Over the past few decades, the body has attracted intense scholarly interest across many disciplines, from critical theory to anthropology to philosophy. What has emerged is a dynamic conception of the body shaped by discourses and institutions, practices and technologies, that cannot be reduced to a single fixed physical form. For historians, this “corporeal turn” has manifested in works inquiring about state interest in the movement and reproduction of bodies, the representation of bodies in visual culture, the body as an object of scientific interest and the experience of individual bodies in the past. Drawing on foundational work by Foucault, Canguilhem and Butler, this course adopts a critical historical perspective to examine how notions of human difference have been inscribed onto bodies as the result of multiple, intersecting regimes of power— including race, gender, sexuality, ability. We will explore the boundaries of the human body in discussions on the relationship between the living and dead, bodies and machines, and conceptions of the body in the non-Western world. In particular, we will pay attention to the role of scientific expertise in drawing distinctions between the ‘normal’ and ‘pathological’ and ask how the body as a kind of methodology can help open us up to new conceptions of the past.

**Grading**

- Attendance and active participation 25%
- 8 reaction papers 30%
  (2-3 pages, double spaced, due to TED every Wednesday by 9 pm)
- Discussion lead 10%
- Final essay (15 pages double spaced) 35%
Books for purchase.


Calendar.

Week 1: What does it mean to talk about the history of the body?


Further reading:


**Week 2: Normal, pathological and monstrous bodies**


**Further reading:**


**Week 3: Body politics and biopower**


Michel Foucault. The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception (London 1973)

**Further reading:**


**Week 4: Bodies and sex(uality)**


Arnold Davidson, “Chapter 2: Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality” (pp. 50-92) in *The Emergence of Sexuality.* Harvard University Press, 2001.


**Further reading:**


**Week 5: Bodies and gender**


**Further reading:**

Laqueur, Thomas and Caroline Callagher (red.), *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley 1987)

**Week 6: Bodies and race**


**Further reading:**


**Week 7: Bodies and colonial power**


Further reading:


Week 8: Bodies and Disability


Further reading:


Week 9: Dead bodies


**Further reading:**


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**Week 10: Bodies and machines (Class meeting date TBD)**


**Further reading:**

