HON-BE 300 (class number 32740) consists of the following two classes: GNDR-G 310 (3 cr.) and HON-H 300 (1 cr.). To receive honors credit for this course, you MUST enroll in HON-BN 300. During the first week of classes, you will be dropped from HON-BN 300 and placed automatically into GNDR-G 310 and HON-H 300. Please note that the 1-credit HON-H 300 discussion section does NOT fulfill the HON-H course requirement for the General Honors Notation (GHN). For more information about the GHN, please visit the HHC web site.

The body. It is something everyone possesses, few feel comfortable in, and almost everyone would like to change. The body is also a significant register of cultural fears and anxieties. It provides the arena through which people enact ceremonial rites of passage. It tells the world if we are happy or sad, rich or poor, lazy or disciplined, healthy or sick. Or so we believe. For as much as we invest in an imagined idea of the body, we are often deceived by what our bodies mean, confused by how they operate, and frustrated by their recalcitrance. In this course we will examine this enigmatic yet central element that is the body, discovering, in turn, how the materiality of the body grounds our metaphors about identity. The distinction between materiality and metaphor is critical. We are, after all, primarily interested not in the body itself but in the idea of the body and in the way that depictions of male and female bodies suture collective understandings of gender, sex, sexuality, race, and class. And yet, it is impossible to examine the imagined body absent the flesh and blood and skin that give representation its saliency. In this course, as a consequence, we will move back and forth between sociological discussions of “real” bodies and artistic representations that imagine bodies, finding in that comparative approach a composite body that is both actual and idealized.

_Brenda Weber’s areas of expertise include nineteenth and twentieth century British and United States literatures, cultural history and social theory, the politics of representation, women’s and gender studies, reception and the construction of celebrity, and cultural studies of the body and its representation._