ASSIGNMENT
BODY JOURNAL

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“A miracle is often the willingness to see the common in an uncommon way.”

—Noah Benshea

The purpose of this assignment is for you to take what we are learning in class and use it as a springboard for deeply noticing, reflecting on, and analyzing the body.

You might approach this assignment in a variety of ways. You might purposely set out to conduct some observations at particular places and record what you see at the beach, at stores, restaurants, parks, classes, in your family, at the workplace, place of worship, etc. Or, you might let these observations emerge naturally and spontaneously as you go about your everyday lives. You might find yourself reading a magazine, listening to a song, watching a television program, going to a movie, being out on a date, surfing the net, being in a class, attending an event or meeting or family gathering, and all of these situations can provide ample opportunities to notice something about how bodies are constructed and portrayed, how issues of the body are dealt with in the social world, how social institutions transmit messages about bodies, etc. I hope that ultimately this journal exercise will assist you in seeing your daily life experiences in new and fresh ways so that things that might have previously gone unnoticed will become worthy of question and deeper examination.

You may also choose to use this journal as an opportunity to do something a bit more personal and to create a body challenge for yourself. You may be struggling with issues related to eating problems, sexuality, addiction, self-injury, grief from the death of a loved one, trauma (grief and trauma are often stored in the body as we will see throughout the course), a disability, chronic illness, a miscarriage, etc. and as a result, you may be exploring ways to live more fully in your own body, perhaps trying to create a program for yourself such as meditation, yoga, relaxation, reducing harm, etc. that might connect you back more fully, in a more present way, to your body and mind. You might want to start a new practice that could be healthy and/or you might want to stop a habit that is hurting or sabotaging you.

The class helps us to see how much is stored in the body and how writing and reflecting can be ways to examine this and work through it. So, you might use this journal as a way to hold yourself accountable to an important life goal, to healing, wholeness, recovery, etc. I offer this option since I do want these writing reflections to be useful for you, and I want you to be able to use tools of the class toward enhancing and enriching your health and your well-being.
You may also choose to do some entries very explicitly related to a classroom discussion we had, a speaker we had, or a film we saw as doing this will reveal active reflection and engagement with themes related to studying the body.

And, you may choose to do a combination and experiment with different types of entries.

**REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU STRUCTURE THE JOURNAL, PLEASE NOTE; THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT:** You will need to go beyond description to an analysis. You must try to make meaning of your observations and reflections. Draw upon the assigned readings, lectures, discussions, concepts, vocabulary, and any supplementary material such as videos and speakers to support your analysis. You should try to occasionally quote from these sources to show an active conversation you are having with the material. You need to do this even if you choose the personal body challenge!

When you submit written work, please be sure that it is stapled with no plastic covers, has page numbers, is in the correct page order, is double spaced in 12 point Times font, in black ink, and with one inch margins. No late work will be accepted.

Good luck, and I hope you have an interesting and meaningful time doing this!!