

COURSE OUTLINE
Anthropology 2263B-650
Bodies: Making, Buying, Living and Dying
Summer 2021 · Distance Studies



This course runs for 6 weeks from June 14 – July 23, 2021.

Instructor: Dr. Karyn Olsen

Pronouns: she/her

Office: Online

Office hours: Online, by appointment

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Calendar Course Description

Bodies are physical and sensual, personal, and public, the result of evolution, and yet flexibly attuned to local histories and desires. This course will take a biocultural approach to exploring what bodies are, how they are used, by whom, for what purposes, and how we come to know such things.

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Prerequisite(s): None.

Antirequisite(s): None.

Course Syllabus

Why take this course? This course draws on cultural, medical, archaeological, and biological fields in anthropology to engage students in critical reflections on the human body. We will start by considering how anthropologists contribute to the study of bodies and then examine how body “norms” are constructed and disrupted. We will discuss key aspects of our social and cultural identities that are enacted and resisted through bodies. You will have the opportunity to review ideas on “body image” as we explore perspectives on weight and body modification. We will consider the different ways that anthropologists help us to understand notions of sick and healthy bodies. We will explore representations of the body in the ancient past and how modern anthropologists navigate the ethics of studying and displaying human remains. Finally, you will have the chance to examine how we treat bodies after death across cultures and through time.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define embodiment and other key terminology used to conceptualize the human body physically and socially.
2. Discuss approaches to understanding the human body from various perspectives including, sociocultural, medical, archaeological, and bioarchaeological perspectives.
3. Compare and ask questions about body “norms” and the ways in which bodies are represented and perceived across cultures and through time.
4. Complete the essential first steps of scholarly research, including critically evaluating scholarly sources relevant to the anthropological study of the body.
5. Reflect on and articulate connections among social constructions of the body, the scholarly literature, and your own experiences.

Course Materials

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. All readings will be available as PDF downloads from the Western Libraries Website and accessed through the course OWL site.

Evaluation

Assessment	Weight
Weekly Participation	10%
Response Paper 1	30%
Response Paper 2	30%
Response Paper 3	30%

Participation – 10%

Participation opportunities incorporated into this course are intended to connect your thoughts and ideas about class topics to those of your peers, and to help you stay on top of the course material. You will be able to gain participation marks each week by responding to poll questions, adding brief comments on discussion topics, and/or answering multiple choice check-in questions.

Response Papers - 3 x 30%

During this course, you will write three short response papers (~750 words each). A response paper is not an essay but an analysis that asks you to consider your assumptions on a topic and critically articulate what you have learned during the course. You will practice posing research questions and making connections among readings, academic literature, and current events. For each paper, you will get to choose a focus subject from 2-3 approved options covered in the previous weeks. Additional details and instructions on topics for response papers will be provided on OWL.

Note: A 5% late penalty per day (including weekends and holidays) applies to all Response Papers. Submissions are not accepted after five days.

Course Specific Statements and Policies***Diversity and Inclusion Statement***

I would like to create a learning environment that supports diverse thoughts, perspectives, and experiences. We all bring unique identities to the classroom that reflect differences in age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and class. I will gladly honour any request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. I will attempt to foster an environment in which students are able to express ideas and hear and respect one another. Please let me know if there are ways that you think I could improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students/student groups.

Statement on Engaging in the Online Learning Environment

This course relies on the OWL site to connect you with the syllabus, assignment outlines, content, and other course material. Here, you will engage with me and your peers as we progress through the course. Please keep track of weekly tasks and contribute respectfully to online activities.

Statement on Email

You may contact me by email, but it may take up to 24 hours for a response. If I cannot provide an immediate response, or if the matter is something that I cannot address easily in an email, we will plan to meet virtually using Zoom or Collaborate. Please ensure that your emails are worded professionally and include the course number (1026B) in the subject line.

Statement on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

Statement on Student Success

- If you need support with your academic writing skills, please visit the [Writing Support Centre](#) in person or online. The Centre aims to (1) enhance your writing and communication skills and build your confidence, (2) equip you with tools, resources and knowledge to effectively communicate through writing, (3) increase your critical analysis abilities to effectively communicate scholarly ideas, (4) convey university level writing expectations, and (5) provide you with the skills you need to navigate academic transitions.
- [Learning Development and Success](#) supports your development as a student by answering questions and providing advice on how to succeed in your studies at Western. They can help you to develop and strengthen academic skills.
- [The Wellness Education Centre](#) will help you navigate any kind of mental health issue (e.g., anxiety, stress, etc.) WEC provides free assistance in connecting you with wellness services and resources on and off campus.

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please contact an academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

Weekly Breakdown of Topics and Due Dates

DATE	TOPIC	DUE
Week 1: Jun 14 to 20	Anthropological Perspectives on the Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normative bodies and questioning “normal” • Cultural perspectives on big bodies 	
Week 2: Jun 21 to 27	Mapping Difference onto Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racialized bodies • Gendered bodies 	Response Paper 1 due Jun 27 by 11:55 pm
Week 3: Jun 28 to Jul 4	Bodies in Sickness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sick and aging bodies • Bodies as evidence of care in the past 	
Week 4: Jul 5 to 11	Transformed: Body Modification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification practices in the present • Evidence for modification in the past 	Response Paper 2 due July 11 by 11:55 pm
Week 5: Jul 12 to 18	Dead Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking dead: vampire and zombie bodies • The study and display of human remains 	
Week 6: Jul 19 to 23	Ancient Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embodying identity through material culture • Finding identity through bioarchaeology 	Response Paper 3 due by Jul 25 by 11:55 pm