

AML 2410- 10490 (Section #8974)
Body Matters: The Body in Contemporary American Culture

Instructor Name: Burcu Kuheylyan

Course meeting times: Tuesday Periods 8-9 (3.00-4.55) + Thursday Period 9 (4.05-4.55).

Classroom: MAT 0115

Office Hours and location: TU/TH. 02.00-03.00 (TURLINGTON, office #4339)

Course website: Canvas (elearning.ufl.edu)

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Course Description:

Although we lead bodily lives, we rarely question the implications of this fact. American media and social media bombard us daily with normative ideals of beauty, fitness, sex appeal, and health. Contrarily, medical and academic attention to the body tends to focus on non-normative orientations like having disabled, enhanced, or transgendered bodies. Such renderings also emphasize physical discomfort and disruptions such as injury, illness, and aging—experiences that heighten our awareness of inhabiting vulnerable bodies. Drawing on essays about body matters, this course considers academic and media discourse to explore key dimensions of living bodily lives in contemporary American culture. We will examine everyday practices of physically sustaining and pampering, financially investing in, and fashionably dressing the body. We will also consider important issues such as race, gender, and disability. Essays that celebrate subjective individual experience are vital to our course’s hybrid approach toward body matters. Nora Ephron’s humorous “A Few Words About Breasts: Shaping Up Absurd” finds its place on our syllabus alongside more contemplative pieces by Laura Kipnis (“Sexual Paranoia”), Thomas Chatterton Williams (“Black and Blue and Blond”), and Barbara Ehrenreich (“Welcome to Cancerland”).

Important Notes on the Assigned Readings and Visual Material to be Utilized in Class

- Most readings for the course are short and will be available either on Canvas (as PDFs) or online. The hyperlinks on the course calendar will take you to the websites of online readings. There is no required textbook.
- Students are responsible for accessing and reading assigned material before class, as well as for keeping them at their disposal during class discussions.
- Some readings include explicit details about the essayists’ unpleasant experiences. These readings are marked with an asterisk (*) to alert students to sensitive and *potentially* disturbing content matter.
- While these are not listed among readings, the course will utilize visual media and material. Some of these images may contain body parts and/or document bodies that have sustained damage.

Course Objectives: During the course of this class, students will:

- Develop a literary critical idiom in reading and discussing examples of the essay genre;
- Grasp both the conventions of this genre and the nuances of approach that make the American essay a highly personal, dynamic, and evolving genre;
- Learn to identify and critically discuss essayists' rhetorical strategies and the latter's argumentative/persuasive function within texts;
- Learn how to address the needs of their readers when producing critical analyses of texts;
- Learn to evaluate and revise their work in response to instructor and peer feedback;
- Develop a new appreciation for the ubiquitous uses of the essay and continue the discipline of reading/writing them beyond this course.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts:

No required textbook. See course calendar below for a list of assigned readings by date.

Assignments (see the last page of syllabus for the grading rubric):

You will compose:

➤ Five 300-word responses to Canvas discussion questions	1,500 words
➤ Two reading reports of 500 words each	1,000 words
➤ One close-reading essay	1,200 words
➤ One comparative analysis essay	1,200 words
➤ <u>And, one personal essay</u>	1,100 words
	<hr/> 6,000 words

Responses to Discussion Questions on CNVS (5 x 300 = 1,500 words):

Each week on Friday, I will open a new board on Canvas and post 10 discussion questions on the upcoming week's assigned readings. Between weeks 2 and 7 (Oct. 3), students will choose one (1) question of their choice (preferably) each week and post a *minimum* 300-word response. If your response relates to a reading assigned for Tuesday, it should be posted by midday on Monday. When responding to a reading assigned for Thursday, post it by midday on Wednesday (the discussion board will be automatically locked at 12.00). Student responses will help kick off our discussions in class. The board will also allow students to directly engage with each other's ideas and help sharpen their critical reading/writing skills. ***It is your responsibility to complete all five 300-word responses by the end of Week 7.*** Failure to do so in a timely manner will cost you word credits.

Reading Reports (2 x 500 = 1,000 words):

Students will compose one reading report of (minimum) 500 words for a choice of their reading in Unit II (Seeing and Being Seen: Objectification, Appearance, and Truth), and another for Unit II (Endangered Bodies: Life, Death, Ailment and Its Co-optation). The reports will either focus on one of the themes highlighted in the unit title or another theme that students have identified in their chosen essay. Rather than simply summarize the content of the essay, the reports will discuss the significance of the theme under focus in the entire essay, as well as demonstrate how it informs or partakes in the author's rhetorical strategies.

Personal Essay (1,100 words):

This assignment gives students the freedom to write about any dimension of their lives. They may choose to write on: (1) a social issue of great importance to them; (2) a challenge they overcame and learned from; (3) a rite of passage experience; (4) a role model or another figure that left an enduring mark on their lives; (5) or, a chance encounter that made them re-examine their values and attitudes toward life. Remember that you'll be sharing your work with your peers and instructor. *If you think your content can potentially make you feel vulnerable or uncomfortable, reconsider your priorities.* The grading of this essay will prize effective use of rhetorical strategies, language, sense of economy, and audience awareness.

Close-reading Analytical Essay (1,200 words):

Students will choose a reading from the first three units (one they haven't written a report on), and *identify a passage, which involves some ambiguity, conflict, dilemma, or a possibility.* These rhetorical ambiguities may be deliberate or unintended by the author. They, nevertheless, provide great opportunities for critics (you!) to take a closer look into the use of language, themes, symbols, or people and their motivations. Your job is to critically explore this ambiguity and to make a specific claim about its source with close references to supporting textual, historical, and contextual evidence. This assignment will prize your ability to go beyond obvious observations (summary), and cultivate argumentative and close-reading skills.

Comparative Analysis Essay (1,200 words):

For this assignment, students will bring together two essays of their choice based on (1) a theme or symbol they share; (2) an issue they address; (3) a situation in which the essayists have found themselves in; (4) or an affect/emotion the reader is left with. At least one of your essays should come from Units IV, V, or VI. While emphasizing the similarities between your chosen texts is of utmost significance to justify writing a comparative essay on them, you also need to pay attention to differences of context, attitude, and rhetorical situations. Comparative essays entail, as well as test your abilities in, formulating a specific and meaningful thesis.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.

2. Attendance: Please come to class on time and use your absence allowances wisely. If you're missing a class, let the instructor know in advance. Be aware that:

- More than 3 absences per semester will earn you a lowered course grade;
- More than 4 absences per semester will automatically fail you, unless you have an official, documented excuse (i.e., doctor's note or UF sponsored events).
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Important: Regardless of absences, it is your job to make yourself aware of all due dates. If you miss class, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

3. Assignments: To pass the course, **all required coursework** listed in the syllabus **has to be submitted on or before their respective due dates.** Papers are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline.

4. Late Papers/Assignments: A whole letter grade will be deducted from all papers and assignments submitted within 24 hours of the missed due date. Papers and assignments that are submitted later than that will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. **If you are struggling with an assignment or think you will not be able to meet a deadline, please talk to me about the possibility of an extension at least 24 hours before the due date.**

5. Classroom Etiquette: Students come from various cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. It is required that you display open-mindedness and respect in class at all times, but particularly during class discussions and group work, where ideas that differ from your own may be presented. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal from the class (an absence for that day).

6. Email Correspondence: Please only use your UF email to contact me, and refrain from sending me messages on Canvas (as these might be missed and cause delays in response).

7. In-Class Work: Active participation is a crucial part of success and your final grade in this course. You are expected to contribute meaningfully and constructively to each class session. Since discussions help us better understand the material, you should come to class prepared to talk and ask questions about the readings. You are also expected to work in small groups and participate in class and group discussions. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up.

8. *Electronic Devices Policy:* Laptops and tablets are allowed, but they should be used only to access course material. Texting and surfing the internet while class is in session is not only rude but it is also distracting, both to you and your instructor. You're advised to limit your use of devices and to be mentally present in class time. Cell phones should be either turned off or placed in silent mode.

9. *Paper Format & Submission:* All papers have to be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) or PDF (.pdf) documents to Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner.

All assignments must have your name, assignment title, and the submission date printed on the top left-hand side of the first page. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins, pages numbered, and include a title representative of your argument. Be sure to staple papers before submitting hard copies.

10. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:* It is your responsibility to keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

11. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:* Plagiarism means using other people's words, sentences, and ideas without giving credit for (citing) it. It violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the UF Student Honor Code, which can be accessed here: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

12. *Appealing Grades:* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

13. *Course Evaluations:* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

14. *Do you have a Disability?* Students with disabilities, who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor early in the semester.

15. *Do you Find Yourself Struggling?* You're not alone. Ask for help. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

16. *Have You Been Subject to Unwanted Advances (Harassment)?* Know your rights and protect yourself (*UF's policy on Harassment*): UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

17. *Writing Studio:* If you seek additional help with your writing, the University Writing Studio is located in 339 Library West and available to all UF students free of charge. Please make sure to make an appointment before you go in.

COURSE CALENDAR

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the dates and readings listed in this schedule. Pay attention to Canvas and announcements in class.

	Readings and Due Dates
UNIT I	<i>Critical Excursions: The Essay Genre and Rhetorical Strategies</i>
	Week One
TU 8/20	Introduction + Syllabus Review + Rhetorical Strategies
TH 8/22	In-class exercises on Reading Rhetoric
	Week Two
TU 8/27	Instruction: The Essay Genre Exercises on Reading Visual Rhetoric (save & post link for your ad sample >> CNVS)
TH 8/29	Building a Critical Vocabulary: Embodiment
UNIT II	<i>Seeing and Being Seen: Objectification, Appearance, and Truth</i>
	Week Three
TU 9/3	Building a Critical Vocabulary: Gender <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , Chapter 3, 1972 (John Berger – PDF) “The Beauty Myth,” 1990 (Naomi Wolf – PDF)
TH 9/5	Building a Critical Vocabulary: Class and Taste “Clothing as a Sign System,” 1981 (Alison Lurie – PDF)
	Week Four
TU 9/10	Building a Critical Vocabulary: Race “Last Taboo,” 2016 (Wesley Morris – online)*
TH 9/12	“A Mask on the Face of Death,” 1988 (Richard Selzer – online)
	Week Five
TU 9/17	Building a Critical Vocabulary: Disability “If Only Your Stare Meant You Actually See Disabled People,” 2018 (Imani Barbarin – online) “On Being a Cripple,” 1986 (Nancy Mairs – online)
TH 9/19	Due: 10 PM - Reading Report I >> CNVS >> Assignments. “What Does It Cost to Tell the Truth?” 1997 (Riki Wilchins – PDF)*

UNIT III	<i>Endangered Bodies: Life, Death, Ailment and Its Cooptation</i>
	Week Six
TU 9/24	Due: Bring to Class 1st Draft of Personal Essay (peer-review) “Illness as Metaphor,” 1978 (Susan Sontag – PDF)
TH 9/26	Sontag’s “Illness as Metaphor” (continued)
	Week Seven
TU 10/1	Due: 10 PM – 2nd Draft of Personal Essay >> CNVS >> Assignments “Welcome to Cancerland,” 2011 (Barbara Ehrenreich – online) Workshop: How to Close-Read?
TH 10/3	“Talking AIDS to Death,” 1989 (Randy Shilts – online)
	Week Eight
TU 10/8	Due: Bring to Class 1st Draft of Closerreading Analytical Essay (peer-review) Workshop: How to Formulate Theses? “Gray Areas: Thinking with a Damaged Brain,” 2005 (Floyd Skloot – online)
TH 10/10	Due: 10 PM – Reading Report II >> CNVS >> Assignments Library Instruction (to be confirmed with Smathers)
UNIT IV	<i>Permeable Bodies: Ambivalence, Enchantment, and Transformation</i>
	Week Nine
TU 10/15	Due: 2nd Draft of Closerreading Analytical Essay - CNVS >> Assignments. Workshop: How to Formulate Effective Subclaims? “A Cyborg Manifesto,” 1985 (Donna Haraway – online)
TH 10/17	Class Canceled: Instructor will be out of state for a conference.
	Week Ten
TU 10/22	Haraway’s “A Cyborg Manifesto” (continued)
TH 10/24	Due 10 PM: Final Personal Essay >> CNVS >> Assignments “Thin Places,” 2015 (Jordan Kisner – online)
	Week Eleven
TU 10/29	Due: Bring to Class 1st Draft of Comparative Analysis Essay (peer-review). “Black and Blond and Blue,” 2015 (Thomas C. Williams – online)

TH 10/31	Due 10 PM: Final Closerreading Analytical Essay >> CNVS >> Assignments “Sex! Is a Verb,” 1997 (Riki Anne Wilchins – PDF)*
UNIT V	<i>The #MeToo Moment: Negotiating Rights, Trust, Paranoia, and Healing</i>
	Week Twelve
TU 11/5	Due: 10 PM – Final Closerreading Analytical Essay (CNVS >> Assignments “Rape,” 1974 (Diane Johnson – PDF) “The Longest War,” 2013 (Rebecca Solnit – online)
TH 11/7	Due 10 PM: 2nd Draft of Comparative Analysis Essay >> CNVS >> Assignments “On Not Liking Sex, 1986 (Nancy Mairs – PDF)
	Week Thirteen
TU 11/12	“Sexual Paranoia Strikes Academe,” 2015 (Laura Kipnis – online) “White Horse,” 2016 (Eliese Colette Goldbach – online)*
TH 11/14	“Right to Life: What Can the White Man Say to the Black Woman?” 2002 (Alice Walker – online PDF)
UNIT VI	<i>Growing Up Confused and Absurd In America</i>
	Week Fourteen
TU 11/19	“Growing Up Absurd: A Few Words About Breasts,” ‘72 (Nora Ephron – online)
TH 11/21	“High Heels” (Caryl Rivers – PDF)
	Week Fifteen
TU 11/26	Revision Workshop: Bring laptops to revise your comparative analysis paper.
TH 11/28	No class – Thanksgiving Break
	Week Sixteen
TU 12/3	“If You’re What You Eat, Then What Am I?” 1999 (Geeta Kothari – online)
TH 12/5	No class – Reading Day
FR 12/6	Due 10 PM: Final Comparative Analysis Paper >> CNVS >> Assignments

GRADING RUBRIC

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	C	2.0	73-76
A-	3.67	90-92	C-	1.67	70-72
B+	3.33	87-89	D+	1.33	67-69
B	3.0	83-86	D	1.0	63-66
B-	2.67	80-82	D-	0.67	60-62
C+	2.33	77-79	E	0.00	0-59

Note: A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>