Course Syllabus (Subject to Change)

**Feminist Biopolitics and Cultural Practice**
MA, 4 Credits, 8 ECTS VTP Elective
Winter 2019-20, Time and Place TBA

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What do memorial displays for those who died from AIDS tell us about public mourning as a political measure of the (disavowed) sexuality? How might performances of dancers and other artists with disabilities challenge the normative perception of gendered and racialized desire/desirability? How do artistic and scientific rendering of “life” reanimate certain mode of life? How do corporeal enmeshment among human and other bodies (such as fish, hormones, chemicals) refigure our understanding of sexual and reproductive bodies? This course examines how the biopolitical operations im/materialize through various forms of cultural practice – especially at the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, species, and disability. For the purpose, this course enters the conversation between feminist and queer theories and the theories of biopolitics, which traditionally concern the relevance of the biological life/death (and what exceeds such dichotomous conceptualization) to the realms of the political. We will pay particular attention to the entwinement between the biological, technological, and cultural as an important constituent of biopolitics, as most dramatically shown in – but not limited to – the emergence of bioarts and biomedia. From this perspective, the course explores a number of sites of cultural practice including performance, eating (and starving), tattoo, biometrics, prosthetics, reproductive technology, and graphic medicine as sites of feminist criticisms and creative interventions.

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

1. **Attendance and Participation (15%)**: Please complete the reading and screening assignment each week, and come to class prepared for class discussion. Curiosity, humility, generosity, respect, and risk-taking are expected for our collective journey. Attendance is mandatory. Absences due to medical problems should be officially documented to be excused. Missing a class will negatively affect your grade, and missing more than three classes might result in failing the course. Lateness can negatively affect your grade, too. If you are late, please notify me of your attendance after class.

2. **Key Term Entry (5%)**: You will write one 300-word key term entry on a major concept in one of the reading assignments that are underlined. For the entry, please write a concise yet elaborate explanation of the chosen term without any critique. Please submit an entry under the corresponding week’s thread in the course e-learning site, by **9am on the day of discussing the text in class**. Key term entries will not be graded, but will be asked to resubmit if it is seriously mistaken the job or done carelessly. Tips for the assignment:
   - Identify a main concept in the text, and imagine that you’re explaining it to a fellow student who is interested in the subject but hasn’t read the text.
   - What does the author mean by this concept, and how does it fit into the main argument of the text?
   - What is main significance, according to the author? (What does it allow us to see, criticize, or re-examine and how so?)
   - Paraphrase in your own words, minimize quoting, and avoid referring to other texts.
3. **Text Responses (20%)**: You are required to write two text responses on the assigned readings and other materials (other than the text on which you’ve written a key term entry). A TR is 400-500 words long, and should be posted under the corresponding weekly thread by 9am the day of the relevant class. The purpose of TR is to think about the texts, to articulate your questions, interpretations, and critiques, and to share them with other participants. A TR is expected to demonstrate your analytic engagement with the texts – more than simple summaries or criticisms based on an already-assumed position of truth and/or justice. You are encouraged to read your colleagues’ responses before we meet and share what you’ve written in class discussion.

* Please put [Key Term Entry] or [Text Responses] on the top of the assignment.

3. **Conference presentation and response (30%)**: You will give a presentation that is directly relevant to your upcoming term paper (20%). You are welcome to present the work-in-progress that you are developing into the paper, but you may also present a media, art, or performance project that will be complemented by the paper. The point of the class conference is to have the opportunity to share your work and offer collective input into each other’s projects. Therefore, your responses to fellow students’ presentation are also important contributions to the conference and will be factored into the grade (10%).

4. **Term Paper (30%)**: You will write a term paper (around 2500-3000 words) on a topic of your choice that is directly relevant to the theme of the course. The term paper is not a standard research paper, and should demonstrate conceptual, methodological, and epistemological engagement with the course materials and discussion. You may write the paper as part of a larger research project of yours, but you should nonetheless focus on course materials in a significant manner.

**Course Policies and Logistics**

1. Please arrive on time, and turn off or silence all cell phones before class begins (vibration-mode does not constitute turning off). I also have a no-laptop and no-recording policy during class discussions, so that we can fully engage with and pay attention to other participants. You may use tablets only to refer to the course materials, but please turn off the Internet connection in class. However, if you need any device for disability-related (or other comparable) reasons, you’re welcome to use it; just let me know in advance.

2. Everyone is encouraged to visit my office hours to go over classroom discussions, assignments, and any other thoughts you might have related to the course. You’re welcome to come in small groups as well as individually. To reserve a time slot during my office hours, use the sign-up sheet on my office door without prior communication. Open time slots are available for drop-ins during the office hours. If you have conflicting class schedule with my regular office hours, please send me an e-mail to set an appointment.

3. I’ll be communicating with you by e-mail during the term, and you’re responsible for knowing what is in those emails. You may write me at YoonH@ceu.edu; please use the subject line “[Biopolitics]” or there is a good chance that I’ll lose your email.

4. If you have any disability-related needs, please discuss them with me ASAP. Access needs can be shared with the class without shame. We, as a learning community, will try to support each other’s access needs.
Learning Outcomes:

- Students will familiarize themselves with the major concepts and arguments in biopolitical theories, and their connections to and implications for gender studies in particular and critical theories in general.
- Students will better understand and be able to analyze some of the important ways in which biopolitical power relations substantiate and operate through cultural practices in the contemporary world.
- Students will be able to experiment with transdisciplinary theories and methods in order to engage with various forms of cultural practice, such as dance, bioart, cloning, and biometrics.
- Students will improve their skills in analytical reading and writing, verbal discussion, and other forms of presentation.
Course Schedule

Week 1. The Birth of Biopolitics
Day 1  Course Introduction

Week 2. Bare Life and the Force of Flesh

Week 3. Horizons of Death

Media & Art Presentation 1: Jason deCaires Taylor’s underwater sculptures

Week 4. Biopolitical Production, Tear and Wear
• Another chapter or article on the politics of love, TBA.

Week 5. Precarity of Life and Elegiac Politics

Media & Art presentation 2: AIDS Memorial Quilts (or other relevant project)
Michelle Dizon, Ex Utero (2015), in-class screening.

Week 6. The Self, Other, and the Immunity Paradigm
Day 11 • Roberto Esposito, “Community, Immunity, Biopolitics,” Angelaki 18(3), 2013

Week 7. Technology of Normalization and Surveillance
Media & Art presentation 3: Pink Flamango
Guidelines for Final Papers

**Week 8. Molecular Biopolitics**

Guidelines for Final Conference


**Week 9. Disability and Debility**

Media & Art Presentation 4: *Sins Invalid*


**Week 10. Reproduction and Futurity**
Day 19 • *Children of Man* (2006), in-class film screening

**Week 11. Biopolitics in Post/Socialist Societies**
Day 21 and Day 22: Readings TBA

**Week 12. Final Conference**

***Final Paper Due TBA***