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**Office:** South College W421  
**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2:30 – 4:30 or by appointment

\*To avoid scheduling conflicts, please do email in advance, even if you plan to drop by during office hours.

## Introduction to Transgender Studies

Tu/Th 1-2:15 | South College W101

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### Course Description:

While mainstream discourse tends to frame “transgender” as a perpetually new phenomenon, this survey of transgender studies will contextualize present-day conversations in a longer intellectual history. We will be guided by questions like: What does trans mean and how has its meaning been shaped by regimes of gender, racism, colonization, ableism, and medical and legal regulation? What have emerged as the main concerns of transgender studies/activism and how has trans studies interacted with more established academic fields? How have trans artists, activists, and scholars helped us to imagine other, more just worlds? By engaging with scholarship from multiple fields, as well as a range of creative work, we will map the emergence of “transgender” as both an object of knowledge and a way of knowing.

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### Required Texts

- Dean Spade, *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of the Law* (Duke University Press, 2015)
- Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today’s Revolution*, revised edition (Seal Press, 2017)

\*The above have been ordered through Amherst Books (8 Main Street, Amherst). If you choose to purchase your books elsewhere, please make sure that you are getting the correct editions.

\*\*All other course material will be provided to you through Moodle

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### Requirements:

- ***Analysis Papers (30%)***

These are short, 3-4 page papers in which you will use several sources from the class (no more than four, no less than two) to answer the following:

Paper #1: What is *trans*?

Paper #2: What is the relationship between *trans* and x (feminist, disability, critical race, decolonial...) studies/politics?

I will give you more detailed assignment sheets two weeks in advance of each due date. But you should know that I think these are unanswerable questions – or, at least, there is no one right answer—so the point of these papers is not for you to come to the ‘right’ answer. Rather, these are meant to get you to 1) look back at the reading with the benefit of hindsight, 2) compare and contrast how these scholars have implicitly or explicitly answered the above questions, and 3) make a reasoned argument about what *you* think the answer is or ought to be and why.

Each paper is worth 15% of your grade. Points for paper #1 will be given for timely completion rather than “quality” in order to prioritize developing your writing – think of this as an opportunity to get to know my expectations and to troubleshoot well in advance of the end of the semester. Paper #2 will be graded.

- **Reading Responses (20%)**

For this requirement, you are responsible for uploading a short, informal response to the day’s reading to Moodle by 12:30pm. Your response can be formatted as bullet points, full sentences, whatever, but must include two things:

- 1) One thing from the reading that you do not understand/find confusing and why
- 2) A list of at least three words that seem to be central to the reading for the day. You should also 1) try to define each term *in your own words* and 2) offer a brief account of why you think each term is important.

Each one is worth 2% of your grade, so you must submit a total of 10 reading responses over the course of the semester for full credit, but when you do so is up to you. I strongly recommend getting into the habit of this early, so that you don’t have to play catch up at the very end.

- **Final Project (30%)**

You have several options for your final project:

- 1) Keyword Essays: For this option, choose four of the words that you have noted in your reading responses as important. Then, for each word, write a ~2 page essay defining the term and explaining why it is important to the field of trans studies. For a model, see the first issue of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* “Postposttranssexual: Terms for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transgender Studies,” which is available online through the UMass Library.
- 2) Revise and expand one of your analysis papers into an ~8 page essay that applies the course reading to a case study (a real-life event, a novel, a tv show, a news report, a policy...) of your choosing.
- 3) Creative Option: Pair a substantial act of creativity (5-8 pages of poems, a complete short story, a lyric essay, an artzine, a short film...) with a ~5 page reflection detailing how the work is engaging with the intellectual content of the course. I welcome and even encourage you to take the creative option; however, if you intend to do so, please clear your project with me **no later than 4/16**.

- **Participation (20%)**

This is a discussion-based course, so your participation is vital to making it function. There are many ways to be engaged and many styles of participation. But, at minimum, I expect that you: come to class, be on time, do the reading and be ready to discuss it, and participate in in-class discussions and activities to the best of your ability. I recognize that some students have trouble speaking up in class due to shyness, language barriers, processing speeds, and so on. Because public speaking is a useful skill, I encourage you to push yourself to participate verbally. To facilitate this, I'd like you to take the first five minutes of each class period to gather your thoughts: jot down a question, a quote you want to talk about, a feeling the reading made you have and why. I will provide notecards for this purpose, which I will collect at the end of each class.

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### **Policies:**

All undergraduate students are responsible for complying with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures contained in this publication as well as those in other official University publications and announcements which may be issued from time to time. This document includes policies on absences, grading, late withdrawal and related issues.

<https://www.umass.edu/registrar/students/policies-and-practices/academic-regulations>

- **Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University's official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary (you can read it in full at [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/code\\_conduct/acad\\_honest.htm](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm)): "If an instructor finds that a student has violated the University's Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor has the right to lower the student's grade, or even to fail the student for the course. Students have the right to appeal such a grade penalty by an instructor. The University Academic Honesty Board, which must be notified by instructors of any grade penalty, reviews all student appeals. The Board may sustain or recommend modification of the penalty given by the faculty member, or may recommend sanctions exceeding those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University. The Board may also recommend sanctions for offenders who have committed multiple violations of the Academic Honesty Policy but who have not appealed the faculty members' decisions."

- **Absences**

Again, this is a small, discussion based class, so it going smoothly depends on your showing up. However, because I understand that sometimes things come up, you are allowed *two* absences, no questions asked. Any additional absences will have to be cleared with me, in advance, or they will negatively affect your participation grade.

- ***Late Work***

Late assignments will be marked down a half letter-grade (5%) per day past the deadline, unless we have worked something else out in advance. If you are having trouble with the work for the course, I recommend taking advantage of the many resources available to you well before any deadlines. Come to my office hours, visit the Writing Center (<https://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/>), or make an appointment with Kate Litterer ([www.wgsswritingtutor.com](http://www.wgsswritingtutor.com) / [wgsswritingtutor@gmail.com](mailto:wgsswritingtutor@gmail.com)), who is the department-specific writing tutor for WGSS.

- ***Accessibility / Title IX***

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements:  
<http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf>

However, I also assume that we all have different learning needs, many of which don't fall under the official rubric of disability. Our first in-class writing assignment is intended to provide you with a space to articulate your learning needs, and I will do my best to accommodate them. I also assume that brains and bodies change overtime, so if you find that you are having trouble, please come talk to me and I will be happy to help you find ways to succeed, which may or may not mean making use of the resources available at Disability Services.

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) classes are a place where issues of sexual violence and other sexual misconduct are discussed as a matter of course. It's not a taboo subject, and feminists have long worked to develop theory and activism around sexualized violence, including rape, dating violence, child sexual abuse, and the like. If you want to discuss your own personal experiences of sexual violence in a class, we don't consider that a "report" covered by Title IX (although if you want faculty help and support in reporting sexual violence, we are here to help you do that). Other available resources on campus for addressing sexual violence include both confidential and non-confidential resources—non-confidential resources will keep your concerns private but will report your concerns to the Title IX coordinator, or, the Dean of Students Office who will provide you with different options to assist you. Confidential resources will keep your concerns confidential and will provide you support, assistance in addressing safety concerns as well as other services such as providing you with an advocate. The resources can be found at [www.umass.edu/titleix/](http://www.umass.edu/titleix/).

- **WGSS Librarian:**

WGSS has specialized librarians, Isabel Espinal and Anne Moore who can assist students with research. These librarians have developed a subject area research guide which has links and information to contact them directly.

<http://guides.library.umass.edu/wost>

- ***Communication***

With a few exceptions, all course material—including reading, assignment prompts, and updates—will be posted to Moodle. Therefore, please check Moodle regularly, and consult it first if you have a question. That said, I do welcome appropriate email inquiries, and will do my best to get back to you within 24-48 hours.

If you have questions that might require complex answers—i.e. “Is this an appropriate paper topic?” “How do I boost my participation grade?” “Can we work out a way to meet xyz accessibility needs?” “I am having a tough semester for abc reasons; how can I keep that from tanking my grade?” —**I urge you to come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to talk face-to-face.**

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## Course Schedule

Trans studies is a dynamic, interdisciplinary field that traverses a broad range of times, places, methods, objects, and aims. In building this reading list, I’ve endeavored to give you a taste of the full range of the field, while also grounding us in the work of a small handful of scholars whose voices will recur over the course of the semester. Because of this desire to give you both grounding and range, this will be a very reading intensive class. Of course, in an ideal world, you’ll budget enough time to complete all of the reading. However, for those times when the world is less than ideal: I would rather you carefully read one thing than quickly skim two.

### Introductions

1/22

- Jen Manion, “The Performance of Transgender Inclusion: The Pronoun Go-Round and the New Gender Binary”
- Dean Spade, “We Still Need Pronoun Go-Rounds”

1/24

- Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* Chapter 1: “Contexts, Concepts, and Terms”
- Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies”

## Thinking Trans – Some Ways of Knowing

### Trans Before/Beside Transsexuality

1/29

- Mary Weismantel, “Towards a Transgender Archeology: A Queer Rampage Through Prehistory”
- Emily Skidmore, “The Last Female Husband: New Boundaries of Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century”

1/31

- Deborah Miranda, “Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California”
- Kai Pyle, “Naming and Claiming: Recovering Ojibwe and Plains Cree Two-Spirit Language”
- Aniruddha Dutta and Raina Roy, “Decolonizing Transgender in India: Some Reflections”

2/5

- Kadji Amin, “Glands, Eugenics, and Rejuvenation in *Man into Woman*: A Biopolitical Genealogy of Transsexuality”
- Lili Elbe and Niels Hoyer, *Man into Woman* (excerpts)

2/7

- Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* Chapter 2: “A Hundred-Plus Years of Transgender History”
- Assignment: Dig around the digital trans archive and locate two things (one from before 1950 and one from between 1950-1990) that are often interest to you. Post these to the Moodle Forum and come to class ready to discuss. What did you find? Why is it interesting? How does it speak to the history in the Stryker reading?  
(<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net>)

### In the Clinic

2/12

- Julian Gill-Peterson, “Before Transsexuality: The Transgender Child from the 1900s to the 1930s”
- Dean Spade: “Mutilating Gender”

2/14

- Aren Aizura, “The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: Race, Labor, and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics”
- Elizabeth Bucar and A. Finn Enke, “Unlikely Sex Change Capitals of the World: Trinidad, United States, and Tehran, Iran, as Twin Yardsticks of Homonormative Liberalism”

2/19 **No Class: Paper 1 Due to Moodle by 11:59pm**

## Trans Liberation

2/21

- Stryker, *Transgender History* Chapter 3: Trans Liberation
- In-class screening of *Screaming Queens: The Riot At Compton's Cafeteria*

2/26

- Jessi Gan, “‘Still at the back of the bus’: Sylvia Rivera’s Struggle”
- Abram J. Lewis, “Organizing within and beyond ‘visibility’ in the 1970s”

## **Encounters, Entanglements**

2/28

- Stryker, *TH* Chap 4: “The Difficult Decades”
- Sandy Stone, “The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto”
- Emi Koyama, “Whose Feminism is it Anyway?: The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate”

3/5

- Sara Ahmed, “An Affinity of Hammers”
- A. Finn Enke, “The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies”

3/7

- Stryker, *TH* Chap 5: The Millennial Wave
- Cael M. Keegan, “Getting Disciplined: What’s Trans\* about Queer Studies Now?”
- Talia Mae Bettcher, “Trapped in the Wrong Theory: On Trans Oppression and Resistance”

## **Spring Break 3/10-3/17**

3/19

- S. Lambie, “Retelling Racialized Violence, Remaking White Innocence: The Politics of Interlocking Oppressions on Transgender Day of Remembrance”
- Treva Ellison, “The labor of werqing it: the performance and protest strategies of Sir Lady Java”

3/21

- C. Riley Snorton, “Anatomically Speaking: Ungendered Flesh and the Science of Sex”

3/26

- Clare Sears, “Electric Brilliancy: Cross-Dressing Law and Freak Show Displays in Nineteenth- Century San Francisco”
- Kevin Barry, “Disabilityqueer: Federal Disability Rights Protection for Transgender People”
- Eli Clare, “Body Shame, Body Pride: Lessons from the Disability Rights Movement”

3/28 – **No class, professor out of town. Paper 2 due by 11:59pm.**

## Regulating [Trans] Gender

4/2

- Dean Spade, “Preface” and “Introduction” in *Normal Life*
- Clare Sears, “Problem Bodies, Nation-State”

4/4

- Spade, *NL* Chapter 1: “Trans Law and Politics on a Neoliberal Landscape”
- Dan Irving, “Normalized Transgressions: Legitimizing the Transsexual Body as Productive”

4/9

- Spade, *NL* Chapter 2: “What’s Wrong with Rights?”
- C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife.”
- “This Black Trans Man Is in Prison for Killing His Rapist”

4/11

- Spade, *NL* Chapter 4: “Administrating Gender”
- Toby Beauchamp, “Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11”

\* In-class activity. If you have one, please bring your laptop, tablet, or other form of wifi-enabled screen.

## (Some) Trans Aesthetics

4/16

- Madison Moore, “The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric”

4/18

- Myra Hird, “Animal Trans”
- Poetry Packet – Oliver Baez Bendorf

4/23

- Keegan, “Sensing Transgender”
- Either *The Matrix* or *Bound* (dir. Lana and Lili Wachowski)

4/25

- Torrey Peters, *Infect Your Friends and Loved Ones*

4/30

- Show and Tell – locate a piece of trans art (poem, photograph, short film, sculpture, etc.); post it to Moodle; come to class having prepared a brief presentation about the piece. What is it? Who is its maker? What makes the piece itself trans?

**Final project due 5/7 by 11:59pm**