

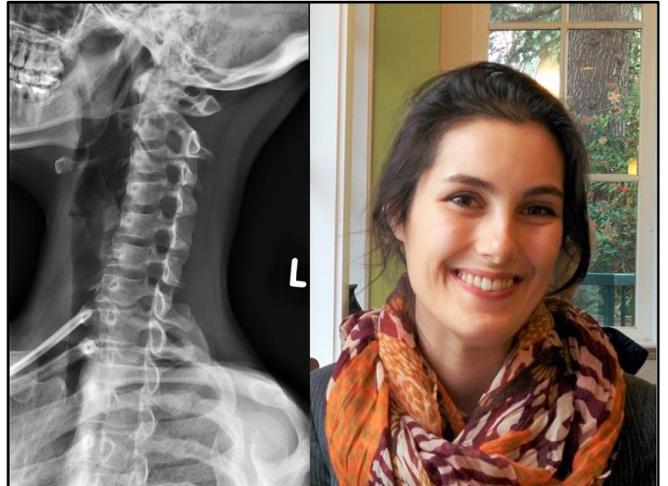


University
of Victoria

GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Chiropractic Care and Yoga: Conceptualisations and Representations of Skeletal Bodies



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Monday, November 14th, 2016

11:30 am – 12:50 pm

Cornett Building, Room A229

Canadian popular culture generally depicts skeletons as ghoulish, despite their essential role in life. From ‘skeletons in closets (or cupboards)’ to spinelessness, the bony body features pejoratively in our language—someone ‘has guts’ or ‘tough skin’ (i.e. the skeletal attributes become invisible). Visually, skeletons come through in broader concepts of illness, poverty, and trauma; outside of medical, scientific imaging (and images), the skeleton is a sign of morbidity and mortality. We have tended to think about skeletons as sites of injury and pain, indicators of growth, age, and pathology, and (in the case of chiropractic care) as a site for the healing of bodies.

Skeletal bodies may manifest (or may ‘materialise’) themselves in ways that go beyond injury and symptoms of ageing, and tending to this ‘materialisation’ may help us gain a more complex understanding of how individuals are ‘embodied’. I use anthropological concepts of materiality, bodily-ness, and health to examine how ‘skeletal bodies’ are apprehended/tended to among practitioners and patients of chiropractic care and yoga. Specifically, I ask: 1) How is the human skeleton conceptualised and represented by specialists (yoga instructors and chiropractors) in these two disciplines? 2) How do specialists’ views of the skeleton differ from those of their clients? 3) How do these views of the skeleton shape the health practices of both specialists and clients?

I theorize the skeleton as a critical space of the body, a part of the internal material world that shapes not only the body as an object, but how we are in the world as subjects. I will explore how working with the skeleton as an integral part of one’s embodiment may influence current health practices surrounding the body in Western Canada. To do this, I use theories of materiality and embodiment to examine how skeletal bodies (are) ‘surface(d)’. To answer the research questions, I will use ethnographic methods such as semi-structured interviews, participant observation, as well as visual research methods to explore how skeletal bodies may ‘surface’ (Taylor 2005).

EVERYONE WELCOME.

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