GSWS 320-4 ST: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Fitness Culture
“Keeping up with the Joneses”

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Lecture: Wednesdays 17:30 - 21:20; HC 1325

Course Description:
In a culture where censuring of body types that do not meet a certain ‘fit’ standard is all too common, the everyday person often gets swept up in a struggle to “keep up” with their neighbors, the Joneses, who are the epitome of health and fitness. The Joneses can be seen hiking, biking, running the seawall and making their way to the next yoga event - yoga mat strapped across their back. And in a culture that has given way to an upsurge in fitness services, businesses and different types of fitness routines; Cross fit, Tabatha, HIIT, to name a few, failure to “keep up with the Joneses” could be viewed as demonstrating both ‘cultural inferiority’ and a lack of discipline over one’s body. But in this ‘keep-fit’ culture, how are identities perceived, constructed and performed? Do the same rules apply for all bodies? In this course we will explore the phenomenon of the fitness culture, paying close attention to the ways in which gender and ethnicity are regulated and performed. Broadly interdisciplinary in its concerns, this course is suitable for students across all disciplines.

Objectives:
- Familiarize students with the debates around fitness;
- Provide opportunities for students to think critically about the bearing that fitness has on notions of femininity and masculinity and ethnic bodies;
- Provide opportunities for students to develop enhanced skills in communication through written and oral work;
- Encourage students to reflect on their own stereotypes and prejudices around fitness and the ‘fit body’.

Educational Goals:
For more detailed information please see the GSWS website: [http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/courses/Educational_Goals.html](http://www.sfu.ca/gsws/courses/Educational_Goals.html)

Course Texts and Courseware:
Readings will be available on Canvas or online (SFU library) via electronic books.

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Film Review - 15%
In Class presentation - 20%
Class participation - 10%
Final paper - 30%
Seminar Presentation (Observation Write-up & Presentation) – 25%

Prerequisite: 15 units