

## INTRODUCTION TO TRANSGENDER STUDIES

**Instructor:** Amir Aziz

**Level:** Introductory 3-credit undergraduate course

**Targeted enrollment size:** 20-25 students, meets twice a week in 50-mins sessions

**Keywords:** Transgender studies; Queer studies; Gender and sexuality; Feminist theory

### DESCRIPTION

This course introduces contemporary theories, themes, and debates on transgender and genderqueer lives and lived realities; cultural aspects of gender/sex diversity; and transgender subjectivity as embedded in assemblages of gender, sex, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, and class. The course also maps the emergence of *transgender* as an emerging subjectivity, subject, and object of study as embedded within dynamics of gender, sex, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, and class.

The questions we will ask include the following: What does the word *transgender* mean, and in its multiple meanings, how does it open up space to imagine new possibilities of becoming? How is *transgender* emerging as an embodied reality with claims to medical care, rights, and recognition globally? We will examine how Transgender Studies has challenged and/or enhanced thinking in Feminist, Queer, Gender, and Ethnic studies as academic and activist fields of engagement.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the gender/sex binary system and how it affects societal perceptions of gender.
2. Demonstrate the ability to utilize appropriate vocabulary in relation to discussing issues of sex, gender, gender diversity, and transgender and transsexual subjectivities.
3. Identify significant events in the history of various transgender movements.
4. Identify the contributions of various transgender and genderqueer people throughout history.
5. Recognize the current Western cultural impacts on gender identity and expression.
6. Describe current medical, social, political and legal issues impacting transgender populations.
7. Explain alliances with and advocacy for transgender and genderqueer populations.
8. Recognize the complexity of racialized transgender experiences within a transnational feminist frame and analyze both micro- and macro- distributions of power.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Students are not required to purchase any material. All material will be made available online on the course website.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT

Students are assessed via weekly Class Preps, a Midterm exam, and a final Research Project.

### **1. Class Prep and In-Class Participation** **40%**

Each week, students will prepare a *Class Prep* that they will then submit online prior to class. Class Prep is at least 2 pages and consists of three parts: (a) a summary, (b) a glossary section of key concepts and definitions, and (c) three questions that students have about the material. The Class Prep is designed to develop students' close reading and analytical skills while preparing them with questions and talking points to encourage in-class discussion.

- (a) The summary comprises 150-200 words, in which students provide a detailed description of each reading by providing its primary thesis, an explanation of the types of arguments and evidence present to support claims, and a brief statement on methodologies used to present its arguments.
- (b) The glossary section involves a description of at least 2-3 key concepts, terms, and/or definitions, from across all the week's assigned readings, that pertain to the weekly theme.
- (c) The final section comprises three questions that students may have when reading or that they may wish to clarify in class. This section will be used in discussion sessions, providing students the forum to ask their questions and/or expand upon arguments in the readings.

### **2. Midterm Exam** **20%**

The Midterm Exam is an online exam administered on the course website and will cover materials from weekly readings and classroom discussions. The exam will not be timed online, but students will be given ample time during the week to prepare for and complete the exam.

### **3. Final Research Project** **40%**

The final Research Project will comprise an essay of at least 8-9 pages long, not including footnotes/endnotes and bibliography, that examines a particular assigned topic (that students choose over a number of provided topics) related to the course theme.

Students are encouraged to be consistent in the formatting of their online writing; a good guideline is a written task formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with wide margins.

## GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Just as misogynist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of transgender, intersex, gender non-binary, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming individuals. Language should be gender- and sex-inclusive when we use words that recognize and affirm how people describe, express, and experience their gender and sex.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

#### **WEEK 1 – Overview of Transgender Studies**

Tuesday Course Introductions

Thursday Susan Stryker, "An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts"  
Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto"

#### **WEEK 2 – Gender/Sex Non-Conformity: Historical Perspectives**

Tuesday Deborah A. Miranda, "Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California"  
Evelyn Blackwood, "Gender Transgression in Colonial and Postcolonial Indonesia"

Thursday Maria Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender"  
Evan B. Towle and Lynn Marie Morgan, "Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the "Third Gender" Concept"

#### **WEEK 3 – Thinking 'Transgender' and 'Transsexual' Before**

Tuesday Mary Weismantel, "Towards a Transgender Archeology: A Queer Rampage through Prehistory"  
Susan Stryker, "A Hundred Years of Transgender History"

Thursday Jules Gill-Peterson, "Before Transsexuality: The Transgender Child from the 1900s to the 1930s"  
Dean Spade, "Mutilating Gender"

#### **WEEK 4 – Early Medical Theories and Models of Gender and Sex**

- Tuesday David O. Cauldwell, "Psychopathis Transsexualism"  
Harry Benjamin, "Transsexualism and Transvestitism as Psycho-Somatic and Somato-Psychic Syndromes"
- Joanne Meyerowitz, "A 'Fierce and Demanding' Drive"  
Kadji Amin, "Glands, Eugenics, and Rejuvenation in Man into Woman: A Biopolitical Genealogy of Transsexuality"
- Thursday

### **WEEK 5 – Genealogies of Gender and Sex**

- Tuesday Excerpts from Jennifer Germon, *Gender: A Genealogy of an Idea*  
David A. Rubin, "An Unnamed Blank That Craved a Name": A Genealogy of Intersex as Gender"
- Thursday Jules Gill-Peterson, "Sex in Crisis: Intersex Children in the 1950s and the Invention of Gender"

### **WEEK 6 – Global Mobilities and Contestations**

- Tuesday Toby Beauchamp, "The Substance of Borders: Transgender Politics, Mobility, and U.S. State Regulation of Testosterone"  
Aren Aizura, "The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: 'Race', Labour and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics"
- Thursday Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Verdicts of Science, Rulings of Faith: Transgender/Sexuality in Contemporary Iran"  
Aren Aizura, "Of Borders and Homes: The Imaginary Community of (Trans) Sexual Citizenship"

### **WEEK 7 – Trans Subjectivities and Feminist Theory**

- Tuesday Viviane Namaste, "Undoing Theory: The 'Transgender Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory"
- Thursday Gayle Salamon, "Transfeminism and the Future of Gender"  
Jack Halberstam, "Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum"

### **WEEK 8 – Social Movements and Mobilizations**

- Tuesday Excerpts from *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*  
Watch *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*. Directed by Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker
- Thursday Gayle Salamon, “Transfeminism and the Future of Gender”  
Susan Stryker, “Transgender Liberation”

### **WEEK 9 – Trans Rights: Law, Politics, Power**

- Tuesday Dean Spade, “Rethinking Transphobia and Power—Beyond a Rights Framework”
- Thursday Kevin Barry, “Disabilityqueer: Federal Disability Rights Protection for Transgender People”  
C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife”

### **WEEK 10 – Mid-Term Exam**

### **WEEK 11 – ‘Transgender’ as a Racialized Category**

- Tuesday Jules Gill-Peterson, “The Racial Plasticity of Gender and the Child”  
Emi Koyama, “Whose Feminism Is it Anyways? The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate”
- Thursday Excerpts from Marquis Bey, *Black Trans Feminism*  
Sarah Lamble, “Retelling Racialized Violence, Remaking White Innocence: The Politics of Interlocking Oppressions in Transgender Day of Remembrance”

### **WEEK 12 – Trans Creative Productions and Resistances**

- Tuesday Excerpts from ALOK Vaid-Menon, *Femme In Public*  
Excerpts from madison moore, *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*
- Thursday Watch *Happy Birthday, Marsha!*. Directed by Tourmaline and Sasha Wortzel

**WEEK 13 – Trans Liberation Futures**

Tuesday Excerpts from ALOK Vaid-Menon, *Your Wound / My Garden*  
Watch Disclosure. Directed by Laverne Cox and Sam Feder

Thursday Leslie Feinberg, “Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come”  
Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee, and Dean Spade, “Building an Abolitionist  
Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We’ve Got”

**WEEK 14 – Rethinking ‘Trans’ as Subject and Category**

Tuesday Viviane Namaste and Georgia Sitara, “Inclusive Pedagogy in the Women’s Studies  
Classroom: Teaching the Kimberly Nixon Case”  
Talia Bettcher, “Trapped in the Wrong Theory: Rethinking Trans Oppression and  
Resistance”

Thursday Review

**WEEK 15 – Workshop Final Research Project**