Hers is

The moon does not have
a strategic plan

She is not owned by a corporate
her pull is not a hand
or a bank balance,
Dow Jones means nothing to her.

Hers is
a going towards
and a return,
a hiss and a roar
a spit and polish
a shaving of paua backs
to produce a showing.

She can dance
she can
can wave her hips and laugh
knowingly,
what a woman
moves as she
must.

Yes
I knew her
A small beacon in the world.

To me she was a bonfire
a torch setting itself alight
on a beach
in a limited season.

Roma Potiki
Shaking the Tree (1998)
Steele Roberts, Wellington, NZ
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Disclaimer: The Organising Committee accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the abstracts contained in this Programme. This responsibility remains with the author(s).

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School of Humanities  School of Social Sciences
University of Otago  University of Auckland
Dunedin  Auckland
WELCOME

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou

On behalf of the conference organising committee, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the third Fat Studies New Zealand conference. *Fat Studies: Past, Present, Futures* was scheduled to take place on the Albany campus of Massey University on 18-19 June 2020. Unfortunately, COVID-19 forced us to cancel the conference on the ground but provided an opportunity to take it online. I am so incredibly grateful to the FSNZ20 Cmte, who shifted gears at the last minute to pull together this online offering. And to the speakers who agreed to share their scholarship in a different medium. I am also excited for the speakers from the cancelled Weight Stigma Conference and PCA/ACA who have come on board with FSNZ20; our conference has grown to include a broader range of scholarship and speakers from around the world. We are already plotting whether we can make an online global Fat Studies conference a reality.

The programme for FSNZ20 is varied and exciting. We have activists and academics; graduate students and those established. Our speakers come from nine different countries; from South Africa to Scotland. Each bring an unique perspective to their scholarship and each make a rich contribution to the growing field. We have continued our commitment to acknowledging the role that activists have always played in fat epistemology, by having an activist as one of our keynotes. FSNZ20 welcomes Sonya Renee Taylor, the Radical Executive Officer of The Body is Not An Apology. We also welcome Professor Esther Rothblum, the Editor-at-Large of the *Fat Studies* journal. The theme for this year’s conference was chosen because we felt that this is a good time to reflect on the history of Fat Studies scholarship, consider the present state of the discipline, and imagine what the future might hold. It has been over ten years since *The Fat Studies Reader* was published, and almost a decade since our academic journal began production.

The first Fat Studies New Zealand conference was *Fat Studies: Reflective Intersections* in 2012; it took place in Wellington, hosting 30 individuals, including scholars from three continents. Dr. Samantha Murray (Macquarie University) presented the keynote, “Assent and its Aftermath: Critical Fat Studies and the Implications of Weight Loss Surgery”. Following on from FSNZ12, a special edition of *Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight & Society* (Taylor & Francis) was produced exploring the conference theme of reflection intersections. In 2016, *Fat Studies: Identity, Agency, Embodiment* welcomed 40 individuals to Palmerston North, including scholars from eight countries; another 60 individuals joined us online. The keynotes included Professor Katie LeBesco (Marymount Manhattan College), “Genderqueer, trans, fluid, fat: Physical modification and the politics of acceptance” and Substantia Jones (The Adipositivity Project), “Adipositivity: Part fat, part feminism, part f**k you”. At the close of FSNZ16, work began on an International Handbook of Fat Studies for Routledge; Sonya and I are finishing the work on this now and hope the Handbook will be published next year.

This conference would not be possible without the support of Massey University, the Institute of Education, and the FSNZ20 organising committee. This is the first online conference we’ve organized, so there may be a few mistakes along the way. We hope we have developed a safe and inviting space that will promote exciting scholarship and community. Please let us know if you find any errors or have any problems navigating the conference. And please share your experience of the conference throughout social media, using #FSNZ20.

We are incredibly grateful for all of the people who worked together to make this conference happen. And we would also like to thank all those who are participating for supporting Fat Studies scholarship and activism.

Cat Pausé
On behalf of the FSNZ20 organising committee
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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And the members of the Fatosphere who helped promote the conference!
PROGRAMME

Presentations will be available from the first day of their assigned week; Speakers and Session Chairs will be available for Q&A during their assigned week.

Week One: June 18th – June 24th, 2020

Keynote

Esther Rothblum
Fat Studies: Past, Present, and Future
Abstract

Session One

Gurleen Khandpur
Fat female embodiment: Queering conventional femininity or queer-in-itself
Abstract

Allison Taylor
Fashioning Fat Fem(me)ininities
Abstract

Natalia Skoczylas
Sexual healing after fatshaming: Reclaiming fat sexual pleasure
Abstract

Session Two

Trish Cain, Patricia Thille, Kristy Wittmeier, Liz Harvey, & Sandra Webber
Exploring physical therapists' investment in healthy living and attitudes towards fatness
Abstract

Tina Sikka
The medicalization, app-ification, and genetification of fatness
Abstract

Stephanie Campbell
Weight, “health”, and morality: Historicizing schools as agents of biopedagogy
Abstract

Session Three

Brittany Lockard
I almost put the “die” in diet: Reflections on taking Fat Studies from intellectual to interior life
Abstract

Sea Matheson
Embracing fatness as self-care in the era of Trump
Abstract

Katie Greenall
Creating art about fatness: Making FATTY FAT FAT
Abstract
PROGRAMME

Presentations will be available from the first day of their assigned week; Speakers and Session Chairs will be available for Q&A during their assigned week.

Week Two: June 25th – July 1st, 2020

Keynote

Sonya Renee Taylor
Fat, Black Futures: Visioning a World Beyond Fatphobia and Anti-Blackness
Abstract

Session One

Ramanpreet Annie Bahra
‘Personhood’ and fat as debility
Abstract

Mackenzie Edwards
Dispossession, disposability: An exploration of fatness, disability, and migration through Fat Rose’s #NoBodyIsDisposable
Abstract

Sharon Bernecki DeJoy
Towards a new public health ethics: Have they (we) finally realised weight stigma is unethical?
Abstract

Session Two

Erin Cox
Holding space: Changes in a fat fashion community in Australia
Abstract

Shirmeez Samaai
Body positive healthy women: Constructions of healthy feminists in South Africa’s Women’s Health Magazine 2009-2019
Abstract

Hannele Harjunen
Fat women and exercise: Invisibility, discrimination, and feelings of empowerment
Abstract

Andrea Bombak, Angela Meadows, & Jacqueline Bilette
Fat acceptance 101: Midwestern American women’s perspective on cultural body acceptance
Abstract

Session Three

Samantha Keene
Occupying a fat research identity: Reflections from the field
Abstract

Jenny Lee
Removing the armour: Fat activism and vulnerability
Abstract

Aimee B. Simpson
Fat (Studies) researcher: Reflections on inside research
Abstract
PROGRAMME

Presentations will be available from the first day of their assigned week; Speakers and Session Chairs will be available for Q&A during their assigned week.

Week Three: July 2nd – July 8th, 2020

Session One
Abigail Jenkins Menzies
*Rereading fatness in 2020: Intimacy, pleasure and analysis*
[Abstract]

Sean Ryan
*The unchanging representations of the fat body in young adult fiction*
[Abstract]

Judith Schreier
*Between blame and pity: The representation of the fat female body in This is Us*
[Abstract]

Session Two
Ashlea Gillon
*Body Sovereignty and fat Indigenous women*
[Abstract]

Elyse Durocher, Amelia Perron & Dave Holmes
*The usefulness of critical realism in understanding experiences of fatness*
[Abstract]

Victoria Knight
*Shamed and silenced: The fat subject, agency, and mental health*
[Abstract]

Session Three
George Parker
*From critique to transformation: Where to for research on pregnancy fatness?*
[Abstract]

Kiki Fornero & Dena Hassouneh
*Challenging dominant evidence hierarchies to value personal perspectives on fat embodiment: A call to bridge the gap between personal narratives and health science literature*
[Abstract]

Carolynne White, Louise Adams, Mandy-Lee Noble, Anna Reeves, & Natalie Jovanovski
*Collective action to end weight stigma and discrimination in Australia: Achievements and challenges*
[Abstract]

Closing
Cat Pausé
*Fattening Scholarship*
[Abstract]
Week One | Keynote

Fat Studies: Past, Present, and Future

Esther Rothblum
San Diego State University

This keynote address will address issues in the past, present, and future of the relatively new field of fat studies. Regarding the past, I will focus on (1) ancient and more recent history of fat, (2) control of women’s appearance across historical time and geographic region, and (3) early books on fat activism and scholarship. For the present, I will highlight (1) fatness as moral panic, (2) the media focus on weight, and (3) intersectionality of weight with race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Future issues include (1) creation of fat studies as an academic discipline, (2) ways in which children’s literature reflects societal oppression, (3) the Health at Every Size movement, and (4) the need for fat people to organize.

About Esther:
Esther D. Rothblum, Ph.D., is Professor of Women’s Studies at San Diego State University and editor of Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society. Her research and writing have focused on the stigma of weight, weight and employment discrimination, and weight across cultures. She has edited over 20 books, including Overcoming Fear of Fat (with Laura Brown in 1989). Her most recent book, The Fat Studies Reader (with Sondra Solovay in 2009), was reviewed in The New Yorker, the New York Times, MS Magazine, and the Chronicle of Higher Education, among others, and received the Susan Koppelman Award for Best Anthology by the Popular Culture/American Culture Association and a Distinguished Publication Award from the Association for Women in Psychology. Esther Rothblum is a member of the advisory board of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance and a founding co-chair of the Size Acceptance Caucus of the Association for Women in Psychology. She is also the LGBTQ+ Studies program advisor at San Diego State University, the editor of the Journal of Lesbian Studies, and conducts research on same-sex couples and on LGBTQ+ mental health.
Fat female embodiment: Queering conventional femininity or queer-in-itself?

Gurleen Khandpur

Master’s Candidate, University of Otago

Fat cis-women become fat cis-women within a cis-patriarchal heteronormative psychosocial and cultural matrix that discursively constructs that becoming. Within this matrix fat female bodies (depending on varying factors of fat embodiment including race, size and where fat is located on bodies) are often read as being unfeminine and sexually undesirable. This lack of perceived (by the self or society) femininity may be a product of some fat bodied people being physically, or for lack of social infrastructure, incapable of performing certain rituals and/or portraying key characteristics of feminine gender production. For instance, among other things, they may not be small and “dainty”, be unable to sit with their legs crossed or knees close thus acquiring a more “masculine” pose, or go shopping with their girlfriends. Given that one’s personal or societal reading of oneself as unfeminine can be a source of great shame and distress for (presumed) cis-women, fat positive and body positive rhetoric often encourages, even pressurises, them to find empowerment in exaggerated femininity, reclaiming their femininity and/or by expanding the social and personal boundaries of femininity, thus creating a narrative of empowerment that advocates for embracing a radical femininity that bends but stops short of breaking binary-gender categories. I argue that such a default paradigm of empowerment is inherently queer-phobic, particularly if one subscribes to the notion that gender is socially constructed. I further argue that a) the metaphysical position that one becomes gendered a woman through various processes entails that conversely, one may not be so gendered as the matter of being gendered in a certain way and/or belonging to a gender kind is contingent not necessary and b) that the nature of conventional femininity and the production of conventional gender is such that fatness can hinder the woman-making process in a significant way so that a person assigned female at birth may become “not-woman” i.e. be queer (used here as an umbrella term for any/all non-cis gender identities) instead of cis-gender by virtue of being fat. Any argument that seeks to head off a self-avowed queer gender identity of a person rooted in their fatness as a symptom of low self-esteem that can be cured by embracing fat-positivity is queerphobic. Hence, I advocate for re-examining our narratives of fat-empowerment. We must affirm queerness as a legitimate and empowering possible consequence of living in a fat female cis-assigned body.

About Gurleen:
Gurleen Khandpur is a postgraduate student pursuing a Master’s degree in Philosophy from the University of Otago. Her thesis undertakes a conceptual analysis of Gender with an emphasis on the implications for applied ethics in various domains. She is passionate about fruitfully marrying academia with activism and as such her research interests include normative and applied ethics, gender, sexuality, and fat studies.
Week One | Session One

Fashioning Fat Fem(me)inities

Allison Taylor
PhD Candidate, York University

Queer fat femme can be defined, loosely, as an identity individuals across genders draw upon to negotiate their intersecting queerness, fem(me)ininity, and fatness. Queer fat femme communities are emergent within overlapping fat, queer, femme, and feminist movements, forming in response to the marginalization of fatness and fem(me)ininity in heteronormative and queer spaces (Chalklin, 2016; Taylor, 2018). Drawing on interviews and participant photographs from my research with queer fat femme women and gender non-conforming individuals living in Canada, I argue that ‘queer fat femme’ functions simultaneously as a site of resistance for, and regulation of, fat femmes. On one hand, participants express that ‘queer fat femme’ allows them to resist the fatphobia—and racism, classism, ableism, and cissexism—central to normative conceptions of femininity because it carves out space for expressions of fat fem(me)ininity. On the other, participants articulate ‘queer fat femme’ as an ideal that they often fail to embody because of its dominant representation as ultra-feminine, polished, fat ‘in the right places’, able-bodied, and white. Consequently, I demonstrate a need for broadening the narrow parameters of ‘acceptable’ fat fem(me)ininity to recognize and value queer fat femmes’ varied and resistant visions of fat fem(me)ininity.

About Allison:
Allison Taylor is a PhD candidate in the department of Gender, Feminist and Women’s Studies at York University. Taylor’s SSHRC-funded, doctoral research explores queer fat femme identities, embodiments, and negotiations of femmephobia, fatphobia, and other intersecting oppressions in queer communities in Canada. Her research interests include fat studies, critical femininity studies, and queer theory. Her work has been published in places such as Fat Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Body Weight and Society, Psychology & Sexuality, and the Journal of Lesbian Studies.
Week One | Session One

Sexual healing after fatshaming: Reclaiming fat sexual pleasure

Natalia Skoczylas

This essay will explore fat-shaming as a specific form of sexual violence. It seems that fatphobic comments or attitude does not find similar compassion and willingness to counteract it (which it is still difficult in the event of any sexual assault), as a result of a general bias towards fat bodies. Growing up as a fat girl and living as a fat woman and based on my experience of many years of work, as a first contact person and consultant for women who experienced violence, (especially sexual and domestic violence), I explored the topic of trauma and how it can affect sexuality. Fat-shaming can result in the same or similar psychological consequences as other forms of sexual violence. It can stop exploring your sexuality and can result in problems with having sex with another person, and even with satisfactory masturbation. Besides, living in a fatphobic society in which discrimination and stereotypes are sustained by both institutions and mass culture, we do not need to receive direct comments to know that our bodies can experience them, which can affect social or dating life. Fat survivors may not report sexual assault because of the fear of exposing themselves to comments about their body and lack of faith or to be in relationships where violence occurs due to reduced self-esteem. Disciplining the sexuality of fat people means taking away their fundamental right to sexual freedom and pleasure and exposing us to violence.

About Natalia:
Natalia Skoczylas is a fat feminist and anti-fascist activist and about to be a lawyer based in Warsaw, Poland. She is a certified specialist in the field of domestic violence, and as an antiviolence consultant she worked with people who experience any form of violence: provided support and accompanied during legal proceedings. An actress in the theater play "Rape. Voices", based among others on her experience. Member of the 8th March Women's Alliance. She currently conducts workshops on combating sexual violence in clubs and bars.

Instagram: @nataszex
Week One | Session Two

Exploring physical therapists’ investment in healthy living and attitudes towards fatness.

Trish Cain (a), Patricia Thille (b), Kristy Wittmeier (b), Liz Harvey (b) & Sandra Webber (b)
(a) Murdoch University, Western Australia, (b) University of Manitoba

Prior survey research indicates that physical therapists demonstrate antifat attitudes, fear of fat, and inaccurate beliefs about determinants of weight. Physical therapists tend to be involved in sports and fitness pursuits, which may reflect strong personal commitments to ‘health’ and ‘fitness’. To guide future intervention on a potential healthcare quality issue, this study explores correlations between attitudes and personal investment in ‘health’ and ‘fitness’ in physical therapy students and practitioners. Physical therapy students (n = 34) and licenced practitioners (n = 187) in Manitoba, Canada took part in an online survey. Investment in ‘healthy’ living was assessed with the Health Orientation Scale (HOS) and the Multidimensional Body Self-Relations Questionnaire (BSRQ), and attitudes towards fatness were assessed with the Fat Attitudes Assessment Toolkit (FAAT). For the combined student/practitioner sample, and the practitioner sample alone, there were no meaningful significant correlations between the subscales of the HOS and BSRQ with the FAAT scales. For the student sample, the BSRQ Health Evaluation scale showed moderate negative correlations with the FAAT scales of Empathy, Discrimination, Size acceptance, Responsibility and moderate positive correlations with self-reflection. For students, positive body appraisal and evaluation of one’s good physical health corresponded with less positive evaluations of fat people.

About Authors:
Dr. Patricia Cain’s (pictured) research is informed by both qualitative and quantitative methodology with a focus on critical health psychology, specifically weight stigma and stigma intervention research. Patricia’s research has developed and validated the Fat Attitudes Assessment Toolkit.

Dr. Patty Thille is a sociologist and physical therapist who studies health services using qualitative methodologies. Her graduate research focused on anti-fat stigmatization in primary care, resulting in peer-reviewed publications in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Canadian Journal of Public Health, and Health Communication, as well as an award at the International Weight Stigma conference.

Dr. Kristy Wittmeier is a physical therapist and researcher interested in pediatric healthcare and service delivery, with experience in patient engagement and knowledge translation. She began her research career investigating the relationship between obesity and health. Recognizing the negative impact of weight stigma, she is refocusing her obesity-related research on access to non-biased healthcare.

Liz Harvey is a physical therapist and PhD student working with Drs. Thille and Webber.

Dr. Sandra Webber is a physical therapist and researcher with an interest in student wellness and educational issues relevant to physical therapy.
About Tina:
Dr. Tina Sikka is a Lecturer in Media and Culture at Newcastle University in the UK. Her research interests include the science studies (environmental science, nutritional science, health), gender, and culture. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Sikka has written for such outlets as Jacobin, Lady Science and Alternet. Her most recent book is titled Climate Technology, Gender, and Justice: The Standpoint of the Vulnerable (Springer Press, 2019). Her research can be found at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/sacs/staff/profile/tinasikka.html

Week One | Session Two

The medicalization, app-ification, and genetification of fatness.

Tina Sikka
Newcastle University

In this talk, I examine the rise of medical research (Krueger and Retherner 2015), health-surveillance apps (Noom, SparkPeople), and consumer based genetic technologies (DNAfit, DNAInsight), that I contend have given rise to pernicious and faulty assumptions about health and fatness. By exploring and critically examining this medical research and these technologies through the lens of feminist science studies (Rivers 2019; Land 2017) and fat studies (biopolitics, health pathologies, bio-citizenship), I critique the ways in which they work synergistically to produce a regime of knowledge about our bodies that:

1. Normalizes particular kinds of embodiment;
2. Pathologizes fatness;
3. Renders ill-health not a product of structural and socioeconomic racism, patriarchy, and ableism, but the result of ones’ genes (which leads to discrimination based on collected data); and
4. Considers ill-health the result of ones’ bad choices – which also results in multiple forms of oppression by responsibilising health onto individuals as well as into the private sphere.

I conclude with a robust argument in favour of fat activism in the medico-technological field which consists of, one, the incorporation of modes of medical knowledge production about our bodies based on feminist principles of heterogeneity, embodiment, care, and wellness; two, supports the further discursive and sociological de-linking of fatness from illness; and three, implements regulation of these apps and genetic tests with respect to what they claim and how they handle our data. I specifically take up and propose models of activism that incorporates fat liberation with science-based social movements (e.g. Science for the People, Feminist Arts and Science Shop).


About Tina:
Dr. Tina Sikka is a Lecturer in Media and Culture at Newcastle University in the UK. Her research interests include the science studies (environmental science, nutritional science, health), gender, and culture. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Sikka has written for such outlets as Jacobin, Lady Science and Alternet. Her most recent book is titled Climate Technology, Gender, and Justice: The Standpoint of the Vulnerable (Springer Press, 2019). Her research can be found at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/sacs/staff/profile/tinasikka.html
Weight, “Health”, and Morality: Historicizing Schools as Agents of Biopedagogy

Stephanie Campbell
PhD Candidate, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Schools have long been sites for bodily transformations. From reformatory institutions (e.g., Carlisle Indian Industrial School) to the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to the food pyramid—education is intertwined with the sociopolitical history of what is acceptable about how people eat, live, and move. Schools provide more than academic improvement; they have been sites for moral development (Allen, 2013), medicalization (Petrina, 2006), “civilization” (Jones & Jenkins, 2000), and the reification of fatphobia (Clare et al., 2015). The proposed paper will overview how systems of education have been settings for cultural [re]production (Packer & Greco-Brooks, 1999) and how they have promoted particular biopedagogies. Connecting threads of history from colonial times through modern day will be used to argue that schools continue to define “health” with curricula that are oppressive, white-washed, anti-fat. Further, the commodified, objectified issue of body size—especially for women and femme-identifying individuals—is constantly problematized as a moral and character failure of the person. This association between moral goodness and health is a narrative well-entrenched in the history of schooling. Building upon lessons learned from extant literature, this paper will conclude with liberatory suggestions for school professionals to counter harmful messaging about fatness.


I stumbled upon the then newly-emerging field of fat studies almost by accident in my early twenties. Like many fat people, my life up to that point consisted of a cycle of dieting and/or eating disorders followed by weight regain (plus a little extra) and utter devastation at “my” failure. This made me initially quite resistant to some of the fat studies research, as I had thoroughly internalized our fat-hating diet culture. Eventually, however, I began to see the larger structures (medical, social, religious, governmental, etc.) that caused Western society’s anti-fat ideology, and to interrogate them in my art historical writing. However, it took much longer to truly absorb many of the precepts of fat studies on an emotional level, and even fifteen years later, I still struggle with this task.

This essay reflects on the difficulties of applying my deeply-held intellectual beliefs to my personal life, and the ways that this disjunction impacts my work as a fat-positive art historian. How do I provide a fat-positive example for colleagues, friends, family, and students, while not always feeling so fat-positive about myself? How do scholars live and work while navigating what W.E.B. DuBois called the double consciousness, that is, the feeling that your identity is fractured into several parts, and cannot be made whole?
Embracing Fatness as Self-Care in the Era of Trump

Sea Matheson
Independent Scholar/Activist.
https://sites.google.com/view/sea-matheson/

Current discourse surrounding self-care is often dominated by sizeism and fatphobic attitudes. These problems are augmented in a time when we have an openly fatphobic president. Donald Trump’s racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia are openly discussed and protested while the president’s fatphobia is often ignored. Not only does he rely on sizeist tropes to shame women, but he is also known for favoring his own children based on their adherence to hegemonic, patriarchal conceptions of beauty. This paper argues for an embracing and reclaiming of fatness as an act of self-care in the era of Trump. Because of this leader’s bigotry, fatness acts as a distancing mechanism from the president, producing physical and ideological space that can insulate the individual from intolerant ideology.

About Sea:
Sea Matheson (they, them) is an activist based out of Austin, TX. They have worked to bring awareness and understanding of the fat and nonbinary community to many events such as the Women’s March, March for Our Lives, and most recently, the Global Climate Strikes. Sea focuses on fat activism, as even in intersectional communities, discourse often focuses on race and gender and ignores or silences fat voices.
Creating art about fatness - Making FATTY FAT FAT

Katie Greenall

After feeling increasingly frustrated at the lack of representations of bodies & stories of fat bodies, FATTY FAT FAT (FFF) was conceived in 2018. FATTY FAT FAT is a solo autobiographical show about my experiences having always been fat, fat right now and probably fat forever.

I created FFF to be an uprising, after living in a fat body all my life, this show was created as both a revolution to (literally) take up the space nobody has ever wanted to give and to pay homage to the fat activists that have come before me. FFF isn’t a utopia yet, because the show is a beginning and not an end, so instead uses humour, anecdotes, games and activism through theatre to radicalise our spaces and create empathy for other fat folk in our spaces.

FATTY FAT FAT has spent 18 months in development and has now been performed over 50 times across the UK- and will hopefully continue its postponed 2020 tour in 2021. Here, I aim to share with you some of the complexities around making art around Fatness and talk about the process of making FATTY FAT FAT. I will share the some of the ways we have worked to ensure this work is safe for me to perform and how the work has been received publicly along the way. Finally, I will share how we have begun to use FFF as a platform for grassroots activism and to build fat communities across the UK.

About Katie:
Katie is a facilitator, theatre maker and spoken word artist currently living in London. After graduating in 2017 with a degree in Acting and Community Theatre, Katie has been running workshops and making work with young people and communities all over London - including at the Bush Theatre, The Yard, National Youth Theatre and Central School of Speech and Drama. Katie is currently performing FATTY FAT FAT, her debut autobiographical solo show about living in a fat body. This show debuted at VAULT Festival last year where it won the VAULTS Origins Award for Outstanding New Work. Following this FFF was performed at the Marlborough, the Roundhouse and the Albany before completing a sold-out 5* run at Edinburgh Fringe. FFF was due to head out on a tour of England and Wales in Spring 2020, supported by Arts Council England. Katie performs regularly across the UK, has appeared on several podcasts, including The Pleasure Podcast & The Guilty Feminist and written for the Metro, Refinery 29 & Bustle.
Week Two | Keynote

**Fat, Black Futures: Visioning a World Beyond Fatphobia and Anti-Blackness**

Sonya Renee Taylor

As much of the world awakens to the realities of systemic oppression specifically on Black Bodies we are in a collective opportunity of visioning. What is the future we are living into and what bodies will be there? How are the vibrant abundant lives of Black people essential to creating the same for fat people? Where can fat white and non-Black POCs explore how their anti-Blackness is detrimental to justice and equity for fat bodies? To be fat and Black is to live in a body constantly invited to some sort of death. The refusal of the invitation is to stake a claim for fatness in the future. It is to stake a claim for Blackness in the future. And it is a call for us to understand the necessity of the survival of both if there is to be any future worth living in to at all.

**About Sonya:**

Artist, Activist and transformational leader Sonya Renee Taylor is a National and International award winning writer and performer, best-selling author, and founder and Radical Executive Officer of The Body is Not An Apology, an international digital media and education company committed to radical self-love and body empowerment as the foundational tool of social justice, whose content reaches over 1 million people monthly. She has shared her work and activism across the US, New Zealand, Australia, UK, Scotland, Sweden, Germany, Canada, Brazil and the Netherlands. Sonya has been seen, heard, and read on HBO, BET, MTV, TV One, NPR, PBS, CNN, Oxygen Network, The New York Times, New York Magazine, MSNBC.com, Today.com, Huffington Post, Vogue Australia, Shape.com, Ms. Magazine and many more. She has shared stages with such luminaries as the Hillary Rodham Clinton, Angela Davis, Naomi Klein, Sonia Sanchez and others. In 2016, Sonya was a guest of the Obama White House, where she spoke about TBINAA’s work at the intersection of LGBTQIA+ issues and disability justice. Sonya currently resides in New Zealand where she is an inaugural fellow in the Edmund Hillary Fellowship for global impact change makers. You can learn more about her radical self love and transformational change work at www.thebodyisnotanapology.com and www.sonyareneetaylor.com.
‘Personhood’ and Fat as Debility

Ramanpreet Annie Bahra, M.A
PhD Candidate, York University

The discourse of the body has travelled between different streams of scholarship to examine the ways in which language, science and medicine have established and legitimated a criteria of personhood, while contextualizing fat personhood as a lacking state. In taking up literature coming from Affect Studies, Fat Studies, and Critical Disability Studies, this paper will present on Jasbir K. Puar’s theorization of ‘debility’ and ‘capacity’ in attempt to analyze how the intersections of fatness, disability and racialization can be considered a debilitated state. Puar (2015) has defined debility as the lack or loss of certain bodily abilities and, in using terminology springing from affect theory, as a form of ‘slow death’ that follows the discourse of the body; capacity, on the other hand, becomes a site of discipline and regulation for compulsory ableism, racism and sizeism/“shapeism” to mutually function. In contemporary society, we come to see how medical industrial complex determines and utilizes bodily capacity and debility to map out and organize fat, disabled and racialized bodies. This brings us to the question of how is the nondisabled and thin body as a state of normative bodily capacity used to reinforce the fat body as an unproductive and debilitated state of being, therefore not a worthy citizen of the nation? Lastly, following Marta Usiekniewicz (2016) argument that fat Black people are put on a path of ‘accelerated death’ rather than ‘slow death’ will be reflected upon, thus bringing us to the last question guiding this paper: how does the politics of size/shape, disability and race continue to push ‘Othered’ bodies into this debilitated state and enable ‘accelerated death’ in accordance to the celebrated bodily capacity?


**Week Two | Session One**

*Dispossession, Disposability: An Exploration of Fatness, Disability, and Migration through Fat Rose’s #NoBodyIsDisposable*

**Mackenzie Edwards**  
PhD Candidate, York University

This paper looks beyond the academic world toward the activist world in order to shed light on radical fat movements for change. The centerpiece of the paper is Fat Rose’s #NoBodyIsDisposable campaign and its intersectional implications. This campaign is analyzed thoroughly throughout the paper, with specific attention paid to the ways in which it ties together fat, disabled, and migrant bodies under a common logic of disposability, a disposability which relies on rhetorics of dispossession.

This particular disposability’s duality as well as its connection to capitalism and colonialism are made apparent through the analysis, which incorporates critical feminist and Indigenous scholarship. The way fat, disabled, and migrant bodies and subjects are all differently rendered as disposable under Western hegemony is a key point, with disposability being the bridge that links these seemingly separate oppressions in this framing. Additionally, there is a focus on the importance of Fat Rose’s activist work being both online and offline as well as what that means for accessibility of protest movements in the modern age.

*About Mackenzie:*
Mackenzie Edwards is a PhD student at York University in the Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies Department. Her work focuses on fat embodiment in popular and social media, and her proposed PhD research explores Toronto’s #bodypositive Instagram community. Using anti-capitalist and disability studies perspectives, she brings together multiple fields in her writing, which has been published in the journal Screen Bodies.
Week Two | Session One

Towards a new public health ethics: Have they (we) finally realized weight stigma is unethical?

Sharon Bernecki DeJoy
Department of Health, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

The 2019 American Public Health Association Code of Ethics establishes 8 criteria for ethical action. This presentation will analyze the ethics of “obesity” policy in the US context through the lens of the new standards. It is grounded in the Code’s new definition of public health as promotion of human “flourishing”, which focuses on social conditions rather than biology.

The first criteria, permissibility, focuses on the ethics of the policy. Next, this analysis will consider whether “obesity” treatment prevention and treatment programs are respectful. Third, effectiveness will be considered. Discussion of the failure rate of weight-loss programs will illustrate how “obesity” prevention and treatment programs are not based on sound science. I will also address criteria such as reciprocity and responsible use of scarce resources. The criteria of proportionality asks us to consider whether there a net benefit to the majority of society from a policy. I will also address transparency and public participation, noting the influence of the medical lobby on health policy and mechanisms for silencing the voices of fat individuals. To conclude, I will suggest how a redefined public health ethics can enable human flourishing without harming fat people.

About Sharon:
Dr. Sharon DeJoy is an Associate Professor of Health at West Chester University of Florida. She completed her MPH and PhD in Public Health from the University of South Florida. Prior to her current position, she was an Assistant Professor of Community Health at the State University of New York at Potsdam. She teaches both undergraduate and graduate public health courses, and directs the BS in Public Health program. Dr. DeJoy has conducted community-based research and consultation in maternal and child health for underserved populations. She has authored and co-authored various peer-reviewed articles and presented at international conferences. Dr. DeJoy maintains certification as a direct-entry midwife, although she is not in clinical practice. Dr. DeJoy conducts applied research focused on improving the quality and outcomes of the maternity care system in the United States. Topics of special interest include the midwifery model of care, informed decision making in childbirth, and weight stigma in pregnancy.
**Week Two | Session Two**

**Holding space: Changes in a fat fashion community in Australia**

**Erin Cox**  
A Plus Market

In recent years significant cultural shifts have occurred directly impacting the fat fashion community I’m involved in. My personal observations are herein discussed.

Body positivity is now mainstream yet its appropriation of some and not all of fat liberation messaging means those that are informed and engaged politically are still a privileged minority. Ethical and environmentally minded fashion consumption has gained mainstream traction.

These socio political changes; having greater understanding and numbers involved in fat liberation and having increased access to diverse fashion choices has strengthened the fat community. A greater number of people now feel less isolated and marginalised. With these benefits however come considerations. There are now greater divides within the fat community; some are left behind or further marginalised due to the changes not being fully inclusive of size, shape, financial challenges and or disparity in access to fat liberation education and support.

Access to clothing has increased for ‘acceptable fats’ but not those above a size 22 nor those that identify as non-cis gendered or choose to not to dress ‘femme’ and or whose bodies are not hourglass or pear shape. Access to ethical and environmentally conscious clothing has increased but is still financially prohibitive. The pressure of managing the huge amount of waste generated by fast fashion now poses physical and emotional stress.

On a personal level creating and holding space for this community is energetically and emotionally draining. These are complex issues that need wider understanding, support and action.

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**About Erin:**

Erin Cox is the founder of A Plus Market, a ‘plus size’ specific fashion market held regularly in Melbourne, Australia since 2013. During 2014 and 2015 she was part of the team that led to the first large scale fat fashion runway events to be held as part of Melbourne’s mainstream fashion festival. Erin is also a practicing visual artist and recently embarked on curating a group art exhibition themed - Fat Feminism.

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Week Two | Session Two

Body positive healthy women: Constructions of healthy femininities in South African Women's Health Magazine 2009-2019

Shirmeez Samaai
University of the Western Cape

In December 2013, I attended a Zumba fitness class at a local gym and enjoyed every second of it, so much so that I myself became a dance instructor. However, there was one problem; despite my outstanding fitness capabilities, I did not present the stereotypical attributes of a “healthy” woman because I am plus-sized. Now, where do the ideas of what a healthy woman should be come from? And why does this have to do with my size and shape in particular? Contemporary pop cultures strongly shapes the perception that women should look a certain way in order to be considered as fit and healthy; because this would mean she ascribes to ideal femininities. As shown in media, a stereotypical healthy woman is portrayed as having a beautiful tall, slim, toned, figure with sleek long hair and fair skin. In concurrence with the mass media, the health and fitness industry promotes idealistic versions of “feminine” healthy bodies that women should aspire to. More often than not, these communications are accepted within any society because the mass media is a powerful source of information, perhaps even the most powerful source of information.

The proposed thesis will explore the construction of femininities in terms of health and embodiment discourses by analyzing the visual images and textual phrases that are represented in Women’s Health magazine over a period of ten years. My study aims to analyze images, narratives and messages that are found in selected South African Women’s Health magazines that are viewed as accepted symbols of idyllic healthy women. In exploring representations of healthy femininities through media discourses, my study will consider ways in which racial, gendered, ageist and classed norms are connected to notions of feminine “health”, “beauty” and “fitness” by closely examining the dichotomizing of body perfection and imperfection.

About Shirmeez:
My name is Shirmeez Samaai and I am professionally known as the Curve Dancer. I am a body positive activist who expresses her confidence and self-love through dancing. I believe that being a body positive person means expressing yourself through self-love and healthy methods of living, in spite of societal standards of beauty. I grew up in Mitchell’s Plain and I’ve always been a dancer as I took up ballet and modern dance classes at the age of 4 years old, until I was 12. Eventually, things started changing and I grew up believing that I was too overweight to be a dancer. I then instead took an academic path to life and studied Psychology at the University of the Western Cape. When I realized that writing and the throws of being a researcher is a stressful path, I started dancing again, became a Zumba Fitness Instructor and never looked back. I've been teaching dance for over five years and I was often portrayed as the fat fitness instructor, despite my fitness capabilities. Regardless of that, I taught my classes through self-love and body positivity. I always told my members that they should have fun and not focus on getting every single dance move correct. The only way you will feel your workout is if you sweat, and the only way you’ll sweat is if you have fun and enjoy the process. I teach my classes through self-love and body positivity, where I make sure people are comfortable with themselves. Through my movement, I want men and women to love themselves unconditionally and to enjoy the process of being a healthy human being.
Week Two | Session Two

Fat women and exercise: Invisibility, discrimination, and feelings of empowerment

Hannele Harjunen
University of Jyväskylä

Bodies that are deemed non-normative, such as fat bodies, are often made either invisible or intolerable in the discourse of sports and exercise. In this paper, I will examine fat women’s experiences concerning exercise and physical activity. Fat people are routinely recommended exercise, however, when they do, they are often made feel unwelcome in the field of exercise in general and in specific sites such as swimming pools and gyms in particular. Due to the gendered nature of body norms and expectations, especially fat women are treated disrespectfully while exercising. They are harassed, ridiculed and commented on. In this paper, I will examine fat Finnish women’s experiences of doing exercise. I am interested in their experiences of discrimination and exclusion in the field of sports and physical activity, but not just that. In my data, fat women also talk about their desire to exercise, being good at sports and feelings of empowerment they have had through exercise. Since it is often assumed that fat people are not interested in, or do not enjoy sports or physical activity, it is important to bring out the positive experiences in order to shift the prevailing exclusive sports discourse towards a more inclusive one. The data used was collected in 2015 for a research project concerning weight discrimination in Finland. The data was gathered with an online questionnaire in collaboration with Finland’s largest daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat. Approximately 18 000 Finns, of whom approximately 14 500 identified as women, 3000 as men, participated in the survey.

About Hannele:
Hannele Harjunen, PhD, works as a Senior Lecturer in gender Studies at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Jyväskylä. She has written extensively about gender, body norms, and fatness in Finnish and English. Her doctoral dissertation: Women and Fat: Approaches to the Social Study of Fatness (2009) dealt with women’s experiences and social construction of fatness. Her recent publications include the book "Neoliberal Bodies and the Gendered Fat Body and article "A Cross-Cultural Examination of Fat Women’s Bodies: Stigma and Gender in North American and Finnish Culture" (2019) with Jeannine Gailey in Feminism and Psychology. Harjunen is currently on research sabbatical (2018-2021) and working on a book on Finnish women and men’s experiences of weight discrimination.
Fat acceptance 101: Midwestern American women’s perspective on cultural body acceptance

Andrea Bombak (a, b), Angela Meadows (c), & Jacqueline Bilette (b)
(a) University of New Brunswick, (b) Central Michigan University, (c) University of Western Ontario

Fat hatred is pervasive. However, there is a growing movement for fat acceptance and body positivity. The purpose of this study was to explore how Midwestern American women who are trying to, or have tried to, accept their bodies perceive cultural attitudes toward size diversity. Participants (n=18) are self-identified women who have ever been pathologized as “obese” on the Body Mass Index and have ever tried to accept their bodies. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants over the course of one year at approximately 3-4 months intervals. Interview guides focused on participants’ perceptions of how society represented diverse bodies and how people of diverse sizes were treated. Detailed field notes of the interview process were recorded. All data were analysed thematically. Three major themes emerged: greater (mixed) representation, lip service, and inclusive culture. Participants indicated that they felt society was heading in a generally more inclusive direction, but they were frustrated by a lack of diversity in representation, ceilings on acceptable sizes, commodification of body positivity, and emergent cultural backlashes.

About Authors:
Andrea Bombak, Ph.D. (pictured) is a social and population health scientist in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick. She specializes in critical weight studies, weight stigma, health policy, and health inequities. She received degrees and post-doctoral training from the Universities of Calgary and Manitoba and spent two years as an Assistant Professor at Central Michigan University in the School of Health Sciences.

Angela Meadows, Ph.D. is a social psychologist specializing in the relationship between experienced and internalized weight stigma and health and wellbeing in higher-weight individuals. She is particularly interested in determinants of response to stigma, with a focus on fat identity. She has published a number of articles and book chapters and has been interviewed by numerous media outlets internationally. She writes on issues around weight and health for print and digital media. In 2013, she founded the Annual International Weight Stigma Conference. She is currently a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow in Psychology at Western University, Canada.

Jacque Bilette, MA, MPH has master’s degrees in English and Public Health. Her research and interests are interdisciplinary, focusing on the social construction of language in regards to disease, the body, and health. She currently teaches at Central Michigan University.

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Sexuality research has been conceptualised as a form of ‘dirty’ work (Irvine 2014), where researchers are vulnerable to experiencing stigma contagion as a result of their research topics. The detrimental impacts of being involved in dirty research projects are many, with researchers reporting ethical review challenges, trivialisation of their research projects, struggles for academic legitimacy, sexual harassment by colleagues and assumptions made about one’s sexual proclivities due to the subject of their research. In doing research on sexuality, then, researchers walk a fine line between pleasure and danger. This paper argues that doing dirty work as a fat researcher is an added layer of complexity in an already messy landscape.

Gailey (2014) suggests that fat women are considered to be “either nonsexual or sexually insatiable and desperate” (p. 111), so what does this mean for those who identify as fat and embark on sexuality research? How might our identity as fat researchers influence our research experiences? This paper reflexively examines the way that my identity as a fat woman may have influenced and affected my experiences doing pornography research in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It encourages researchers to provide more reflexive and nuanced insights into our fat research experiences, especially in areas where researchers are already vulnerable to experiencing stigma and vulnerability.
Week Two | Session Three

Removing the armour: Fat activism and vulnerability

Jenny Lee
Victoria University, Melbourne

It feels transgressive to reveal what we are most scared to reveal, to share stories, emotions, vulnerability & sometimes ‘dirty laundry’ in our writing. It can open us up to potential attack. But a few years ago I realised that it was still safer for me to express my fat activism in written form – whether that be academic writing or creative approaches such as memoir. I made the decision to move from purely intellectual and written fat activism to fat activism that involves my body and explores fat embodiment through representation of my body in performance, photography and art. I am now taking it a step further to reflect on the use of my body in my fat activism in my writing, both scholarly and creative. With this has come an increase in vulnerability, however, in writing I find that I have an ability to frame how a story is told, whereas to expose and reveal my body in ways that challenge what fat bodies are capable of doing, or how they ‘should’ be visually represented, is a more vulnerable position for me as a fat activist. I’ve been asked why I do this. Wouldn’t self-protection and self-preservation dictate that we keep ourselves hidden away? Often it does. Revealing ourselves and our bodies, and becoming vulnerable by doing so, takes courage. It means putting aside the instincts of self-protection, to reveal aspects of yourself so that others either see themselves reflected in your body, and take strength and courage from that, or are exposed to a representation of a fat body they wouldn’t normally be exposed to. This presentation includes some (short) stories, photography and art that illustrate the discussion.

About Jenny:
Jennifer Lee, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing and Literary Studies, and a Research Fellow in the Institute for Health and Sport at Victoria University, Australia. In addition to publishing scholarly papers, she publishes memoir, short stories, essays and narrative non-fiction. She is writing a book about fat in Australia. Her recent autoethnographic publications include “You will face discrimination”: Fatness, motherhood, and the medical profession in the Fat Studies Journal (2020) and ‘Stigma in practice: Barriers to health for fat women’ with Dr Cat Pausé in Frontiers of Psychology (2016).
Fat (Studies) Researcher: Reflections on Inside Research

Aimee B. Simpson
PhD Candidate, University of Auckland

This paper considers how the field of fat studies can be used as a methodology, and reflects on the experience of researching and documenting the stories of other fat people as an ‘insider’. In particular, the centring of fat experiential knowledge as a legitimate and necessary source for understanding the issue and meanings of fatness through a fat epistemology is fundamental to the way that fat people are approached methodologically. Drawing on interviews with self-identifying fat people about the issues of fatness, identity and health, I consider the role that my own fat identity and body played in the research process. I explore how my own physicality became an aspect of the body politics within the interview setting, and reflect on the ways that my own experiences as a fat pākehā woman were challenged, affected and influential in designing and conducting this research.

About Aimee:
Aimee is a PhD Candidate in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her doctoral research explores how dominant ‘obesity’ discourses inform embodied narratives of health and fatness. Aimee’s previous work has examined the life impacts of weight-loss surgery using Foucault’s notion of biopower.
Rereading fatness in 2020: Intimacy, pleasure, and analysis

Abigail Jenkins Menzies
University of Glasgow

In the last two years, there has been a (slight) uptick in the number of fat protagonists portrayed on fictional television, see: Joy Nash in Dietland (2018); Aidy Bryant, Lolly Adefope of Shrill (2019-); and Chrissy Metz on This is Us (2016-). While the value of these representations can be debated on grounds of employment practices (the weight loss requirement in Metz’s contract, for example) or in terms of wider representational politics, this paper is interested not in detracting further from the sparse cast of fat women in contemporary media, but rather in revaluing and rereading their stories.

Taking a cue from feminist media critic Alexia Smit (2014) and her work toward “reconsidering the pleasures” of plastic surgery television, I consider the use of an embodied approach to television analysis which centres on “feelings of care, shame, and intimacy.” My paper employs these feelings - which Smit argues encourage a transgressively and pleasurably intimate mode of looking at and connecting to onscreen bodies - as the basis for a brief, television-specific textual analysis of scenes from these three programmes. Throughout my rereading, I interrogate the approach with explicit recognition of my limitations and positions as a researcher and fat woman.

My rereading differs from many of the existing analyses in Critical Feminist Media Studies, which approach the fat body from an automatic binary (“unqueered”) position of abjection and disgust, assuming a heteronormative gaze from both camera and audience that continues to view fat bodies exclusively as problems and poor biocitizens. While this method can be (and has been) valuable in highlighting forms of oppression in media representations of fatness, my paper demonstrates that this kind of analysis is only one part of a textual conversation, and thus does not fulfill the requirements of nuanced (and particularly of embodiment-inspired) analysis.

I conclude with a discussion about how scholarship on fatness might revalue the fat body on television utilizing a blend of methods from both Fat Studies and Critical Feminist Media Studies. I consider whether these might add to burgeoning conversations about, as the conference proposal suggests, disrupting and understanding the construction, pathologisation, and/or representations, of fatness.
The unchanging representations of the fat body in young adult fiction

Sean Ryan
Victoria University

The negative representations of fat boys in young adult fiction have not evolved in over 100 years. In recent times, books with fat female protagonists such as Dumplin’ (Murphy, 2015), Leah on the offbeat (Albertalli, 2018) and Fat Angie (Charlton-Trujillo, 2013) have challenged the way fat girls are represented and the way fat characters are read in young adult (YA) fiction. Unfortunately there is not a similar challenge to unfair representations of fat boys in YA fiction. The character of Billy Bunter, (Hamilton, 1908) began as a minor character in the weekly boy’s magazine The magnet (1908-1940) the derision, abuse, greed and laziness of this character was so popular as a source of mirth, that the character of Billy Bunter was given his own series. Using Billy Bunter as a prototype, and juxtaposing some of the most popular and well known fat boy characters against that of Billy bunter, I will argue that contemporary YA fiction with young male protagonists has failed, in comparison to works with fat girl protagonists to similarly, evolve, expand upon or challenge representations of fat boys in YA fiction.

Why have the cruel and clichéd representations of fat boys persisted for so long? Psychologist and personality theorist, Silvan Tomkins argued that “The capacity of the individual to feel strongly or weakly, for a moment or for all his life, about anything under the sun and to govern himself by such motives, constitutes his essential freedom.” (Affect Imagery Consciousness, p. 122). This freedom therefore affords people a choice as to how they will label anything they encounter. Within the context of Fat Studies, people can choose how they will feel about fat bodies and fat people. Currently, negativity and criticism of fatness, fat bodies and fat autonomy are the choices and ways of feeling that people are encouraged to embrace. Of course the society and culture in which an individual lives in will strongly encourage and influence individual’s acceptance of certain bodies. Similarly, Professor Winfried Menninghaus, in his book Disgust: Theory and history of a strong sensation (2003) suggested that in our culture, bodies are “subject to a thorough cultural coding – it has a highly specific skin and shape and is quite unique with respect to its joints, nose, mouth, breast and belly” (pg. 51). Bodies that do not adhere to the ideals of cultural coding are labelled disgusting.

So the fat boy in YA fiction is still in contemporary readings used as a tool to illicit disgust. This disgust in turn is used to extract from the reader humour, like Billy Bunter or Augustus Gloop from Charlie and the chocolate factory (1964) whose misfortunes are designed to be laughed at. The fat boy is often used to antagonise, like Dudley Dursley or Vincent Crabbe in the Harry Potter series (1997). What action can be taken to challenge these negative representations of fat boys? It is the obligation of Fat Studies to directly challenge the oppressive representations that seem permanently ingrained in the way fat boys are written and read. For those of us within Fat Studies who demand fair representation of fat boys and fat bodies, for those of us who will not accept lazy writing when describing fat, the only option left to us is to begin writing our own books with fat positive, boy characters.

About Sean:
Sean Ryan is a Ph.D candidate at Victoria University, Australia, supervised by Dr. Jenny Lee and Dr. Emily McAvan. His work focuses on the representations of fat boys in young adult fiction and the intersections between fat, gender, masculinity and queerness.

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Between blame and pity: The representation of the fat female body in This Is Us

Judith J. Schreier
University of Leipzig

Most US-American TV shows that have fat women as their main characters use them as figures of ridicule—the highly-praised NBC television series This Is Us appears to be an exception. The family drama evolves around the Pearson family: Rebecca and Jack, the parents, and the triplets Kevin, Kate, and Randall. The daughter of the Pearson family, Kate, is a fat woman and her relationship to her weight is an important part of the overall narrative of the TV show. This Is Us, in fact, makes an effort to display the realities of fat women shaped by discrimination in today’s US-American society. Yet, the TV show does not manage to refrain from upholding the stigmatization of fat bodies. This becomes particularly obvious when looking at the portrayal of Kate’s relationship to her mother, her own pregnancy, and her own experience of motherhood. Despite Rebecca’s motherly love and care, the complex mother-daughter relationship is underlined her mother’s guilt, disappointment, and ultimately her inability to keep/turn her child thin. The grown-up Kate Pearson has difficulties to get pregnant. At first, she has a miscarriage and only because of her fertility doctor’s benevolence, she finally gets pregnant. She goes into labor prematurely and, on top of that, her child Jack is born blind. All of these debilitating experiences are represented as the liability of Kate’s fat body. By drawing direct and unreflective connections between the fat body of Kate, her pregnancy, and the disabled body of her son, This Is Us does stigmatize the fat body as unhealthy and as a body that is unsuitable for reproduction. Despite shedding light on fat oppression, the television series This Is Us reinforces the discriminatory stigmatization of the fat and female body.

About Judith:
Judith J. Schreier is a MA student of American Studies at the University of Leipzig, Germany. She received her BA in American Studies and German as a Foreign Language in 2017. She studied abroad at Stockholm University and Hobart and William Smith Colleges where she focused on women and queer studies. She is interested in the representation of ‘deviant’ bodies, such as fat and queer bodies, in American culture. Her additional interests lie in feminist narratology, (writing) poetry, and social media. She has been a member of the editorial team of aspeers 11, has presented at the 6th Weight Stigma Conference and gives talks and workshops that promote fat acceptance.
Body Sovereignty and Fat Indigenous Women

Ashlea Gillon
Ngāti Awa, PhD Candidate, Te Wānanga o Waipapa, University of Auckland

Hine-Nui-Te-Pō is an atua, a goddess, an ancestor and one of the biggest, most influential, powerful Māori women in our history as tāngata whenua and Indigenous peoples. Her life as Hine-Titama and Hine-Nui-Te-Pō illustrate a complex past of experiences that have restricted her body sovereignty and show the ways in which she has enacted acts of body sovereignty. This Kaupapa Māori doctoral research utilises Hine-Nui-Te-Pō as a foundation for an exploration into body sovereignty for fat Indigenous women.

Re-presentations of fat Indigenous women are complex and often operate in ways that restrict access through multiple systems of oppression and biopower. The ways in which these systems re-define body sovereignty are intricate and often restrict access to opportunities to feel safe from (bodily) harm, and able to make decisions about the body in ways that reinforce agency. As colonial intersecting systems of oppression, racism, sexism and fatism limit access to wellness for Indigenous women. Within an Aotearoa context, the re-positioning of Indigenous women and Indigenous women’s bodies as (un)well and (un)(re)liable ultimately places Indigenous women in dual positions of being (over)/(under)surveilled. These biopolitical issues centre around power, deservedness, worthiness, classifications of dis-eased and liable bodies, and consent, and influence fat Indigenous women’s lives in ways that restrict access to opportunities, health resources and ultimately body sovereignty. This space discusses these issues, Hine-Nui-Te-Pō’s story and the kōrero of fat Indigenous women around body sovereignty.

About Ashlea:
Kia ora, ko Ngāti Awa te iwi, ko Ashlea tōku ingoa.
I’m a Kaupapa Māori critical trans-disciplinary researcher. Currently I am undertaking my PhD in Indigenous Studies at Te Wānanga o Waipapa, University of Auckland, exploring body sovereignty for fat Indigenous women; I also work as a teaching fellow and researcher in Māori Studies, Indigenous education and Indigenous psychology at the University of Auckland.

My work involves Kaupapa Māori re-searching and re-privileging Indigenous ways of being. My areas of interest and background are varied and include Māori and Indigenous health, ethnicity and identity, deconstructing racism and privilege, equity, Indigenous studies, Indigenous education and pedagogies, Indigenous psychologies, Indigenous theories and methodologies, and more recently fat studies and fat liberation.
In the field of fat studies, weight stigma and weight-loss imperatives are described as oppressive social and medical norms, in particular for people of lower socioeconomic status. However, socioeconomic status is rarely addressed in current studies on the disruption of the fat identity. Since socioeconomically deprived people tend to be subjected to more negative perceptions from health care providers and society in general, they face additional challenges in expressing agency and in reaching social acceptance in their process toward body acceptance. Acknowledging differences and similarities in eating and weight-related trajectories is necessary to understand the process and the context in which weight-related discourses are adopted, challenged and translated into practices by people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. This presentation will outline the usefulness of critical realism in attempting to bridge the fields of health promotion and fat studies. Preliminary results from an ongoing project on the adoption and subsequent rejection of restrictive eating practices will be used as an example. The proposed paradigm approach helps bring together the lived experience of persons of lower socioeconomic status, and the expression of their agency as they reconstruct their sense of self and body acceptance.

About Elyse:
Elyse Durocher is a PhD candidate in Population Health at the University of Ottawa. She is also a registered dietitian and a nutrition lecturer. Her works concern the sociology of weight loss, chronic dieting and body acceptance.
Shamed and silenced: The fat subject, agency and mental health

Victoria Knight
University of South Australia

Fat people are continually vilified and dehumanised in society, often treated as lacking any control over their bodies and selves. The field of fat studies has responded to this kind of treatment, not only by critiquing existing biomedical research, but also problematising common media representations of fat people as passive subjects who are victims of circumstance at best and their own hedonism at worst. Yet this stripping of agency is something we are yet to fully understand, especially alongside mental health issues. In response to this problem, this paper argues that the apparent lack of agency does not make fat subjects inactive or passive. Fat subjects can find ways to reflectively and reflexively resist representations and responses to their subjectivity. Drawing on autoethnographic research, I begin by narrating my experiences of being a fat subject who suffers from mental illness. Utilising works by Murray, Ahmed and Probyn, I then analyse the affective power of shame and guilt. I then elaborate as to the role these affects play in becoming what Jan-Mohamed terms a death-bound-subject. Finally, employing Berlant’s work, I critically examine what constitutes agency and how a fat subject can reclaim the very agency previously denied to them.

About Victoria:
Victoria Knight is a PhD Candidate at the University of South Australia. Her primary research focus is on Fat Studies, with a particular interest in the intersections of fatness and fat identity. She recently completed an Honours thesis exploring the agency of the fat subject when it comes to mental health, particularly the ways in which the fat subject is stripped of and can subsequently reclaim agency. Her PhD research continues to centre on Fat Studies, focusing on the identities of queer fat people and the way that fatness interacts and intersects with queer identity.
From critique to transformation: Where to for research on pregnancy fatness?

Dr. George Parker
Strategic Advisor, Women’s Health Action Trust
georgeparker.nz@gmail.com

Critical responses to the construct of “maternal obesity” and associated discourses of epigenetics are now well established. Scholars in fat studies, critical public health, and gender studies have identified the toxic confluence of obesity panic and reproductive responsibilisation in the problematisation of pregnancy fatness which has placed the fat pregnant body at the centre of moral panic about fatness as a health issue. The harmful effects on pregnant people have been documented including increased exposure to fat stigma and discrimination, attempts at weight gain minimisation or even weight loss during pregnancy, and increased medicalisation of care and reduced birthing options. The resulting decline in the physical, mental and spiritual health of fat pregnant people and new parents (and their babies) have been demonstrated, compounded for those already marginalised along the lines of race and class.

This paper will take the critical literature on maternal obesity and its effects as its starting point. I will affirm the importance of the expansion of this literature and the role it plays in talking back to the problematisation of pregnancy fatness. However, I will also assert the need to move beyond critique in order to offer productive pathways to transformation for those involved in the care of fat pregnant people and their families. Opportunities to move towards health care for fat pregnant people and their families that is constructive, just and decent and that promotes the possibility for peaceful fat maternal subjectivity will be explored.

About George:
George Parker is Strategic Advisor at Women’s Health Action Trust and is also a lecturer in the School of Midwifery at Otago Polytechnic. George recently completed a PhD in Sociology at the University of Auckland. A registered midwife, George has spent a number of years working in women’s health policy and research. George’s research includes critical perspectives on maternal obesity, culturally safe maternity care for rainbow communities and reproductive justice.
Week Three | Session Three

Challenging dominant evidence hierarchies to value personal perspectives on fat embodiment: A call to bridge the gap between personal narratives and health sciences literature

Kiki Fornero MSN, RN & Dena Hassouneh PhD, RN, ANP, PMHNP, FAAN
Oregon Health & Science University

Background and Purpose: Although the Fat Studies literature values lived experience narratives as a valuable form of knowledge, dominant evidence hierarchies in the health sciences rank personal narratives as less reliable and valid forms of evidence relative to studies using designs such as the randomized controlled trial. This is significant because the health science literature shapes the ways in which health care professionals understand and address fat embodiment and weight stigma. Hence, the purpose of this presentation is to explore the impact of dominant evidence hierarchies on knowledge production about fat embodiment and weight stigma in the health sciences literature. To do this we review and compare the nature of knowledge produced about fat embodiment and weight stigma in the health sciences literature as compared to published personal narrative texts.

Method: An initial review of databased literature focused on experiences of weight stigma in the context of healthcare. Concurrently, published personal narratives describing experiences of weight stigma were screened and compared to the databased literature. Four published personal narratives were selected for inclusion in analysis based on the criteria that 1) the authors identify as body-positive or fat-positive and 2) they offered first-hand experiences with weight stigma. Any quote pertaining to weight stigma was extracted from the personal narratives and organized by author. Thematic analysis was used to explore the personal narrative accounts in an effort to highlight experiences not represented in databased health sciences literature. Four themes emerged and a conceptual review was completed separately for each theme in Pubmed, PsycINFO, and CINAHL databases using the terms gender performance, social currency or social capital, invisibility or hypervisibility, and accessibility or inaccessibility. Each search term was also combined with the terms weight, weight status, or body weight and conducted without date limits.

Results: A gap in knowledge development and understanding of fat embodiment and stigmatizing experiences was noted between first-hand accounts and health sciences literature. Representation and discussion was limited to fat embodiment and gender performance, the body as social currency, hyper(in)visibility of fat bodies, and the inaccessibility of public spaces relative to body size.

Conclusions: Although some of the concepts extant in the health sciences literature align with a personal understanding of fat embodiment, these perspectives are not prioritized for investigation in the health sciences literature, limiting our current understanding of lived experiences of weight stigma. Hence, we conclude that traditional evidence hierarchies and ways of knowing obscure the generation of new knowledge and discount the perspectives of people affected by weight stigma.

About Kiki and Dena:
Kiki Fornero is a PhD student at Oregon Health & Science University. Using a critical methodologic approach grounded in Fat Studies, Kiki’s dissertation focuses on lived experiences of weight stigma throughout the lifespan for people who have undergone weight loss surgery. Kiki has been a Registered Nurse for 10 years and is an Assistant Professor at Linfield College where she teaches pre-licensure nursing students in simulation and Populations Health. She is passionate about helping students to learn weight neutral approaches to health and wellness as well as honoring and supporting individual choice.

Dr. Hassouneh’s work focuses on marginalized populations using critical approaches and community based participatory research. Dr. Hassouneh serves as Kiki’s dissertation chair.
Week Three | Session Three

Collective action to end weight stigma and discrimination in Australia: Achievements and challenges

Carolynne White (Presenter, ab), Louise Adams (b), Mandy-Lee Noble (b), Anna Reeves (b), Natalie Jovanovski (c)
(a) Swinburne University of Technology, (b) HAES Australia, (c) Melbourne University

As a social justice issue, addressing weight stigma and discrimination requires collective action at a structural level. In 2017, a group of health and fitness professionals established HAES Australia to bring together the highest quality information, training and specialists in Australia for the Health at Every Size® approach. Ending weight stigma and discrimination is one aspect of respectful care, one of the five HAES® principles. HAES Australia aims to connect and raise awareness of HAES among health professionals and the general public. However, as public health organisations have lobbied for Federal Government action to address the ‘obesity epidemic’, HAES Australia has become increasingly involved in advocacy, arguing for weight-inclusive public health policies and clinical care. This presentation will outline the multi-strategy approach and collective actions undertaken by HAES Australia over the past two years to address weight stigma at a policy level. Key achievements include participation in a symposium for public health professionals and a subsequent invitation to prepare a joint submission to the ‘Senate Select Committee into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia’, which resulted in two recommendations to address weight stigma in the final report. Recognising and responding to challenges is key to ensuring that policy recommendations are implemented.
Week Three | Closing Talk

Fattening Scholarship

Cat Pausé
Massey University

Fat Studies: Past, Present, Futures is a space where we can reflect on the past of our discipline, our present, and what our future might look like. Building on the Keynote’s from Professor Rothblum and Sonya Renee Taylor, this presentation presents a brief history of the past and reflects on the current state of Fat Studies as a discipline; a discipline that works to produce knowledge about fatness and fat people while working to achieve fat liberation. Current strengths and weaknesses will be considered, and threats and opportunities will be presented. The Fat Studies MOOO will serve as one illustration of the opportunities we have for continuing to build the discipline in a global context.

About Cat:
Cat Pausé, Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer in Human Development at Massey University. She is the lead editor of Queering Fat Embodiment (2014, Ashgate), and has coordinated two international conferences – Fat Studies: Reflective Intersections (2012) and Fat Studies: Identity, Agency, Embodiment (2016). She is the convener of Fat Studies: Past, Present, Futures. Her research is focused on the effects of fat stigma on health and well-being on fat individuals and how fat activists resist the fatpocalypse. She has called for a new fat ethics, acknowledging the role science has played in the oppression of fat people and ensuring that research around fatness centers fat epistemology. Her work appears in scholarly journals including Fat Studies, Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics, Feminist Review, and Narrative Inquiries in Bioethics, as well as online in the Huffington Post, NPR, The Conversation, and in her blog (Friend of Marilyn). Her fat positive radio show, Friend of Marilyn, has been showcasing fat studies scholarship and fat activism since 2011.
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rbahra77@yorku.ca |
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*University of Glasgow* | Rereading fatness in 2020: Intimacy, pleasure and analysis  
abigail.jenkins@glasgow.ac.uk |
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- Increase professional and public awareness of weight-inclusive, non-diet, client-centred practice and research outcomes.

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www.tandfonline.com/UFTS

EDITOR:
Esther Rothblum, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

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Fat Studies is the first academic journal in the field of scholarship that critically examines theory, research, practices, and programs related to body weight and appearance. Content includes original research and overviews exploring the intersection of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability, and socioeconomic status. Articles critically examine representations of fat in health and medical sciences, the Health at Every Size model, the pharmaceutical industry, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, legal issues, literature, pedagogy, art, theater, popular culture, media studies, and activism.

Fat Studies is an interdisciplinary, international field of scholarship that critically examines societal attitudes and practices about body weight and appearance. Fat Studies advocates equality for all people regardless of body size. It explores the way fat people are oppressed, the reasons why, who benefits from that oppression and how to liberate fat people from oppression. Fat Studies seeks to challenge and remove the negative associations that society has about fat and the fat body. It regards weight, like height, as a human characteristic that varies widely across any population. Fat Studies is similar to academic disciplines that focus on race, ethnicity, gender, or age.

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Lonie McMichael, Ph.D.
Acceptable Prejudice?
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