Bodies on Campus
Research Proposal

The **Big** Picture
Why do we do what we do?

Why do *individuals* participate in *Group* Fitness classes offered by *Campus* Recreation?
We’re your campus playground
http://www.campusrec.uiuc.edu/fitness/index.html#

From *The Body in Society: An Introduction* (Introduction, p. 11)

• In modernity, the body has increasingly become the target of political control, rationalization, and discipline. States and agencies of the state exert considerable control over the movement of populations in time and space (e.g., universities) and encourage individuals to discipline themselves in compliance with state objectives (such as improving the nation’s health).

So, what’s the matter??
Why should you care??
Proposal

The Problem…

• Obesity epidemic

• Health and fitness values highlighting physical appearance

• Body as commodity and contemporary consumer culture

Worth Considering…

• Social stigma and exclusion

• Student body as ‘target’ of control, rationalization and discipline

• Internal discipline and self control vs. University as agent of student body

• Consumer culture of a service: Student provided means to modify body, creating a particular kind of self that presents itself and representative of University’s initiatives
Considerations

• Class members
• Instructors
• Intentions (3 types)
• Participation/Attrition
• Gender issues
• Physical space
• Equipment
• Types of classes
• Times of classes
• Financial issues
• Campus Recreation initiatives
Feasibility

• Observation (one location, several visits)

• Interview (the individual, the group, the instructor, Campus Rec)

• Archive (University health initiatives, History Campus Rec, etc)

• Hindrances? (subject compliance, subjective data, etc.)

Concise, yet variety exists
Expectations & Possibilities

- *Group* fitness is really not at all about the group atmosphere
- The University exerts no control/ultimate control over the student body through group fitness classes
- Responsibility for a healthy body falls on the individual and not the University
- University must be more active in encouraging individuals to lead a healthy lifestyle
- University has control/no control over the movement of the student body in time and/or space
- University promotes physical appearance “norms” and does not concentrate on the individual
- Group fitness promotes social stigma and social exclusion
- Body becomes a commodity of University through its initiatives
- Others???