THE BODY 2019-20

Seminar reading and suggested topics for presentations/essays.

You will see from the timetable that the first seminar of each pair will generally occur two days after the lecture associated with the topic of the seminar. With this pattern, for example, you will have a lecture on Violence on Monday, and the first seminar will take place in the Wednesday of that week. To prepare for the seminars you should do the relevant *required* reading in advance, so may need to be preparing for the seminar before the lecture actually occurs. You are not, of course, expected to read all the further material listed here. The reading given in these lists is for guidance and you are not restricted to the texts listed. If you do not know the original language of a text, read it in translation. Convenors/supervisors will give advice on combinations of material for presentations and essay work. The timing of the second seminar (one week after the first seminar) means that you need to be planning early if you are to present a paper at the second seminar. All students are expected to give at least one presentation during the course of the year, and you should be ready to volunteer to do this. A presentation can be very useful groundwork for an essay. Essays for this paper should always cover material from at least TWO language areas.

MICHAELMAS TERM

The Body Politic (weeks 1 and 2)
Convenors: Dominic Keown (Fitzwilliam) dk209@cam.ac.uk
            Sam Goff sam.goff1@gmail.com

First seminar

'Cinema and Biopolitics: The Soviet Case'
Required reading:
Primary:
Russian
Spanish
Cecilia Vicuña: http://www.ceciliavicuna.com/
Tania Bruguera: http://www.taniabruguera.com/cms/

Secondary:
Giorgio Agamben, 'Notes on Gesture', in Means Without End: Notes on Politics (Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 49-60;
Jonathan Crary, 'Modernizing Vision', in Vision and Visuality, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle 1988), pp. 29-44;
Francesco Casetti, 'Strong Sensations' (ch. 5) in Eye of the Century: Cinema, Experience, Modernity (New York, 2008), pp. 111-140;

‘Ideology of Artistic Representation’

The artistic representation of the body has inevitable ideological implications. A cursory reading of any Dickensian text in this respect, for example, immediately privileges a whole series of notions regarding gender, social class and psychology. It is the intention of this class to consider these elements within the framework of the Marxist deliberation on reification: that is to say, the manner in which the commodification of humanity in the capitalist system is exposed and subsequently challenged in art of the twentieth century through corporal representation. To this effect, the aesthetic basis to the argument will be established with reference to the "look" of female stars in early Hollywood which will precede a more detailed examination of essays on the same theme in European graphic art particularly as regards the dissident speculation on this theme evident in the work of Dalí, Picasso, Warhol and Damien Hirst and Bigas Luna.

**Background Reading**

K Marx, F Engels, The Communist Manifesto
J P Sartre, Being and Nothingness
Secondary texts

Further Reading:
Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (Stanford, Calif., 1998)
---. 'Dr Mabuse and Mr Edison', in Art and Film Since 1945: Hall of Mirrors, ed. by Russell Ferguson (Los Angeles, 1996).
Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life, ed. by Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz (Berkeley, 1995).
Roberto Esposito, Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy (Minneapolis, 2008).
Brian Massumi, Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation (Durham, 2002).
Steven Shaviro, The Cinematic Body (Minneapolis, 1993).

Topics for essays/presentations:
1. 'Though bodies are shaped by a multitude of political forces, these forces typically remain undetected'.
2. 'Of all the political factors which influence the body, class remains the most important and yet is the most neglected'.
3. 'The metaphor of the body politic is inseparable from the aesthetics of spectacle'.
4. 'The notion that the body politic is sick and needs to be healed is frequently used to
legitimate oppression'.
5. 'Imagery of the body politic often emerges in connection with revolutionary discourse'.
6. 'In representations of the body politic women and children rarely play a significant role'.
7. 'The metaphor of the body politic is inherently reactionary and conservative'.
8. 'Melodramatic bodies are bodies that have been inscribed with political meaning'.
9. 'Mass cultural forms are inextricable from political practices intended to produce docile bodies'.
10. 'Power works through affect and affect emerges in power'.

**Nudity and Costume (Weeks 3 and 4)**

Convenors: Nick White (Emmanuel) njw16@cam.ac.uk
Stuart Davis (Girton) sd367@cam.ac.uk

**Required reading for first seminar:**
Luce Irigaray ‘This sex which is not one’ (‘Ce sexe qui n’en est pas un’) – essay found in *New French Feminisms* (Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds.), Harvester Press, 1986 and other anthologies of feminist criticism

Poems ‘El origen del mundo’ and ‘La toilette’ by Cristina Peri Rossi, on CamTools resource site (with English translations)

**Further material:**

**Primary**

**Secondary**
Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1990)
Bernice Chitnis, *Reflecting on Nana* (Routledge, 1991), esp. chapter 3
Julia Prest and Hannah Thompson (eds), *Corporeal Practices: (Re)figuring the Body in French Studies* (Peter Lang, 2000)

**Topics for essays/presentations:**
1. ‘The limits of bodily representation are ultimately genital.’ Discuss.
2. ‘The representation of costume is more a matter of undressing than
dressing.' Discuss.
3. 'The truth of the body in representation is defined more by narrative form than by any particular mode of description.' Discuss.
4. 'The heterosexual gaze upon the female body can only be deconstructed by unintended viewers and/or readers.' Discuss.
5. 'Unlike the body in visual culture, the written body can never be properly naked as it is clothed in rhetoric.' Discuss.
'It is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of our arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking' (Woolf). Discuss.
6. 'Costume is culture's way of exploring the confusions and complexities of gender and sexual identity.' Discuss.
7. 'A close look at the literary text reveals that fetishism is inevitable - even in the most realistic of depictions.' Discuss.

**Queer Bodies (Weeks 5 and 6)**

Convenors: Stuart Davis (Girton) sd367@cam.ac.uk
Jasmine Cooper (Newnham) jdc52@cam.ac.uk

**Required Reading for first seminar** (all texts will be circulated as PDFs prior to the seminar)

**Primary Material**
André Gide, *L'Immoraliste / The Immoraliste* (Extracts)
Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (Extracts)

Non-literary material includes viewing a number of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe, and listening to a number of songs and watching a number of music videos by the rapper Le1f.

**Theoretical**


**Further Examples of Possible Material – Don't hesitate to get in touch with either Stuart Davis or Jasmine Cooper if you want some guidance on or further**
recommendations for material according to language areas or particular thematic focuses

**Textual (Roughly Modernist Material)**
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
Edward Forster, *Maurice*
Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*
Jean Genet, *Querelle de Brest*
André Gide, *L’Immoraliste*
M. A. Kuzmin, *Kryl’ia*
Thomas Mann *Der Tod in Venedig, Tonio Kröger*
Pierpaolo Pasolini, *Amado mio and Atti impuri*
Federico García Lorca, *El público*
Alfonso Hernández Catá *El ángel de Sodoma* (see Dr Davis for a copy)

**Post-War/Contemporary Material**
Hubert Fichte, *Versuch über die Pubertät* (1974)
Juan Goytisolo *Makbara* (1980)
Esther Tusquets *El mismo mar de todos los veranos* (1978)
Ingeborg Bachmann, ‘Ein Schritt nach Gomorhra’, in *Das dreißigste Jahr: Erzählungen*
Guillaume Dustan, *Dans ma chambre*
Rachid O, *Chocolat chaud*
Nina Bouraoui, *Poupée Bella*
Emmanuelle Pagano, Les adolescents troglodytes

**Cinematic**
Claire Denis, *Beau Travail*
Pedro Almodóvar, *Todo sobre mi madre; La mala educación*
Ventura Pons *Ocaña, retrat intermitent*
Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Querelle; Faustrecht der Freiheit* (English title: *Fox and His Friends*)
Rosa von Praunheim, *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt*
John Waters, *Pink Flamingos; Female Trouble* (good examples of films that have an unmistakably queer sensibility despite not necessarily dealing with same-sex sexuality)
Monika Treut, *Die Jungfrauenmaschine*
Kutlug Ataman, *Lola und Bilidikid*
Jenny Livingstone, *Paris is Burning*
Barry Jenkins, *Moonlight*
Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*
François Ozon *8 femmes*
Céline Sciamma *Tomboy*
Alain Berliner *Ma vie en rose*

**Secondary (Titles marked with ** are particularly relevant)**
Abelove, Henry et al. (ed.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993)


**Topics for essays/presentations**

1. The representation of sexuality, particularly homosexuality, is a constant challenge to aesthetic norms which seek to disguise from social discourse any form of “bodily abominations”.

2. Queerness is inherently indeterminate and as such its use to those who wish to challenge heteronormativity’s status quo is minimal.

3. The historic inability to voice non-normative sexualities has a continued legacy to this day; the queer body remains illegible.

4. Representations of the homosexual body show that ‘sex’, ‘sexuality’, and ‘gender’ may be confused but can never be properly synonymous.

5. Human sexuality cannot be treated as a constant essence; it is both indeterminate and intermittent.

6. The writing of homosexuality shows the body to be “a volume in perpetual disintegration” (Butler), a text which is never fully legible.

7. Representations of non-normative sexualities are not only shaped by medical, social and political discourses but themselves contribute in turn to the shaping of those discourses.

8. The queer body and its literary and visual depictions have little connection to stability and order; instead they are strongly characterised by uncertainty and indeterminacy.

9. The language of the queer body is a language of transgression and fluidity.
10. The homosexual body provokes forms of control and of crisis in both time and space.

11. The ‘Homo’ of ‘Homosexuality’ imputes a homogeneity to homosexual desire that can only be deceptive; cultural representations demonstrate that queer desire and sexuality is by no means free from the imperative of difference.

**Violence (weeks 7 and 8)**
Convenors: Ian James (Downing) irj20@cam.ac.uk
Emily Fitzell (Trinity) elf40@cam.ac.uk

**Reading for first seminar:**
André Breton, ‘Union libre’, ‘Free Union’ (available online, on Moodle)
Alejandra Pizarnik, *La Condesa sangrienta* (Barcelona: Librod del Zorro Rojo, 2012); translated as *The Bloody Countess*
Selected works by Ana Mendieta
Selected works by Francis Bacon

**Further Material:**

**Primary**

a) Violence and Sexuality

*Salò* (1975) Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini*
*Baise-moi* (2000), Dir. Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Thi*
*Pulp Fiction* (1995), Dr. Q. Tarantino

b) Violence and Politics

*Paisà* (1946) Dir. Roberto Rossellini.

c) Violence and Women

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*Peeping Tom* (1960), Dir. M. Powell
*Kill Bill vol. 1 & 2*, Dir. Quentin Tarantino (2003-04)
*Breaking the Waves* (1996) Dir. Lars von Trier

e) Violence and Religion

*Medea* (1968) Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini
*Breaking the Waves* (1996) Dir. Lars von Trier

f) General

*Funny Games* (1997), Dir. Michael Haneke
Álvaro Do Carvalhal, *Os Canibais*
Alexande Herculano, *A Dama Pê De Cabra*
Hélia Correia, *Fascinação*
Lygia Fagundes Telles, *Venha Vêr O Pôr-Do-Sol, A Caçada, Herbarium, A Estrutura Da Bolha De Sabão.*
Flannery O’Connor, *Wise Blood* (1952)
Flannery O’Connor, *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960)
George Orwell, 1984 (1949)
Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Le Voyeur [The Voyeur]* (1955)
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Player Piano* (1952)
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Cat's Cradle* (1963)
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)

**Secondary**


Mulvey, Laura 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16.3 Autumn 1975

Nietzsche, Friedrich 'Von den Verächttern des Leibes', in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, pp. 6-18.


**Added for 2019/20**:  
*Ana Mendieta: Decolonialized Feminist and Artist*. Talk by Laura E. Pérez, Professor of Ethics Studies at UC Berkley. 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVk4UBA6HGQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVk4UBA6HGQ)  
*Francis Bacon: A Brush with Violence*. 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgrO5za0lSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgrO5za0lSY)

* (This is a very violent and sexually explicit film and students may wish to focus on other material instead if they feel this may pose problems for them).

**Topics for essays/presentations:**
1. In much twentieth-century thought and culture the body functions as a site of the unfamiliar and the unassimilable.
2. In cultural representation erotic experience becomes a figure of transgression in which all values and norms are exceeded.
3. For many thinkers the body functions as a figure of thought working at the limit of thought itself.
4. The evocation of eroticism and sexual violence as forms of transgression often ignores sexual political dimensions of bodily experience.
5. How is repetition employed as an aesthetic principle in representations of the body?
6. How have writers/artists negotiated the paradox that pain, that most direct of experiences (Elaine Scarry), eludes language and reference?
7. The body is the principal site through which texts and other cultural forms explore the individual's relation to a violent history.
LENT TERM

Contagion (weeks 1 and 2)
Convenors: Martin Crowley (Queens') mpvc2@cam.ac.uk
Stuart Davis (Girton) sd367@cam.ac.uk

The introductory seminar on Contagion will explore the topic through the work of Girard and Bataille, who provide starkly contrasting anthropological interpretations of its nature and interest. Girard offers a comprehensive survey of the effects of plague on social structures, and representations of these effects in literature and myth; Bataille uses the image of emotional contagion ("rage") to discuss the nature of literary communication itself.

Required reading for first seminar:
Georges Bataille, Foreword to The Blue of Noon (Le Bleu du ciel).
First section of Juan Goytisolo Las virtudes del pajaro solitario (pp. 11-24 of Alfaguara edition) The Virtues of the Solitary Bird (pp. 11-24 of Serpent's Tail edition).

Further material:
Primary
Mann, Der Tod in Venedig; Cela, Pabellón de reposo; Poe, The Masque of the Red Death; Manzoni, Storia della colonna infame, I promessi sposi (esp. chs 31-2); Camus, La peste; Solzhenitsyn, Cancer Ward; Svevo, La coscienza di Zeno; Stoker, Dracula; Eça de Queirós, Os Maias; Saramago, Ensaio sobre a cegueira; Torga, ‘O Leproso’ Films: F.W. Murnau, Nosferatu, Visconti, Death in Venice, David Fincher, Fight Club; Bryan Forbes, Stepford Wives; Spike Jonze, Being John Malkovich; Nicolas Roeg and Donald Cammell, Performance.

Secondary
Alison Bashford and Claire Hooker (eds), Contagion (London: Routledge, 2001). (Whipple Library: X.2131.)
Peter Baldwin, Contagion and the State in Europe, 1830-1930 (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
Stanley Black, Juan Goytisolo and the Poetics of Contagion (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2001).
Elaine Hatfield et al (eds), Emotional Contagion (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).

**Topics for essays/presentations:**
1. Contagious illness offers the following paradox: isolated within his/her suffering, the sufferer is nonetheless bound to a community of which s/he may want no part.
2. ‘Plague makes all accumulated knowledge and all categories of judgement invalid.’ (Girard)
3. The narrative of contagion is itself necessarily implicated in its subject, as contagion offers an unsettling but irresistible model of communication.
4. Plague narratives are unable to resist the suggestion that the suffering they represent might, in some sense, prove beneficial.
5. Contagion enacts a form of immediate communication that art cannot but betray.
6. The allegorical fascination of contagion derives from its ability to represent anything and nothing.
7. In narratives of contagion, what exactly is being transmitted? And to whom?

**Hystera (weeks 3 and 4)**
Convenors: Nicholas White (Emmanuel) njw16@cam.ac.uk
Lucia Ruprecht (Emmanuel) lr222@cam.ac.uk

This seminar presentation will address the gestural world of Freud’s and Breuer’s Studies on Hysteria, and consider them in the context of the gestural revolution in dance that was taking place at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Dance registered the crisis of the motor sphere which is at stake in the convulsions of hysterical bodies; but it also took possession of the gestural field, recovering it for the purpose of an entirely new, rich world of physical expression.

**Required reading for first seminar:**

**Further material:**
**Primary**
Freud and Breuer, Studies on Hysteria, Pelican Freud vol 3;
George Sand, Indiana; Balzac, La Cousine Bette; Flaubert, Madame Bovary; Rachilde, Monsieur Vénus, George Sand, Valentine, Zola. Pot-Bouille; Alas, La Regenta;
Schnitzler, Fräulein Else; Bronte, Jane Eyre; Bronte, Wutherering Heights; George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wallpaper; James, The Turn of the Screw; Arthur Koestler, The Sleepwalkers; Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar; Pérez Galdós, Miau; Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, La Jeune
Née; Hélène Cixous, Portrait de Dora; Marie Cardinal, Les Mots pour le dire; Kathryn Mansfield, Bliss and other stories; Rilke, Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge; Rosa Chacel, Memorias de Leticia Valle; Pirandello, Vestire gli ignudi; Gadda, La cognizione del dolore; Pina Bausch, Café Müller.

Secondary
Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady (1985)
Elaine Showalter, ‘On Hysterical Narrative’ (1993), Narrative 1:1 (24-35)
Mark S. Micale, Approaching Hysteria: Disease and its Interpretations (1995)
Martha Noel Evans, Fits and Starts: A genealogy of hysteria in modern France (1991)

Topics for essays/presentations:

1. Hysteria cannot be defined, not least because its manifestations vary from culture to culture and between different historical times.
2. Is hysteria an illness, or a political strategy?
3. What does the incidence of male hysteria have to tell us about the gendered construction of hysteria?
4. The power of hysteria alters, depending upon whether the hysteric writes or is written about.
5. Hysterical behaviour is not a refusal of femininity, but rather an excessive expression of it.
6. The inability of the hysteric to produce a coherent narrative is not just a symptom, but rather the meaning of hysteria.
7. Hysteria stages and articulates problems of sexual difference, but it presents no implicit proposals for a possible cure, be it medical or social.
8. To label a woman’s writing as hysterical is to denigrate it as art and to undermine its political potential.

Dreams (weeks 5 and 6)
Convenors: Ian James (Downing) irj20@cam.ac.uk
‘Dream doctors’

This paper will briefly consider the representation of medical practice as a function of dreams in relation to three texts: the ‘specimen dream’ of Irma’s injection in Sigmund Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*; Schnitzler’s *Traumnovelle* (*Dream Story*); and Kafka’s ‘Ein Landarzt’ (‘A Country Doctor’). In each case, the texts explore ambiguous mind-body relations between doctor and patient, asking questions about how a knowledge system like medicine is embedded in, and rendered slippery by, its attention to the body and its symptomatic disorders.

**Required reading for first seminar:**

**Further material:**

**Primary**
Goya, *Caprichos, Disparates* [paintings]; Füßli, *The Nightmare* [painting];

**Secondary**
Peter France, *Diderot* (Past Masters Series)
Topics for essays/presentations:
1. Dreaming is the elusive, liminal zone between the expression of the body and the constraints of the mind.
2. Dreams, as explored by literary texts or other cultural forms, venture not so much into the unknown as the repressed.
3. Behind every dream there is a sexual wish.
4. Dreams are profoundly bound up with the body’s subjection to time.
5. Dreaming is a process of healing: a reconstruction of the sick or wounded psyche.
6. Our understanding of dreams is always defined by their embodiment in the medium of language.
7. The dream body is always monstrous, displaying disfigurement and hybridity.
8. The disembodied physicality of film makes it the ideal medium for representing dreams.