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| <p>Course Name: HLTH 430/3.0 Critical Weight Studies</p> | <p>Course Instructor: Grace Wedlake</p> | <p>Contact Hours: Lectures: 1 x 3 hrs/wk / 12 weeks</p> <hr/> <p>Prerequisite: Level 3 or above in a (HLTH Major or Medial) Plan or Level 3 or above in a KINE Plan HLTH 333/3.0 or HLTH 334/3.0</p> <hr/> <p>Exclusion: None</p> |
| <p>Course Description:</p> <p>We live in a fat-phobic society in which discrimination on the basis of size is one of the last acceptable forms of prejudice. Body size, like health more generally, has become interpolated with moralism. As Jonathan Metzl (2010)¹ states:</p> <p>“Health is a term replete with value judgments, hierarchies, and blind assumptions that speak as much about power and privilege as they do about well being. Health is a desired state, but it is also a prescribed state and an ideological position. We realize this dichotomy every time we see someone smoking a cigarette and reflexively say, “smoking is bad for your health,” when what we really mean is “you are a bad person because you smoke.” Or when we encounter someone whose body size we deem excessive and reflexively say “obesity is bad for your health,” when what we mean is not that this person might have some medical problem but that they are lazy or weak of will.... In these and other instances, appealing to health allows for a set of moral assumptions ... to fly stealthily under the radar. And the definition of our own health depends in part on our value judgments about others. We see them—the smokers, the overeaters...—and realize our own health in the process” (p. 1-2).</p> <p>¹ Metzl, J. M. (2010). Introduction: Why against health? In J. M. Metzl & A. Kirkland (Eds.), <i>Against Health: How Health became the New Morality</i> (pp. 1-11). New York: New York University Press.</p> <p>In this course, we will consider alternatives to the dominant biomedical discourse that problematically understands large body size strictly through a “health risk factor” lens. We will use the term “fat” because it is a descriptive term, like short or tall, rather than the terms “overweight” and “obese,” both of which reflect medical conceptions of body size.</p> <p>The field of Fat Studies challenges the dominant belief system about weight. These beliefs are pervasive and given the fat-phobia of our society, we all absorb fat-hating beliefs,</p> | | <p>Course Texts/Readings:</p> <p><i>Belly of the Beast: The Politics of Anti-Fatness as Anti-Blackness</i> by Da'Shaun L. Harrison. Available via the campus bookstore. All other readings will be made available via the Queen's University Library Course Reserves.</p> <p>Other readings will be made available through onQ.</p> |

stereotypes and assumptions. Fat-hating beliefs are socially constructed, produced and reproduced (for example, in other historical periods and societies, body fat was/is highly prized). While fat-phobia is all around us, we are each responsible for recognizing the size prejudices that we hold and for the size-related statements and actions we make in the world, which either reproduce or resist the dominant anti-fat discourse.

Thus fat studies requires us to reflexively examine and challenge our beliefs and moral positions about size and to understand our own place in a weight-based system of privilege and oppression.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Critically engage with biomedical understandings of body weight and size by applying critical, cultural perspectives. This entails stepping away from the usual, biomedical framework within which we usually discuss weight, and learning to ask cultural questions instead. For example, instead of asking what causes fatness, we will be exploring the implications of thinking about body size only in terms of health and considering other ways of understanding body size.
- Apply different theoretical approaches to studying body size, including social constructionism, feminism, critical race theory, queer theory and disability theory.
- Evaluate how understandings of fatness reinforce or resist other systems of privilege and oppression, including gender, race, class, and sexuality.
- Analyze your own position in our system of weight-based privilege and oppression.
- Identify and analyze the multiple ways in which our society reproduces fat-phobia and fat-hatred.

Course Evaluation:

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| Weekly Questions and Participation | 20% |
| Post-Class Reflections | 3 x 10% |
| Short Paper Assignment | 20% |
| Final Paper | 30% |

Course Outline

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| Introduction | Belly of the Beast Discussion |
| What about health? | Racialized Fatness |
| Re-thinking 'Obesity' and the BMI | Fatness & Disability |
| Medicalized Fatphobia | Fatness & Sport |
| Fatphobia in the Physical Environment | Body Positivity |
| Is there a Right Way to be Fat? | |