



O.P. Jindal Global University
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Body Image and Mental Health

Course Instructor: Dr. Shilpa Bandyopadhyay

Jindal Institute of Behavioral Sciences (JIBS)

3 Credit Course

SPRING SEMESTER 2026

Faculty Contact: Dr. Shilpa Bandyopadhyay

Email: shilpa.bandyopadhyay@jgu.edu.in

Office Hours: TBA

Classroom: TBA

The information provided herein is by the Course Coordinator. The following information contains the official record of the details of the course.

PART I

Course Title:	
Course Code	BE-E-0106
Course Duration	1 Semester
No. of Credit Units	3
Level	UG
Pre-Requisites	Nil
Pre-Cursors	Nil
Equivalent Courses	Nil
Exclusive Courses	Nil
Class Timing	

PART II

Course Description

- A lot of us are not satisfied with our physical appearance. Besides, being in a media driven society and consumerist culture we are constantly reminded of our bodily flaws, and we are always striving to reach the ideal body.
- However, who has created the existing notion of the 'ideal body' - thin and sexualized for women, and tall and mesomorphic for men – apart from numerous other such (often gendered) parameters?
- Moreover, why do we feel pressured to reach this ideal? This course will help you reflect on some of these critical questions.
- It will help you understand what body image issues are and when they become concerning. This is particularly important when we consider the rising rates of dysfunctional body image issues, such as body dysmorphic disorder.
- Through this course you will know about some of the biopsychosocial causes of body image issues. You will also learn about the impact of body image issues on our overall well-being levels, including our social and sexual functioning.



[Image reference](#)

- This course will also take you through a journey of body image issues faced by different groups of people in society (e.g., women, men, people with congenital deformities and dermatological conditions).
- Also, taking cues from psychological research, you will learn of some ways to promote better body acceptance.
- Broadly, the learnings from this course will make you more resilient to socio-cultural pressures and motivate you to focus on your body's needs, responsiveness, and functionality.
- This course will be taught through lectures, discussions, case studies, movies, individual and group activities, and relevant Ted Talks as well as songs.



[Image Reference](#)

Learning outcomes:

After the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Understand and recognize the role of the self and external agents in body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
2. Identify the factors related to their and others' body image content and discontent.
3. Differentiate between common body image discontent and dysfunctional body image concerns (body dysmorphia, eating disorders).
4. Assess the levels of body image satisfaction and dissatisfaction in themselves and others.

Course Format

Class time will include a combination of lectures, discussions, individual and group activities, relevant Ted Talks, songs and documentaries, movie and case analysis, and student presentations. Every class will begin with a 5 to 10-minute recap of the information learnt in the previous class.

Assignments: (Total internal assessment - 70 marks)

Assignment 1: Movie Analysis (linked to LO1 to LO3) | (In-class assessment) | 25 marks

After completing Unit 1, students will watch a movie related to body image. They are expected to make notes and reflect critically on the links between the movie and what we have discussed and learnt in Weeks 1 to 4. On completion of the movie, students will have an open-book, handwritten in-class assessment. Students will have to answer a set of critical and open-ended questions from the movie. They will be allowed to refer to the notes they made while watching the movie.

Assignment 2: Analyzing the Severity of Body Image Concerns (linked to LO3 and LO4) | Marks: 20 marks (In-class assessment)

In this assignment students will be presented with a few cases, and they will have to differentiate between common body image discontent and dysfunctional body image concerns. This will be a closed-book, in-class handwritten assessment. They will be given print out of the case(s). The primary objective of this assessment is to help students analyze the severity of the body image issues on a case-to-case basis.

Assignment 3: The Positive Body Image Campaign (linked to LO1 to LO4) | (Group presentation) | 15 marks

This is a group-based presentation with both group (10 marks) and individual marks (5 marks). Think of yourself as a mental health advocate and your group as a mental health awareness group. Your group's task is to plan a positive body image campaign for a particular population (e.g., women who have just given birth) (every group will be allotted a different population and the details will be emailed to each group). Your intervention strategies should be relevant to the population assigned to you, and it should cover the different components covered in this course. Students will receive a detailed email regarding the aspects they should cover in their presentation, including time limit, key pointers, and headings.

Class participation across the course| 10 marks

Your class participation marks will include markers of professionalism (punctuality and attendance, being attentive, not using digital devices, being respectful in class discussions), participation in individual and group activities, responding during recap sessions, and sharing one's views during in classroom discussions. This course is going to be a highly interactive one and students will be encouraged to share their views during class discussions. Classroom interactions must be meaningful and respectful. However, the course instructor understands that not all students are equally comfortable with speaking in class and may need some encouragement. If you are not comfortable speaking in class, you may write your views on the discussion questions and share them with the instructor at the end of the class.

(*Please note that absenteeism on the day of assessment will not be entertained and no assessments shall be rescheduled.)

End-term assessment: 30 marks (closed-book exam)

Missed or Late Assessment Submission

All assessments are expected to be submitted on the scheduled day. In case of exceptional circumstances, the student can contact the course instructor and at their discretion (with or without

penalty), the instructor may take a call on the concession that is granted. It is the students responsibility to double check that the correct file has been submitted. In case the incorrect or corrupted document is submitted for evaluation, it may result in a lower grade for the student.

Grading of Student Assessment

Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Interpretation
O	80 and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 -69	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49	2	Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter.
P2	40 - 44	1	Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.
F	Below 40	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.

Course Outline

Week	What will you learn?	How will you learn? You will learn through...
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faculty-student introductions ▪ Classroom norms ▪ About the course ▪ Meaning of body image ▪ Contemporary developments in body image scholarship 	Lecture Class discussion Short video: Hair Love (Disney) Individual activity: self-reflective exercise
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychosocial impact of body image issues ▪ Eating disorders (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder) & Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) 	Recap of previous class Lecture Class discussion Relevant videos on lived experiences of people with body image issues
Week 3	Continuation...eating disorders & BDD Theoretical perspectives on body image issues: a. Socio-cultural perspective	Recap of previous class Lecture Class discussion Individual activity (gender roles and culture) Group activity (media literacy)
Week 4	Theoretical perspectives on body image issues: b. Socio-cultural perspective (continuation) c. Feminist perspective	Recap of previous class Lecture Class discussion Relevant short videos including Ted Talks
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congenital deformities & body image ▪ Movie on body image 	Movie Note-taking and reflection
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Movie Analysis in-class assignment ▪ Evolutionary perspective ▪ Genetic & Neuroscientific perspective 	Movie analysis: Assignment I (in-class, open-book) Recap of previous class Lecture with PPT Class discussion
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body image and self-esteem • Body image and personality 	Lecture Discussion Relevant documentaries Group activity (Body image storytelling project)

Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 2: in-class assessment Dermatological conditions & Body Image 	Assignment 2: (in-class, closed book, handwritten) Recap of previous class Lecture with PPT Class discussion Relevant short videos
Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy & Body Image Post-partum Body Image Issues Critical review of BMI 	Recap of previous class Lecture with PPT Class discussion Relevant short videos including Ted Talks
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body image in boys and men Body image in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals 	Recap of previous class Lecture with PPT Class discussion Relevant short videos including Ted Talks
Weeks 11 – 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting body acceptance (at Individual & Societal level) Body Positivity & Body Neutrality Movement Group Presentations Course recap 	Group presentations Recap of previous class Lecture with PPT Class discussion

Reading List:

Primary course textbooks:

- **Book 1:** Cash, T. F. & Smolak, L. (2011). *Body Image: A Handbook of Science, Practice, and Prevention*. Guilford Press.
- **Book 2:** Cash, T. F. (2012). *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance*. Amsterdam, Waltham, MA: Academic Press.

Other readings:

- Marzola, E., Cuzzolaro, M., Abbate-Daga, G. (2018). Body Image: Methods of Assessment in Children, Adolescents, and Adults. In: Cuzzolaro, M., Fassino, S. (eds) *Body Image, Eating, and Weight*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90817-5_3
- Bjornsson, A. S., Didie, E. R., & Phillips, K. A. (2010). Body dysmorphic disorder. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 12(2), 221–232. <https://doi.org/10.31887/dcns.2010.12.2/abjornsson>
- McGuire, J. K., Doty, J. L., Catalpa, J. M., & Ola, C. (2016). Body image in transgender young people: Findings from a qualitative, community-based study. *Body image*, 18, 96–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2016.06.004>

- McClain, Z., & Peebles, R. (2016). Body Image and Eating Disorders Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth. *Pediatric clinics of North America*, 63(6), 1079–1090. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2016.07.008>
- Grogan, S. (2010). Promoting Positive Body Image in Males and Females: Contemporary Issues and Future Directions. *Sex Roles* 63, 757–765. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9894-z>
- Lazuka, R. F., Wick, M. R., Keel, P. K., & Harriger, J. A. (2020). Are We There Yet? Progress in Depicting Diverse Images of Beauty in Instagram's Body Positivity Movement. *Body image*, 34, 85–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.05.001>
- Cohen, R., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (2021). The case for body positivity on social media: Perspectives on current advances and future directions. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 26(13), 2365–2373. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105320912450>

Additional readings may be provided during the course.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Professional Conduct in Classroom

Developing professionalism means arriving on time to the classroom, maintaining classroom decorum, such as being seated within the first two minutes, being respectful to the instructor, peers, conflicting opinions, and submitting assignments on time. As a student of this course you are expected to integrate these skills into your daily behaviour as maintaining professionalism is an essential component of the course. It is essential that we pursue higher ideals which means incorporating behaviours such as listening to others when they are contributing, being sensitive to other individuals and diversity, and supporting the overall learning environment. Disrupting the learning environment by arriving after a two-minute window from the designated start time would mean that the student will be refused entry/attendance. It is also expected that the student contributes in classroom discussions, activities, and presentations to enhance the overall learning environment.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance in classes is strongly recommended. There could be components of internal assessment based on class participation. A student who fails to attend a class is expected to inform the Course Instructor of the reason for their absence. Any medical leave for missing classes will be granted with prior approval from the respective school only and upon submission of a valid medical certificate. Students are required to contact the Academic Office of their respective School to recommend any such requests. A minimum of 75% attendance is mandatory. Please note that in case students are found to be below the 75% attendance marks even after attempting the end term examination. They will still be held debarred due to shortage in attendance and the answer scripts will be considered null and void and will not be evaluated. Parents email/appeals or any other request will not be considered in case of debarment due to shortage of attendance.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be seated and prepared inside the class at the scheduled class time. Regular late comers will be denied entry. Both later comers and early departures disrupt the learning environment and would be penalized. A student who might feel like they might be late for a class is expected to inform the Course Instructor, beforehand, orally or in writing, the reason for the same.

Respectfulness

Students must maintain the integrity of the classroom which means respecting peers, faculty, and staff. It is essential that the student is attentive and sensitive about the words that they use and its impact on others. Students who harm the decorum of the classroom will be asked to leave the classroom and marked absent for the day.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices such as laptops, headphones, mobile phones are known to be major distractions for learning. Therefore, students will be permitted to use electronic devices only at the behest of the course instructor.

Notes on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable! Chat GPT extracted answers are not acceptable either. Please refrain from copying and pasting paragraphs and sentences from your reading materials. This includes copying someone's words, structure, grammar, ideas, thoughts, and phrases and passing them as your own. Too many quotes are not acceptable! Using

What is acceptable? Using one quote which is not more than 40 words with proper citation. Use citation! It's a must! Present the content you read from your reading materials in your own words! It is necessary to cite all material that is not the student's original work. Think and critically analyse the content! The source should be always acknowledged in your written material and presentation. All papers in this class will be checked electronically for plagiarism. Sharing or using past work is also counted as plagiarism.

Academic learning is founded on ideals of honesty, integrity, and civility and students are expected to display these ideals at all times. Serious consequences could result when the ideals of academic behaviour are violated.

Safe Space Pledge

Some parts of this course may discuss a range of issues that might result in distress for some students. Discussions and images in the course might also provoke strong emotional responses. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, and do not feel troubled due to either the contents of the course, or the conduct of the discussions, it is incumbent upon all within the classroom to pledge to maintain respect towards our peers. This does not mean that you need to feel restrained about what you feel and what you want to say. Conversely, this is about creating a

safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibition and fear. This responsibility lies not only on students, but also the instructor.

Disability Support and Accommodation Requirements

JGU endeavors to make all its courses accessible to students. All students with a known disability needing academic accommodations are required to register with the Disability Support Committee [S](#). The Committee has so far identified the following conditions that could possibly hinder student's overall well-being. These include: physical and mobility related difficulties; visual impairment; hearing impairment; medical conditions; specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia; mental health. The Disability Support Committee maintains strict confidentiality in its discussions. The students should preferably register with the Committee in the first week of the semester as disability accommodation requires early planning. DSC will approve and coordinate all the disability related services such as appointment of academic mentors, specialized interventions and course related requirements such as accessible classrooms for lectures, tutorials and examinations.

All faculty members are required to refer students with any of the above-mentioned conditions to the Disability Support Committee for addressing disability-related accommodation requirements.

Centre for Wellness and Counseling Services:

Contact: Email ID: cwcs@jgu.edu.in

Mobile: +91 8396907312