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Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism

Techniques of the Body in Greece, Rome, and the Modern Era

This course explores how modern concepts of the “body” and “embodiment” are born out of and engaged in the history of the problem of the body in antiquity and its reception. In particular, we will focus on the body as a site of discursive practices in antiquity related to theology, knowledge, art, politics, and gender in works ranging from Homer and Hippocrates to Plato and Aristotle, as well as Roman philosophers and physicians such as Seneca and Galen. Thus, we will consider historically how the body comes into consciousness as both object and instrument of *technē* throughout antiquity. This discursive history of the body in antiquity will be paired with the history of modern theories of the body from Marcel Mauss to Judith Butler and beyond. Indeed, because so much discourse on the body today is born out of engagement with ancient texts, this course will provide a unique opportunity for students to engage in a critical way with the dialectic between antiquity and the present constructed by some of our most prominent theorists.

Week 1. Before the Individualized Body. Homer and the Body as Historical Problem

Ancient:

Homer’s *Iliad*- Selections

Modern:

Bruno Snell, *Discovery of the Mind (Entdeckung des Geistes)*- Selections

Brooke Holmes, “The Body of Western Embodiment: Classical Antiquity and the Early History of a Problem” in *Embodiment: A History* (2017).

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Selections)

Week 2, Week 3 Bodily Knowledge, Bodily Practice

Ancient:

Hippocrates, *Peri Technēs* (On the Art of Medicine)- Selections

Plato, *Gorgias* – Selections

Isocrates, *Antidosis* – Selections

Modern:

Marcel Mauss, *Techniques of the Body*

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*

Week 4 and Week 5. Bodily Art and Imitation, Ancient and Modern

Ancient primary sources will be material objects (sculpture and architecture) from Greece and Rome, along with select readings on those objects as historiography.

Readings:

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*; *The History of Art in Antiquity* – selections

Jean Baudrillard, *The Precession of Simulacra*

Jean-Pierre Vernant, "From the 'Presentification' of the Invisible to the Imitation of Appearance."

Richard Neer, "Jean-Pierre Vernant and the History of the Image."

Michael Squire, *The Art of the Body*

B. Holmes, K. Marta, and D. Joannou, eds. *Liquid Antiquity* (select essays)

Week 6 and 7: Docile Bodies, Political Bodies, and Self-Care

Ancient:

Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*- selections

Aristotle, *Politics* – selections, especially *Politics* 1 (political animal)

Seneca's Letters –Selections

Epictetus - Selections

Modern:

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*- Selections

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol.1*, Part 5: "Right of Death and Power over Life"

History of Sexuality Vol. 3, Care of the Self- Selections

Week 8 and 9: Gendered Bodies

Ancient:

Plato *Timaeus*- Selections

Aristotle *De Anima*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*- Selections

Modern:

Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, "Plato's Hysteria"

Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*

Week 10 and 11: The Slave's Body

Ancient:

Aristotle's *Politics*- Selections

Paulin Ismard, *Democracy's Slaves: A Political History of Ancient Greece* (2017)

Modern:

Giorgio Agamben, *The Use of Bodies* (2015)

Week 12 and Week 13: Student Presentations