

**WGSS 297: Introduction to Transgender Studies  
Fall 2017**

Class Meetings: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:00-5:15 PM  
W101 South College

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**Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the epistemologies and analyses of the field of transgender studies. We will investigate the following questions. How do processes of knowledge-production and regimes of gender, racism, colonization, ableism, empire, medical and legal regulation, and social interaction work to simultaneously produce, police, and erase trans and gender nonconforming bodies? How do cultural assumptions of sex as fixed and binary shape interpretive frames and thus policies, institutions, administrative systems and social practices that trans people must negotiate? How do trans and gender nonconforming people resist normatization, misrepresentation, and erasure? Through active engagement, we will build a critical analytical framework around contemporary trans politics and theory.

**~ A Note ~**

We will cover some very intense topics in this class (e.g. medical abuse, sexual violence, hate violence, racism, genocide). Regardless of your personal experience, the material may bring up emotions. Please examine this syllabus and honestly assess your own comfort with the topics listed herein. If you are concerned about much of the material, you might consider taking a different class. The self-care resources I have listed in this syllabus might be useful for you and your friends.

**Course Learning Objectives**

In this course, each student will:

1. Develop a nuanced understanding of gender and power
2. Become familiar with injustice and politics particular to gender diversity
3. Examine how race, ethnicity, nation and context shape the lives of gender minorities
4. Understand gender minorities' various modes of resistance
5. Develop critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills
6. Communicate analyses clearly through writing and speaking

## Course Grade Components

**Contribution to Class Discussion.** Come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, attend the entire class period, and speak regularly in class. I will evaluate your level of effort and engagement when assigning a discussion contribution grade. (10%)

**Moodle Forum Posts: Reading Reflections and Discussion Questions.** Students will post reflections and pose discussion questions in response to the following day's assigned reading on Moodle by 10 pm the night before each class. The goal of these posts is not simply for you to summarize key ideas from the readings. Rather, I want you to use these questions/reflections as an opportunity to share *what you think* about what you've read. What strikes you in this reading? From whose perspectives are the articles written? What's troubling, confusing, or problematic? If there's a topic that you find really interesting and you want to do more research, share what you learn with the group. Share in your posts how the things we are learning in Transgender Studies relate to your particular interests, major, or focus of study. As the course progresses, your posts will be a good place to work through ideas related to the research for your final paper. Consider how the readings pertain to your paper topic. What is explained well in the reading and what needs more information? Are there things missing completely or perspectives that are absent in what you read? Did our discussion bring to mind more questions or make you re-think what you are researching for your final paper? Your questions and reflections will help you prepare for our in-class discussions, and will provide ideas and text for your final research paper. There are 18 forum posts total; each post should be at least one paragraph. I will drop the two lowest grades. (20%)

**Student Teaching Day.** Students will teach a lesson on a topic in Transgender Studies. This will involve both presenting a lecture on a topic you have researched and facilitating active student participation, through a class activity and/or discussion. Students will apply course concepts and analytical frameworks and generate critical questions to engage peers. This assignment is meant to accompany your research project, so that you can teach a lesson based on the research you are already immersed in. (10%)

**Final Research Paper.** Instead of midterms and a final exam, we will work collaboratively to write a Transgender Studies "textbook." With your input, you will be assigned a Transgender Studies approach or area of research and you will write a research paper (~15 pages plus references) as an overview of the academic literature on your topic. Your research paper will take the form of a textbook chapter that introduces students to your Transgender Studies topic in an interesting and engaging way. (45%)

**Peer Reviews of Two Classmates' Final Papers.** An important part of the chapter-crafting process is that you will read and comment on each other's work. Students will review two peers' final papers, to help each other improve your chapters. (15%)

**Why create a textbook instead of taking exams?** One thing you will learn over the course of this semester is that disciplines (and interdisciplines) are always changing and evolving as they incorporate new ideas, research, and knowledge. Transgender Studies is an emerging field, which has, even in its short life, already grown and expanded in interesting ways. While a great deal of new research has been published in the past several years, a Transgender Studies textbook has not yet been written. To demonstrate your learning in this course, I want you to consider what the first Transgender Studies textbook should look like. How should Transgender Studies concepts and perspectives be taught to the next generation? What are the best examples of research theorizing trans lives? How does Transgender Studies help us understand the complex problems faced by individuals in different locations?

**What's due when?** We will begin working on your research projects halfway through the semester. Early in the semester (**Week 3, Sept. 21**) we will discuss in detail the expectations for your final research paper. In **Week 7 (Oct. 19)** we will have an **in-class workshop in which you will discuss and consider ideas for your research topic**. A paragraph proposing your research topic with a summary of your topic, key texts, and main concepts that will be highlighted is due in **Week 8 (Oct. 26)**. In **Week 10 (Nov. 7)** you will **submit an outline of your research paper**, including a list of Transgender Studies concepts, definitions, and approaches that are the focus of your paper, and details of the texts and/or examples/case studies that you will highlight in your paper. A full draft of your research paper will be due in **Week 11 (Nov. 16)**. In **Weeks 11 and 12 (Nov. 16 and 28)** we will work together in and outside class to provide feedback on each other's chapters. On **Nov. 28** we will also have an in-class workshop that will help prepare you to teach your lesson on your research topic. **Nov. 30** peer reviewers will return their reviews to authors and myself. In **Weeks 12 and 13 (Nov. 30; Dec. 5 and 7)** you will teach your lessons. Your **final research paper** will be **due Friday, Dec. 15**.

## Materials

All course materials will be available on the course Moodle page. Readings are in the Course Reader.

## Resources

**Each Other:** Write down contact information of two classmates. These will be your go-to contacts for this class. If you miss class, contact them (not me) to find out what you missed:

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**Your Instructor:** Direct contact with the instructor is an important part of students' learning. Do attend my office hours at least once this semester.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities: Welcome! It is my effort to move beyond compliance to create a welcoming space for all abilities and learning styles. If you need accommodations due to a disability, please talk to me, and contact Disability Services at **413-545-0892** (Voice/TTY) or [ds@educ.umass.edu](mailto:ds@educ.umass.edu) or 161 Whitmore within the first two weeks of class. All information and documentation of the disability will be confidential.

**The Writing Center:** <http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/index.html>  
[writingcenter@acad.umass.edu](mailto:writingcenter@acad.umass.edu) or 413-577-1293.

**OIT:** For technical problems with Moodle, call OIT at 545-9400 or go to <http://www.oit.umass.edu/support/moodle/a-quick-tour-moodle-students>.

### ***On-Campus Self-Care Resources:***

- **The Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)**  
413-545-2337 or <http://umass.edu/counseling>
- **Trans and Gender Nonconforming Support Group**  
This group is facilitated by a trans-identified therapist. For more information, contact Genny Beemyn, director of the Stonewall Center: [genny@umass.edu](mailto:genny@umass.edu) or (413) 545-4826.
- **UHS Diversity Patient Advocate, Cindy Hildebrand, R.N.**  
For trans students who experience discrimination or run into difficulties with campus healthcare. She can be reached at [cdugan@uhs.umass.edu](mailto:cdugan@uhs.umass.edu) or (413) 577-5040.

## Expectations and Policies

**Conduct:** Be on time. Listen to your classmates. Maintain a respectful atmosphere. Communicate professionally, including in email correspondence. Do not pack up early or leave class early. In addition to my expectations, we will collaboratively create course discussion guidelines and conduct agreements, which I will post on Moodle.

**Electronic Devices:** You may not use cell phones during class; they are to be silenced and put away. You may not use any electronic devices in class, *unless I invite you to do so*.

**Communication:** All communication from you to me must be **in person**, either before or after class, in office hours, or by appointment. If you have a question, first consult the syllabus and/or a classmate before asking me. I will send out announcements and reminders via Moodle. You are responsible for reading all emails in entirety. If you have a concern, we'll set up a meeting to discuss it.

**Email Etiquette:** Please compose your emails to me using formal letter-writing conventions. Use professional language in your correspondence, including a salutation.

### **Grading Scale:**

Highest	Lowest	Letter
100.00 %	93.00 %	A
92.99 %	90.00 %	A-
89.99 %	87.00 %	B+
86.99 %	83.00 %	B
82.99 %	80.00 %	B-
79.99 %	77.00 %	C+
76.99 %	73.00 %	C
72.99 %	70.00 %	C-
69.99 %	67.00 %	D+
66.99 %	60.00 %	D
59.99 %	0.00 %	F

**Grade Concerns:** If you would like to discuss a grade, I ask that you wait at least 24 hours before making an inquiry. We can meet in office hours or we can make an appointment. You have one week to inquire about a grade. I do not discuss grades via email.

**Late Policy:** All written work must be submitted **on time**. I do not accept assignments late, except for in extenuating circumstances. If you have extenuating circumstances, contact me as soon as possible in advance of the due date, if possible.

**Academic Honesty:** 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. For the University's Academic Honesty Policy, please see: [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

## Semester Calendar

### Unit 1: Transgender Studies: Origin Stories and Contexts

- Tue, Sep 5: Introductions.  
What is Transgender Studies? Why a Textbook for your final research papers?  
Discussion and collective creation of Course Conduct Agreements
- Thur, Sep 7: NO CLASS MEETING  
Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies"  
**Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Intentions and Goals Statement**
- Mon, Sep 11: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the two Stryker readings**
- Tue, Sep 12: Stryker, "An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts"
- Wed, Sep 13: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Rawson reading**
- Thur, Sep 14: Rawson, "Introduction: An Inevitably Political Craft"
- Mon, Sep 18: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Stone reading**
- Tues, Sep 19: Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto"
- Wed, Sep 20: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Serano reading**
- Thurs, Sep 21: Serano, "Trans Woman Manifesto"  
Research Project Workshop: Review of materials to identify textbook structure and research topics  
**Bring your computers, textbooks, and trans studies articles to class**

### Unit 2: The Production and Policing of "Problem Bodies" & "Problem Bodies" Resistance

- Mon, Sep 25: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Sears reading**
- Tues, Sep 26: Sears, "Electric Brilliancy: Cross-dressing Law and Freak Show Displays in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco"
- Wed, Sep 27: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the McDonald reading**
- Thurs, Sep 28: McDonald, "'Go Beyond Our Natural Selves': The Prison Letters of CeCe McDonald"
- Mon, Oct 2: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Chase reading**
- Tues, Oct 3: Chase, "Hermaphrodites With Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism"

- Wed, Oct 4: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Clare reading**
- Thurs, Oct 5: Clare, "Body Shame, Body Pride: Lessons From the Disability Rights Movement"
- Tues, Oct 10: NO CLASS, MONDAY SCHEDULE
- Wed, Oct 11: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Nordmarken reading**
- Thurs, Oct 12: Nordmarken, "Becoming Ever More Monstrous: Feeling Transgender In-Betweenness"

### **Unit 3: Political Economy**

- Mon, Oct 16: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Irving reading**
- Tues, Oct 17: Irving, "Normalized Transgressions: Legitimizing the Transsexual Body as Productive"
- Wed, Oct 18: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Irving et al. reading**
- Thurs, Oct 19: Irving et al., "Trans\* Political Economy Deconstructed: A Roundtable Discussion" (mid semester date)  
 Research Paper Workshop (first half of class – choose a topic!).  
**Due next Thurs: Paragraph proposing your research topic**

### **Unit 4: Violence, Meaning, and Memorialization**

- Mon, Oct 23: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Miranda reading**
- Tues, Oct 24: Miranda, "Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California"  
*Extra Credit:*  
 Willy Wilkinson: Intersectional Resistance and Resilience: Strategies for Survival  
 6:00 PM Cape Cod Lounge
- Wed, Oct 25: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Bettcher reading**
- Thurs, Oct 26: Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make Believers: On Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion"  
**Due Today in Class: Paragraph proposing your research topic with a summary of your approach, key texts you will draw on, and list of key concept(s) to highlight.**
- Mon, Oct 30: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Lamble reading**
- Tues, Oct 31: Lamble, "Retelling Racialized Violence, Remaking White Innocence: The Politics of Interlocking Oppressions in Transgender Day of Remembrance"

## Unit 5: Power and Struggle Across World Contexts

- Wed, Nov 1: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Jarrín reading**
- Thurs, Nov 2: Jarrín, "Untranslatable Subjects: Travesti Access to Public Health Care in Brazil"
- Mon, Nov 6: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Kirey-Sitnikova reading**
- Tues, Nov 7: Kirey-Sitnikova, "The Emergence of Transfeminism in Russia: Opposition from Cisnormative Feminists and Trans\* People"  
Research Paper Workshop.  
**Due Today: Outline of your research paper, showing how you will organize the chapter and key concepts.**
- Wed, Nov 8: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Silva Santana reading**
- Thurs, Nov 9: Silva Santana, "Transitionings and Returnings: Experiments with the Poetics of Transatlantic Water"
- Mon, Nov 13: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Forum post for the Roy reading**
- Tues, Nov 14: Roy, "Translating *Hijra* into Transgender Performance and Pehchān in India's Trans-*Hijra* Communities"
- Thurs, Nov 16: Research/Writing Workshop: Reviewing each other's chapters  
**Due in Class (2 copies): Complete draft of your research paper with bibliography.**
- Tues, Nov 21: NO CLASS, FALL RECESS
- Thurs, Nov 23: NO CLASS, FALL RECESS
- Tues, Nov 28: Read two chapter drafts and complete peer review for Thursday Teaching Workshop
- Thurs, Nov 30: Student Teaching Day  
**Due on Moodle and in Class (hard copies): Peer Reviews**
- Tues, Dec 5: Student Teaching Day
- Thurs, Dec 7: Student Teaching Day
- Tues, Dec 12: Conclusions.  
Reflecting back on what we've learned, looking to the future. We will collaboratively outline the introduction to our Textbook. How do we define Transgender Studies? What key points do people need to know about Transgender Studies? How do we envision the future?  
**Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Self Evaluation**
- Friday, Dec 15: **Due on Moodle by 10 PM: Final Research Paper/Textbook Chapter**