

Somatic Material Culture (Anthropology 52421)

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Fridays 1:30-4:30 PM

This seminar explores forms of material culture that go into or onto the human body and practices that treat the body itself as material culture. In other words, it focuses on: (1) what I call "embodied material culture", meaning substances that are made to be ingested into the body (food, alcohol, and drugs) and become part of the person; (2) objects worn on the body (clothing, jewelry, armor, etc.) that constitute what Terry Turner called "the social skin"; and (3) forms of body modification through which people treat their physical being as a material object for creative expression or augmented utilitarian performance. The latter forms of modification would include such practices as tattooing, painting, piercing, scarification, plastic surgery, circumcision, gender reassignment surgery, skin bleaching, cranial shaping, foot binding, neck stretching, tooth shaping, body building, fasting, prosthetic enhancement, sports training, skill and body technique learning, and so forth. All of these forms of "somatic material culture" and their associated practices have a prominent role in the inculcation, expression, and performance of identity, although they operate in different ways. They also have a wide range of social and economic functions and consequences. The class will examine the comparative history/prehistory and ethnography of these forms of somatic material culture, looking at them through the lens of semiotics, practice theory, phenomenology, consumption, and other approaches as a way of assessing their cultural, social, and economic significance. Readings include theoretical statements, comparative analyses, and detailed empirical studies of historical and contemporary cases. For reasons of time limitations, this class focuses exclusively on the living body. However, I would also include the numerous treatments of the post-mortem body practiced around the world (funerary corpse treatment, body-part decoration and display, etc.) as part of the theme of somatic material culture, and this area would be equally appropriate for research papers.

Class requirements include:

1) Informed discussion of the assigned texts. Students will be divided into three groups, each of which will have responsibility for guiding discussion of a different set of texts each week. Of course, everyone should read all the articles for the week and be prepared to discuss them all.

 = Group A  = Group B  = Group C

2) Producing a 15-page research paper on an aspect of somatic material culture that will be due at the end of the course.

Students should do the readings for the first week ahead of the class session and come prepared to discuss the points raised in these general theoretical arguments, several of which are foundational for the field and will be important for discussions in later weeks. All readings are available in PDF form on the Canvas site.

Week 1: Definitions, goals, methods, some general theoretical statements

Mauss, Marcel (1973)[1935]. Techniques of the body. *Economy and Society* 2(1):70-88.

Turner, Terry (1980). The social skin. In *Not Work Alone: A Cross-Cultural View of Activities Superfluous to Survival*, edited by J. Cherfas, and R. Lewin, pp. 112-140. Beverly Hills, CA.

Falk, Pasi (1995). Written in the flesh. *Body and Society* 1(1):95-105.

Featherstone, Mike (1982). The body in consumer culture. *Theory, Culture & Society* 1(2):18-33.

MacCannell, Dean, and Juliet F. MacCannell (1987). The beauty system. In *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, edited by Nancy Armstrong, and Leonard Tennenhouse, pp. 206-238. Methuen, London.

Crossley, Nick (2005). Mapping reflexive body techniques: on body modification and maintenance. *Body and Society* 11(1):1-35.

Week 2: Embodied material culture: Food, drink, and drugs

Mary Douglas (1984). Standard social uses of food: introduction. In *Food in the Social Order*, ed. by Mary Douglas, pp. 1-39. New York: Russell Sage.

Lalonde, Marc P. (1992). Deciphering a meal again, or the anthropology of taste. *Social Science Information* 31(1):69-86.

Dietler, Michael (2007). Culinary encounters: food, identity, and colonialism. In *The Archaeology of Food and Identity*, edited by Katheryn C. Twiss, pp. 218-242. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

de Garine, Igor (1996). Food and the status quest in five African cultures. In *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Pauline Wilson Wiessner and Wulf Schiefenhövel, pp. 193–218. Berghahn Books, Oxford.

Harbottle, Lynn (1997). Taste and embodiment: the food preferences of Iranians in Britain. In *Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change*, edited by Helen Macbeth, pp. 175-185. Berghahn Books, Providence, RI.

de Solier, Isabelle (2013). Making the self in a material world: food and moralities of consumption. *Cultural Studies Review* 19(1):9–27.

- Dietler, Michael (2020). Alcohol as embodied material culture: anthropological reflections on the deep entanglement of humans and alcohol. In *Alcohol and Humans: A Long and Social Affair*, edited by Robin Dunbar, and Kimberley J. Hockings, pp. 299-319. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Hall, Timothy A. (2005). Pivo at the heart of Europe: beer-drinking and Czech identity. In *Drinking Cultures: Alcohol and Identity*, edited by Thomas M. Wilson, pp. 65-86. Berg, New York.
- Matthee, Rudi (1995). Exotic substances: the introduction and global spread of tobacco, coffee, cocoa, tea, and distilled liquor, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. In *Drugs and Narcotics in History*, edited by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, pp. 24-51. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Week 3: Dressing the body

- Hansen, Karen Tranberg (2004). The world in dress: anthropological perspectives on clothing, fashion, and culture. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33:369-392.
- Entwistle, Joanne (2000). *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge. Chapter 1: Addressing the Body, pp. 6-39.
- Comaroff, Jean (1996). The Empire's old clothes: fashioning the colonial subject. In *Cross-cultural Consumption: Global Markets and Local Realities*, edited by D. Howes, pp. 19-38.
- Gondola, Ch. Didier (1999). Dream and drama: the search for elegance among Congolese youth. *African Studies Review* 42(1):23-48.
- Alvarez, Luis (2008). *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Chapter 3: "Zoot style and body politics", pp. 77-112.
- Eckersley, Andrea, and Cameron Duff (2020). Bodies of fashion and the fashioning of subjectivity. *Body and Society* 26(4):35-61.
- Corrigan, Peter (2008). *The Dressed Society: Clothing, the Body and Some Meanings of the World*. Sage, London. Chapter 1 - Introduction, pp. 1-12.
- Loughran, Kristyne (2003). Jewelry, fashion, and identity: the Tuareg example. *African Arts* 36(1):52-65.

Week 4: Inscribing the body: tattooing, scarification, branding, etc.

Barron, Lee (2017). *Tattoo Culture: Theory and Contemporary Contexts*. Rowman and Littlefield, London. Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 3-49).

Sweetman, Paul (1999). Anchoring the (Postmodern) self? Body modification, fashion and identity. *Body and Society* 5(2-3):51-76.

Jones, C. P. (1987). Stigma: Tattooing and branding in Graeco-Roman antiquity. *Journal of Roman Studies* 77:139–155.

MacQuarrie, Charles (2000). Insular Celtic tattooing: history, myth and metaphor. In *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*, edited by Jane Caplan, pp. 32-45. Reaktion Books, London.

Kuwahara, Makiko (2005). *Tattoo: An Anthropology*. Berg, Oxford. Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-59).

Govenar, Arnold (1988). The variable context of Chicano tattooing. In *Marks of Civilization: Artistic Transformations of the Human Body*, edited by Arnold Rubin, pp. 209-218. Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA.

Garve, Roland, Miriam Garve, Jens C. Türp, Julius N. Fobil, and Christian G. Meyer (2017). Scarification in sub-Saharan Africa: social skin, remedy and medical import. *Tropical Medicine and International Health* 22(6):708-715.

Rosenblatt, Daniel (1997). The antisocial skin: structure, resistance, and "Modern Primitive" adornment in the United States. *Cultural Anthropology* 12(3):287-334.

Turner, Bryan S. (1999). The possibility of primitiveness: toward a sociology of body marks in cool societies. *Body and Society* 5(2-3):39-50.

Klesse, Christian (1999). 'Modern Primitivism': non-mainstream body modification and racialized representation. *Body and Society* 5(2-3):15-38.

Week 5: Body Projects: plastic surgery, skin lightening

Negrin, Llewellyn (2002). Cosmetic surgery and the eclipse of identity. *Body and Society* 8(4):21-42.

Pitts, Victoria L. (2006). The body, beauty, and psychosocial power. In *Bodies in the Making: Transgressions and Transformations*, edited by Nancy N. Chen, and Helen Moglen, pp. 28-46. New Pacific Press, Santa Cruz, CA.

Blum, Virginia L. (2006). Love thy neighbor, hate myself: the vicissitudes of affect in cosmetic surgery. In *Bodies in the Making: Transgressions and Transformations*, edited by Nancy N. Chen, and Helen Moglen, pp. 47-53. New Pacific Press, Santa Cruz, CA.

Henley, David, and Nathan Porath (2021). Body modification in East Asia: history and debates. *Asian Studies Review* 52(2):198-216.

Gulbas, Lauren E. (2012). Embodying racism: race, rhinoplasty, and self-esteem in Venezuela. *Qualitative Health Research* 23(3):326-335.

Blay, Yaba Amgborale (2011). Skin bleaching and global White supremacy: by way of introduction. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4(4):4-46.

Edmonds, Alexander (2007). 'The poor have the right to be beautiful': cosmetic surgery in neoliberal Brazil. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13(2):363-381.

Atkinson, Michael (2008). Exploring male femininity in the 'Crisis': men and cosmetic surgery. *Body and Society* 14(1):67-87.

Plemons, Eric (2019). Gender, ethnicity, and transgender embodiment: interrogating classification in facial feminization surgery. *Body and Society* 25(1):3-28.

Week 6: Modification through body building, fasting, eating, etc.

Monaghan, Lee (1999). Creating 'the perfect body': a variable project. *Body and Society* 5(2-3):267-290.

Wacquant, Loïc (1995). Why men desire muscles. *Body and Society* 1(1):163-179.

Bordo, Susan R. (1989). The body and the reproduction of femininity: a feminist appropriation of Foucault. In *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, edited by Alison Jaggar, and Susan R. Bordo, pp. 13-33. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.

Bordo, Susan R. (1990). Reading the slender body. In *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science*, edited by Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, pp. 83-112. Routledge, London.

Gooldin, Sigal (2008). Being anorexic: hunger, subjectivity, and embodied morality. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 22(3):274-296.

Lee, Sing (1996). Reconsidering the status of anorexia nervosa as a Western culture-bound syndrome. *Social Science and Medicine* 42(1):21-34.

Popenoe, Rebecca (2005). Ideal. In *Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession*, edited by Don Kulick, and Anne Meneley, pp. 9-28. Penguin, New York.

Week 7: Prosthetics, skeletal modification, tooth modification, etc.

Serlin, David (2004). *Replaceable You: Engineering the Body in Postwar America*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Introduction: Can humans be rebuilt? (pp. 1-20).

Messinger, Seth D. (2008). Anthropology and its individual, social, and cultural contributions to psychoprosthetics. In *Psychoprosthetics*, edited by Pamella Gallagher, Deirdre Desmond, and Malcolm MacLachlan, pp. 107-117. Springer, London.

Jarrassé, N., M. Maestrutti, G. Morel, and A. Roby-Brami (2015). Robotic prosthetics: moving beyond technical performance. *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine* 34(2):71-79.

Geller, Pamela L. (2011). Getting a head start in life: Pre-Columbian Maya cranial modification from infancy to adulthood. In *The Bioarchaeology of the Human Head: Decapitation, Decoration, and Deformation*, edited by Michelle Bonogofsky, pp. 241-261. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Blom, Deborah E. (2005). Embodying borders: human body modification and diversity in Tiwanaku society. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 24:1-24.

Stone, Pamela (2012). Binding women: Ethnology, skeletal deformations, and violence against women. *International Journal of Paleopathology* 2(2-3):53-60.

Shepherd, John Robert (2018). *Footbinding as Fashion: Ethnicity, Labor, and Status in Traditional China*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. Introduction and Conclusion, pp. 3-9 & 164-176.

Week 8: Hair, body painting, cosmetics, the beauty industry

Synnott, Anthony (1987). Shame and glory: a sociology of hair. *The British Journal of Sociology* 38(3):381-413.

- Thompson, Julia (1998). The politics of hair in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 4(1):77-129.
- Vidal, Lux (1981). Contribution to the concept of person and self in lowland South American societies: body painting among the Kayapo-Xikrin. *Dispositio* 6(17-18):169-177.
- Jerrentrup, Maja Tabea (2020). The body as canvas as picture: bodypainting and its implications for the model. *International Journal of Culture and Art Studies* 4(2):44-60.
- Black, Paula, and Ursula Sharma (2001). Men are real, Women are 'made up': beauty therapy and the construction of femininity. *The Sociological Review* 49(1):100-117.
- McCabe, Maryann, Timothy de Waal Malefyt, and Antonella Fabri (2020). Women, makeup, and authenticity: Negotiating embodiment and discourses of beauty. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 20(4):656–677.
- Miller, Laura (2021). Deracialisation or body fashion? Cosmetic surgery and body modification in Japan. *Asian Studies Review* 45(2):217-237.

Week 9: Producing skilled bodies

- Wacquant, Loïc (1995). Pugs at work: bodily capital and bodily labour among professional boxers. *Body and Society* 1(1):65-93.
- Rotella, Carlo (2002). *Good With their Hands: Boxers, Bluesmen, and Other Characters from the Rustbelt*. University of California Press, Berkeley. Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-50).
- Underman, Kelly (2022). The social transmission of bodily knowledge. *Body and Society* 28(3):30-62.
- Gowlland, Geoffrey (2012). Learning craft skills in China: apprenticeship and social capital in an artisan community of practice. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 43(4):358-371.
- Wallaert-Pêtre, H el ene (2001). Learning how to make the right pots: apprenticeship strategies and material culture, a case study in handmade pottery from Cameroon. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 57(4):471-493.

Grasseni, Cristina (2004). Skilled vision. An apprenticeship in breeding aesthetics. *Social Anthropology* 12(1):41-55.

Tan, Chris K. K. (2016). Gaydar: using skilled vision to spot Gay "Bears" in Taipei. *Anthropological Quarterly* 89(3):841-864.

In addition to works mentioned above, here are a few general references you may find useful to consult (for the research papers, for example):

Atkinson, Michael (2003). *Tattooed: The Sociogenesis of a Body Art*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Counihan, Carole M. (1999). *The Anthropology of Food and the Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power*. Routledge, New York.

Counihan, Carole M., and Steven Laurence Kaplan (editors) (1998). *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*. Gordon and Breach, Newark, NJ.

Crossley, Nick (2001). The phenomenological habitus and its construction. *Theory and Society* 30(1):81-120.

Crossley, Nick (2007). Researching embodiment by way of 'body techniques'. *Body and Society* 55(1):80-94.

de Garine, Igor, and Nancy J. Pollock (editors) (1995). *Social Aspects of Obesity*. Taylor and Francis, London.

de Solier, Isabelle (2013). *Food and the Self: Consumption, Production and Material Culture*. Bloomsbury, London.

DeMello, Margo (2000). *Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Dietler, Michael (2006). Alcohol: anthropological/archaeological perspectives. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35:229-249.

Dietler, Michael, and Brian Hayden (editors) (2001). *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.

- Douglas, Mary (1972). Deciphering a meal. *Daedalus* 101:61-82.
- Douglas, Mary (editor) (1987). *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Eicher, Joanne B., and Sandra Lee Evenson (editors) (2015). *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture, and Society* (4th edition). Fairchild Books, New York.
- Entwistle, Joanne (2000). *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Entwistle, Joanne, and Elizabeth Wilson (editors) (2001). *Body Dressing: Dress, Body, Culture*. Berg, Providence, RI.
- Gell, Alfred (1993). *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*. Clarendon, Oxford.
- Gremillion, Helen (2005). The cultural politics of body size. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34:13-32.
- Hastorf, Christine A. (2016). *The Social Archaeology of Food: Thinking about Eating from Prehistory to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Hayden, Brian (2014). *The Power of Feasts: From Prehistory to the Present*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Heath, Dwight B. (1987). Anthropology and alcohol studies: current issues. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16:99-120.
- Laudan, Rachel (2013). *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Lock, Margaret (1993). Cultivating the body: Anthropology and epistemologies of bodily practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22:133-155.
- Mennell, Stephen (1985). *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1962) [1945]. *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Routledge, London.
- Miller, Laura (2006). *Beauty Up: Exploring Contemporary Japanese Body Aesthetics*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

- Mintz, Sidney (1985). *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. Viking, New York.
- Moore, Pamela L. (editor) (1997). *Building Bodies*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Pilcher, Jeffrey M. (editor) (2012). *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Pitts, Victoria L. (2003). *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Polanyi, Michael (1962). *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Sanders, Clinton R., and D. Angus Vail (2008). *Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia.
- Schildkrout, Enid (2004). Inscribing the body. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33:319-344.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang (1993). *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants*. Translated by David Jacobson. Vintage Books, New York.
- Shilling, Chris (2007). Sociology and the body: classical traditions and new agendas. *Body and Society* 55(1):1-18.
- Silverman, Eric K. (2004). Anthropology and circumcision. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33:419-445.
- Thomas, Helen, and Jamilah Ahmed (editors) (2004). *Cultural Bodies: Ethnography and Theory*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Turner, Bryan S. (1984). *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory*. Sage, London.
- Wilk, Richard (editor) (2006). *Fast Food/Slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System*. AltaMira Press (Society for Economic Anthropology Monograph Series, 24), Lanham, MD.
- Wilk, Richard (2006). *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists*. Berg, Oxford.

Wilk, Richard, and Livia Barbosa (editors) (2012). *Rice and Beans: A Unique Dish in a Hundred Places*. Bloomsbury, New York.