

Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University
Spring 2008
Classroom: 715 Broadway, Room 527

Jean Graybeal
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Hours: W 10 - 12, 1:30 - 4:30
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Body and Soul *Spring 2008*

Body and Soul is a course about the fundamental fact, problem, or mystery of embodiment, and about its implications for human existence. We begin with the assumption that this human body is questionable, meaningful, and symbolic, and therefore important and worthy of reflection and study. We look first at the philosophical roots of Western dualism and the effects such a perspective may have on our lives, and then explore some alternative understandings, both non-Western and Western.

Texts:

Plato, *Phaedo*

Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*

Margaret Atwood, *The Edible Woman*

Dao De Jing, translated by Moss Roberts

Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

Several additional readings, available on reserve or online

Class Process:

This course is constructed around careful reading and discussion of texts. Please read each assigned text before coming to class, think about your reading, and come to class ready to talk and listen. The discussion will draw on your responses, on in-class writing exercises, and on other activities.

It is important for the class process that each student feel free to contribute to the discussion; I have found that students' welcoming attitudes and encouragement can help even less verbal students to find space to speak. I'd like to work together with you to construct a safe, open place for dialogue and learning. *Everyone needs to contribute to the discussion in every class.* I will call on you if you don't volunteer, so please speak up! Everyone's perspective is valuable.

Requirements:

1) *Reading assigned texts and writing about them.* Bring texts to class. Allow at least four hours outside of class for reading and other class work. Some of the texts are dense and will require two readings.

2) *Attendance and participation.* Please be on time. Let me know *ahead of time*, by phone or e-mail, if you won't be able to be in class. Contribute to the discussion at least once or twice in every session.

3) *A semester-long Action project" and journal.*

4) *Paper on dualism, due Feb. 26.*

4) *Body Book or other project, due April 15.*

5) *Additional writing assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.*

Grading:

Preparation, attendance, and participation: 20 points

Action project journal: 20 points

Paper on dualism: 20 points

Body Book: 20 points

Additional assignments: 20 points

Policies:

Incompletes are assigned only for valid medical or other emergencies. Please talk with me about any problems you may be encountering.

Academic honesty is extremely important. I will provide a handout on plagiarism, and will expect that you read and understand it. Your work should reflect your own thinking, ideas, and analyses and should be written in your own words. When you refer to or draw on or quote other people's work, it must always be given proper credit and documentation, with footnotes or endnotes and a full bibliography. This includes all links to electronic resources. Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, will be reported to the dean and will result in an F on the assignment or for the course. Please ask me if you have any questions about academic honesty.

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Spring 2008

Projected schedule – subject to change.

Please check Blackboard for updated schedule.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
Jan. 22	First class: Introductions to each other, the topic and the course, syllabus, goals, expectations, methods. Perspectives on the body.
	FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN DUALISM: BODY AS BURDEN, DECEIVER, OR ALIEN
Jan. 29	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> . Post ideas on Blackboard for action project.
Feb. 5	Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> . First action project journal due.
Feb. 12	A feminist analysis of the consequences of dualism: Susan Bordo, <i>Unbearable Weight</i> , selected chapters
Feb. 19	Bordo, continued, selected chapters
Feb. 26	Papers on dualism due.
March 4	A fictional response: Margaret Atwood, <i>The Edible Woman</i>
	ALTERNATIVES TO DUALISM: SCIENTIFIC, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL
March 11	Contemporary science on body, brain, and mind. Readings TBA.
<i>March 18</i>	<i>No class -- spring break -- enjoy!</i>
March 25	A Taoist perspective: <i>Dao De Jing</i>
April 1	A Buddhist perspective: Shunryu Suzuki, <i>Zen Mind, Beginner=s Mind</i>
April 8	Field trip – to be announced
April 15	Body books or projects due with short presentations
April 22	Excerpts from David Abram, <i>The Spell of the Sensuous</i> , and Abram interview, available on line.
April 29	Last class X conclusions and ideas for further study.