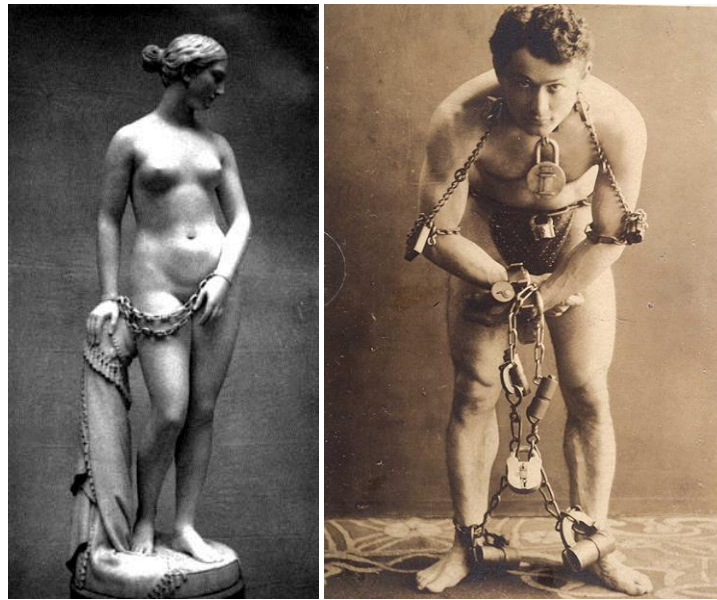


BODIES ON DISPLAY:



PERSPECTIVES ON THE BODY IN AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF SYLLABUS—SUBJECT TO REVISION

Professor John Kasson
Monday, 3:00-5:30 pm

Fall 2013
Hamilton 523

Course Description and Rationale: This course seeks to explore some of the rich historical materials treating aspects of the human body as it has been viewed, exhibited, analyzed, and objectified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In recent years scholars in a number of fields bearing upon cultural history have created a veritable industry of writings about the body. We can only sample a small amount of this work, but our readings promise to be both rewarding in their own right and illuminating of larger patterns, issues, and methodologies in cultural history.

The readings are intended not to add up to some tidy thesis, but to raise questions of interpretation and methodology. We will read some key primary works and also a selection of interpretive studies that address and extend issues adumbrated by these texts. Our reading—both primary and secondary—is material that invites argument and demands appraisal. Class discussions will be devoted to consideration of this reading and to questions of cultural interpretation. In addition, on **six**

occasions each student will prepare a short (2-3 page) critical evaluation of the major reading assignment in advance of class, which will help provide a basis for our discussion. Each student will be permitted to substitute on **six** other occasions a single-page commentary and evaluation of the reading, which will not receive a formal grade, though it will be evaluated. Not more than two single-page papers may be submitted on consecutive weeks, however. (See the instructions on preparing critical evaluations below.) The final assignment will be a slightly longer paper (4-5 pages), which will also be graded (and count as two critical responses).

Books marked with an asterisk have been ordered at Student Stores. Shorter readings will be available at the Reserve Desk at the Undergraduate Library, through our Blackboard course website, or online.

Course Website: We will use a password-protected website to provide materials, announcements, links, and other aids to the course. Please visit this website at the outset of the semester to familiarize yourself with its contents.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS & READINGS:

1. DIRTY & CLEAN BODIES: HYGIENE, HOUSEKEEPING, AND GENDER IN EARLY AMERICA (August 26)

Required Reading: Kathleen M. Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010 ??).

Bibliography:

2. EXTRAORDINARY BODIES: P. T. BARNUM AND THE DISPLAY OF HUMAN ODDITIES (Sept. 9)

Required Reading:

P. T. Barnum, *The Life of P. T. Barnum, Written by Himself** (1855; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), chapters 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, and skim rest.

The Life of Joice Heth, the nurse of Gen. George Washington, (the father of our country, now living at the astonishing age of 161 years, and weighs only 46 pounds (New York, 1835). (Available at: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/heth/menu.html>)

“The Joice Heth Archive”

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/lostmuseum/searchlm.php?function=find&exhibit=heth&browse=heth>

Benjamin Reiss, “P. T. Barnum, Joice Heth and Antebellum Spectacles of Race,” *American Quarterly* 51 (1999): 78-107 (available through Project Muse, which can be accessed through the UNC Library directory of electronic journal databases).

James W. Cook, “Mass Marketing and Cultural History: The Case of P. T. Barnum,” [review essay] *American Quarterly* 51:1 (1999): 175-86 (also available through Project Muse).

Elizabeth Reis, “Impossible Hermaphrodites: Intersex in America, 1620-1960,” *Journal of American History*, 92, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 411-441. Available online.

Bibliography:

- James W. Cook, ed. *The Colossal P.T. Barnum Reader: Nothing Else Like It in the Universe*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005.
- Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P. T. Barnum* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973; available as a University of Chicago Press paperback.)
- Bluford Adams, *E pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
- A. H. Saxon, *P. T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
- James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- Harriet Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), esp. chapter four: "Out of Bounds," 131-187.
- Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ed., *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).
- Rachel Adams, *Sideshow U.S.A. Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

3. SEXUALLY AMBIGUOUS BODIES AND MEDICAL AUTHORITIES (Sept. 16)**Reading:**

Elizabeth Reis, *Bodies in Doubt: An American History of Intersex* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

Bibliography:

- Christina Matta, "Ambiguous Bodies and Deviant Sexualities: Hermaphrodites, Homosexuality, and Surgery in the United States, 1850-1904," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48:1 (2005): 74-83.
- Katrina Karkazis, *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience* (2008).]

4.) SKULLS AND BONES, BRAINS AND BODIES (Sept. 23)**Required Reading:**

Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man** (New York: Norton, 1981), chapters 1, 2, pp. 19-72.

Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Bibliography:

- Richard C. Lewontin, "The Inferiority Complex" [review of *The Mismeasure of man*], *New York Review of Books* 28, no. 16), October 22, 1981.
- Bruce Dain, *A Hideous Monster of the Mind: America's Race Theory in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

- Michael Sappol, *Traffic of Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Robert L. Blakely and Judith M. Harrigan, ed., *Bones in the Basement: Postmortem Racism in Nineteenth-Century Medical Training* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).
- Orrin Starn, *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild" Indian* (New York: Norton, 2004).
- David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

5. ANTEBELLUM MURDERERS AND THEIR VICTIMS (Sept. 30)

Required Reading:

- Karen Halttunen, *Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1998).
- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (French original edition published 1975; New York: Vintage Books/ Random House, 1995), chapter 1 (on course website).
- Life and Confession of Reuben A. Dunbar* (Philadelphia, 1859), on course website.

Bibliography:

- Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: Knopf, 1998).
- Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties: Unwarranted Speculations* (New York: Knopf, 1991). On the George Parkman-John Webster case.
- Daniel A. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace: New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- Michael Trotti, *The Body in the Reservoir: Murder and Sensationalism in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).
- Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

6. FUGITIVE SLAVE NARRATIVES, PERSONAL TESTAMENT AND BODILY SUFFERING (Oct. 7)

Required Reading:

- Moses Roper, *Narrative of the Abduction and Escape of Moses Roper from American Slavery, 2nd ed.* (Berwick-upon-Tweed, UK: Published for Author, 1848), available through "Documenting the American South."
- Elizabeth B. Clark, "The Sacred Rights of the Weak: Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *Journal of American History* 82 (September 1995): 463-91 (available through JSTOR).
- Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), Chapter 3: "Slaves."

Bibliography:

- North American Slave Narratives, full text of nineteenth-century narratives, in Documenting the American South (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library)

William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

7. THE BODY IN PHOTOGRAPHY: THE ILLUSTRIOUS, THE ENSLAVED, THE CRIMINAL, THE DEAD AND WOUNDED (Oct. 14)

Required Reading:

Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs** (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), prologue and chapters 1-2).

Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3-64. (available through JSTOR)

Bibliography:

Brian Wallis, "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," *American Art* 9 (2) (Summer, 1995): 38-6 (available through Project Muse).

John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (1988; pb. reprint, University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

John Pultz, *The Body and the Lens* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1995).

Mary Panzer, *Mathew Brady and the Image of History* (Washington, D.C.: {Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Portrait Gallery, 1997).

Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

Carol Squiers, *The Body at Risk: Photography of Disorder, Illness, and Healing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).

8. ETIQUETTE AND THE BODY (Oct. 21)

Required Reading:

John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990). Copies to be supplied.

Bibliography:

Keith Thomas, "The Rise of the Fork" [review of Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 1], *New York Review of Books*, 25 (Mar. 9, 1978), 28-31

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).

Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), esp. Chapter 4, "Belief and the Body."

Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

N.B.: By Oct. 21 each student should have met with me to discuss and provide a preliminary statement of a proposed subject for our concluding sessions (see below).

9. WHITE WOMEN AND GIRLS ON DISPLAY: THE FEMALE NUDE IN THE VISUAL ARTS (Oct. 28)

Required Reading:

Joy S. Kasson, "Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*" from *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) (on Blackboard site).

T. J. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 79-146 (on reserve).

David M. Lubin, "Introduction: The Politics of Method," and chapter 5, "Guys and Dolls" Framing Femininity in Post-Civil War America" in *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994; on reserve).

David Scobey, "Nymphs and Satyrs: Sex and the Bourgeois Public Sphere in Victorian New York," *Winterthur Portfolio* 37 (Spring 2002): 43-66. Available through JSTOR

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1215421?&Search=yes&term=scobey&list=hide&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoAdvancedSearch%3Fq0%3Dscobey%26f0%3Dall%26c0%3DAND%26q1%3D%26f1%3Dall%26c1%3DAND%26q2%3D%26f2%3Dall%26c2%3DAND%26q3%3D%26f3%3Dall%26wc%3Don%26Search%3DSearch%26sd%3D%26ed%3D%26la%3D%26jo%3D&item=7&ttl=519&returnArticleService=showArticle>

Bibliography:

William H. Gerds, *The Great American Nude* (New York: Praeger, 1974).

Jean Fagan Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Antislavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

10. SURGERY, SEXUALITY, AND THE BODY IN THE WORK OF THOMAS EAKINS (Nov 4)

Required Reading:

Amy Werbel, *Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), chapters 2-4, pp. 38-135 (on reserve).

Sarah J. Burns, "Ordering the Artist's Body: Eakins's Acts of self-Presentation," *American Art* 2005 19(1): 82-107. Available through UNC Library Electronic Journals, University of Chicago Online:

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/429976?journalCode=amart&quickLinkVolume=19&quickLinkIssue=1&quickLinkPage=82&volume=19>

David M. Lubin, "Projecting an Image: The Contested Cultural Identity of Thomas Eakins" [review of exhibition, *Thomas Eakins* "American Realist"], *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 3 (Sept. 2002): 510-522 (available through JSTOR).

Elizabeth Johns, *The Gross Clinic, or Portrait of Professor Gross*," in *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 46-81 (on reserve).

Bibliography:

Michael Fried, "Realism, Writing, and Disfiguration in Thomas Eakins's *Gross Clinic* with a Postscript on Stephen Crane's *Upturned Faces*," *Representations* 9 (Winter, 1985): 33-104 (available through JSTOR).

- Jennifer Doyle, "Sex, Scandal, and Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*," *Representations* 68 (Fall 1999): 1-33 (available through JSTOR).
- Bridget I. Goodbody, "'The Present Opprobrium of Surgery': *The Agnew Clinic* and Nineteenth-Century Representations of Cancerous Female Breasts," *American Art* 8: 1 (Winter 1994): 31-51 (available through JSTOR).
- Randall C. Griffin, "Thomas Eakins' Construction of the Male Body, or 'Men Get to Know Each Other across the Space of Time'" *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 70-80 (available through JSTOR).
- Martin Berger, "Modernity and Gender in Thomas Eakins's *Swimming*" *American Art* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 32-47 (available through JSTOR).
- David M. Lubin, "*The Agnew Clinic*," in *Acts of Portrayal: Eakins, Sargent, James* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 27-82.
- Darrel Sewell, ed., *Thomas Eakins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). .
- Kathleen A. Foster, *Thomas Eakins Rediscovered: Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

11. PERFORMING WHITE MASCULINITY (Nov. 11)

Required Reading:

- John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America** (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001).
- Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914), skim. Available online.

Bibliography:

- Kathryn Grover, ed., *Fitness in American Culture: Images of Health, Sport, and the Body, 1830-1940* (Amherst, MA and Rochester, NY: University of Massachusetts Press and Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1989).
- Gail Bedermann, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1890-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
- Geoffrey C. Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Knopf, 2004).

12. PERFORMING "THE NEW WOMAN": WOMEN ON STAGE IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (Nov. 18)

Required Reading:

- Susan A. Glenn, *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism** (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

Bibliography:

- Robert Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
- M. Alison Kibler, *Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

Simonson, Mary. ““The Call of Salome”: American Adaptations and Re-creations of the Female Body in the Early Twentieth Century.” *Women and Music* 11 (2007): 1-16.

13. Bodies in the Great Depression (Nov. 25)

Required Reading:

Sally Stein, “The President's Two Bodies: Staging and Restagings of FDR and the New Deal Body Politic,” *American Art* 18, no. 1 (2004): 32-57. Available online.

Sally Stein, “Peculiar Grace: Dorothea Lange and the Testimony of the Body,” in *Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life*, edited by Elizabeth Partridge (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution press, 1994), 57-89 (on reserve).

Elliott J. Gorn, “Re-membering John Dillinger,” in James W. Cook, Lawrence Glickman, and Michael O'Malley, eds., *The Cultural Turn In U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 153-183.

John F. Kasson “Behind Shirley Temple's Smile: Children, Emotional labor, and the Great Depression,” in Cook, et al., ed, *Cultural Turn in US History*, 185-216 (on reserve).

Lori Merish, “Cuteness and Commodity Aesthetics: Tom Thumb and Shirley Temple,” in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 185-203.

Bibliography:

Geoffrey C. Ward, *A First-Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989).

Elliott J. Gorn, *Dillinger's Wild Ride: The Year That Made America's Public Enemy Number One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Linda Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009).

14, CONCLUDING SESSION: HYPOTHETICAL UNIT PRESENTATIONS (Dec. 2)

For our last session, each student will give a *brief* presentation of materials for a hypothetical additional unit concerning the body on display in American culture. This unit should include some primary work or works and secondary or theoretical interpretation. (Please distribute a list of your proposed assignments to each member of the class.) Each student should also turn in a short paper (approximately four to five pages) discussing this hypothetical unit, the subject under scrutiny, the leading historical and interpretive issues, and something of how it relates to other materials we have considered in the course. These last papers are due on December 4.

PREPARING CRITICAL EVALUATIONS OF THE MAJOR READING ASSIGNMENTS



"By God, for a minute there it suddenly all made sense!"

Critical evaluations should run about two or three pages (600-900 words), if submitted for a formal grade. They should run 300-500 words if submitted as a shorter response. Please send me a copy of your evaluations as an attachment in Microsoft Word as well as providing a printed copy. Whatever its length, the paper should have a title of its own that indicates its general aim, ideally, with a little flair. As to citation form, all direct quotations should be accompanied by page references. These may be given in parentheses after each quotation or in footnotes, as you prefer. Please identify in the paper any other sources of intellectual indebtedness.

Please observe the **Honor Code** scrupulously. Both the writing of these papers and their contents must be your own work. If you have any questions about guidelines in a specific case or where the boundaries of academic integrity might lie, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I also strongly urge you to review the American Historical association statement on plagiarism, available at: <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.htm#Statement%20on%20Plagiarism><http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.htm#Statement%20on%20Plagiarism>

Again, whatever its length, your critical response should endeavor to engage an issue of significance. This issue may not necessarily link all the readings in a given unit (if there are more than one), but it should not arouse the suspicion that you are cherry-picking from a short, low-hanging bough instead of climbing the tree and gathering a richer harvest. In preparing your critical evaluation, you should feel free to take a variety of approaches and even forms. Strive to go beyond a dutiful and pedestrian "review," and aim to present a thoughtful, probing (though necessarily condensed) essay. You should not concern yourself with summarizing what a given writer *says* at any length. Although you may wish to recapitulate an argument or a particular point briefly, do so in order to raise questions or issues that especially concern you. Some of the questions you might think about are:

What is most valuable (suggestive, stimulating, provocative) in a given work or set of readings? Why? What are some of the implications or applications that you see? You might, in this connection, remember the remark of Daniel Calhoun in *The Intelligence of a People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973): "There are times when an inquirer asks not What can we prove? but What if it should be true that all these threads do hang together?"

What are the implications of a given work in terms of methodology? What conceptions of key categories of interest (e.g. culture, gender, class, social change, ritual, etc.) does it contain? What kinds of evidence are used?

What are the thematic or substantive implications of a given work? How does it relate to (confirm, complement, complicate, challenge, undermine) other readings and materials in the course? Does the work enlarge your understanding of a problem in American history in important ways?

I would urge you, in short, to be probing and speculative in your approach to the reading, to ask why it *matters* or might matter, to ask what may be learned from a piece, even an unsuccessful or only partially successful piece. You may mention minor points if you wish, but subordinate them and go after major issues.

BASIS FOR FINAL GRADE:

Grades on critical evaluations and concluding paper: 80%

Class participation: 20%

Individual consultation, messages, and office hours:

Please feel free to see me during my office hours (or by appointment) to discuss a specific matter about the course, to exchange more general ideas, questions, and concerns--or simply to chat.

Office: Hamilton 473

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30, and by appointment.

E-mail: jfkasson@email.unc.edu