Introduction

“Bodylore,” a term coined by folklorist Katharine Young, names a subfield of inquiry focused on the body’s role in social communication and the making of social meanings. Central to this inquiry is the philosophical puzzle of the “mind-body” split, and the ways in which bodylore rethinks or re-imagines the interrelations of matter and presence. How might ethnographic and historical study of modes of embodiment help to dismantle the dualisms of subject/object, abstract/material, male/female, culture/nature, classical/grotesque. We will examine some of the Western philosophical foundations for this split in the writings of Plato and Descartes, and efforts of 20th century philosophers and social scientists (Merleau-Ponty, John Dewey, Gregory Bateson, Katharine Young) to undo dualism. At the same time, heeding Caroline Bynum’s criticism that proliferating studies of the body do not adequately register the broad range of issues taken up in popular and vernacular discourses, we will pay special attention to ethnographic case studies. How is the body inscribed into multiple discourses, and how does it perform them? What is the relationship between bodies and social bodies (Mary Douglas’s “two bodies”) and what politics arise in relation to various models? How are the body’s paradoxes cross-culturally elaborated? How is the body a historically unfinished project? What can bodylore contribute to the understanding of Dewey’s “public intelligence,” or Bateson’s “ecology of mind”? And how is Merleau-Ponty’s proposal to base our engagement with the world in our embodiment an “invitation to ethnography?” (Del Negro and Berger)

Required texts:
Young, Presence in the Flesh
Young, Bodylore
Grosz, Volatile Bodies
Hufford, The Terror that Comes in the Night

Recommended:
Charon, Rita, Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness

(All required and recommended articles will be posted on Blackboard, and placed on reserve, with required and recommended texts, both in Rosengarten of Van Pelt, and in
the Folklore Archive and Seminar Room, Room 404, 3619 Locust Walk)

Work for the Course: 1) Each week post to the course blackboard a comment and question posed for you by the readings. Your comment, which can be of any length, can take the form of a response to the comment of another or initiate a new thread; I will post a prompt to get you started. 2) Bring to each class a bodylore “sighting” for that week – a newspaper clipping, an advertisement, a summary of a movie, news report, novel, conversation, policy, custom, artifact, concept, scholarly reading from another course or anything else that comes to your attention. Be prepared to relate it to themes emerging in our discussions and to document it for our course archive; 3) Observe a recurrent form of social communication in an institutionalized setting of your choice and write about its implications for understanding a problem of interest to you raised in the course readings: the mind/body dualism, embodiment, body image, participation in the social body, the body’s role in modeling, sustaining, challenging structures of power and authority, or other aspects of interest to you. Speak with me by the end of the day on November 1 to confirm your choice of topic, and submit a proposal (2-3 pages) by November 8. Be prepared to present on your research on December 13 to the class. You may incorporate feedback from the class into your final papers (20 pages, double-spaced, including endnotes and bibliography), which are due on December 20.

September 6: Introduction to the course and its topics

September 13: Why Bodylore?
Bynum, Caroline, “Why all the Fuss About the Body?: A Medievalist’s Perspective” in Beyond the Cultural Turn, pp. 241-80.
Grosz, Elizabeth. “Refiguring Bodies,” Volatile Bodies, pp. 3-24,


THE BODY IN HISTORY

September 20: The Body in History

September 27: Managing the Grotesque


October 4: Discourses of Medicine, Pathology, and Healing


October 11: The Mind/Body Puzzle


TWO BODIES

October 18: Two Bodies
Poovey, Mary, “Making a Social Body,” *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864*

Rec: Plato, selections from *The Republic*: “Justice in State and Individual,” and “The Philosopher Ruler”
Paul, 1 Corinthians, 13:12-31

October 21: Performing the Social Body

Case Studies:
Williams, Clover, “The Bachelor’s Transgression: Identity and Difference in the Bachelor Party,” JAF 107:106-120

November 1 (Paper proposals due): Self and Body Image


November 8: Studying Traditions of the Soul and Supernatural Experience
Guest Lecturer David Hufford


Charon, Rita. *Narrative Medicine*, excerpts.


**ECOLOGIES**

**November 15: Landscape and Narrative Ecology**


**November 22: Aesthetic Ecologies**


Hufford, Mary. “Carnival Time in the Kingdom of Coal,” in Crichlow, forthcoming.

**November 29: Rumor, Science, and Crisis in the Ecology of Mind**


Two Case Studies in Environmental Justice

**December : Voice, Gesture, and Mirror Neurons**

**Guest Speaker: Katharine Young**


**December 13: Mini-conference: Working Papers in Bodylore**

**December 20: Final papers due**
Folklore 725

BODYLORE

Course Bibliography


Del Negro, Giovanna P. and Harris M. Berger. 2001. “Character Divination and Kinetic


