The purpose of this interview project is to give you the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding about issues related to the body from the perspective of another person and how he or she goes about living in his or her body and/or making the body part of his/her life’s work. You will be examining the intersections of autobiography, diversity, identity, oppression and privilege as related to bodies. When thinking about whom you want to interview, you may want to consider what issues you feel passionate and curious about or even afraid of.

You will need to consider what themes and topics most interest you related to the body and what you feel you would benefit from learning more about. You may conduct interviews with people around the following topics and issues. In the list below, I also include people who have careers related to the body. You may also choose other topics if you see me beforehand and discuss it with me.

- person with a chronic illness
- person with a disability
- a person very aware that she or he is near death or a loved one of that person
- hospice worker
- funeral home director
- person in recovery from addiction
- person who has been involved in self-injurious behaviors
- person who has undergone profound grief (i.e. a survivor of a homicide)
- survivor of trauma, sexual violence, etc.
- advocate for survivors of sexual violence
- person with PTSD, perhaps from intimate violence or military related, etc.
- person grappling with gender identity
- person grappling with sexual orientation or someone who has recently come out
- a health practitioner such as a midwife, doula, therapist, someone who works in the area of reproductive rights, etc.
- yoga or meditation teacher
- massage therapist
- a surgeon
- a dancer
- a person who has struggled with an eating problem or some other form of self-injury or someone who leads support groups for this
- a person in the sex work industry
- a much older person; the person needs to be over 70 years old.
- a formerly homeless person
- a surrogate mother or a man who is partnered with a woman who served as a surrogate
- a person or couple who hired a surrogate to carry a child
These are the guidelines for choosing a person with whom you want to build bridges:

1. You are not a part of this community already and the issue/topic is new to you. The point is to step out of your comfort zone. If for some reason you really want to interview someone with an issue similar or very close to your own, and that may be most meaningful to you, you will need to provide reasons for this. (Please see due dates below about this so you can submit a strong proposal).

2. You have questions about this topic and or this community—some of which may even make you feel a bit uncomfortable, and you are willing to use this as a unique opportunity to ask new questions and explore.

What you will do: Frame a set of issues, concerns, and questions you would like to address in the interview, using our class conversations as a backdrop. Tape record the interview if at all possible and only if the person agrees to it. Transcribe the interview. Analyze the interview for major themes. You will need to turn in a copy of the interview transcript. Please note that your actual paper is separate from this interview transcription; however, you will use your transcript as one of your data sources for quoting in the actual paper. Your actual paper will be four pages maximum.

In the paper, you will, of course, refer to aspects of your interview and you should quote the person you spoke with so your paper includes pithy passages. In fact, you may choose to think of your interview as the primary data on which your actual paper is built. Qualitative researchers in sociology do this all the time; they enter the field, meet the people, talk with them and make reports based on these observations and in-depth interviews.

In your paper, you will need to do more than summarize the interview; you will also need to construct an integrated paper and you will need to make creative and critical connections to class materials such as readings, lecture presentations and discussions, speakers, and films. You should plan to quote the sources to which you make connections. You must use the readings! Depending on the topic you choose, it may be beneficial for you to read ahead in the course; for example, if you want to do a paper related to self-injury or mental illness, the books we are reading about that come later in the course.

If the person you interview is connected to a particular organization, you may want to ask this person if you can spend any time there or if they will be sponsoring any events or meetings you can attend. If you are at all interested in community work, social and human services, activism, or eventual jobs or internships, this project could provide you with a beneficial opportunity to first get acquainted with who and what is in the area. It is a chance to think globally, locally, and personally.
Due dates:

1) Tuesday, September 15th: Bring a brief paragraph to class indicating what you plan to investigate and why this is significant to you. Also, identify whom you plan to interview and when you plan to conduct this meeting. Good planning on your part is crucial to your success with this project!

2) The finished paper is due Thursday, October 29th