

# STS 1126 | Science & Society: Thinking Bodies

**Cornell, Spring 2017**

**Time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:40 - 12:55 PM

**Room:** Rockefeller Hall 128

## **Instructor**

Lisa Lehner

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## **Office Hours:**

Thursdays, 1:30 - 3:30 PM | Morrill Hall 418



"Body of Knowledge", by Jaume Plensa

## **SYNOPSIS AND GOALS**

### **Course Description**

In this course, we will "think with" the human body. Through the eyes of different scholars, we will peek into anatomy theaters, laboratories, medical schools, and clinics to understand how knowledge about the body is made, and how this knowledge shapes our own bodies. How are (arguably) universal biological categories like race and sex made meaningful on the body's surfaces and in its molecular depths - and what are the consequences? Can we understand our bodies differently? We will explore concepts of power, emotion, and what it means to be a body with(out) rights or a body in migration. We will tackle all this through discussions, critical reflections on readings, creative writing about bodies in the media, and longer essays.

### **Course Rationale**

This course aims to introduce students to complex ideas, concepts, and texts as well as the means to tackle them efficiently through close readings, discussions, and writing exercises. The human body is arguably the most tangible and relatable "thing" in our lives: we all have one, inhabit one, live one. Often this very fact leads us to assume the human body as universal, natural and, at least as far as underlying anatomy and biology are concerned, the same for everyone. As we will discover reading the works of scholars in Science & Technology Studies and following them into different countries, cultures, scientists' laboratories, doctors' offices, and surgical theaters, we can critically engage with and question this idea of the "universal human body". In the course of the semester, we will strain to ask difficult questions about what

it means to be or to live in a certain kind of body (and not another). We will be investigating the power structures at work in contemporary societies and how they shape the way we can and cannot inhabit our bodies, how they influence the way we understand ourselves, and how they define the way the (bio)medical sciences relate to our bodies when treating them. This course is not about learning new facts about the human body, but rather about questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about, arguably, this most “natural” of entities. To get there, we will need to understand how exactly other scholars have made their arguments, what kind of evidence they used to support them, and what the implications are. In turn, intensive writing tasks, both formal and informal, will help students to join the conversation and draw their own conclusions. By way of in-class discussions, close readings, and topic-specific writing assignments this course will instill and cultivate analytical skills and writing skills necessary not only for engaging with the complexities of academic scholarship, but also for critically reflecting on the state of contemporary societies.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to demonstrate the following skills:

- ✓ Do careful close-readings of a text and analyze it in terms of argument(s), evidence, general framework, and larger implications
- ✓ Develop means to competently annotate and systematize readings for later use
- ✓ Know what makes a manageable and meaningful thesis
- ✓ Craft a lucid argument well supported by evidence and communicate it in a distinct writing style appropriate for an academic audience
- ✓ Put different texts into productive conversation with each other
- ✓ Use these skills to confidently and efficiently tackle writing tasks in future academic work and professional situations

This class aims to introduce you to a number of complex ideas and concepts about the human body and their larger implications within contemporary societies. Specifically, we will:

- ✓ Confront and complicate the notion of bodies as universal and natural entities, and instead entertain the idea that the human body is culturally and socially co-constructed
- ✓ Investigate the human body as the material and contingent outcome of local knowledge production
- ✓ Critically reflect on the meanings and implications of embodying certain socially consequential categories as well as the rights and obligations associated with them

# REQUIREMENTS

## Grade Breakdown

See details on writing assignments and other class requirements below.

- **Writing Assignments (55%):** Throughout the semester, you will be completing a total of six writing assignments, the first of which (Assignment #1) will be an ungraded reflective essay. Assignment #2 through #4 together will make up 15% of your grade, Assignment #5 another 15%, and the final analytical paper (Assignment #6) 25%.
- **Class Participation (20%):** You are expected to regularly attend class, participate in classroom activities, do all required readings ahead of time, and be prepared to contribute to class discussions.
- **Discussion Questions (15%):** There are a total of 26 readings for this class, and you will be posting discussion questions, including short justifications, on at least 10 of them. Questions must be posted to Blackboard by 8 PM on the day before class.
- **Discussion Leaders (10%):** You will be responsible for introducing one of the readings of the semester. You can sign up for a specific date and reading in class.

You will receive **points** (out of 100 total) on of your assignments. Points given correspond to the following scale:

A+	96-100	B	85	C-	74-70
A	95	B-	84-80	D+	69-64
A-	94-90	C+	79-76	D	65
B+	89-86	C	75	D-	64-60

## Writing Assignments - Deadlines

Most of the writing assignments for this class include intermediate steps, such as drafts and peer reviews, leading up to the final deadline. Your relative improvement and how well you respond to feedback, both on single assignments and in the class as a whole, will significantly figure into your grades.

- **Assignment #1:** Reflective Personal Essay (*not graded*, 2-3 pages) | due **January 31<sup>st</sup>**
- **Assignment #2:** Writing about the "Cultural Body" (2-3 pp.) | due **February 14<sup>th</sup>**
- **Assignment #3:** Argument Analysis (3-4 pp.) | due **February 23<sup>rd</sup>**
- **Assignment #4:** Analyzing Body-Knowledge (4-5 pp.) | due **March 21<sup>st</sup>**
- **Assignment #5:** Final Paper Proposal & Annotated Bibliography (5-6 pp.) | due **April 11<sup>th</sup>**
- **Assignment #6:** Final Analytical Paper (8-10 pp.) | due **Day of Final** (TBD)

*Detailed instructions for each assignment will be handed out and discussed in class.*

## Requirements for Written Work

All written assignments need to be typed in a word processor, printed out, stapled, and turned in as hard copies at the beginning of class on the due date.

- **Proofread and spellcheck** all your work, drafts, and final versions alike before turning them in.
- **Citations:** All assignments must include APA-style in-text citations and a complete bibliography (see for details: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>)
- **First page:** Include your name, the date, the assignment number, and an essay title.
- **Format:** standard font (e.g. *Times New Roman*), 12 point, double-spaced, 1-inch margins
- **Number** your pages

Avoid being late for submissions. **Late submissions** will receive a penalty of 5 points (i.e. half a grade-point, e.g. from an A to an A-) for each day that they are late.

## Class Participation

Read all assigned material as listed on the syllabus in advance and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. Avoid being late to class.

- **Print out all texts** and bring them to class. This will facilitate annotations, discussions, and your use of them in classroom activities.
- **Laptops, tablets, electronic devices of all kinds:** You are allowed to bring them to class, but using them for anything not directly related to the class will not be permitted. Note that multi-tasking actually reduces your ability to focus on tasks (say studies like this one: <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html>). Discussions and exercises in class will also prepare you for your writing assignments, so you will want to follow them closely.
- **Be respectful, generous, and constructive** both with regard to the authors of the texts we will read and your classmates. Engage with and entertain new ideas and different perspectives, even if you do not agree with them.

## Required Texts

All of the required texts will be posted online. Most of them will be available on Blackboard, but please note that in some cases you might need to follow links to electronic books and locate the assigned chapter yourself. For most electronic books, it is not possible to form a stable link directly to chapters.

## Discussion Questions

You have to post **a discussion question for at least 10** of the readings for the semester. These questions should not simply address problems of comprehension, but should be an informed response to the text at hand and engage with its arguments. Your questions will be used to facilitate class discussions, so they should prove your critical engagement with the text and our

topic. Additionally, you will be required to set up each question with a concise **justification**: A paragraph explaining what made you ask this question, adding e.g. details or a quote from the text. You can receive **up to 10 points** for each question (plus justification paragraph), depending on how well you can demonstrate your engagement with the text. The best 10 of your questions will be counted towards your grade.

Questions must be posted to the respective forum **on Blackboard by 8 PM** the day before the class for which the respective reading is indicated on the syllabus.

*Note: Since you will be writing an assignment on the paper assigned for February 23<sup>rd</sup> (Ian Hacking), I will not be accepting discussion questions for this day/reading.*

## **Discussion Leaders**

You will be responsible for introducing one of the readings for the semester. Briefly introduce the author(s), then summarize and explain the arguments of the text: What was the overall thesis, and how did the author/s support it with arguments and evidence? What are key passages you would want to highlight? What did you find challenging about the reading? Also comment on what you found particularly interesting, curious, well done, etc. Did you find anything that connected well or in an interesting way to other readings we have done in the class so far?

Finally, formulate a discussion question for the whole class to tackle in response to your presentation. Alternatively, and in case you want to be more creative, find a real-life case or event (news article, YouTube video, image, etc.) which relates in some significant way to the reading and we can subsequently discuss, analyze, and unpack as a class.

Presentations **should be about 5-10 minutes**, and you will be able to sign up for them ahead of time. Note also that your presentation will not count towards one of your discussion questions.

## **Individual Conferences**

You are required to meet with the instructor for a one-on-one conversation about your work at least twice over the course of the semester. These conferences will take place at specific points during the semester, and you will be able to sign up for an appointment in class around those dates:

**1<sup>st</sup> round of conferences: February 27<sup>th</sup> - March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Week 6)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> round of conferences: April 17<sup>th</sup> - April 21<sup>th</sup> (Week 13)**

These meetings are not meant to intimidate you, but give you a chance to ask for advice, express concerns, and discuss your progress in the class, your plans for future written work, and your grades.

Apart from these pre-scheduled conferences, you should feel free to attend office hours anytime throughout the semester.

# CLASS POLICIES

## Absence Policy

Arriving late to class will be reflected in your overall class participation grade. If you have a legitimate reason for arriving late or for being absent from class entirely (illness, a family emergency, mental health issues, etc.), let the instructor know in advance. Absences may require a make-up assignment and you will be responsible for finding out from your classmates - *not the instructor* - what happened in class during your absence.

## Statement on Academic Integrity

The Cornell Code of Academic Integrity states: "Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others ... A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers". The essential guide to academic integrity at Cornell can be found at:

- <https://blogs.cornell.edu/provost/files/2014/12/2016-essential-guide-academic-integrity-t7slma.pdf>.

I expect each student in this class to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. All the work you submit for this course must have been written specifically for this course and not any other. Contributory sources must be fully and clearly acknowledged. The penalty for violating the Code of Academic Integrity can be an "F" for the term.

Note that the difference between plagiarism and good, responsible scholarship are often only quotation marks or a footnote. A university-wide guide for acknowledging the work of others can be found here:

- <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/courses/cs6742/2011sp/handouts/ack-others.pdf>.

Cornell also provides examples and exercises. You are strongly encouraged to do the following **tutorial** in order to acquaint yourself with the proper citation of sources:

- <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>.

Apart from this, collaborative work such as peer reviews, guided critiques of students' essays, or collaborative projects are permitted when clearly authorized (and indeed encouraged) by the instructor.

## Public Domain Statement

Students' writing for this course may be read by and shared with all members of the class.

## **University Policies and Regulations**

The course instructor respects and upholds University Policies and Regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to physically disabled, visually and/or hearing-impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; as well as racial and ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University Regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.

## **Disabilities**

Cornell University (as an institution) and I (as a human being and instructor of this class) are committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to persons with temporary and permanent disabilities when conditions cause barriers to equal educational opportunity.

The Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/index.html>) determines the eligibility of students to receive formal accommodations and works collaboratively with the student and instructors to recommend appropriate accommodations. Please visit the Student Disabilities Services site for more information about accessibility at Cornell.

Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1: CAN'T ESCAPE YOUR BODY...

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January 26<sup>th</sup>     *Introductions & Discussion Agreements*

**Readings:** none

**Assignment #1:** [Instructions](#) - Reflective Personal Essay & Questionnaire

### SECTION 1: BEYOND THE UNIVERSAL BODY AND THE BODY PROPER

## WEEK 2: ORIENTATIONS AND THE "CULTURAL BODY"

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January 31<sup>st</sup>     *How to approach scholarly writing?, and the Art of Note-Taking*

**Readings:**

Farquhar, Judith, and Margaret Lock. 2007. "Introduction." In *Beyond the Body Proper. Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1-16.

**Assignment #1:** Reflective Personal Essay & Questionnaire [due](#)

February 2<sup>nd</sup>     *Close Reading, and What is a Thesis?*

**Readings:**

Mauss, Marcel. 2007 (1935). "Techniques of the Body." In *Beyond the Body Proper*, edited by Judith Farquhar and Margaret Lock. Durham: Duke University Press, 50-68.

**Assignment #2:** [Instructions](#) - Writing about the "Cultural Body"

## WEEK 3: THE BODY BEYOND THE SKIN

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February 7<sup>th</sup>     *What is a Thesis?, and Peer Review Session for Assignment Drafts*

**Readings:**

Black, Daniel. 2013. "Where Bodies End and Artefacts Begin. Tools, Machines and Interfaces." *Body & Society* 20 (1): 31-60.

**Assignment #2:** Draft (Outline) [due](#)

February 9<sup>th</sup>     *Citation Management*

**Readings:**

Mol, Annemarie, and John Law. 2004. "Embodied Action, Enacted Bodies: The Example of Hypoglycaemia." *Body & Society* 10 (2-3): 43-62.

**Assignments:** none

## WEEK 4: AND THIS MATTERS BECAUSE..? - POLITICAL ETIOLOGIES

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February 14<sup>th</sup> *Analyzing one's own writing*

**Readings:**

Hamdy, Sherine F. 2008. "When the State and your Kidneys Fail." *American Ethnologist* 35 (4): 553-569.

**Assignment #2:** Writing about the "Cultural Body" due

February 16<sup>th</sup> *Writing Introductions and Arguments*

**Readings:** none

**Assignment #3:** Instructions - Argument Analysis

## SECTION 2: THE BODY AS OBJECT (AND SUBJECT) OF KNOWLEDGE

## WEEK 5: PRODUCING KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING UP PEOPLE

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February 21<sup>st</sup> **No class** (*February Break*)

February 23<sup>rd</sup> *"Knowledge Production"*

**Readings:**

Hacking, Ian. 2007 (1986). "Making Up People." In *Beyond the Body Proper*, edited by Judith Farquhar and Margaret Lock. Durham: Duke University Press, 150-163.

**Assignment #3:** Argument Analysis due

**Assignment #4:** Instructions - Analyzing Body-Knowledge

## WEEK 6: VISUAL KNOWLEDGE AND MAKING SELVES

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February 28<sup>th</sup> *"Knowledge Production" (2)*

**Readings:**

Dumit, Joseph. 1997. "A Digital Image of the Category of the Person. PET Scanning and Objective Self-fashioning." In *Cyborgs & Citadels: Anthropological Interventions in Emerging Sciences and Technologies*, edited by Joseph Dumit and Gary Downey. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 83-102.

**Assignment #4:** Bring your "Object of Knowledge about the Body"

**Assignment #4:** Instructions - "Explosions" Exercise

March 2<sup>nd</sup>      *Peer "Explosions": a Review*

**Readings:**

Burri, Regula Valérie. 2007. "Sociotechnical Anatomy. Technology, Space, and Body in the MRI Unit." In *Biomedicine as Culture. Instrumental Practices, Techniscientific Knowledge, and New Modes of Life*, edited by Regula Valérie Burri and Joseph Dumit. Routledge: New York, 109-121.

**Assignment #4:** "Explosions" due

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**WEEK 7: BODY-KNOWLEDGE FROM PLACE TO PLACE**

March 7<sup>th</sup>      *Writing Conclusions*

**Readings:**

Casper, Monica J. 1998. "A Hybrid Practice. Traffic Between the Laboratory and the Operating Room." In *The Making of the Unborn Patient: A Social Anatomy of Fetal Surgery*. New Brunswick: Rutgers, 73-105.

**Assignments:** none

March 9<sup>th</sup>      *Peer Review Session for Assignment Drafts, and Texts-in-Conversation*

**Readings:**

Mol, Annemarie. 2002. "Cutting surgeons, walking patients: Some complexities involved in comparing." In *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, edited by John Law and Annemarie Mol. Durham: Duke University Press, 218-257.

**Assignment #4:** Draft due

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**WEEK 8: BODY-KNOWLEDGE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS**

March 14<sup>th</sup>      *The Body in Ethnographic Writing*

**Readings:**

Richardson, Ruth. 1987. "The Corpse as an Anatomical Object." In *Death, Dissection, and the Destitute*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 30-51.

**Assignments:** none

March 16<sup>th</sup>      *How to write annotated bibliographies*

**Readings:**

Good, Byron J., and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good. 1993. "'Learning Medicine': The Constructing of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School." In *Knowledge, Power, and Practice*, edited by Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 81-107.

Epstein, Steven. 2004. "Bodily Difference and Collective Identities. The Politics of Gender and Race in Biomedical Research in the United States." *Body & Society* 10 (2-3): 183-203.

**Assignments:** none

## SECTION 3: THE BODY IN CONTEXT - MEANINGS OF HAVING / BEING A BODY

### WEEK 9: MEDICINE MAKES THE BODY SPEAK

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March 21<sup>st</sup>      *Prose, Grammar, and Style*

**Readings:**

Das, Veena, and Ranendra K. Das. 2007. "How the Body Speaks: Illness and the Lifeworld among the Urban Poor." In *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl et al. Berkeley: University of California Press, 66-97.

Siegel Watkins, Elizabeth. 2008. "Medicine, Masculinity, and the Disappearance of Male Menopause in the 1950s." *Social History of Medicine* 21 (2): 329-344.

**Assignment #4:** Analyzing Body-Knowledge due

**Assignment #5:** Instructions - Final Paper Proposal & Annotated Bibliography

March 23<sup>d</sup>      *Idea and Thesis Workshop: Final Paper*

**Readings:** none

**Assignments:** none

### WEEK 10: MOLECULAR BODIES

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March 28<sup>th</sup>      *Prose, Grammar, and Style*

**Readings:**

Richardson, Sarah S. 2012. "Sexing the X: How the X became the 'Female Chromosome'." *Signs* 37 (4): 909-933.

**Assignments:** none

March 30<sup>th</sup>      *Peer Review Session for Assignment Drafts*

**Readings:**

Ossorio, Pilar, and Troy Duster. 2005. "Race and Genetics: Controversies in Biomedical, Behavioral, and Forensic Sciences." *American Psychologist* 60 (1): 115-128.

Fullwiley, Duana. 2014. "The 'Contemporary Synthesis': When Politically Inclusive Genomic Science Relies on Biological Notions of Race." *Isis* 105 (4): 803-814.

**Assignment #5:** Draft due

### WEEK 11: SPRING BREAK

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April 4<sup>th</sup>      **No class**

April 6<sup>th</sup>      **No class**

## WEEK 12: THE BODY OF THE NEOLIBERAL SUBJECT

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April 11<sup>th</sup> *Prose, Grammar, and Style*

**Readings:**

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2000. "The Global Traffic in Human Organs." *Current Anthropology* 41 (2): 191-224.

**Assignment #5:** Final Paper Proposal & Annotated Bibliography due

April 13<sup>th</sup> *Concluding Section, and Texts-in-Conversation*

**Readings:**

Guthman, Julie, and Melanie DuPuis. 2006. "Embodying Neoliberalism: Economy, Culture, and the Politics of Fat." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (3): 427-448.

**Assignment #6:** Instructions - Final Analytical Paper

### FOCUS SESSION 1: FEELING BODIES

## WEEK 13: REVISITING EMOTION AS SOCIO-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

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April 18<sup>th</sup> *Content and Writing Workshops*

**Readings:**

Briggs, Jean. 2010. "Emotions Have Many Faces: Inuit Lessons." In *Psychological Anthropology. A Reader on Self in Culture*, edited by Robert A. LeVine. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 60-67.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2007. "Pathologies of Hope." *Harper's Magazine*.

**Assignments:** none

April 20<sup>th</sup> *Content and Writing Workshops*

**Readings:**

Livingston, Julie. 2012. "Pain and Laughter." In *Improvising Medicine. An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*. Durham: Duke University Press, 119-151.

**Assignments:** none

### FOCUS SESSION 2: BODY IDENTITIES, RIGHTS, AND ETHICS

## WEEK 14: BIO-SOCIALITY AND BODIES IN MIGRATION

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April 25<sup>th</sup> *Content and Writing Workshops*

**Readings:**

Rose, Nikolas, and Carlos Novas. 2005. "Biological Citizenship." In *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier. Malden: Blackwell, 439-463.

**Assignment #6:** Draft due

April 27<sup>th</sup>

*Content and Writing Workshops*

**Readings:**

Ticktin, Miriam I. 2011. "How Biology Travels: A Humanitarian Trip." *Body & Society* 17 (2/3): 139-158.

Biehl, João, and Adriana Petryna. 2011. "Bodies of Rights and Therapeutic Markets." *Social Research* 78 (2): 359-386.

**Assignments:** none

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**WRAPPING UP**

**WEEK 15: WORKSHOPS**

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May 2<sup>nd</sup>

*Essay Workshop*

**Readings:**

Martin, Emily. 1992. "The End of the Body?" *American Ethnologist* 19 (1): 121-40.

**Assignments:** none

May 4<sup>th</sup>

*Essay Workshop (Happy Star Wars Day!)*

**Readings:** none

**Assignments:** none

**WEEK 16: THE END.**

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May 9<sup>th</sup>

*Wrap-Up*

**Readings:** none

**Assignments:** none

May 10<sup>th</sup>

*Last Day of Classes*

TBD

**Assignment #6:** Final Analytical Paper due