

# TRANSGENDER STUDIES: COURSE LISTINGS AND SAMPLE READING LIST

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December 19, 2016

*Transgender Studies & the Humanities*  
Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies  
Franklin Humanities Institute  
Duke University

*Jeremy Gottlieb (Duke '18) conducted Internet research on courses in Transgender Studies at a selection of American and Canadian universities. The following is his resulting compilation. Note: Schools are not listed in order. A sample reading list from one syllabus follows the courses list.*

*This report is part of a project on Transgender Studies & The Humanities housed in the Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies Program (GSF) at Duke University and funded by the Franklin Humanities Institute's Humanities Futures initiative.*

## COURSE LISTINGS IN TRANSGENDER STUDIES

### 1. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

#### a. GWS 470 Transgender Studies

What are the issues and politics related to transgender and transsexual identities? Students will examine and critically evaluate historical and contemporary debates that contest normative male/female binaries and traditional categorizations of sexuality. The course moves beyond these initial inquiries into gender theory to consider the effects of institutional discourses produced through stage and civil society. Taught with particular attention given to questions of race, national formations, medical, and legal discourses. Areas of inquiry may include gender theory, transnational identities, gendered and racial performances, medical and psychological diagnoses, violence, the law, and the Prison Industrial Complex. Through these topics, students will be asked to consider important questions over political and legal representation, autonomy, the rights of citizenship, and the practice of everyday life.

### 2. Yale University

#### a. U.S. Lesbian and Gay History WGSS 200 01/HIST127/AMST135 ~ George Chauncey

Introduction to the social, cultural, and political history of lesbians, gay men, and other socially constituted sexual minorities. Focus on understanding categories of sexuality in relation to shifting normative regimes, primarily in the twentieth century. The emergence of homosexuality and heterosexuality as categories of experience and identity; the changing relationship between homosexuality and transgenderism; the development of diverse lesbian and gay subcultures and their representation in popular culture; religion and sexual science; generational change and everyday life; AIDS; and gay, antigay, feminist, and queer movements.

#### b. Sexual Politics, 1960s to the Present WGSS 297 01/ENGL292 ~ Margaret Homans Spring Historical survey of works of fiction, poetry, drama, and creative nonfiction that have shaped and responded to feminist, queer, and transgender thought since the start of second-wave feminism. Authors include Wittig, Rich, Broumas, Brown, Russ, Walker, Lorde, Morrison, Kingston, Atwood, Cisneros, Bechdel, and Rankine.

#### c. *Gender and Transgender* WGSS 306 01/AMST314 ~ Greta LaFleur Introduction to transgender studies, an emergent field that draws on gender studies, queer theory, sociology, feminist science studies, literary studies, and history. Representations of gender nonconformity in a cultural context dominated by a two-sex model of human gender differentiation. Sources include novels, autobiographies, films, and philosophy and criticism.

- d. *Transgender Cultural Production* WGSS 324 01 (21192) ~ T.L. Cowan  
MW 2.30-3.45 Spring  
Introduction to Trans- Studies, with focus on transfeminist cultural production in the United States and Canada. Exploration of key theoretical texts; activist histories and archives; and wide range of expressive cultures, including film and video, performance, spoken word, memoir, blogging, and other new media.

### 3. The University of Arizona

- a. GWS 496T; Queer, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Histories of North America; Susan Stryker; Tu, 5:00pm-7:30pm; Chavez, Rm 306
- b. GWS 300; Trans and Genderqueer Literature; TC Tolbert
- c. ANTH 696: Sex, Gender, Science, Medicine (includes Trans Studies content); Prof. Eric Plemons

### 4. Cornell - None found.

### 5. Syracuse

- a. WGS 438 / QSX 438 – Trans Genders and Sexualities  
Examines normative and non-normative genders/sexualities. Focuses on embodiment, desire, and identity. Examines relation between individual and collective subjectivities and politics. Foregrounds transnational and decolonial challenges to categories such as man/woman, lesbian/gay, straight/queer, transgender, transsexual.

### 6. University of Maryland

- a. LGBT 398C Special Topics in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies: Queer and Trans Collaborations (Prerequisite: Junior standing; LGBT 200 or permission of the program.)  
An interdisciplinary investigation of queer social theory, with particular attention to discussions of assimilationist and radical politics within queer and trans communities. Topics explored include same-sex marriage, capitalism, and consumerism. Focus on students' participation as informed, conscientious, and responsible citizens in the struggle for social justice for all. This course fills the upper division personal, social, political, or historical requirement for the LGBT Studies Certificate or Minor.
- b. LGBT 459A: Special Topics in Sexuality and Literature: Trans Literature (Prerequisite: two lower-level English courses, at least one in literature.)  
For the purposes of this course, the term "trans literature" will describe literary and cinematic representations of a broad range of gender variance and ambiguity, from gender queerness and transitivity to hormonally and surgically defined transsexualism. Our study of novels, memoirs, autobiographies, and film will be supplemented by theoretical

interventions by Judith Halberstam, Jay Prosser, Sandy Stone, Susan Stryker, and others who have recently brought trans issues to the forefront of LGBT and queer studies. Throughout, we will be interested in questions of embodiment; the role of medical and legal authorities in the construction of trans identities and of trans subjects challenging those constructions; issues of safety, risk, visibility, and passing; debates about whether the “proper” ending of trans stories is a sense of being “at home” in a male or female body or of being “in-between” genders. We will also give careful consideration to the ethics of producing and consuming trans stories. Work for the course will include response papers, a group oral presentation, a 12-15 page essay, and a final exam. This course fills the upper division literature, art, or culture requirement for the LGBT Studies Certificate or Minor.

**7. Kent State -- None found**

**8. City College of San Francisco**

- a. LGBT 18. Transgender Lives, Culture and Art (3) Lec-52.5  
Focuses on Transgender and ‘gender variant’ figures throughout the world who, historically, held a sacred place within ancient cultures as evidenced in art and literature. The course will then move to explore modern and contemporary views of Transgender and ‘gender variant’ people within various cultures including LGBT politics, art and culture. UC/CSU
- b. *Offered on occasion* HLTH 95. Transgender Health: Working with Clients and Communities (1) Lec-17.5  
A critical analysis of the health status of transgender people. The course will provide knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to work effectively in health and social service settings that serve transgender clients and communities. CSU
- c. IDST 80G. Diversity and Social Justice: Transphobia (0.5) Lec-9  
A consciousness raising analysis and evaluation of transphobia and gender oppression on individual, institutional, and cultural levels in the United States. Expanding one’s knowledge about transphobia and gender diversity, increasing personal awareness of one’s own socialization and assumptions, and the application of this knowledge and awareness for individual and social change are emphasized. CSU

**9. UCLA**

- a. Trans-gressing the Law: The Transgender Challenge to Sex Laws M98T / Same as Law 98T. Danielle Brown
- b. Introduction to Transsexual Histories  
Marcus Desmond Harmon

- c. *Invisible Bodies: Agency, Voice, and Erasure in the Records of Trans and Gender Variant Persons*
- d. *Queer/Trans of Color Genealogies*
- e. *Transsexual Histories*
- f. *Introduction to Trans Studies*. Talia Bettcher
- g. *Intersexuality, Transexuality, and the Emergence of “Gender”*  
Noa Ben-Asher
- h. *Race, Class, Ability, and Transgender Rights*. Dean Spade
- i. *Transgender Voices: Global and Local Perspectives on Transgender History and Culture*. Muriel Vernon
- j. *Hermaphrodites, Homosexuals, and Transsexuals: The Medical Manipulation of Sex*. Vernon Rosario
- k. *An Intensive Introduction to Transgender Studies*. Jacob Hale
- l. *Anthropology of Gender Variance Across Cultures: From Third Gender to Transgender*. Muriel Vernon

**10. University of Michigan** - No evident transgender studies courses online.

**11. Duke University**

- a. *Introduction to Transgender studies*  
As celebratory popular culture representations of transgender embodiment and subjectivity become more commonplace—from Caitlyn Jenner’s widely publicized transition to the advent of new TV series such as *Transparent*—how have our understandings of “sex” and “gender” shifted over the past twenty years? In light of recent legislation in North Carolina, “House Bill 2,” (HB2) that generates conditions of extreme bodily precarity under which trans people must live and operate in Durham and in North Carolina at large, what sorts of complex negotiations of public in/visibility do trans people in our communities undertake daily in order to access public spaces? How do the tensions between legal and popular culture representations of trans subjects produce particular notions of “the social?” What sorts of representational strategies do trans-identifying subjects enact in order to produce narratives of self, belonging and community? In this introductory course to the rapidly evolving field of Transgender Studies, we will grapple with questions such as these. Readings will include feminist, queer, trans studies scholarship, critical theory, fiction and autobiography. Using these readings as critical frameworks, we will analyze popular media, manifestos, blogs, TV shows and legislation such as HB2 and its impact upon our local communities. Final project options include original research paper, creative product or service learning engagement.
- b. *Constructing Transgender Identities*. (Instructor: Shuster)

## 12. University of Wisconsin

### a. Gen&WS 342 Transgender Studies

Transgender Studies teaches students fluency with basic terms, concepts, and methodologies within the interdisciplinary field of Transgender Studies. Content includes transnational and cultural considerations; contemporary transgender issues in medicine, law, and education; cultural production, art and activism; transgender, feminist, and queer theories.

### b. Gen&WS 343 Queer Bodies

This course centralizes the intersection of LGBTQ identities and dis/ability through various queer bodies which are also inflected by race, class, geographical and national locations. Approaches may include critical theory about queer bodies and personal narratives. Students will learn a variety of ways to think critically and creatively about the politics of bodily experience, including how those politics have shaped their own embodied lives.

### c. GEN&WS 346: *Trans/Gender in Historical Perspective*

Throughout recorded history, humans have conceptualized categories of sex and gender in a variety of ways; some have elaborated just two main sex/genders, others have elaborated more than two categories. At the same time, regardless of how a given culture has defined sex and gender and the behaviors and appearances deemed appropriate, humans have always exceeded those definitions. Quite simply, the determination of male and female and any other sex or gender category is neither obvious nor simple: what is sex, what is gender? Do they reside in the body, behavior, psyche, clothing, or social processes such as racialization? To make matters still more complicated, cultural beliefs about sex/gender have changed across time. How have contacts across cultures through migration and colonization affected people's understanding of sex/gender possibilities and norms? This course focuses on sex/gender crossing and variation in historical contexts including Japan, South Africa, Europe, the African diaspora, and North America. We will consider perspectives of people who themselves passed, crossed, transitioned, transed, or otherwise exceeded their culture's definitions of normative sex/gender. Alongside, we will consider the ways that dominant social institutions reinforced norms, recognized, tolerated, punished and/or celebrated gender variation. We will examine popular culture, medical and legal perspectives, memoir, queer and trans theory, and social movement treatises.

## 13. Bryn Mawr --- No courses listed on the internet.

#### 14. University of British Columbia (Vancouver)

a. CSIS 301: Intro to Trans\* Studies.

In a field characterized by rich debate and productive intellectual work, scholars and activists have engaged in major interventions to prevailing assumptions, popular and academic understandings of gender identities and gender normativities. But their contributions have had a broader impact that bring an intersectional lens to bear on issues involving, but not restricted to gender alone. As such, in this course we will examine a wide range of diverse trans experiences, practices, meanings, beliefs, and situations in time and space; and we will look at how they articulate with other analytical categories, such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, age, art, labour, history, geopolitics, nationality and the media.

We will ask how, and under which circumstances, these trans\* realities become visible and/or invisible, recognizable and/or incomprehensible, livable and/or not viable. We will investigate the ways in which an analytical trans\* lens allows us to interrogate and challenge certain hegemonic norms while others remain re-inscribed.

#### 15. University of Victoria

a. SOCI 520: Selected Topics in Contemporary Sociology: Trans Activism  
Instructor: Dr. Aaron Devor

Course Description: In recent years, there are stories about trans and gender nonconforming (GNC) people in the media almost every day, and trans and GNC people are increasingly becoming accepted in all areas of society. Although it may seem as though trans and GNC people have just spontaneously come into the spotlight, trans and GNC activists have been working for trans and GNC recognition and rights for many decades. In this course we will look at some of the work that has been done by trans and GNC activists over the past 50 years. Among other sources, we will make use of the world's largest collection of original records of trans/GNC activism held in the Transgender Archives at the University of Victoria.

b. Gender 334: Bodies out of Bounds GNDR 334

Critiques productions of the 'normal' body by introducing and critically analyzing bodies that defy, resist, challenge and, in the process, expose the 'normal' body as myth, as well as explores the disruptive potential of diverse bodies and various bodily practices.

#### 16. University of Southern California

a. Gender Studies 355: Transgender Studies.

Analysis of transgender behaviors, from androgyny and transvestism to transexuality. Discussion of changing laws, representations, medical standards, and social attitudes towards transgender and intersex people.

## 17. Wesleyan University

### a. AMST344: Transgender Theory

This seminar will consider theoretical, political, and social understandings of what has been broadly defined as "transgender" identities. We will begin by interrogating the concept of gender itself, probing the centrality of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and questioning modes of gender compulsoriness and inevitability. We will consider the relationship between the study of gender and scholarly disciplines including queer theory and feminist theory as well as American studies. The course will then focus more centrally on transnarratives of self and fights within queer and feminist communities over emerging trans articulations of personhood. Finally, the class will consider the diverse ways in which trans subjects struggle over the meaning(s) of trans narratives and the ways in which political rights and cultural legibility may be accessible or at times nonexistent for transpeople.

In understanding transgender theory as a scholarly field, this course will focus on the following questions: What does it mean to be transgender? How can we (or can we?) delineate different modes of trans being (e.g., transsexual identity, genderqueer, and so on) in a meaningful way? What does it mean to transform a central tenet of one's core self? Or, does the process of transgender existence consist more of a concretion of the real rather than a transformation of the self? How can trans narratives become legible to social and political articulations of personhood?

## 18. The College of New Jersey

- ### a. WGS 344/Transgender Studies.
- This course examines the interdisciplinary field of transgender studies. It provides an overview of major concepts, terms, and debates, as well as a cross-section of recent scholarly work and a snapshot of emerging trends, within this rapidly evolving field of study. One general focus of the course is to examine the ongoing development of the concept of transgender as it is situated across historical, social, cultural, legal, biomedical, and political contexts and discussions within the scholarly literature and beyond. Questions raised during the semester include: What is transgender studies and how does it differ from other forms of scholarship within gender and sexuality studies? In what complex ways is the concept of transgender "remapping" the relationship among biological sex, gender, and sexuality, as well as reconstituting the meanings of these categories? How does trans politics relate to feminist politics, to queer politics, and to anti-racist politics? Is the term transgender useful in describing non-Western embodiments? By way of a discussion of and critical engagement with a variety of texts, materials, and representations, the course provides students with an



opportunity to immerse themselves in transgender studies as they consider the complex ways the category of transgender describes a broad range of social identities, a global political movement, and a community that has become increasingly visible since the 1990s both within and beyond academia.

#### **19. Western University (London, Ontario)**

- a. WS 2274F Introduction to Transgender Studies. There have always been people who refuse the terms of sex and gender in the time and place in which they live. Today those people take on an array of complex and overlapping embodiments and identities: trans\*, transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, non-binary, and so on. Some of them lead lives that are unruly, and others ordinary. Regardless, all can be seen to both refuse and make use of a wide range of epistemologies, discourses, strategies of resistance and systems of power in their claims to knowledge, belonging, rights and resources. Now more than ever, trans is being storied in the public realm; thus it is an exciting time to think about trans life and what that might mean. This course will introduce students to the emerging interdisciplinary field of transgender studies, tracing its trajectory through vexing debates in feminist theory, queer theory, disability studies and trans of colour critique. A series of open questions will animate our discussions about trans as an identity, a politic, a movement, and a “form of life” (Sekuler, 2014). What is the relationship of transgender studies to women and gender studies broadly? How does transgender studies differ from the study of transgender people? How does trans studies reckon with, or fail to reckon with, non-normative embodiments and identities outside of a white settler North American context? And as a field now turning its attention to other crossings and transformations beyond gender, what is in store for trans politics? In the rapidly forming field of transgender studies, all these questions are, thankfully, contested. By engaging with a selection of theory, cultural production, politics and activism, we will use the occasion of this course to consider the political and intellectual contributions of this important field.
- b. WS 2264G GENDER IDENTITY AND THE LAW. Instructor: Nicole Nussbaum. This course will introduce students to basic Canadian legal concepts, structures, and procedures, and focus on issues relating to gender identity, gender expression, and the development of jurisprudence and legislation that addresses these issues. In particular, human rights and family law will be explored in their application to a variety of issues such as regulation of gender/sex designation, access to transition related medical care, employment, housing, policing and corrections, and custody and access. International approaches to these issues will also be referenced for comparison. The role of community advocacy in promoting

the rights of trans persons, as well as the goals, strategies, and successes of these advocacy efforts, both in Canada and internationally, will also be canvased. Finally, the struggle for trans rights will be considered in the context of feminist, civil rights, and queer rights movements.

## **20. Harvard University**

- a. Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality 1409: Transsexuality, Transgenderism, and the Rest. Half course.

Afsaneh Najmabadi

This course will cover narrative, anthropological, historical, scientific, and theoretical texts (including films) about transsexuality and transgenderism. The course will begin with transsexuality before and beyond identity politics and its transformation in the light/shadow of identity politics and theories of gender; it will consider these issues initially in a Euro-American context, but also move onto other socio-cultural formations and consider how trans-subjectivities as well as histories and politics of transsexuality and transgenderism have been formed transnationally. Note: Expected to be given in 2012–13. Please see syllabus for prerequisite reading. Permission of instructor required.

## SAMPLE READING LIST IN TRANSGENDER STUDIES

*From Wesleyan University, American Studies 344: Transgender Theory*

Julia Serrano, WHIPPING GIRL: A TRANSSEXUAL WOMAN ON SEXISM AND THE  
SCAPEGOATING OF FEMININITY

Dean Spade, NORMAL LIFE: ADMINISTRATIVE VIOLENCE, CRITICAL TRANS POLITICS,  
AND THE LIMITS OF THE LAW

Judith Butler, UNDOING GENDER

Susan Stryker, THE TRANSGENDER STUDIES READER

Riki Anne Wilchins, READ MY LIPS: SEXUAL SUBVERSION AND THE END OF GENDER

Judith Halberstam, "F2M: THE MAKING OF FEMALE MASCULINITY"

Jack Halberstam, FEMALE MASCULINITY

Jay Prosser, SECOND SKINS

Gayle Salamon, ASSUMING A BODY: TRANSGENDER AND RHETORICS OF  
MATERIALITY

Judith Butler, BODIES THAT MATTER: ON THE DISCURSIVE LIMITS OF SEX

Sandy Stone: "THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK: A POSTTRANSSEXUAL MANIFESTO"

Janice Raymond, THE TRANSSEXUAL EMPIRE: THE MAKING OF THE SHE-MALE

Shelia Cavanaugh, TOUCHING GENDER: ABJECTION AND THE HYGENIC IMAGINATION

Nikki Sullivan, TRANSMOGRIFICATION: (UN)BECOMING OTHER(S)

Talia Mae Bettcher, EVIL DECEIVERS AND MAKE-BELIEVERS: ON TRANSPHOBIC  
VIOLENCE AND THE POLITICS OF ILLUSION

Michelle O'Brien, TRACING THIS BODY: TRANSSEXUALITY, PHARMACEUTICALS, AND  
CAPITALISM

Ruthann Robson, REINSCRIBING NORMALITY: THE LAW AND POLITICS OF  
TRANSGENDER MARRIAGE

Riley Snorton & Jin Haritaworn, TRANS NECROPOLITICS: A TRANSNATIONAL  
REFLECTION ON VIOLENCE, DEATH, AND THE TRANS OF COLOR AFTERLIFE

Jessi Gan, "STILL AT THE BACK OF THE BUS": SYLVIA RIVERA'S STRUGGLE

Sima Shakhari, SHUTTLLING BETWEEN BODIES AND BORDERS: IRANIAN  
TRANSSEXUAL REFUGEES AND THE POLITICS OF RIGHTFUL KILLING

Richard Juang, TRANSGENDERING THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

### **Transgender Studies & the Humanities**

PIs: Gabriel Rosenberg & Ara Wilson

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