

WOS410: TRANSFEMINIST THEORY

OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, and concerns have become ever present in mainstream media and culture. As the visibility of transpeople increases, so too does the violence those in the community experience, and this is particularly acute for transwomen of color. Responses to transpeople are informed by the theoretical underpinning of how we understand gender, gender identity, gender expression, and the relationship of these to sexuality, race, disability, and other vectors of our identities. This course will explore the emergence of transfeminist theory as a field, as well as some of the key debates in the ongoing development of trans theory. Understanding systems of oppression are central to this academic pursuit, and focusing specifically on feminist iterations of trans theory will help focus and ground our research. Furthermore, students will apply theoretical frameworks about trans subjectivity to contemporary issues—to understand how these stories are being told, as well as to understand whose stories get told and whose don't.

GOALS/LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Identify and recognize transfeminist theories, terms, and concepts.
- Describe the links among systems of gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, ability, and ethnicity, and how they inform transfeminist theoretical frameworks.
- To distinguish between individual attitudes and institutionalized forms of discrimination and oppression facing trans* and gender expansive individuals and communities.
- To understand how seemingly “different” forms of domination interconnect.
- Apply your understanding of these theories to the lived experience of transpeople to explain how transfeminist theories can inform strategies for change and liberation within trans communities.

INCLUSIVITY AND DIFFERENCE

I am committed to making this space a welcoming place for anyone, regardless and because of race, sexuality, dis/ability, religion, gender, gender expression, class, as well as many other factors that shape who we are in the world. We will work collectively to make this classroom a safe space. This means that we will work on valuing a diversity of backgrounds and experiences and will recognize experiences that differ radically from our own are valuable. Creating a safe space does not mean it will always be comfortable: discomfort can often be the most productive place of learning. We will support each other, assume good intentions, and hold each other accountable as we attend to the voices of every person in this class.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

* Dean Spade, *Normal Life*, Duke University Press, 2015

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

* *The Transgender Studies Reader I*, Routledge, 2006

* *The Transgender Studies Reader II*, Routledge, 2013

We will be reading excerpts from both of these texts throughout the semester. We will, however, be reading significantly more from *The Transgender Studies Reader II*. All readings from both will be available on D2L.

RESEARCH & GRADING!!

PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM 100PTS:

Participation will count directly towards your grade. To participate, you must attend class. Attendance is expected. In this class there are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences. NOTE: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you are absent due to circumstances that are beyond your control, alternative due dates will be worked out with the instructor on an individual basis. *Professionalism* – you will lose up to 50pts if you are: consistently late to class, unprofessional in your communication with me, or inquire about aspects of the course that are covered in the syllabus.

WEEKLY RESPONSES 300PTS (12 RESPONSES DUE, 25PTS EACH):

These will be due every time we meet in class. This response is comprised of four parts: 1. Summarize the main point/argument from that day’s reading. 2. Find a particularly interesting or difficult quote from the reading and copy it into your response. Cite appropriately. 3. Comment on this quote – why did you choose it? What did you find interesting about this particular excerpt? 4. Ask a question about the content you’ve already presented. The questions you bring to class will guide our class discussion – be prepared to share your question with the class.

CRITICAL ESSAY 100PTS:

Pick a reading that seems particularly challenging or interesting to you and write a 4-5 page response, ending with 2-4 substantive questions. Part of this essay will also involve staking a claim in relationship to the argument(s) the author makes. Do you agree or disagree with the author, and why? Is it more complex than just agreeing or disagreeing? Cite at least one other reading (from the syllabus or otherwise) to support your work. This will be used in lieu of the weekly response on the day you submit the essay. You will sign up for one day of reading in the first week of class.

FOLLOW THE FOOTNOTES 100PTS:

This purpose of this exercise is to develop your skills in research, annotation, and theoretical genealogy. Your goal is to trace a thread of knowledge, from assigned course texts to the sources on which they rely, and annotate the texts with which you come into contact. This will highlight the social production of knowledge.

APPLYING THE THEORY ESSAY 400PTS:

This will be completed in several parts—

Step 1: Abstract & Working Title (25pts) DUE WEEK 3

Step 2: Annotated Bibliography 10 sources (50pts) DUE WEEK 6

Step 3: 5-7 pages written, with the rest outlined (50pts) DUE FRIDAY BEFORE SPRING BREAK

Step 4: Complete essay written (12-15 pages) (75pts) DUE WEEK 11

Step 5: Peer Review (50pts) WEEK 12

Step 6: Final, revised, polished essay (100pts) DUE WEEK 14

Step 7: Presentation (50pts) DUE WEEKS 14 & 15

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ADD UP TO A TOTAL OF 1000 POINTS:

A+ = 970-1000 ::: A = 930-969 ::: A- = 900-929

B+ = 870-899 ::: B = 830-869 ::: B- = 800-829

C+ = 770-799 ::: C = 730-769 ::: C- = 700-729

D+ = 670-699 ::: D = 630-669 ::: D- = 600-629

F= 0-599pts

YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO **EARN** UP TO 1000 POINTS OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEMESTER.

COURSE OUTLINE/TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: JANUARY 24TH

WHAT IS THEORY/THEORIZING TERMINOLOGY

Quinnae Moongazer, "Theory is Yours: A Brief Archaeology of Trans Feminist Awesome"
Jacob Hale, "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans ____."

Also see: <https://radicalcopyeditor.com/2017/08/31/transgender-style-guide/>

This guide is posted on D2L and I expect that you will reference it frequently this semester.

WEEK 2: JANUARY 31ST

EARLY FEMINIST THEORIZING 58

How do Raymond and Burkett justify the arguments they make? How are their arguments similar and how do they differ? How are transpeople responding? How do the responses differ? Do they all approach critiquing the anti-trans arguments in the same way?

Janice Raymond, "Sappho by Surgery: The Transsexual Constructed Lesbian Feminist" TGSRI

Carol Riddell, "Divided Sisterhood: A Critical Review of Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire*" TGSRI

Sandy Stone, "Empire Strikes Back"

Riki Wilchins, "The Menace Statement to Janice Raymond"

Sullivan, "A Transvestite Answers a Feminist" TSRI

Elinor Burkett, "What Makes a Woman" & Crayborck, "An Open Letter to Elinor Burkett"

WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 7TH

TRANS/GENDER, QUEER, & FEMINIST THEORY 47

Outline some of the debates: What are the authors concerned about? What seem to be the differences between feminist studies/theory and trans studies/theory? Do they have different objects of study? What are they? How might they overlap or complement one another?

9 Susan Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies" TGSRI (7-15 only)

14 Bobby Noble, Trans. Panic. Some Thoughts Toward a Theory of Feminist Fundamentalism"

4 Susan Stryker, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin"

20 Gayle Salamon, "Transfeminism and the Future of Gender"

WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 14TH

TRANSFEMINIST THEORIES 62

How do the authors understand the intersection of transness and feminism? How do they see them as necessarily connected? What concerns do they have, and how are those concerns connected to what we read last week?

9 Susan Stryker & Talia M. Bettcher, "Introduction: Trans/Feminisms"

9 Julia Serrano, "Trans Woman Manifesto" only pgs 11-20

16 Emi Koyama, "Transfeminist Manifesto"

9 Stephen Whittle, "Where Did We Go Wrong? Feminism and Trans Theory—Two Teams on the Same Side? TGSRI

10 Finn Enke, "The Education of Little Cis," TGSRII

WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 21ST

THEORIZING RECOGNITION 51

21 Cameron Awkward-Rich, "Trans, Feminism: Or, Reading like a Depressed Transsexual

7 Emi Koyama, "Whose Feminism is it Anyway?: The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate" TGSRI

- 14 Susan Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage"
9 Katrina Roen, "Transgender Theory and Embodiment: The Risk of Racial Marginalization" TGSR

WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 28TH

THEORIZING EMBODIMENT 58

- 13 Susan Stryker & Nikki Sullivan, "King's Member, Queen's Body: Transsexual Survery, Self-Demand Amputation and the Somatechnics of Sovereign Power"
16 Elizabeth Loeb, "Cutting It Off: Bodily Integrity, Identity Disorders, and the Sovereign Stakes of Corporeal Desire in U.S. Law" TGSR
9 Bobby Noble, "Our Bodies are Not Ourselves: Tranny Guys and the Racialized Class Politics of Embodiment of Incoherence" TGSRII
9 Lucas Cassidy Crawford, "Transgender Without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification" TGSRII
11 Nikki Sullivan, "Transmogrification (Un)Becoming Other(s)" TGSR

WEEK 7: MARCH 7TH

THEORIZING RACE & TRANSRACIALITY (IF THAT IS EVEN A THING) 56

- 15, Excerpts from *Is Everyone Really Equal*
11 Richard M. Juang, "Transgendering the Politics of Recognition" TGSRI
16 Cressida Heyes, "Changing Race, Changing Sex: The Ethics of Self-Transformation"
3 Jelani Cobb, "Black Like Her"
1 Meredith Talusan, "There is No Comparison Between Transgender People and Rachel Dolezal"
5 Kai M. Green, "'Race & Gender are Not the Same!' is Not a Good Response to the 'Transracial'/Transgender Question **OR** We Can and Must Do Better"
5 Angela Jones, "Rachel Delozal is Really Queer: Transracial Politics and Queer Futurity"

WEEK 8: MARCH 14TH ← SPRING BREAK

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: MARCH 21ST

THEORIZING REPRESENTATION 54

- 11 Talia Mae Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers: On Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion" TGSRII
9 Toby Beauchamp, "Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11" TGSR
10 Laura Horak, "Trans on YouTube: Intimacy, Visibility, and Temporality"
15 Julian Kevon Glover, "Redefining Realness?: On Janet Mock, Laverne Cox, TS Madison, and the Representation of Transgender Women of Color in Media"
8 Julia Serano, *Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and Heels* TGSR

WEEK 10: MARCH 28TH

THEORIZING MOVEMENT & MIGRATION 58

- 19 Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Verdicts of Science, Rulings of Faith: Transgender/Sexuality in Contemporary Iran"
19 Elizabeth Bucar & A. Finn Enke, "Unlikely Sex Change Capitals of the World: Trinidad, United States, and Tehran, Iran, as Twin Yardsticks of Homonormative Liberalism"
6 Daniel Brittany Chavez, "Transmasculine Insurgency: Masculinity and Dissidence in Feminist Movements in México"
13 Aren Aizura, "The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: 'Race,' Labor, and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics"

WEEK 11: APRIL 4TH

THEORIZING LABOR & CITIZENSHIP 52

Biopolitics and necropolitics intro 6

9 C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife" TGSRII

25 Dan Irving, "Normalized Transgressions: Legitimizing the Transsexual Body as Productive" TGSRII

12 Elijah Edelman, "'Walking While Transgender': Necropolitical Regulations of Trans Feminine Bodies of Colour in the Nation's Capital"

WEEK 12: APRIL 11TH

Free CeCe & Conversation with the Filmmaker

TO READ:

Captive Genders, Foreword and Intro – **with activities at end.**

Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee, and Dean Spade, "Building an Abolitionist Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We've Got"

WEEK 13: APRIL 18TH

THEORIZING COALITIONAL POLITICS

Ashley Mog, "Threads of Commonality in Transgender and Disability Studies"

Eli Clare, "Body Shame, Body Pride, Lessons from the Disability Rights Movement" TGSRII

Jim Newel, "The Anti-Trans Bathroom Nightmare Has Its Roots in Racial Segregation"

Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, & Welfare Queens"

WEEK 14: APRIL 25TH

THEORIZING A TRANS POLITIC

Dean Spade, *Normal life*, Intro, Ch1-3

Presentations: 2nd Half of Class

WEEK 15: MAY 2ND

THEORIZING A TRANS FUTURE

Normal Life, Ch4-5, Conclusion

Presentations: 2nd Half of Class

NAMES AND E-MAILS OF THREE CLASSMATES

While I am always available to talk about the course and questions you may have, I expect you to rely on your classmates when questions arise or if you need to miss class. Check in with them to catch up, share notes, etc. It is my hope that this classroom will also be a community where we not only challenge each other intellectually, but encourage and support each other as we move through the semester. With that in mind, please ask three of your classmates for their contact info.

1.

2.

3.

BUSINESS ITEMS

CLASSROOM CIVILITY

While the nature of the material covered in this course means we will discuss controversial materials, you do not have license to be insensitive. No bigotry will be tolerated in this class. That said, at some point in time, any one of us might offend someone else in the classroom. I would ask that you assume good intentions, but that does not mean we should not be held responsible for your words, regardless of intention. If you offend someone in a genuine effort to learn and grow, we have no problem. If, however, you are simply trying to offend or being blatantly insensitive, I will have to speak to you about your behavior. If that type of insensitive behavior continues, I will invoke the Student Code of Conduct on Classroom Behavior.

ACCOMMODATIONS & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

WCU is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Service for Students with Disabilities is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact OSSD to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are already registered with OSSD and have a current letter requesting accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible to review how your accommodations will be applied in our course. Remember, accommodations are your legal right! In the same vein as the University's commitment to equal educational access, I am dedicated to cultivating a classroom environment and exercising instruction that is as accessible as possible to all students. I invite you to discuss your unique learning needs with me, regardless of your documentation status with OSSD. If you have recognized religious observances or recognized university obligations or if unforeseen circumstances arise that conflict with course events or requirements you must let me know immediately, so that we can discuss and arrange a reasonable accommodation before the course is underway.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & MISCONDUCT

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The plagiarism policy for this course is that anyone who deliberately commits plagiarism will get an F for the course and will be reported. This includes submitting anything but ORIGINAL work. Instances of unintentional plagiarism will be handled on a case-by-case basis and can result in a reduced or failing grade for that assignment. For more information on the WCU plagiarism policy, please see their website. I recognize as cheating anything that is covered in the university policy on academic honesty.

EXCUSED ABSENCES POLICY FOR UNIVERSITY-SANCTIONED EVENTS

Students are advised to carefully read and comply with the excused absences policy for university-sanctioned events contained in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. In particular, please note that the "responsibility for meeting academic requirements rests with the student," that this policy does not excuse students from completing required academic work, and that professors can require a "fair alternative" to attendance on those days that students must be absent from class in order to participate in a University-Sanctioned Event.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

All students are encouraged to sign up for the University's free WCU ALERT service, which delivers official WCU emergency text messages directly to your cell phone. For more information and to sign up, visit www.wcupa.edu/wcualert. To report an emergency, call the Department of Public Safety at 610-436-3311.

EMAIL POLICY

It is expected that faculty, staff, and students activate and maintain regular access to University provided e-mail accounts. Official university communications, including those from your instructor, will be sent through your university e-mail account. You are responsible for accessing that mail to be sure to obtain official University communications. Failure to access will not exempt individuals from the responsibilities associated with this course.

A NOTE ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE

WCU Faculty, Staff, and Students believe in creating a community free from interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, partner violence, and stalking, in which all members feel safe and respected. I believe each student deserves a safe environment to pursue an education and I understand the devastating impact forms of power-based personal violence (i.e. sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking) may have. I am dedicated to make our campus safe. If you'd like to know more about Green Dot, our campus's bystander intervention program, please ask!

Please know that all faculty on campus are mandatory reporters. This means that if you disclose an experience of sexual misconduct to me outside of a classroom discussion, a writing assignment, or as part of a University-approved research project, I must report the experience to WCU's Title IX Coordinator, Lynn Klingensmith (lklingensmith@wcupa.edu). If you disclose sexual violence or any other abuse that occurred to you while you were a minor, or to someone else while they were a minor, I must report that, too. If you would like to co-report your experience in a way that feels comfortable for you, we can discuss that process. Filing a sexual misconduct report *does not mean* you will have to get involved with an investigation or go to court. Survivors under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not face disciplinary charges from WCU. Learn more at: [wcupa.edu/sexual misconduct](http://wcupa.edu/sexual-misconduct)

Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at the webpage for the Office of Social Equity at <http://www.wcupa.edu/admin/social.equity/>.

If you or someone you know has experienced stalking, partner violence or sexual assault, please know, you are not alone. You can find confidential resources at the following:

- **Sexual Misconduct Advocate:** Housed in the Office of Wellness Promotion, the Advocate is a confidential resource for those who have experienced sexual violence, harassment, intimate partner violence and stalking. *Sherry Mendez: 610-436-0732 | smendez@wcupa.edu Commonwealth Hall Room 12. Hours: Mon-Fri 8a.m.-3:30p.m.*
- **Counseling Center:** The Counseling Center offers free confidential individual and group counseling and support. *610-436-2301 | Commonwealth Hall—Lower Level to schedule an appointment. Hours: Monday through Friday 8a.m.-4:30 p.m.*
- **Student Health Services:** The Health Centers offers non-emergency medical care for injuries and follow-up appointments. *(610) 436-2509 | Commonwealth Hall—Lower Level. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 10a.m.-6p.m.*
- **Women's Center:** The Women's Center is a confidential resource offering assistance to survivors, friends, and family members of a recent or past assault. *(610) 436-2122 | Lawrence Room 220. Hours: 8:00-4:00pm.*
- **Crime and Victim's Center of Chester County:** 24-hour hotline for sexual assault and rape in Chester County: *610-692-RAPE (7273).*

MORE INFO

For questions regarding Academic Integrity, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to the Undergraduate Catalogue, the Ram's Eye View, and the University website at www.wcupa.edu.

REQUIREMENTS THIS COURSE FULFILLS

I. DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

This course fulfills the Diverse Communities (J) component of the WCU General Education curriculum. As a Diverse Communities course, this course meets an additional Gen. Ed. goal that will help students learn to

- Respond thoughtfully to diversity
- Examine assigned issues from a diverse communities perspective.
- Evaluate the ideological, historical, and cultural causes of structural inequality.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives of historically marginalized groups.
 - Diverse Communities goals achieved through Critical Essay, Daily Response Essays, Lectures, class discussion and activities, and Follow the Footnotes, and Final Essay.

II. WRITING EMPHASIS

This course also fulfills a requirement for the Writing Emphasis component of the WCU General Education curriculum. As such, this course aims to develop the student's writing abilities. Among these abilities is the crafting of prose that displays clarity, correctness, and grammatical grace. Students will be given opportunities to revise their writing with the benefit of feedback from the instructor and peers. I will also provide workshops and pointers on writing throughout the semester.

As a Writing Emphasis course, this course meets two Gen. Ed. goals that will help students:

- Communicate effectively
- Think critically and analytically
- Learn ways to revise and improve upon writing in both formal and non-formal settings
 - Writing goals achieved through the following: Follow the Footnotes, Critical Essay, as well as Final Essay

::: You can count this class for J & W :::

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES REQUIREMENTS

This course is taught as part of the Women's and Gender Studies program, and this course counts as an elective for both the major and minor in Women's & Gender Studies. As such, the course is intended to help you:

- *Identify women's and feminist activities and accomplishments -- especially those that have been conventionally neglected -- across a variety of cultures and historical contexts.*
 - Achieved through Lectures/Participation, Reading Summaries
- *Analyze how gender operates historically and in the present.*
 - Achieved through Lectures/Participation.
- *Apply feminist theories, including theories of intersectionality, to personal, local, and global contexts.*
 - Achieved through Reading Summaries, Critical Response, Final Essay, Lectures/Participation.
- *Locate, evaluate, and use relevant and appropriate information related to women's and gender studies.*
 - Achieved through Reading Summaries, Response Essays, Lectures/Presentations.