**Texts and Ideas: The Body in the Ancient Mediterranean**
Core-UA 400-100 (17451)
Fall 2017
Mon/Wed 12:30-1:45pm
Silver Center, Room 520

**Instructor:** Claire Bubb (cc148@nyu.edu)
**Office Hours:** Mon 11-12pm (Silver 503H) or by appointment

**TAs:** David Danzig (dd66@nyu.edu)
**Recitations:** Fri 8-9:15am, 9:30-10:45am (7 E12th St, Rm 325)
**Office Hours:** Fri 11-1pm (Silver 903, “Core Annex”)

Christine Roughan (cmr639@nyu.edu)
**Recitations:** Fri 12:30-1:45pm, 2-3:15pm (45 W4th St, Rm B01)
**Office Hours:** Fri 9-11am (Silver 903, “Core Annex”)

**Course Aims:**
Modern understanding of the human body is built upon millennia of philosophical inquiry and scientific endeavor. This course focuses on the pivotal social and scientific understanding of the body in the ancient Mediterranean from the 8th century BC to the 2nd century AD, especially among the two dominant cultures of this era, the Ancient Greeks and the Ancient Romans. Approached from the perspective of today’s very distant time and place, the views of this period can seem quite alien, but also, because of the outsized influence of these two cultures on modern Western Civilization and science, surprisingly familiar. This class will trace the evolution of theories of human physiology, beginning from the most basic questions of bodily composition and internal structure among the pre-Socratic philosophers all the way up to minute theories of nerve and brain function in the Roman Empire. As we follow the development of these scientific ideas, we will examine the concomitant cultural attitudes to the body, which both inform and are informed by the scientific theories. Are the soul and the body distinct? Do they have different fates in the afterlife? How should a corpse be handled? In what ways are the body and social status connected? How do these answers evolve over time and across cultures? How are differing beliefs and norms reconciled or superseded? We will approach all of these questions through primary textual sources by foundational thinkers in ancient science and natural philosophy, archaeological finds, and ancient art, supplemented by secondary scholarship where appropriate.

In addition to these concrete topics, as part of the College Core Curriculum this class will hone students’ abilities in critical reading, effective writing, and thoughtful analysis. We will address big questions that will prepare students for habits of thinking to be applied to their later college career and beyond. How can one access a text from the past or from another culture without importing one’s own biases and beliefs? How can one evaluate the trustworthiness of sources, both ancient and modern? What can we learn from the history of science and ideas? Where are the boundaries between science and the humanities? Like all Texts and Ideas courses, this class is intended to provide a foundation for students’ liberal arts education through engagement with influential literary and philosophical works and with the subsequent debate, adaption, and pushback surrounding them. Further, students will focus in depth in their recitations on effectively organizing, conveying, and supporting their ideas in their written work.
Course Structure:

The course proceeds chronologically through Graeco-Roman antiquity, bookended by a related earlier and later tradition. We will begin with ancient Egyptian religious and medical attitudes to the body, dating as far back as the Old Kingdom. The Greeks and Romans viewed the Egyptians as uncomfortably “other,” but also as a fascinating and perennially fertile ground for cultural adoption, including in medicine and religion, making them an excellent place to start. We will then proceed to study the body in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Greece, pre-Roman Italy, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire, including among the early Christians. Finally, we will conclude with a study of the reception of Graeco-Roman scientific ideas into the new cultural milieu of Medieval Islam, which was critical to their survival into Medieval and Early Modern Europe (and indeed to this day). For each period we will discuss the developing understanding of human anatomy and physiology, as well as contemporary religious, legal, philosophical, literary, and/or artistic approaches to the body according to the dominant motifs of the time period.

Lectures will introduce new themes and provide background and in-depth analysis of the primary sources assigned in the readings. Recitations will allow for more intimate discussion of the readings and of topics raised in the week’s lectures. In addition, each recitation meeting has a designated theme designed to teach students how to successfully approach, navigate, and write about ancient cultures and sources, both written and visual.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Students are required to attend all lectures, participate actively in recitations, complete all readings in advance of the lecture for which they are assigned, and submit all assignments in a timely fashion. Late work will be docked half a letter grade every six hours (A- to B+, etc.). Make-up exams and assignment extensions will only be approved for a verified medical condition or similarly extenuating situation; they must be approved in advance by your recitation instructor. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated; any instances will be reported to the appropriate dean and will result in serious grade reduction or failure to pass the class, depending on the severity of the infraction. If you have any uncertainty whether what you are doing constitutes plagiarism, consult the College Core Curriculum Statement on Academic Integrity (appended at the end of the syllabus) and/or your recitation instructor before turning it in. Grades will be assigned in accordance with the Core Curriculum Grading Guidelines (appended) and weighted along the following lines:

Class participation: 15%
- Attendance to all lectures is required. Readings are to be completed before the lecture for which they are assigned.
- Attendance to and active participation in all recitations is required, with the assigned readings in hand.
- Unexcused absence to either lecture or recitation will lower your participation grade. For every three unexcused absences from lecture and/or recitation the final grade will be reduced a letter grade. For an absence to count as excused it must be cleared by your recitation instructor in advance.

Bi-weekly writing responses: 15%
- 2 page written responses to a prompt about the week’s reading, due at 8pm on Thursdays (as per the syllabus). Responses promote deeper engagement with weekly readings, facilitate more thoughtful discussion during recitation, and allow for early and continuous feedback on students’ writing.
- Recitations will be split into groups A and B (based on last names), which will alternate weeks as marked; each group will have 5 total responses (each counting for 3% of the final grade).
- At least one response for each student must engage with a relevant object from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (opportunities for this will be presented in Weeks 7, 8, 10, and 11). There will also be a tour of the museum in lieu of recitation for Week 9.

Shorter Writing Assignment: 15%
- 4-5 page paper
- Students will choose one of three suggested topics.

Midterm Exam: 15%
- In-class exam consisting of multiple choice, IDs, and short essays.

Longer Writing Assignment: 20%
- 7-8 page paper
- Students will apply one of three suggested approaches to a topic of their choice (in close consultation with their recitation instructor).

Final Exam: 20%
- Same format as the midterm exam; will cover the entire course.

Class Schedule:

Week 1
Wed, Sept 6th: Introduction; Egyptian cultural and religious attitudes to the body
Readings: (3p)

Recitation: Why study ancient culture and science?

Week 2
Mon, Sept 11th: Egyptian anatomical and medical theories
Readings: (40p)
* The Edwin Smith Papyrus, Cases 1, 6, 31 (notes and commentary are optional) (3p).
* Nunn (1996): Ancient Egyptian Medicine, 42-52, 54-56 (10p).

Wed, Sept 13th: Early Greek culture and sculpture; Greeks on Egyptians
Readings: (55p)
* Handout of Primary Sources: Greeks on the Egyptians (5p).

Recitation: Recognizing bias in ancient and modern writing
* Group A Response 1 due

Week 3
Mon, Sept 18th: The body in Homer and in Greek Tragedy; Orphics and Pythagoras
Readings: (52p)
Craik (2001): 'Medical References in Euripides', 81-95 (15p).

Wed, Sept 20th: Pre-Socratics: Alcmaeon, Empedocles, and Diogenes of Apollonia
Readings: (45p)
Handout of Primary Sources: Fragments of the Pre-Socratics (8p).

Recitation: What are fragments? Where they come from and how to handle them.
*Group B Response 1 due

Week 4

Mon, Sept 25th: Hippocrates: Overview; Cult of Asclepius
Readings: (48p)

Wed, Sept 27th: Hippocrates: Heart and brain; Thucydides on the plague
Readings: (50p)

Recitation: Using direct quotations of primary sources to present an argument
*Group A Response 2 due

Week 5

Mon, Oct 2nd: Plato on physiology and the soul/body dichotomy; Old Comedy
Readings: (47p)
Aristophanes, selections of *Clouds* and *Frogs* (2p).

Wed, Oct 4th: Aristotle on digestion and cardiovascular system
Readings: (44p)
Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* II.2-6; III.4-5, 7-9 (Lennox (2001)) (19p).

Recitation: Comparing and contrasting two ancient authors
*Group B Response 2 due

Week 6

Mon, Oct 9th: NO CLASS

Wed, Oct 11th: Aristotle on respiration; Classical sculpture
Readings: (32p)
Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* III.3, 6, 10 (Lennox (2001)) (6p).

Recitation: Discussing art in academic writing
*Shorter paper due (all students)*
Week 7
Mon, Oct 16th: Aristotle on the brain and senses
Readings:
Aristotle, *On the Soul* II.5-12 (Loeb v.8) (22p).

Wed, Oct 18th: Aristotle on reproduction and embryology; New Comedy
Readings:
Aristotle, *On the Soul* II.5-12 (Loeb v.8) (22p).

Recitation: Shorter papers returned, reviewed, and workshoped.
*Group A Response 3 due*

Week 8
Mon, Oct 23rd: Diocles of Carystus, Praxagoras, Hippocratic *On the Heart*
Readings: (44p)

Wed, Oct 25th: Hellenistic Alexandria; Hellenistic sculpture
Readings: (54p)

Recitation: Fragments revisited: reconstructing ancient authors
*Group B Response 3 due*

Week 9
Mon, Oct 30th: Herophilus; Erasistratus; Greek Novels
Readings: (19p/57p)
Herophilus, *Fragments* (read circled numbers only), (von Staden) (~12p).
Erasistratus, *Fragments* (handout) (7p).

Wed, Nov 1st: *Midterm Exam*
*In lieu of recitation students will sign up for group tours of the Greek and Roman and Egyptian collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art led by teaching staff.*

Week 10
Mon, Nov 6th: Etruscan and Early Italian attitudes and art; haruspicy
Readings: (47p)

Wed, Nov 8th: Roman medicine and Greek doctors in Rome
Readings: (50p)
Celsius, *De medicina* Preface (9p).
Recitation: Examining the boundaries between science and religion
*Group A Response 4 due

Week 11
Mon, Nov 13th: Roman attitudes, religion, and art
Readings: (50p)
Handout of Primary Sources: Romans (6p).

Wed, Nov 15th: Early Christians
Readings: (47p)
Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, 1, 3-9, 63 (6p).
Handout of Primary Sources: Christians (5p).

Recitation: Cultural comparison: Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Christians
*Group B Response 4 due

Week 12
Mon, Nov 20th: Galen on digestion; Aelius Aristides, *Sacred History*
Readings: (64p)
Aelius Aristides, *Sacred History*, selections (9p).

Wed, Nov 22nd: NO CLASS

Week 13
Mon, Nov 27th: Galen on cardiovascular system and respiration
Readings: (53p)

Wed, Nov 29th: Galen on the brain and senses
Readings: (51p)
Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts* VIII.6-7 (May (1968), 398-409) (10p).
Recitation: Evaluating ancient science beyond “right” and “wrong”
* Group A Response 5 due

Week 14
Mon, Dec 4th: Galen on reproduction; Soranus; Roman childbearing
Readings: (52p)

Wed, Dec 6th: The body in Islam; Prophetic Medicine; body in the Arabic novel
Readings: (44p)

Recitation: Accessing silent populations: women in antiquity
*Longer paper due (all students)

Week 15

Mon, Dec 11th: Arabic reception of Greek science: Hunayn ibn Ishaq and Al-Razi
Readings: (37p)
Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Questions on Medicine for Scholars, Chapters 1 and 7 (Ghalioungui (1980): 1-5, 70-72) (8p).
Al-Razi, Kitab al-Mansuri, selections (4p).

Tues, Dec 12th: Arabic reception of Greek science: al-Majusi, Avicenna, Ibn al Nafis
Readings: (37p)
Avicenna, Canon (3p).
Ullmann (1978): Islamic Medicine, 55-71 (16p).

Wed, Dec 13th: Conclusion: A look back and a look forward
Readings: (27p)

Recitation: Bias revisited: Ancient Islamic science in modern scholarship
* Group B Response 5 due

*Final Exam as scheduled by registrar
Statement on Academic Integrity
The College Core Curriculum, College of Arts and Science

As a student at New York University, you have been admitted to a community of scholars who value free and open inquiry. Our work depends on honest assessment of ideas and their sources; and we expect you, as a member of our community, likewise to maintain the highest integrity in your academic work. Because of the central importance of these values to our intellectual life together, those who fail to maintain them will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism consists in presenting ideas and words without acknowledging their source and is an offense against academic integrity. Any of the following acts constitutes a crime of plagiarism.

Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person’s work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.
Paraphrasing words or ideas from another’s work without attribution.
Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another person.
Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.
Submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors.

Other offenses against academic integrity include the following.

Collaborating with other students on assignments without the express permission of the instructor.
Giving your work to another student to submit as his or her own.
Copying answers from other students during examinations.
Using notes or other sources to answer exam questions without the instructor’s permission.
Secreting or destroying library or reference materials.
Submitting as your own work a paper or results of research that you have purchased from a commercial firm or another person.

**Particular emphasis is placed on the use of papers and other materials to be found on the World Wide Web, whether purchased or freely available. In addition to having access to the same search engines as students, faculty also have at their disposal a number of special websites devoted to detecting plagiarism from the web.**

Plagiarism and other cases of academic fraud are matters of fact, not intention. It is therefore crucial that you be diligent in assuring the integrity of your work.

Use quotation marks to set off words that are not your own.
Learn to use proper forms of attribution for source materials.
Do your own original work in each class, without collaboration, unless otherwise instructed.
Don’t use published sources, the work of others, or material from the web without attribution.
For further information, consult the College of Arts and Science website on academic integrity at http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity.
The College Core Curriculum is designed to provide students with an intellectually rigorous general education in the liberal arts. Because Core courses seek to stretch you beyond your previous schooling and major course of study, they will likely be among the most academically challenging experiences you undertake as an undergraduate. The following guidelines outline our common expectations concerning the evaluation of students' work across the curriculum.

The grade of **A** marks extraordinary academic performance in all aspects of a course and is reserved for *clearly superior* work. In large lecture courses such as those in the Core, it would be unusual for more than 20–25% of students to earn grades in this range, or for more than 10% to merit marks of straight **A**.

As a faculty, we are similarly concerned to reserve the mark of **B+** to signify *very good* work.

It is our hope and desire that the majority of students will want and be able to do good work in their Core courses, work in the **B** range. Because these courses are intended by design to foster your intellectual development, the difference between merely satisfactory and good work will frequently depend on outstanding effort and class participation. For this reason, class participation is typically a substantial component of the overall grade in Core courses.

The grade of **C** denotes satisfactory work—regular attendance, ordinary effort, a minimum of demonstrated improvement across the semester. It is expected that every student is capable of and motivated to perform at least at this level.

Grades below **C** are reserved for less than satisfactory and, in the **D** range, for poor work and effort, and mark a need for improvement.

The grade of **F** indicates failure to complete the requirements for a course in a creditable manner. It marks a judgment about the quality and quantity of a student’s work and participation—not about the student—and is therefore in order whenever a student fails to complete course requirements, whatever his or her intentions or circumstances may be.

The temporary mark of **I** (Incomplete) is given only when sudden and incapacitating illness, or other grave emergency, prevents a student from completing the final assignment or examination for a course. It must be requested by the student in advance; all other course requirements, including satisfactory attendance, must have been fulfilled; and there must be a reasonable expectation that the student will receive a passing grade when the delayed work is completed. Students must make arrangements with the faculty member to finish the incomplete work as soon as circumstances permit within the following semester. If not completed, marks of **I** will lapse to **F**.