

Specimen, Patient, and Spectacle: An Anthropological Look at the Body in Medicine
Fall 2006 - BIOE 552 Anthropological Topics in Bioethics
Wednesday 4:30 - 7:00pm

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Overview.

This course is about how the human body is literally being 'seen' by medical students, physicians, patients, and the public. Our focus will be on the ways in which the diseased or sick body is experienced and understood from the perspective of the various actors in contemporary medicine. We will begin with the 'body as specimen,' the patient's body as seen by Western biomedical physicians in training and then in clinical medicine. Here we examine the histories of medical education and medical imaging technologies (i.e. x-rays, CAT scans, photography) to understand the development and perpetuation of what is called in anthropology the 'biomedical gaze,' a distinct perspective towards patients that is expressed in the clinical encounter. We then turn to the 'body as spectacle,' in which we will examine how the diseased or ill body has been used in popular culture. We will focus in particular on recent trends in the art world of using the deformed body as subject matter. We will ask for what purpose the patients' bodies are being used, and what this trend tells us about our cultural attitudes towards and beliefs about illness, disease, and medicine. We conclude with the 'body as patient,' where we will explore how the experience of illness or disease in the clinical encounter can change one's self-image and self-understanding. This portion of the class asks how, other than being a patient ourselves, we as social scientists and bioethicists can come to understand the patient's perspective. We will evaluate various types of first-person sources, including art, literature, and accounts generated through social science research. The end goal of this course is to learn how a viewer's social, personal, and educational history influences how we see the human body, and then to be enabled to use this knowledge when analyzing the origins and complexities of contemporary bioethics problems.

Requirements.

- Class participation (5%)
- 1 article presentation to the class (20%)
- 1 5-7 page critical essay (on your choice of Module 1, 2 or 3) (35%)
- 1 5-7 page final paper (40%)

Calendar.

WEEK 1 – SEPT 6TH. Course Overview

Introductions; medical anthropology/anthropology of the body; what is ‘the body’?; what is ‘the body’ not?; course overview

WEEK 2 – SEPT 13TH. An Introduction to Looking at the Body

Looking at the body; health versus illness; body as metaphor; visual perception and communication; ethics in/on/of the body

Readings: Berger, John. 1972. Ways of Seeing (chapters 1 and 2). London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books. 10pp. (class handout)

**** Choose 1 of the following ****

Kirmayer, Laurence J. 1992. The Body’s Insistence on Meaning: Metaphor as Presentation and Representation in Illness Experience. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 6(4): 323-46. (article available on blackboard)

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Margaret Lock. 1991. The Message in the Bottle: Illness and the Micropolitics of Resistance. *The Journal of Psychohistory* 18(4): 409-432. (class handout)

MODULE 1 – THE BODY AS SPECIMEN

WEEK 3 – SEPT 20TH. Early Social and Cultural Authority of Medicine

The body from subject to object; influence of early medical education; influence of early medical technologies

Readings: Look at Kevles’ Timeline of Medical Technology from the 1870s to 1995. (class handout)

***** Choose 3 of the following *****

Starr, Paul. 1982. The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry. Chapter 1: The Social Origins of Professional Sovereignty. NY: Basic Books. Pp 3-30. (article available on blackboard)

Becker, Howard S et al. 1961. Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School. Chapter 16: Students and Patients, and CODA. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books. Pp 313-40; 435-44. (article available on blackboard)

Berg, Marc and Paul Harterink. 2004. Embodying the Patient: Records and Bodies in Early 20th Century US Medical Practice. *Body & Society* 10(2-3): 13-41. (article available on blackboard)

Howell, Joel D. 1995. Technology in the Hospital: Transforming Patient Care in the Early 20th Century. Chapter 1: Physicians, Patients, and Medical Technology. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp 1-30. (article available on blackboard)

WEEK 4 – SEPT 27th. Current Social and Cultural Authority of Medicine

The biomedical gaze; from the bedside to the bench; contemporary medical technology

Readings: Good, Bryon J. 1994. Medicine, Rationality, and Experience: An Anthropological Perspective. Chapter 3: How Medicine Constructs its Objects. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 65-88. (article available on blackboard)

Dumit, Joseph. 1999. Objective Brains, Prejudicial Images. *Science in Context* 12(1): 173-201. (class handout)

Gottlieb, Scott. 2003. The Future of Medical Technology. *The New Atlantis* 1(1): 7pp. (article available on blackboard)

WEEK 5 – OCT 4th. FIELD TRIP TO THE MÜTTER MUSEUM

Readings: McLearly, Erin H. 2000. The Mütter Museum: Education, Preservation, and Commemoration. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 132(7): 599-603. (article available on blackboard)

Worden, Gretchen. 2002. Mütter Museum. Preface and Chapter 1: Pathological Treasures of the Mütter Museum. NY: Blast Books, Inc. Pp 7-16. (class handout)

Carr, David. 2005. The Eeewww Factor in Downtown Philadelphia. *The New York Times*, December 30, 2005. Travel. (article available on blackboard)

MODULE 2 – THE BODY AS SPECTACLE

WEEK 6 – OCT 11th. Bodies on Display

Body Worlds; illness versus freak; witnessing the spectacle; ethics of display

Readings: ***Choose 2 of the following***

Thomson, Rosemarie Garland. 1996. Introduction: From Wonder to Error – A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity. In Thomson, Rosemarie Garland, ed. Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body. NY: New York University Press. Pp 1-22. (article available on blackboard)

Radley, Alan. 2002. Portrayals of Suffering: On Looking Away, Looking At, and the Comprehension of the Illness Experience. *Body & Society* 8(3): 1-23. (article available on blackboard)

Cole, Catherine. 1993. Sex and Death on Display: Women, Reproduction, and Fetuses at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. *The Drama Review* 37(1): 43-60. (article available on blackboard)

WEEK 7 – OCT 18th. Artists and Images of Healing, Illness, and Disability

Classical, modern, and postmodern images; images from medicine and art

Readings: Cazort, Mimi et al. 1996. The Ingenious Machine of Nature: Four Centuries of Art and Anatomy. Chapter 1: The Theatre of the Body. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada. Pp 11-42. (skim) (class handout)

Shaw, Joyce Cutler. 1994. The Anatomy Lesson: The Body, Technology and Empathy. *Leonardo* 27(1). Pp 29-38. (article available on blackboard)

Gilman, Sander L. 1988. Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 14: Seeing the AIDS patient. Pp 245-272. (class handout)

WEEK 8 – OCT 25th. Bodies on Film

Television; film; contemporary 'medical' entertainment television; horror, drama, comedy

Film Screening: Freaks (1932) and Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back (1995)

WEEK 9 – NOV 1ST. Bodies on Film, con't.

Readings: ***Choose 3 of the following***

Dennett, Andrea Stulman. 1996. The Dime Museum Freak Show Reconfigured as Talk Show. In Thomson, Rosemarie Garland, ed. Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body. NY: New York University Press. Pp 315-326. (article available on blackboard)

Clark, David L and Caherine Myser. 1996. Being Humaned: Medical Documentaries and the Hyperrealization of Conjoined Twins. In Thomson, Rosemarie Garland, ed. Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body. NY: New York University Press. Pp 338-355. (article available on blackboard)

van Dijck, José. 2002. Medical Documentary: Conjoined Twins as a Mediated Spectacle. *Media, Culture & Society* 24: 537-56. (article available on blackboard)

Kevles, Bettyann Holtzman. 1997. Naked to the Bone: Medical Imaging in the 20th Century. Chapter 11: The Transparent Body in Late 20th Century Culture. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley. Pp 261-96. (class handout)

WEEK 10 – NOV 8th. The Body in the Age of Genetic Technology

Genetic changes in art, body image,

Readings: Reichle, Ingeborg. 2003. Where Art and Science Meet: Genetic Engineering in Contemporary Art. <http://www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/arhistory/pub/pdf/artscience.pdf> (article available on blackboard)

Nelkin, Dorothy. 1996. The Gene as a Cultural Icon: Visual Images of DNA. *Art Journal* Spring 1996. Pp 56-61. (article available on blackboard)

Mitchell, W.J.T. 2003. The Work of Art in the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction. *MODERNISM/modernity* 10(3):481-500. (article available on blackboard)

MODULE 3 – THE BODY AS PATIENT

WEEK 11 – NOV 15th. Pain in Word and Image

Anthropological accounts of illness and disease; patients/artists self-portraits of suffering; creativity and disease

Readings: Sandblom, Philip. 1982. Creativity and Disease: How Illness Affects Literature, Art and Music. 'Introduction' and 'Relationship between illness and creativity.' New York: Marion Boyars. Pp 10-35. (class handout)

Good, Byron J. 1994. Medicine, Rationality, and Experience: An Anthropological Perspective. Chapter 5: The Body, Illness Experience, and the Lifeworld: A Phenomenological Account of Chronic Pain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp 116-134. (article available on blackboard)

NO CLASS NOV 22nd

WEEK 12 – NOV 29th. Patients as Authors/Artists

Readings: Frank, Arthur. 1995. The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics. Chapter 1: When Bodies Need Voices. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp 1-26. (article available on blackboard)

Lynch, Dorothea and Eugene Richards. 1986. Exploding into Life. NY: Aperture Foundation.

WEEK 13 – DEC 6th. Wrap Up and Conclusions

Illness, Disease, Medicine and Power

Readings: Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Margaret Lock. 1987. The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(1): 6-41. (article available on blackboard)

****** December 13th – Deadline to have final papers emailed / dropped off. ******

Have a wonderful holiday season!