Cultural Studies Colloquium 2
(seminar for advanced students in American and British Cultural Studies):

The Body (and Bodies) in Cultural Studies and Cultural Practice

Regular meeting time: WED 10-12 // Philosophy building, room Ü 15
Study day on 22/01: 10-16 at the Graduate School for the Humanities

Course description

"For indeed, no one has determined what the Body can do," remarks the philosopher Baruch Spinoza in his *Ethics* (1677): a work that problematizes all too simple divisions as well as hierarchies of mind over body in the philosophical tradition. Three centuries later, a further philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, continues this problematization, but transforms Spinoza's observation into the more direct (and activating) form of a query: "What can a body do?" is the deciding question not only for Spinoza's philosophy according to Deleuze, but also for issues of ethics, dynamics of power, and a full accounting of the interrelations that constitute the worlds we live in (*Expressionism in Philosophy*, 1968).

This seminar takes up the call to explore what the body can do. Yet more particularly, the course is interested in what study of the body (or of specific bodies) can mean for cultural studies. The goal is, thus, not to neatly answer the question "What can a body do?", but rather to explore a multiplicity of approaches to 'the body' and 'the bodily'. Accordingly, the course has a two-part structure:

1. After initial orientation in regards to "Frameworks and Intellectual Legacies" of thinking (through) the body, further sessions focus on "Theories of the Body/Bodies." Among other topics, we will explore the phenomenological project and the notion of "a queer phenomenology" (Ahmed), the civilizing process and concept of *habitus* in sociology (Elias & Bourdieu), body discipline and biopolitics (Foucault), the project of a "body without organs" (Deleuze & Guattari), and the possibility of posthumanist embodiment (Haraway & Wolfe).

2. In the second block of the course – "Practices of the Body/Bodies" – our discussion will shift from general theories to specific case studies. As a first step we propose considering the bodily intricacies and implications of immunization by way of Eula Bliss's experimental text *On Immunity: An Inoculation* (2014). Further case studies will be developed by course participants and discussed during the end-of-term symposium or 'Study Day' which we have scheduled for Wednesday, 22 January from 10-16.

For further information on enrollment, course format and preparing for the course etc., please see information at the end of this document!
Introduction to Reading


(See also the further titles mentioned at the end of this document.)

16 October

**Introduction**

Course concepts & structures

Discussion of participants' proposals

23 October

**Intellectual histories & legacies**


René Descartes, "Second Meditation: Of the Nature of the Human Mind; and that it is Easier to Know than the Body." *The Body*. Ed. Atkinson. 27-33.


30 October

**Civilizing processes & habitus**


6 November  
**Phenomenology**


13 November  
**Discipline, punishment, & biopower**


[20 November  
Buß- und Bettag / Tag der Lehre]

27 November  
**Bodies with/out organs – Deleuze & Guattari**


4 December  
**Feminist | cyborg | posthuman embodiment**


11 December  
**Flesh**

18 December  
**Bio | Cultural**

================================= Holiday Break =================================

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++ Practices ++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++ 

8 January  
**Immunization**

15 January  
**Preparation Day**

22 January  
**Study day/Symposium**
(with presentations by seminar participants and invited guests)
10-16 at The Graduate School for the Humanities
Confirmed speaker: Jasper J. Verlinden, Humboldt-Universität, Berlin

29 January  
Course wrap-up & reflection on "The body (bodies) in cultural studies"
Enrolling for the course:
To help create a committed and cohesive thinking community for this course, we ask students to compose a brief **statement of purpose** (of 1 to 1.5 pages) in which they (1) introduce themselves and (2) outline their interest/s in this semester's topic. Please mail your statement of purpose to both instructors (zeno.ackermann@uni-wuerzburg.de and maryann.snyder-koerber@uni-wuerzburg.de) by **October 6th**. After submission, we will get in touch with you and register you for the course. Please note that there is no self-registration for this course.

Format of the Cultural Studies Colloquia:
This course is a combined project of American and British Cultural Studies. The format of the joint Cultural Studies Colloquium is discussion-based. Participants are asked to actively bring in their own perspectives and interests. The choice of topics for each semester is based on both current scholarly discussions and the interests of participants. While the course format is particularly geared to advanced students and students with theoretical interests, our project profits from a range of insights and experiences. We would love to integrate perspectives from students with backgrounds in ethnological and performance disciplines, for example, in addition to philosophy and history. If you have questions about the course and its applicability to your studies, please do not hesitate to contact the instructors.

Participants' contributions:
1) In addition to engaged and regular participation, students are asked to specially prepare and co-moderate one seminar session ('Impulsreferat').

2) In terms of written work, participants have the opportunity to write **response papers** that can be composed in preparation for a session (such as the session one is moderating). Papers can also reflect back on previous discussions or bring in new perspectives.

3) Participants also have the opportunity to test out ideas and projects in 'work in progress'-style **presentations at the symposium** at the end of the semester.

All written work for the seminar (response papers, presentation write-up, etc.) is submitted as a **portfolio** of ca. 20 pages at the end of the semester.

Introductory reading:
Lisa Blackman's *The Body*, published in the "Key Concepts" series by Berg in 2008, remains a good introduction to the broad range of our topic. Before the first meeting of the seminar – and ideally before penning your statement of purpose – all participants ought to have read at least the introduction to Blackman's book ("Introduction: Thinking through the Body"; 1-13) as well as the introduction to the *Routledge Handbook of Body Studies*, edited by Bryan S. Turner ("Introduction: The Turn of the Body"; 1-17).

Further useful overviews have been offered in 'keyword' form by Eva Cherniavsky ([LINK](http://example.com)) and Maureen McNeil (in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Society in Culture*, which is available in various print editions in our libraries but also accessible in fairly extensive preview form online ([LINK](http://example.com))). See also Tiffany Atkinson, ed. and introd., *The Body* (Readers in Cultural Criticism; Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005), as well as Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco, ed. and introd., *The Body: A Reader* (Routledge Student Readers; London: Routledge, 2005).