

ANTH 483

Anthropology of the Body

INSTRUCTOR: Cassandre Campeau-Bouthillier

Course Description and Objectives:

Anthropology of the Body is intended to disrupt, provoke, and enrich how we think about bodies and how we construct 'the body'. While we tend to think of bodies as natural and 'taken for granted', this course will examine how bodies are culturally, historically, politically, and economically constructed. We will examine how disciplines both within and outside of anthropology have contributed to how we currently think about and discuss bodies and embodiment.

The course builds on current and historical constructions of embodiment in anthropology as well as disciplines outside of anthropological work to create a ground for understanding how bodies can be approached both theoretically and in the field. In this course, students will learn to think critically about how bodies are conceptualised in anthropological theories and different ways in which bodies are understood in various cultural practices and contexts. We will examine how bodies are not only 'talked about' but also presented in various cultural and historical practices.

Students will learn how to distinguish between different notions of bodies and embodiment across history and cultures, and how these contribute to current anthropological theory and practice; examine how bodies are constructed in our own context (Victoria, BC); be reflexive about our own notions of embodiment and how these affect how we think and act around bodies.

Skills Development:

Students will:

- learn key terms and concepts related to bodies and embodiment in anthropology
- develop knowledge to think critically about how bodies are conceptualised and examined in different cultural and historical contexts
- learn how distinctions between bodies as natural and bodies as cultural aren't always as clear-cut as they seem
- distinguish and think critically about how bodies are (re)presented visually in different contexts, and how these representations serve to produce particular knowledge(s) about bodies.
- Apply this knowledge and critical thinking by writing a research paper on a topic related to bodies and bodily practices.