

# **Body Image and Art - TARTS 203**

**Winter 2016**

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Office Hours: M/W 12:30-1:30 pm, 3:35-4:15 pm or by appointment

Class Meeting Time: 4:15-6:20 pm, M/W Classroom: Whitney 104

## **Course Summary**

Through reading, art practices and the analysis of contemporary media and art, we will examine notions of body image and why so many people in modern mainstream society are obsessed with their appearances. We will study the body through drawing, photography, photo-collage and site-specific installation to develop perceptual and conceptual skills. We will expand our ideas about what is a healthy relationship to our own bodies and to those of others.

## **Course Objectives**

- To explore both a perceptual and conceptual approach to art making
- To strengthen formal skills
- To experience hands-on collaborative art processes
- To be exposed to a wide variety of contemporary art forms including site-specific installations, culture jamming, artist's books, and photo-text work.
- To become familiar with a variety ways of understanding body image as it relates to art and to contemporary society
- To encourage critical thinking in relation to the art making process and social norms
- To become more accepting of different body types and centered in one's own body

## **Course Requirements**

- A journal for examining the issues surrounding body image through drawings, research notes, collage, photos AND reflections on discussions and readings. This journal functions like an open book exam with your entries revealing what you are learning and how you are participating in the creative process. Ideally you should be using your journal for a daily entry.
- Reading: Assorted articles from various websites.
- Assigned drawings, photography, photo-collage, and site-specific projects – both in class projects and work done at home
- A collaborative project presented orally and visually (10 minutes) on a topic related to body image. Possible topics include: dieting, size discrimination, eating disorders, disabilities, body shame, LGBTQ issues, Race and ethnicity issues, the media, Sexuality and Body positivity
- Class participation is essential and unexcused absences will affect grades.

## **Classroom Behavior**

- Food and drink are acceptable as long as you do not disrupt the class or bother your neighbors. All food & drink must be consumed away from computers, on the non-carpeted side of the class.
- Please turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and pagers when you come to class.
- Please be respectful and attentive when others are speaking in class. We want the classroom to be a safe space where different points of view can be expressed. Provoking other students through hostile remarks is not permissible, and if polarizing behavior persists after it is pointed out, it will affect the student's grade.

- Arriving late or leaving early should never happen except on rare occasions; if you must arrive late or leave early, please do so in as unobtrusive a way as possible

### **Grades and Self-evaluation**

Students will turn in a midterm portfolio that includes their journal documenting their work during the first 5 weeks of the course (due Feb 9th). The portfolio of drawings will be graded. A self-evaluation statement will be sent via email by Feb 8th. The self-evaluation should reflect on their participation in class discussions, their art process in relation to collaborative and individual work, and the insights culled from writing, reading and research.

Students are required to share their studio projects during group feedback sessions and to participate in the discussions about their work.

All assignments are assessed according to the following criteria:

- Familiarity with visual grammar in relation to the student's intention
- Ability to be inventive both with content and form, and to take risks
- Attention to craft and process (work done hastily the night before is usually painfully obvious). Work created with little attention or care will be graded accordingly.
- Responsiveness to suggestions to strengthen projects

Grades will be weighted in the following way: Body Outline Project: 20%, Midterm Portfolio: 10%, Midterm Journal: 10% Collaborative presentation: 10%, Final Journal 20%, Photo/text Piece: 20%, Participation: 10%

Grades will be given according to the grade point system. Please refer to this website for information about the grading scale: [http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading\\_Sys.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading_Sys.html)

3.5–4 = OUTSTANDING work, significant extra time spent in developing work, risks taken, unity of concept and handling of materials to create an imaginative visual statement that challenges conventional thinking and image making

2.5–3.4 = ABOVE AVERAGE work, solid concepts and skillful handling of materials, exploration of conceptual ideas evident with thought provoking results

1.5–2.4 = AVERAGE work, competent execution of ideas but not pushing conventions, craftsmanship acceptable with no outstanding qualities, overall investment fulfills requirement but no risk-taking apparent, no evidence of extra time invested to strengthen technical and conceptual issues

.5–1.4 = BELOW AVERAGE, little involvement in exploration of ideas or misunderstanding of assignment with little attention to craftsmanship

0 = FAILING, no attempt to articulate ideas and total lack of regard for craftsmanship

Students are required to write two self-evaluations of their work in the course to be turned in for the midterm meeting and the final day of class. It should be 1-2 pages long and typed. Students must turn these in or receive an incomplete.

### **Supplies**

One **blank page journal (no lined paper please)** for daily drawings/photos/stories/notes (**7x10" minimum**), **large drawing pad (white paper - 18x24")**, **large pad of newsprint (18x24 min)**, **4 graphite pencils (3B-6B, no H's)**, **compressed charcoal (soft)**, **erasers (gum & kneaded)**, **sharpener**, **glue stick**, digital camera or phone with camera (digital cameras can be borrowed for free from Media Services. Course fees will cover cutting boards, x-acto knives, old magazines, large rolls of paper, digital ink and paper.

## Miscellaneous

If you choose to drop the course, you are responsible for reporting the change to the registrar's office. If you stop coming to class and do not contact the registrar, you will end up receiving a failing grade even if you attended only once.

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), temporarily located in Cherry Parkes 206.

Additional information can also be found by visiting

[http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc\\_about.cfm/](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm/)

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS) functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from DSS. If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522, or visit [http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss\\_about.cfm/](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm/)

**Jan 4** - Introductions. Review course syllabus. Discuss journaling. Discuss the role of art in healing and social change. Body meditation and drawing exercise. Body Outline/Diagram – work in pairs. Share with your partner something you like about your body and something you dislike. Write down your experience of this process in your journal. Discussion.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWKXit\\_3rpQ#t=82](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWKXit_3rpQ#t=82)

**Homework: Take home the body outline and fill it with words, drawings, photos. Draw from the inside out. How do you feel at this moment – find the edge between personal iconography and self-revelation. Notice the difference between illustration and expression. Read the following:**

[http://www.edreferral.com/body\\_image.htm#what is body image](http://www.edreferral.com/body_image.htm#what is body image)

**Jan 6** – Slide show that includes work by Jenny Saville, Rachel Lewis, Paula Modersohn Becker, Eleanor Antin, Hannah Wilke, Jo Spence, Carolee Schneeman, Penelope Goodfriend, Nancy Fried, Guerilla Girls, Womanhouse, Valie Export, Cindy Sherman, Shigeo Kubota, Alice Neel, Niki de Sainte-Phalle, Alison Saar, Tanja Ostojic, Judy Chicago, Kiki Smith, Lorna Simpson, Laura Aguilar, Catherine Opie, Jana Sterbak, Janine Antoni, Tee Corinne, Laurie Toby Edison, Orlan, Spencer Tunick, Young Soon Min, Mariona Barkus, Margaret Lazzari, Zizi Raymond, Lauren Greenfield, Marina Abramovic, Vanessa Beecroft and Frida Kahlo. Body meditation. Begin contour drawings of hands. Discuss visual grammar. Look at work on these pages:

<http://www.saelon.com/digitalphotographs/bodyimages/bodyimages.html>

<http://flavorwire.com/402681/10-diverse-body-positive-artworks-about-women/10>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fULtU2NfPQA>

**Homework:** Practice contour drawings on large sheets of paper. Read:

<http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/2013/10/what-percentage-of-women-are-satisfied-with-their-body-image-survey-says/>

**Jan 11** – Bring in FIRST DRAFT of body outlines for discussion. Continue practice of contour drawings on large paper– do feet. Draw another person’s feet.

**Homework:** On large sheet of paper do contour drawing of hands and feet. Meditate before you start. Think about the composition/design (and what makes an interesting one), overlapping, changes in scale, going of the edge, line quality. Begin to distinguish between seeing vs. looking vs. feeling. Read: <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/weightless/2010/04/body-image-beautiful-art-qa-with-elizabeth-patch-of-more-to-love/> Look at: <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/09/living/carol-rossetti-women-illustrations/index.html>

**Jan 13** – Slide show: self-portraiture and feminist history slide show. Discussion about the history of figure study and the objectification of the body. Draw partners with contour style posing for each other (clothed), and finish with some practice in Gesture Drawings. **Homework:** Draw self-portrait using contour. Reading: <http://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/men-and-body-image-bmartin/> Look at: <http://www.cpp.edu/~plin/women/womenart.html>  
Watch: <http://vimeo.com/18985647>  
Look at: <http://figuredrawings.com/>

**Jan 20** – Figure study with nude model – Contour and gesture drawings. **Homework:** Practice drawing from photos using contour and gesture. Reading: <http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2015/01/diet-culture-an-introduction-condemnation/>

**Jan 25** – Figure study with nude model - Gesture and contour drawing **Homework:** Practice gesture drawing of bodies in motion. Reading: <http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2014/11/mom-dad-meet-my-eating-disorder/>

**Jan 27** – Figure study with nude model – Gesture & Value Studies **Homework:** Practice gesture drawing of bodies in motion. Values studies. Reading: <http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2014/12/skinny-women-fat-paychecks-weight-discrimination-in-the-office/>

**Feb 1** – Figure study with nude model – Value Studies. Reading: [http://www.salon.com/2014/07/10/fat\\_shaming\\_women\\_is\\_unhelpful\\_insensitive\\_and\\_downright\\_sad/?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=socialflow](http://www.salon.com/2014/07/10/fat_shaming_women_is_unhelpful_insensitive_and_downright_sad/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=socialflow)

**Feb 3** – Feedback session on Body Outlines and drawing portfolio. Introduce Photo/text project. **Homework:** Write self-evaluation. Prepare portfolio and bring to class on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Send midterm evaluation via email by Feb 8th.

**Feb 8** – Midterm individual conferences. Films in class (make notes in journal for discussion on Feb 15<sup>th</sup>) **Homework:** Reading: <http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2014/11/why-the-media-still-doesnt-get-lesbianism-right/>  
<http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2014/12/working-while-black-10-racial-microaggressions-experienced-in-the-workplace/>

**Feb 10** – Draw in class: “model for each other day”, fully clothed.

**Homework:** <http://www.bodypositive.com/whatisit.htm>  
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/04/new-directions-bopo-movement/>  
<http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2013/11/therese-shechter-on-sexuality-abstinence-and-how-to-lose-your-virginity/> Bring finished Body Outlines to class for public display on the 18th. Search magazines for ads that objectify the body and bring them into class on the 18th

**Feb 17**– Media Literacy discussion. Do photocollage or culture jamming exercise with a partner (put finished piece in journal – make two copies, one for you and your partner).

Slide talk of photo/text projects. Hang finished Body Outlines in atrium and discuss readings. Assign collaborative projects. **Homework:** Reading: <http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2014/12/hey-facebook-ditch-the-body-shaming-emoticons/>

**Photo-text project:** The photo-text project involves a SERIES of photos – a minimum of four.

- The series of photos have a conceptual and aesthetic relationship to each other. Rhythm, composition and the rest of visual grammar is involved in this project.
- You will need to think about different ways to exhibit a series - Please think about using different forms such as an artist's book, a site-specific photo/text series, performance and installation.
- Intention, context and audience should inform the decisions you make about this series.
- You can use text inside the image itself or outside the image.
- It is ideal if you think about a public site for this work - it is not just for our classroom.
- Think about your goal or intention for the piece (are you raising troubling or confusing questions? are you illustrating an experience you've witnessed or had yourself? are you exploring a nightmare? are you wanting to be provocative? are you wanting to create dialog?).
- Think about your audience. Try and imagine them confronting your image in public space. What is the best context for you to find this particular audience?
- Let me know if you are still confused.
- Start working on this NOW. Do not wait. Get a camera, and start shooting images. Let the images tell you where you need to go. Do NOT wait for inspiration to hit. You need to be generating images first, and then ideas will flow.
- Free cameras are in the media center (Mattress Factory - 3rd floor) for those of you who don't have them. They will help you figure out how to use them.

Option #2 - CULTURE JAM series - Probably it is best to think about these as a series of posters. You will need to get feedback on each one before you print them large.

Option #3 - COLLAGE SERIES - It is important to think about display for this project as well. I would recommend scanning them, and printing them large - but only after you get feedback on the small version.

**Homework:** Develop concept for Photo/Text piece about the body. Prepare your presentation about artist dealing with body image. Finish photocollage. Read:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/13/fashion/13nimoy.html?ex=1179633600&en=52e6c30d>

**Feb 22** – Collaborative presentations. Feedback on first draft of photo-text projects as needed.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series.

**Feb 24** – Collaborative presentations. Feedback on first draft of photo-text projects as needed.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series.

**Feb 29** – Collaborative presentations. Feedback on first draft of photo-text projects as needed.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series. Improve journal.

**Mar 2** – Final Feedback session on first draft of photo-text projects.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series. Improve journal.

**Mar 7** – Work Session.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series. Improve journal.

**Mar 9** – Presentation of final photo/text projects – Submit journal and final self-evaluation.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series. Improve journal.

**Mar 14** – Return journals – final discussion.

**Homework:** Work on photo/text series. Improve journal.

### **\*How to Make a Strong Journal**

1. Make notes that are REFLECTIONS about the class discussions - not just what was said, but how YOU feel about them. If you disagree with the dominant opinions in class, but aren't clear why, write about that. If you feel lost, write about that. The great thing about journals is that you are writing for yourself, and developing your voice. If your buttons get pushed, and you are feeling shy to respond, the journal gives you a venue in which to shout, cry, whine, argue or rally support. It is one of the most important tools I can offer you in this course, and journaling can truly help you the rest of your life, if you allow its power in, even in a small way.

2. Make a collage or drawing based on some of the ideas expressed in class or in the readings, at least twice a week.). For more inspiration about how to bend your journal to your will and to lose your inhibitions, please ask me for examples of journals and journaling videos.

3.If your journal is not feeling like it is yours (you have discovered you don't like its shape or color or texture), cut the pages out that you have written and drawn on, and paste them into a journal that really feels like home. You can make your own book using string, thread, wire, an old shoe lace, and a hole punch or a drill. Nothing worse than spending time in a "space" that feels shabby or tentative or NOT YOU. Find some colors that speak to your mood, paint them in the margins of the pages you have just written on.

4. Glue in assorted things you find during the day: like fabric with textures and colors that speak to what you just wrote, leaves, buttons, paper clips, notes you find on the sidewalk. Make tabs, or pockets, or sew things in. Create hidden pages and fold outs. Record these moments in time that will never be repeated.

5. Although the journal project is not scrap booking, you may think this process is similar. Some people HATE scrap booking, so do an anti-scrapbook (what would that look like?). Do some parodies or satires about the whole process.

6. If you come to class bored, you can always open your journal and slip away into its pages. I never complain when students are working in their journals during class time.

7. Use your journal as a place to dream about the world you would love to live in where body image issues are all about celebration of the body as a temple.
8. Remember to write down notes to the readings. If you haven't had time to read all the articles listed in the syllabus, read them now. Put in your thoughts about what you reading. Don't self-censor.
9. But remember THIS journal is not your diary. If you need a place to tell your innermost personal thoughts about your current life challenges (other than those related to the class topic), get another journal for that (OR you can create special pages that are hidden, pockets or envelopes in this journal that are off limits for anyone to read, including me).
10. **Finally, your journal is an important part of your grade, and is truly an open-book exam.** If your projects aren't going well, you can vent in the journal. If you have ideas for site-specific installations, and other forms, you can diagram them in the journal. If you are worried or excited about a project write about it there. USE it everyday if possible. Make it a discipline. You will be amazed how it blossoms for you.

### Bibliography

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- Poulton, Terry , **No Fat Chicks: How Big Business Profits by Making Women Hate Their Bodies – and How to Fight Back**. Secaucus, NJ: Carol Pub. Group, c1997
- Philips, Jan, **Divining the Body: Reclaim the Holiness of Your Physical Self**, Skylight Paths, 2005.
- Seid, Roberta Pollack, **Never Too Thin: Why Women Are at War with Their Bodies**, NY: Prentice Hall Press, 1989
- Stearns, Peter N., **Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West**, NY: NYU Press, 1997
- Thone, Ruth Raymond , **Fat – A Fate Worse Than Death: Women, Weight, and Appearance**, New York : The Haworth Press, 1997
- Wann, Marilyn, **Fat!So?Because You Don't Have to Apologize for Your Size**, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1998
- Wolf, Naomi, **The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women**, Perrenial, 2002

## Websites

<http://flavorwire.com/402681/10-diverse-body-positive-artworks-about-women/10>

[www.bodypositive.com/](http://www.bodypositive.com/)

<http://www.jeankilbourne.com/>

[www.edreferral.com/body\\_image.htm](http://www.edreferral.com/body_image.htm)

[www.adiosbarbie.com/](http://www.adiosbarbie.com/)

<http://www.saelon.com/digitalphotographs/bodyimages/bodyimages.html>

<http://www.fatso.com/>

<http://www.ecclectica.ca/issues/2006/1/index.asp?Article=28>

<http://www.van.at/howl/junction/kont02/kont42.htm>

<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/perspace/images/1/>

<http://www.assemblylanguage.com/reviews/Beecroft.html>

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<http://www.vanessabeecroft.com/#>

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~ator/Spencer%20Tunick%20Experience%20Barcelona/The%20Spencer%20Tunick%20Experience.htm>

<http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/features/kuspit/kuspit6-10-16.asp>

## Artists who will inspire your work

Jenny Saville, Cindy Sherman, Rachel Lewis, Eleanor Antin, Jo Spence, Penelope Goodfriend, Nancy Fried, Guerilla Girls, Womanhouse, Valie Export, Carolee Schneeman, Shigeko Kubota, Alice Neel, Niki de Sainte-Phalle, Alison Saar, Tanja Ostojic, Judy Chicago, Kiki Smith, Lorna Simpson, Laura Aguilar, Catherine Opie, Jana Sterbak, Janine Antoni, Tee Corinne, Laurie Toby Edison, Paula Modersohn Becker, Orlan, Spencer Tunick, Mariona Barkus, Margaret Lazzari, Zizi Raymond, Lauren Greenfield, Frida Kahlo, Marina Abramovic, Vanessa Beecroft, Larry Kirkwood, Hannah Wilke, Young Soon Min.

**Possible topics for collaborative teams:** eating disorders, diet industry, the beauty industry, the exercise industry, causes of obesity and the media/politics surrounding, size acceptance and body positivity movement, body shame, disability issues in relation to body image, race/ethnicity in relation to body image, sexuality and body image, fat oppression and LGBTQ issues in relation to body image. It is suggested that the collaborative project is part oral presentation or facilitated discussion, with an interactive exercise.