University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Anthropology of the Body and Agency, PG_00201043		
Field of study	Ethnology		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2026	Academic year of realisation of subject	2027/2028
Education level	Master's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	2	Language of instruction	Polish
Semester of study	4	ECTS credits	4.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	exam
Conducting unit	Division of Polish Ethnology and Anthropology of History -> Institute of Anthropology -> Faculty of History -> Rector		
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Kamil Pietrowiak	
	Teachers		

Lesson types	Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
	Number of study hours	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30
	E-learning hours included: 0.0						

Learning activity and number of study hours	Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
	Number of study hours	30	22.0	48.0	100

Subject objectives	The aim of the course is to introduce students to the cultural and social dimensions of embodiment, agency, and ability. The classes will explore how the body functions as a carrier of meaning and how it participates in the construction of identity and social relations. Special attention will be given to the embodied practices of people with disabilities and to the analysis of everyday strategies of action.

Learning outcomes	Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
	[ETNOMU2_W04] Has in-depth knowledge of the relationship between ethnology and cultural anthropology and other humanities and social sciences	They understand how embodiment and agency are analysed in anthropology, sociology, and philosophy.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
	[ETNOMU2_W03] Has well-ordered, in-depth knowledge in selected areas of knowledge about culture and religion, including the knowledge and understanding of the importance of promotion and protection of cultural heritage of Pomerania, Poland and the world	They have knowledge of cultural constructions of embodiment and agency across different societies.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
	[ETNOMU2_W07] Has an in-depth knowledge of advanced methods of analysing, interpreting, valuing and problematising cultural products from different cultural backgrounds	They are familiar with methods of interpreting bodily practices and are able to analyse their social and cultural meanings.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
	[ETNOMU2_W01] Has in-depth knowledge of the specific subject matter and methodology of ethnology and cultural anthropology, which they are able to develop and creatively apply in professional activity	They are familiar with methodologies for studying embodiment and can apply them to empirical material.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion
	[ETNOMU2_K01] Critically evaluates acquired knowledge, personal and social competences; is prepared to critically evaluate information received	They are able to critically assess their own assumptions about bodily norms and ability.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SK4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_U09] Communicates in Polish and/or foreign language using professional terminology specific to ethnology and cultural anthropology	They are able to use terminology related to the anthropology of the body and agency in Polish and/or a foreign language.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_K02] Is prepared to initiate and actively participate in activities for the preservation of national and world cultural heritage	They are aware of the importance of reflecting on the body and agency in cultural heritage-related activities.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SK4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_U01] Is able to independently search, verify, evaluate, select information, applying modern techniques of acquiring and analysing data with the use of various sources, integrate knowledge, and formulate critical opinions on this basis	They are able to independently search for and analyse sources related to embodiment and agency across cultural contexts.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_U14] Can work in a group with different roles, including leadership	They are able to collaborate in a group while analysing case studies related to embodiment and agency.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_K06] Demonstrates readiness to act for the integration of cultures, carries out independent or group projects in this respect, establishes contacts with cultural institutions	They understand the importance of reflecting on embodiment and agency in intercultural activities.	[SK1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SK4] test/exam - oral or written
	[ETNOMU2_U02] Has in-depth research skills, including analysis of other authors' works, synthesis of various ideas and views, selection of methods, and construction of research tools, elaboration and presentation of results, allowing for original solutions of complex problems in the field of ethnology and cultural anthropology	They are able to design and carry out research on embodiment and agency using selected anthropological tools.	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU4] test/exam - oral or written

Subject contents	1. Body, agency, ability introduction to key categories 2. The body in different cultures ethnographic comparisons 3. The body as a carrier of cultural and social meanings 4. Agency and identity how the body participates in the making of the self 5. Everyday practices and bodily strategies (after Michel de Certeau) 6. The body at work productivity, efficiency, resistance 7. Social and cultural models of disability 8. Practices of building agency among people with disabilities 9. Extraordinary bodies sport, performance, and bodily limits 10. Medicalization and the biopolitics of the body 11. Social norms and the disciplining of the body 12. The body in public and private spaces
Prerequisites and co-requisites	

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
activity during discussions	51.0%	30.0%
oral or written exam	51.0%	70.0%

Recommended reading

Basic literature	Archer M. (2013a), Człowieczeństwo. Problem sprawstwa, przeł. A. Dziuban, Kraków: NOMOS. Barnes C., Mercer G. (2008), Niepełnosprawność, przeł. P. Morawski, Warrszawa: Sic! M. Szpakowska (red.),Antropologia ciała. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów, Warszawa: WUW, T. F. Heatheron, R. E. Kleck, M. R. Hebl, J. G. Hull (red.), Społeczna psychologia piętna, Warszawa: PWN. Certeau M. de (2008), Wynaleźć codzienność. Sztuki działania, przeł. K. Thiel-Jańczuk, Kraków: WUJ. Goffman E. (2005), Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości, przeł. A. Dzierżyńska, J. Tokarska-Bakir, Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
Supplementary literature	Archer M. (2013b), Jak porządek społeczny wpływa na ludzkie sprawstwo? Refleksyjność jako mechanizm pośredniczący między strukturą a sprawstwem, przeł. T. Skoczylas, w: A. Mrozowicki, O. Nowaczyk, I. Szlachcicowa (red.), Sprawstwo. Teorie, metody, badania empiryczne w naukach społecznych, Kraków: NOMOS, s. 1935. Barker Ch. (2005), Studia kulturowe. Teoria i praktyka, przeł. A. Sadza, Kraków: WUJ Bauman Z. (2000), Ponowoczesność jako źródło cierpień, Warszawa: Sic J.-J. Courtine (red.), Historia ciała, t. 3: Różne spojrzenia. Wiek XX, przeł. K. Bedaid, T. Stróżyński, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria,
eResources addresses	

Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	How is bodily agency understood across different cultures, and how do these perspectives differ? In what ways can the body become a space of resistance against social norms? What cultural meanings are assigned to the able and disabled body? How do people with disabilities build their own agency in everyday life? What are the social expectations toward bodies in the workplace, and how can they be challenged? What does a productive body mean in various cultural contexts? How can everyday practices (e.g., walking, eating, moving through the city) be understood as strategies of agency? What are the challenges and possibilities of researching the body in anthropology?
Work placement	Not applicable

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