GSWS 831-5: “DUDE, WHERE’S MY BODY?”
BIOPOLITICS, BIOTECHNOLOGIES, BIOECOLOGIES

Professor: Dr. Coleman Nye
Email: anye@sfu.ca
Office: AQ 5105A
Office hours: TBD
Lecture: Mondays 13:30 – 17:20; WMC3220

Course Description:
We live in a historical moment in which cells are technologies, genes can be edited, organs and tissues are exchangeable, plastic molecules are laced through our bodies, and our limbs, senses, sex, looks, and lives are transformable. In this context, what is your body? Where does it begin and end? What are your biological properties? How much of your bodily substance and sensation is strictly “you” or “yours”?

Starting from feminist science studies scholar Donna Haraway’s enduring provocation, “Why should our bodies end at the skin?” (“A Cyborg Manifesto” 1991), we will spend the semester mapping and remapping the contours of this thing we call “a body.” This course traces and interrogates the numerous ways in which our bodies matter – socially, historically, technologically, biologically, politically, and economically. We will begin by reading focused selections from key theoretical texts that will help us to develop a shared language for talking about our bodies and their cultural, physical, and historical dimensions. The rest of the semester will be spent on case studies drawn from historical texts, anthropology, science and technology studies, performance studies, and critical cultural studies of race, gender, and sexuality.

Areas of exploration include constructions of race, sex and gender, drugs and addiction, social inequality, ecology, digital media, cosmetic surgery, contagion, organ transplantation, prosthetics, interspecies relations, reproductive technologies, nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, toys, toxins, food, and bioart.

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

Course Texts and Courseware:
1. Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era (2013), Paul Preciado
2. Between the World and Me (2015), Ta-Nehisi Coates
3. The Argonauts (2016), Maggie Nelson
5. All other readings and materials will be made available on canvas

RECOMMENDED TEXTS: (available as e-books through the SFU library)
1. Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect (2012), Mel Chen

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Participation and Attendance – 20%
Body Journal with Critical Analysis – 50%
Final Project – 30% (5% proposal, 25% project)