

WGSS 494TI: Unthinking the Transnational

Spring 2021

This syllabus is subject to change, depending on how the semester progresses

Instructor Information

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Office hours: By appointment on Zoom

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Dr. Leng is an associate professor in the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a historian of sexuality, feminism, science and humor. She has taught at UMass since 2014.

Course Description

This course reviews the framework of ‘transnationalism’ in women’s, gender and sexuality studies. It surveys the field of transnational feminist research and praxis, and examines how conceptions of the “global” and “transnational” have informed the implementation of feminist politics and projects.

In this course, students will also have the opportunity to focus and deepen their understanding of these issues by working on a specific individual research paper (details will be distributed). *This should be an original and specific research project, but must also link to the key themes of the course and broader general education studies.* Students will be presented with information about the proper use of the Library Data Base as well as using Information Technology to enhance their learning and prepare for their research projects. Students can use this as a practical tangible resource for further studies or work.

Learning Goals

- Examine “the transnational” as a category: for conceptualizing feminism, practicing feminism, interrogating assumptions about feminism, and conducting feminist research/research about feminism
- Explore the diverse ways academics and activists have mobilized “the transnational” in their work
- Conduct original feminist research/research on feminism that:
 - Integrates/reflects upon prior WGSS coursework
 - Investigates a topic of personal, possibly future professional interest
 - Deploys “the transnational” analytically and/or methodologically
 - Mobilizes scholarly, activist, and popular literature, as appropriate
 - Sparkles with good grammar and syntax
 - Includes proper and consistent citation
- Critically reflect upon learning—not just this semester, but throughout your undergraduate degree

Capstone and Integrative Experience Designation

This is a *four-credit* Women Gender Sexuality Capstone course, which fulfills the major's Integrative Experience (IE) requirements. This course provides:

1. A context for students to reflect on and to integrate their learning and experience from the broad exposure in their General Education courses and the focus in their major.
2. The opportunity to practice General Education learning objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspective taking, at a more advanced level.
3. A shared learning experience for applying their prior learning to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.

The seminar will be discussion, reading and writing intensive. It will also emphasize a collective learning process from student-led discussions, written assignments, a final research paper or project, and a final in-class presentation. As an IE requirement, the course will provide WGSS seniors with the opportunity to reflect on and make use of the knowledge base they have acquired in the major and *UMass General Education Courses*.

What will this course look like on a weekly basis?

As you well know by now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic our course will be conducted remotely this semester. This means:

- a) that we will not meet in a shared physical space
- b) because people may not be in the same geographic or temporal zone, we will be working both “synchronously” (i.e. together in the same shared time and virtual space) and “asynchronously” (i.e. in different times and space).

However! It does not mean that we will work in isolation or alienation. I am committed to building and sustaining community and fostering engagement with some fascinating and timely ideas and resources.

Our class will meet from 10:00am to 11:15am EST every Thursdays on Zoom. During many of these sessions, we will have guests joining us who will share their research and expertise, prepare you to conduct research of your own, or otherwise help you think about life after UMass. You will be expected to prepare questions for our guests in advance of our Thursday meetings (details below). You will also be expected to write a two-page, double-spaced reflection about these meetings (again, details below).

We will meet occasionally on Tuesdays. These meetings will serve as check-ins to connect with each, catch up about the status of our research, discuss ideas and questions that have emerged over the course of reading, etc... The exact dates of our Tuesday meetings are indicated on the “Course Outline,” below, as “Meeting Day.” Please mark your calendars. On Tuesdays when we do not meet, you are expected to conduct research towards your final project, or begin your readings and question prep for Thursday.

Office hours will be held by appointment. Please reach out to me if/when you want to meet, and I will do my best to find a time that is good for both of us.

Course Text or Online Resources

There are no texts to purchase. The readings are available on Moodle.

Please make sure to budget enough time to complete the readings prior to class. It is essential that you complete the readings in order to participate fully in the intellectual life of the course.

You will notice that the reading load is limited to Thursdays. *I expect you to dedicate equal time to conducting research towards your final project.*

In addition to Moodle, UMass Amherst Libraries offer a number of helpful resources, including Research Guides for particular subject areas, should you wish to learn more:

- Afro American Studies: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/afroam>
- East Asian Studies: <https://guides.library.umass.edu/eastasian>
- Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/latam>
- LGBT Resources: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/lgbt>
- Native American and Indigenous Studies: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/nativestudies>
- Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/wgss>

Another important resource: you can get free access to the New York Times through UMass! Details are available here:

https://guides.library.umass.edu/nytimes?_ga=2.48930918.1147540388.1597010940-1855955997.1573776872

Further information regarding how to access other newspapers is available here:

<https://libanswers.library.umass.edu/faq/297072>

Technology Requirements

- A computer with an updated operating system (e.g. Windows, Mac, Linux) and an Internet browser (e.g. Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari...)
- I highly recommend using a desktop or laptop to complete assignments. A tablet or smartphone is not powerful enough
- Basic computer audio/video equipment
- Internet connection
- Software: Microsoft Word (although I will accept documents via Google Docs...please no Pages documents). Office 365 software is available for free to UMass Students; see https://www.umass.edu/it/software/microsoft-office-365-education?_ga=2.168900769.1631692794.1589223126-1855955997.1573776872
 - [This link is also posted on our Moodle homepage]

Technological Support

If you are experiencing technological problems, please contact one of the following resources. Please don't contact me with technological issues. I am the course instructor and facilitator, and as such my role is to guide you through the course material and answer questions about course subject matter and assignments. Plus, I wouldn't describe myself as tech savvy.

- UMass Amherst's 24/7 Help Center can be reached at the following URL: <https://embanet.frontlinesvc.com/app/home/p/2101>
- UMass Amherst IT can be reached at: it@umass.edu or **413-545-9400** or **5-TECH**

How You Will Be Graded in This Course

Please make note of the assignments in your calendar!!!

- **Participation (45):** Participation in this class is critical; this is why it constitutes almost half of your total grade. Here's how the participation grade breaks down:
 - Regular Attendance AND Active participation in discussions (13): Students are expected to complete the readings, attend our scheduled zoom meetings regularly, and participate in discussions. Your grade will be based on consistency and depth of participation.
 - Submission of questions (13): Every week, you will submit two questions in advance of our Thursday meetings, based on the readings. You are also expected to ask our guest (or, if there is no guest, the instructor) these questions. Questions are due on Wednesdays at 11:59pm EST on Moodle every week.
 - Weekly reflection papers AND summative reflection paper (14): Every week following our Thursday discussion, you will prepare a 2-page double-spaced reflection paper concerning that week's readings and discussion. Ideally, the paper will also reflect on how our discussion and class material engage with, perhaps even challenge and transform, what you've learned in other WGSS classes. These papers are due Fridays at 11:59pm EST on Moodle. The writing here can be informal. You will also submit a 2-3page paper at the end of semester that reflects on what you have learned this semester, as well as your key take-aways from your career as a WGSS student. The writing here can also be informal. The goal is to express your thoughts in words.
 - Self-grade (5): at the end of the semester, you will give yourself a grade out of 5, along with a paragraph-long rationale of why you gave yourself that particular grade. It will be due on May 1st at 11:59pm EST on Moodle.
- **Final Research paper (55):** The major assignment for this course is a research paper, to be submitted at the end of the term. In total, it is worth more than half of your final grade. It should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages, plus a bibliography. This project can be on a topic of your own choosing; however, it should have something to do transnationalism and feminism. Leading up to the submission of the final project, we will complete a number of smaller assignments to help us start and progress on our projects. These include:
 - Research Proposal (5): Your proposal should be one page long. It should introduce and discuss your research topic, your research question, as well as your plan to answer your research question. Your proposals are due on **Friday, February 19th** at 11:59pm EST on Moodle.
 - Annotated Bibliography (10): Your annotated bibliography should include at least 10 scholarly sources, and two popular sources. Each entry should be accompanied by a paragraph-long description of the source, specifically its content, intervention, and argument. Annotated Bibliographies are due **Friday, March 6th** at 11:59pm EST on Moodle.
 - Outline (5): Your outline should provide the reader with an overview of your paper, proceeding from your central argument/findings. It will clarify how you will introduce the various facets of your research, and how they connect with your central

argument/findings (and with one another). Outlines are due on **Friday, March 26th** at 11:59pm EST on Moodle.

- Preliminary Draft of Paper (10): You will submit a rough draft of your entire research paper in advance of the final due date to receive feedback and make changes. Although we are calling it ‘preliminary,’ this paper should be as polished as possible. You should treat it as though it is the final submission. Preliminary drafts are due **Friday, April 16th** at 11:59pm EST on Moodle
- Presentation of Research (5): You will give a 10-minute informal presentation of your research to your peers; half of the time will be dedicated to your presentation, half the time to Q and A. Presentations will take place on **Thursday, April 29th**.
- Final Draft (20): This paper should incorporate the feedback you receive on your preliminary draft as well as your presentation. It is due **May 4th** at 11:59pm EST on Moodle.

Grading System

Number grades will be translated to the final letter grades using the scale shown below:

A	93-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-92%	C	73-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%
B	83-86%	D	60-69%
B-	80-82%	F	59% and below

Zoom Etiquette

- Please be sure to mute yourself when not speaking
- If you have questions or a comment, please write it in the chat. Be sure to check which participant(s) you wish to send your question/comment to—Zoom defaults to everyone
- Be sure to try and give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion
- Be respectful of your classmates, and present ideas appropriately
- Try to share tips with other students!
- Be sure to prepare your space and your mind for our zoom meetings: have water/coffee/tea/juice at the ready, along with a notepad and pen/pencil, and remove distractions

Writing Resources

UMass Amherst offers a Writing Center to its students and can provide tutoring online! Please visit the following link: <https://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/news/online-tutoring>

Class Philosophy

Learning is a *process*, both individual and collective. We come to this course with different backgrounds and experiences, yet we are all moving through it together. Though we acquire information, arrive at insights, and develop skills at our own pace, learning is inescapably interdependent. For this reason, we will proceed with respect and patience for each other, especially when we disagree.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be received by their due date. If there is a compelling reason why you cannot hand in your assignment on time—illness, personal or family emergency, varsity athletic commitment—please be in touch with the Professor as soon as possible. PLEASE BE PROACTIVE in asking for accommodation. Don't suffer in silence—I sincerely want you to succeed in this course.

Statement Regarding Pronouns

There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. Please advise me of your name's proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record in Spire early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records.

Students with Disabilities

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), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For additional information see: <http://www.umass.edu/disability/students>.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Title IX and mandated reporting

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

And Finally...

I recognize this semester will be different, that things are uncertain, and that we don't know what the future will bring. We are living in a time of heightened anxiety. I plan to approach this semester with compassion, flexibility, and reason, and will do my best to support you in realizing success in this course. Please keep the channels of communication open so I can help you.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introductions

February 2	Meeting Day. Introduction to the Course, to Instructor, to Each Other
February 3	2 questions due on Moodle
February 4 Please read:	Guest: Caroline Gould, HFA Career Services https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/02/religion-workism-making-americans-miserable/583441/
February 5	Reflection paper 1 due

Week 2: Visiting Guest: Kiran Asher, Professor, WGSS, UMass Amherst

February 9	
February 10	2 questions due on Moodle
February 11 Please Read:	Kiran Asher and Priti Ramamurthy, "Rethinking Decolonial and Postcolonial Knowledges beyond Regions to Imagine Transnational Solidarity," <i>Hypatia</i> 35 (2020): 542-547 Ella Shohat, "Area Studies, Transnationalism, and the Feminist Production of Knowledge," <i>Signs</i> 26 (2001): 1269-1272 Amrita Basu, "Introduction," in <i>Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms</i> , edited by Amrita Basu (2017), pp. 1-33.
February 12	Reflection paper 2 due

Week 3: Visiting Guest: Anne Moore, Libraries and Special Collections, UMass Amherst

February 16	
February 17	2 questions due on Moodle
February 18	TBD
February 19	Research proposals due Reflection paper 3 due

Week 4: Visiting Guest: Tiffany N. Florvil, Associate Professor, History, University of New Mexico

February 23	Meeting Day
February 24	2 questions due on Moodle
February 25	Tiffany N. Florvil, <i>Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement</i> (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020), pp. 25-52; 104-130 “Documents,” Audre Lorde: <i>Dream of Europe. Selected Seminars and Interviews, 1984-1992</i> , edited by Mayra A. Rodríguez Castro (Chicago: Kenning Editions, 2020), pp. 265-272
February 26	Reflection paper 4 due

Week 5: Visiting Guest: Miliann Kang, Associate Professor, WGSS, UMass Amherst

March 2	
March 3	2 questions due on Moodle
March 4	Miliann Kang, “Reproducing Asian American Studies: Rethinking Asian Exclusion as Reproductive Exclusion,” <i>Amerasia Journal</i> (2020): 1-12 Miliann Kang, “Up in the Air: Circuits of Transnational Asian and Asian American Mothering,” in <i>Gendering the Trans-Pacific World: Diaspora, Empire and Race</i> , edited by Catherine Ceniza Choy and Judy Wu (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 246-253.
March 5	Annotated Bibliography due Reflection paper 5 due

Week 6: Visiting Guest: Laura Briggs, Professor, WGSS, UMass Amherst

March 9	Meeting Day
March 10	2 questions due on Moodle
March 11	<p>Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis, Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, J. T. Way, <i>American Quarterly</i>, Volume 60, Number 3, September 2008, pp. 625-648</p> <p>Laura Briggs, "Feminism and transnational adoption: Poverty, precarity, and the politics of raising (other people's?) children," <i>Feminist Theory</i> 13.1 (April 2012): 81-100.</p>
March 12	Reflection paper 6 due

Week 7: Visiting Guest: Svati Shah, Associate Professor, WGSS, UMass Amherst

March 16	<p>Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, "Transnational Feminist Cultural Studies: Beyond the Marxism/Poststructuralism/Feminism Divides," in <i>Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State</i>, edited by Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 349-363</p> <p>Svati Shah, "Queering the Indian City: Urbanism in the Era of Transnational LGBT Rights," <i>Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography</i> 47.3 (2015): 635-651.</p>
March 17	2 questions due on Moodle
March 18	No class!
March 19	Reflection paper 7 due

Week 8: (just me!)

March 23	
March 24	2 questions due on Moodle
March 25	<p>Me, the limits of transnationalism</p> <p>Leila Rupp, <i>Worlds of Women: The Making of An International Women's Movement</i> (Princeton University Press, 1997), Preface, Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Five, Chapter Nine</p>

	Megan Threlkeld, "Twenty years of <i>Worlds of Women</i> : Leila Rupp's impact on the history of U.S. women's internationalism," <i>History Compass</i> (2017): 1-13.
March 26	Reflection paper 8 due Outlines due

Week 9: Visiting Guest, Joy Hayward-Jansen, PhD Candidate, English, UMass Amherst

March 30	Meeting Day
March 31	2 questions due on Moodle
April 1	Joy Hayward-Jansen, "White Trash and the Queer South: Doing Sex Badly in Dorothy Allison's <i>Bastard Out of Carolina</i> " Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 243-261.
April 2	Reflection paper 9 due

Week 10: Visiting Guest, Associate Professor Asha Nadkarni, English, UMass Amherst

April 6	
April 7	2 questions due on Moodle
April 8: Please read:	Crystal Parikh, "Transnational Feminism," in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature</i> , ed. Yogita Goyal (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2017): 221-236. Asha Nadkarni, "Outsourcing, Terror, and Transnational South Asia," in <i>Flashpoints for Asian American Studies</i> , edited by Cathy J. Schlund-Vials (Fordham University Press, 2017), pp. 115-131
April 9	Reflection paper 10 due

Week 11: Visiting Guest: Adeline Broussan, PhD Candidate, History, UMass Amherst

April 13	Meeting Day
April 14	2 questions due on Moodle
April 15 Please read:	Adeline Broussan, "Resisting the French Colonial Consensus: Vietnamese and French Women in Solidarity Against Imperialism (1945-1954)"

	Judy Wu, "Introduction," <i>Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era</i> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 1-12
April 16	Reflection paper 11 due Preliminary drafts due Friday, April 16th at 11:59pm

Week 12: Visiting Guest: Rebecca Dingo, Associate Professor, English, UMass Amherst

April 20	
April 21	2 questions due on Moodle
April 22: Please read:	Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal, "Transnational Feminist Cultural Studies: Beyond the Marxism/Poststructuralism/Feminism Divides," in <i>Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State</i> , edited by Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 349-363 Rebecca Dingo, <i>Networking Arguments: Rhetoric, Transnational Feminism, and Public Policy Writing</i> (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), pp. 1-27
April 23	Reflection paper 12 due

Week 13:

April 27	Meeting Day
April 28	Two questions due on Moodle
April 29	Class presentations
April 30	Reflection paper 13 due End of Program Report due (for Graduating Seniors)

*****NO MEETING ON MAY 4: FINAL PAPERS DUE, Summative Reflections due*****