THE BODY 2016-17

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. 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

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
(Whipple Library: X.2131.)

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?

Queer Fellows (Weeks 3 and 4)

Convenors: Stuart Davis (Girton) sd367@cam.ac.uk
Ina Linge (King's) kl373@cam.ac.uk

Required Reading for first seminar
Literary
Theoretical

Further Material:
Primary
A Literary texts—options for essays on roughly Modernist material *Wilde, *The Picture...
of Dorian Gray; Forster, Maurice; Genet, Querelle de Brest; Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs; Gide, L’Immoraliste; Gómez de la Serna, La quinta de Palmyra; Kafka, Der Proceß; Kuzmin, Kryl’ia; Lorca, El público; Musil, Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß; Pasolini, Amado mio/Atti impuri; Radclyffe Hall, The Well of Loneliness; Tsvetaeva, Mon frère feminin: Lettre à l’amazone; Hernández Catá El ángel de Sodoma; D’Halmar La pasión y muerte del cura Deusto (see Dr Davis for copies of these two Spanish texts).

B Filmography—films with literary intertexts
(Proust) Chantal Akerman, La Captive, 2000; (Mann) Luchino Visconti, Morte a Venezia, 1971; (Herman Melville) Claire Denis, Beau Travail; (Tennessee Williams) Pedro Almodóvar, Todo sobre mi madre, 1999; (Genet) Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Querelle, 1982.

Secondary (General; Literary; Queer and Film Theory)
Abelove, Henry et al. (ed.), The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader (New York: Routledge, 1993)
Bersani, Leo, Homos (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard UP, 1995)
Butler, Judith, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex” (New York: Routledge, 1993)
———, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990)
Finn, Michael, Proust, the Body and Literary Form (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)
Freud, Sigmund, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (Penguin Freud Library VII)
Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)
Hughes, Alex, Heterographies: Sexual Difference in French Autobiography (Oxford:
Berg, 1999)
Irigaray, Luce, Éthique de la différence sexuelle (Paris: Minuit, 1984)
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, Between Men: English Literature and Homosocial Desire (New York: Columbia UP, 1985)
The Sexual Subject: A ‘Screen’ Reader in Sexuality (London: Routledge, 1992)
Silverman, Kaja, Male Subjectivity at the Margins (New York & London: Routledge, 1992)
Studlar, G., In the Realm of Pleasure (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1988)
———, ‘Mann’s Man’s World: Gender and Sexuality’, in Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann, ed. R. Robertson (Cambridge: CUP, 2001)

**Topics for essays/presentations**

1. The representation of homosexuality exposes the limitations of modernism’s ability to emancipate unspeakable desires.
2. Representations of the homosexual body show that ‘sex’, ‘sexuality’, and ‘gender’ may be confused but can never be properly synonymous.
3. Human sexuality cannot be treated as a constant essence; it is both indeterminate and intermittent.
4. The writing of homosexuality shows the body to be “a volume in perpetual disintegration” (Butler), a text which is never fully legible.
5. Heterosexuality may be compulsory in twentieth-century culture, but its regime can only work by producing its own fantasies of homosexual inclinations.
6. The homosexual body provokes forms of control and of crisis in both time and space.
7. ‘The filmed body generates an understanding of indifference to sexual difference which is as troubling as it is liberating.’
8. ‘Representations of the body which cross the divide between the textual and the visual can work to privilege a merging, rather than a plurality, of sexual identities.’ Discuss specifically in relation to filmic adaptations of literary texts.

**Violence (weeks 5 and 6)**
Convenors: Pierpaolo Antonello (St John’s) paa25@cam.ac.uk
Reading for first seminar:


Georges Bataille, Histoire de l’œil, Œuvres complètes, vol. 1, 9-69; Story of the Eye, trans. J. Neugroschel (Penguin: Harmondworth, 1982). (This work contains explicit and violent material and maybe disturbing to some readers. Please read and refer to Madame Edwarda only, if you feel this may pose problems for you).

Further Material:

Primary

a) Violence and Sexuality

Georges Bataille, Ma Mère, (London: Marion Boyers, 1989)
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

Roma, città aperta (1945) Dir. Roberto Rossellini.
Paisà (1946) Dir. Roberto Rossellini.
Heiner Müller, Der Auftrag, in Der Auftrag Der Bau Herakles 5 Todesanzeige (Berlin: 1981), 9-37.

c) Violence and Women

Elfriede Jelinek, Die Klavierspielerin (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1983).
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
Dogville (2003) Dir. Lars von Trier

f) General

Funny Games (1997), Dir. Michael Haneke
Álvaro Do Carvalhal, Os Canibais
Alexande Herculano, A Dama Pé De Cabra
Hélia Correia, Fascinação
Lygia Fagundes Telles, Venha Vêr O Pôr-Do-Sol, A Caçada, Herbarium, A Estrutura Da Bolha De Sabão.
William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (1929)
Flannery O'Connor, Wise Blood (1952)
Flannery O'Connor, The Violent Bear It Away (1960)
George Orwell, 1984 (1949)
Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow (1973)
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

Freud, Sigmund, Jenseits des Lustprinzips, in Studienausgabe Band III (Frankfurt/Main:
7. korrigierte Auflage, 1975), 213-272. (Translated as Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Pelican Freud vol. 11).


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

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


* (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.

The Body Politic (weeks 7 and 8)
Convenors: Dominic Keown (Fitzwilliam) dk209@cam.ac.uk
Sam Gough (Fitzwilliam) sg466@cam.ac.uk

First seminar

‘The Significance of Aura in the Graphic Arts’

It is the intention of this short paper to consider the ideological implications of the representation of the human body in painting and photography paying particular attention to the notion of aura as proposed by Walter Benjamin in his seminal essay on the subject. Beginning with an analysis of Benjamin’s theory as applied to two key works (Velázquez’s “Rendición de Breda” (popularly “Las lanzas”) and Millet’s “Angelus” we will move on to consider the way in which the camera and its mechanical reproduction offered possibilities for a revolutionary change in perspective. Informed by this speculation, the themes of conflict and the condition of the proletariat will be examined with reference to key studies in photojournalism from the Spanish Civil War.

Required reading/viewing for the seminar

Robert Capa, Heart of Spain (Aperture, 2002)
Augustí Centelles, Augustí Centelles (La fabrica, 2012)
Please note: the photographs selected for study, particularly Centelles’s series of militias on the march, are available on the web.

'Cinema and Biopolitics: The Soviet Case'

This paper will think through cinema’s coincidence with modern political practices centred on managing the life and bodily capacities of the human being. How might cinema’s structuring of embodied experience (sense perception, affect, emotion) relate to political techniques of disciplining and regulating the body? The paper will explore this question with reference to the work of Soviet filmmakers and their attempt to bring about the physical and psychical 'remaking' of the spectator.

Required reading for the seminar:

Secondary:

Primary:

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'.

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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'.

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LENT TERM
Nudity and Costume (Weeks 1 and 2)
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
Zola, Au Bonheur de dames; Woolf, Orlando; Sacher-Masoch, Venus im Pelz;
Pirandello, Enrico IV; Lorca, El Público; Galdos, La de Bringas; Kunzru, The
Impressionist; Dreiser, Sister Carrie.

Secondary
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (Routledge, 1990)
Bernice Chitnis, Reflecting on Nana (Routledge, 1991), esp. chapter 3
Marie Anne Doane, Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory and Psychoanalysis
(London and New York: Routledge, 1991)
Julia Prest and Hannah Thompson (eds), Corporeal Practices: (Re)figuring the Body in
French Studies (Peter Lang, 2000)
Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (eds) Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body
(Routledge, 1990)
Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (Ithaca:
Cornell UP, 1986)
Topics for essays/presentations:
1. Masquerade is an essential part of both femininity and masculinity.
2. Do clothes make the man or the woman?
3. '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).
4. The most immediately striking effect of masquerade is its ability to challenge the gender assignations it seeks to imitate.
5. Performance can only achieve its true aims when it is separated from the realm of the theatrical.
6. Fashion creates the free-floating quality of female sexuality.
7. The motif of the transvestite, like that of the actress adds an additional veil of illusion to the distance separating signs from their supposed referent.
8. A close look at the literary text reveals that fetishism is inevitable - even in the most realistic of depictions.

Dreams (weeks 3 and 4)
Convenors: Ian James (Downing) irj20@cam.ac.uk
Lucia Ruprecht (Emmanuel) lr222@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
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.

**Hysteria (weeks 5 and 6)**
Convenors: Amaleena Damlé (Girton) ad256@cam.ac.uk
Lucia Ruprecht (Emmanuel) lr222@cam.ac.uk

This brief seminar presentation will zoom in onto the gestural world of the hysterical patients 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. This revolution, it will be argued, 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; Zola, Pot-Bouille; Alas, La Regenta; Schnitzler, Fräulein Else; Bronte, Jane Eyre; Bronte, Wuthering Heights; 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; Hélene 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.

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.