect of the material body, in the late 1980s and early 1990s especially, produced a backlash from feminists and other cultural materialists who sought to recuperate and theorize the body. The body has always been an important site for the feminist project, broadly construed; what has been termed "patriarchy" has always marked the female body as "other," but feminism in particular has turned that around, highlighting the fact that a) no body is neutral, b) the body has an importance for scholarly inquiry that has long been neglected, and c) that neglect of the body has had consequences that we are only now beginning to realize. Rhetoricians are now in the beginning stages of understanding the importance of the body to rhetorical (and particularly oratorical) practices.</p> <p>Our readings will attempt to explore the nexus of embodiment, gender, and rhetorical practice. We will read seminal philosophical works that engage with the body and gender (Plato, Freud, Foucault, Cixous, Irigaray, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Merleau-Ponty), along with secondary criticism and responses to those texts. Each of these theorists has introduced particular concepts (hysteria, <i>différance</i>, <i>écriture féminine</i>, becoming) that have produced critical understandings of the body. More contemporary theorists have extended and complicated these initial theories, including the work of Susan Faludi, Susan Bordo, Judith Halberstam, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Judith Butler, Elaine Scarry, Elizabeth Grosz, and Nancy Tuana, among others. Implicit throughout our course will be discussions of rhetorical and performative practices, including specific rhetorical analyses and discussions of writing and composition pedagogy.</p> <p>The seminar trajectory will be fairly chronological. Starting with the Greeks—who many would call the founders of rhetoric—we'll explore how bodies can/not be recovered from history; how individual histories (Dora, Foucault) have fashioned certain rhetorics about bodies and genders; how those rhetorics have been countered and how they have shaped alternative lines of flight. We'll also consider different aspects of embodiment, including touch, sensation, movement, sexuality, desire, affect, etc. Finally, we'll look at performances of the body that attempt to escape traditional binaries and provide alternative forms of rhetorical agency.</p> <p>In terms of format, the seminar will be mostly discussion, close reading, and application of the theories and texts we encounter. Everyone should be open to teaching and learning from one another as we engage with diverse ideas and theories.</p>

Materials

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality II: The Use of Pleasure*. New York: Vintage, 1990.

Freedman, Diane P. and Martha Stoddard Holmes, eds. *The Teacher's Body: Embodiment, Authority, and Identity in the Academy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2003.

Freud, Sigmund. *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. Trans. Philip Rieff. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1994.

Price, Janet and Margaret Shildrick, eds. *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

A two volume course packet available at CopyMat.

Note: All texts are available at Vons.

Attendance

Since this class only meets once a week, it is essential that you come to class prepared and ready to actively participate. Attendance is required at **all** scheduled class meetings and conferences with the instructor. Excused absences may be granted for religious holidays or university-sponsored events, provided you make a written request to me no less than two weeks in advance and that you complete any required work before the due date.

Academic Integrity

Purdue students and their instructors are expected to adhere to guidelines set forth by the Dean of Students in "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students," which students are encouraged to read here:

<http://www.purdue.edu/ODOS/administration/integrity.htm>

Evaluation

Seminar Project—50%

A publishable piece of scholarship related to the topic of the course (equal to 20-30 pages). Class members will also complete a project proposal, bibliography, and rough draft as part of the production process. Multimedia and performance pieces, in addition to traditional papers, are welcome.

Reading Notes—25%

Five reading notes, one for each of the major texts/authors we read this semester.

Discussion Leader—25%

Each class member will be responsible for leading discussion on the texts for **one** class meeting. This involves preparing discussion questions and/or activities for (at least) the first half of class, as well as meeting with the instructor to review your plans. Handouts and/or mnemonic aids are always welcome.

Note: all work must be completed in a timely manner in order to pass the course.