



The Body in Society: An Introduction

Alexandra Howson

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In everyday life we are not, for the most part, actively conscious of our bodies or the bodies of others – we simply take them for granted. This new edition of a lively introduction to the sociology of the body examines what certain aspects of our bodies, such as the size, shape, smell and demeanour, reveal about the social organization of everyday life and how the body is crucial to the way we engage with the world and the people around us.

The human body is endowed with varied forms of social significance which sociology has addressed by asking questions such as: To what degree do individuals have control over their own bodies? What interest does the state have in regulating the human body? How significant is the body to the development and performance of the self in everyday life? What images of the body influence people's expectations of themselves and others? Written in a clear and comprehensible way, *The Body in Society* introduces students to the key conceptual frameworks that help us to understand the social significance of the human body. This second edition has been thoroughly updated to take into account recent theories and debates and also includes enhanced pedagogical features. Using familiar examples from everyday life, such as diet and exercise regimes, personal hygiene, dress, displays of emotion, and control over bodily functions, coupled with examples from popular culture, the text has strong contemporary relevance and will strike a chord with all who read it.

This book will be essential reading for students taking courses on the body in sociology, anthropology, gender studies and cultural studies.

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