

Critical Identity Studies 140: Trans Studies/Trans Activism

Fall 2021

M/W 7:15-9pm

Classroom: Center for the Sciences room 249

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Herold (she/her)

Office Location: Morse-Ingersoll Hall room 218

Email: HeroldL@beloit.edu

Office Hours:

- In my office: Monday 4-5pm
- On Zoom: Tues 10-11am
- Or by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of transgender studies as it relates to history, politics, community, and activism. We will examine how the field of trans studies has emerged in dialogue with gender and sexuality studies, as well as how it stakes a claim for itself as a field and mode of analysis both separate from and integral to feminist and queer theory. Defining "transgender" broadly to include a range of experiences, identities, and embodiments, we will ground theoretical discussions in the everyday lives of trans and non-binary people, examining how race, class, gender, and sexuality shape positionality and proximity to violence, employment, healthcare, and community. Students will pay special attention to the ways trans studies and trans activism explore possibilities of resistance to interlocking structures of power, imagining new ways of being in everyday life, including their lives at Beloit.

Learning Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of the major debates, topics, and concepts in transgender studies
2. To explore gender as a category of analysis that intersects with sexuality, race, and class
3. To reflect on our own conceptions of trans issues and activism, forming opinions and arguments about these topics by drawing on perspectives from the class material

Assignments & Grading:

There are 100 possible points available in the course, allocated as follows:

Assignment	Possible Points	Due Dates
Office Hours meeting	5 points	--
Opening reflection	5 points	Monday, 8/30
Six (6) Reading Reports	5 points each, 30 points total	--
Midterm Assignment	15 points	Wednesday, 10/6**
Final exam (take home)	20 points	Monday, 12/6
Attendance	10 points	--
In class Participation	15 points	--

Office Hours Meeting: Recent research in higher education indicates that making connections with professors increases student academic success and sense of belonging. At the same time, lots of students don't necessarily feel comfortable walking into a professor's office during office hours or making an appointment. Therefore, in this class one (1) scheduled, 20-minute office hour visit (either in person or via Zoom) is a requirement for the course. I invite you to consider office hours as a space to support your learning and work throughout the semester. You might use office hours to discuss questions about the readings, consider ideas for an assignment, or talk through how to incorporate feedback for the next assignment. I look forward to the conversation!

Opening Reflection: This assignment will invite you to reflect on your knowledge of trans issues. Ideally, this opening reflection will serve as a record of your thinking when you begin this course. It will also help me prepare activities and assignments in the course. I will provide a handout with a number of questions and will instruct you to answer them in roughly 5-8 sentences each (about a paragraph). This is due Monday, 8/30 at the beginning of class.

Reading Reports: Throughout the semester, you will be required to turn in a one-page response commenting upon the readings of the class. These responses should demonstrate that you understand the main points of the readings and are able to relate them to class lectures, discussions, current events, and/or personal experience. Responses should reflect critically on the topic at hand; they may include questions provoked by the reading, connections made or tensions between the readings, confusion or disagreement with the author, etc. You are responsible for writing six (6) responses throughout the semester and you may choose which class dates to turn these in. They should be turned in at the beginning of class on the day we discuss the reading.

Midterm Assignment: For your midterm, your task is to find some type of piece (a news article, a think piece or public-facing essay, a political campaign, a TV show or film, etc.) that engages trans issues. Once you have found your object, select one of the readings that we have read so far that you can put into "conversation" with your piece. I will provide you with a handout that lists a number of questions for you to answer about your piece and the reading in one paragraph responses. This assignment is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, 10/6.

Final Exam: The final exam will ask you to articulate definitions and the significance of various key terms, to discuss and connect authors' positions, and to generate your own ideas about course material. It is a cumulative exam, covering material over the course of the semester. The final will be a take home exam due Monday, 12/6 by 11:59pm. I will provide you with more details about it in the weeks ahead.

Participation: Our class time will be based around conversation, so participation is an essential component of class. Participation includes verbal contributions *as well as* active and courteous listening. This does not mean you have to respond to every question or comment in class; however, the class will be most valuable to everyone if we takes risks in front of each other. You are expected to read the assigned articles and to consider them carefully prior to the beginning of class. It is helpful to take notes on readings as well as to formulate questions that can contribute to the class discussion. Please note that this is meant to be a respectful space where we engage

one another's thoughts: abusive and/or aggressive language and behavior are not welcome here and will not be tolerated.

Attendance: Attendance is essential for a robust and thoughtful class discussion and learning environment. For contact tracing purposes, I will be taking attendance every time we meet. With that said, illnesses and emergencies happen, and many of us celebrate religious holidays during the year that require us to be absent. **Please do not come to class if you feel sick!** Additionally, please let me know in advance if you foresee any upcoming absences for whatever reason. If you miss more than three (3) days of class, I will reach out to you to check in. Finally, please be courteous to your classmates and arrive to class on time. If you have a scheduling situation that makes it difficult to arrive on time, come speak to me about it.

Grading Scale:

Point Total:	Letter Grade Equivalent:
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
< 63	F

Class Policies:

Required Readings: All required readings, unless otherwise noted, can be found on our course Moodle site. You are required to complete the readings prior to the course meeting for which they are assigned and should come to class prepared to discuss their content. Please let me know if you have any issues accessing the readings.

Communication with instructor: If you have any questions, problems, or difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or during office hours. Contacting me as early as possible will allow me time to assist you more effectively, so don't wait until the last minute to ask for help. I will do my best to respond to any questions within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Technology: This classroom is technology-friendly. You may use laptops or tablets in class if these technologies aid their learning. All technology should be silenced in order to minimize classroom distractions. Please put away your cell phones, unless you are using them to access course material.

Late assignments: Late assignments will be excused only in the case of a health or family emergency. If you discuss any special circumstances for a late paper with me at least 48 hours in advance, I will be happy to grant you an extension. If you turn in a late paper without having talked to me first, your grade for the assignment will drop ½ letter grade for every day that it is late (e.g., an A paper become as A- one day late, then a B+ two days late).

About Names and Pronouns: Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. I will refer to all students according to the names and pronouns you prefer to be called and will support classmates in doing so as well.

Terminology: Please note that some readings may use terminology now considered outdated when referring to trans people. This terminology has evolved over time; in most cases, these words had particular meaning and were not considered offensive or incorrect at the time of writing. In class, I encourage you to use current terms (“transgender” instead of “transgendered”, “intersex” instead of “hermaphrodite”, “trans” as an adjective and not a noun) rather than those used in older readings, except when quoting directly from the text. You can find a glossary of trans terms on Moodle for your reference. If you have any questions about terminology, I am happy to help.

Statement about “Unprecedented Times,” Mental Health, and Basic Needs:

It has been an incredibly challenging past 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing and intersecting crises of racial injustice, police brutality, and white supremacy. I am aware that some of you may have lost loved ones or may yourself have had/still be recovering from Covid-19, and also aware that these times have often exacerbated physical and mental health concerns. Others of you may have lost jobs or have family members who have lost jobs and may be struggling financially as a result. Still others of you may be dealing with other challenges I haven’t listed here, but that still affect your daily life. These issues have increased barriers to education and classroom learning. If you find yourself struggling, I hope that you will feel comfortable letting me know so that I can support you. Counseling on campus is FREE for Beloit College students. You can call the Health and Wellness center at 608-363-2331 or visit the office on the second floor of the Powerhouse to make an appointment.

Course Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
M 8/23	Introduction to the Course	Screen in class (if time): <i>Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria</i> (2005)
W 8/25	Trans Activism, Then and Now	Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and CeCe McDonald in Conversation with Toshio Meronek, "Cautious Living: Black Trans Women and the Politics of Documentation" Saeed Jones in conversation with Chase Strangio, "The Republican War Against Trans Kids"
Unit 1: Gender, Sexuality, and the Body		
M 8/30	Trans Genders & Sexualities	Kate Bornstein, "Welcome to Your New Gender Workbook," in <i>My New Gender Workbook</i> (make sure to complete the aptitude test questions!) M. Paz Galupo, et al., "'The labels don't work very well': Transgender individuals' conceptualizations of sexual orientation and sexual identity" Due: Opening Reflection
W 9/1	Regulating Trans Bodies	Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, "Bathroom Battlegrounds and Penis Panics" Vivian Namaste, "Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender, and the Regulation of Public Space"
M 9/6	Interrogating Medical Models, pt 1	Dean Spade, "Mutilating Gender" Cheryl Chase, "Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism"
W 9/8	Interrogating Medical Models, pt 2	Toby Beauchamp, "The Substance of Borders: Transgender Politics, Mobility, and US State Regulation of Testosterone" Lynsey Chutel and Jere Longman, "The Clock Ticks on Caster Semenya's Olympic Career"
Unit 2: Media, Representation, and Visibility		
M 9/13	Approaching Trans Media Representation	Watch at home: <i>Disclosure</i> (2020)

		<p>Sam Feder and Alexandra Juhasz, “Does visibility equal progress? A conversation on trans activist media”</p> <p>Cael Keegan, “In Praise of the Bad Transgender Object: Rocky Horror”</p>
W 9/15	Approaching Trans Media Representation, Pt 2	<p>TJ Billard and Sam Nesfield, “(Re)Making ‘Transgender’ Identities in Global Media and Popular Culture”</p> <p>Andre Cavalcante, “Resilient Reception”</p>
M 9/20	Trans Media-Making	<p>Watch at home: Her Story Episode 1</p> <p>Laura Horak, “Tracing the History of Trans and Gender Variant Filmmakers”</p> <p>Nicole Morse, “Authenticity, Captioned: Hashtags, Emojis, and Visibility Politics in Alok-Vaid Menon’s Selfie Captions”</p>
W 9/22	Trans YouTube – Guest Lecture from Erique Zhang	<p>Tobias Raun, “YouTube is My Hood: Creating a Sense of Community”</p> <p>Erique Zhang, “‘I Don’t Just Want to Look Female; I Want to Be Beautiful’: Theorizing Passing as Labor in the Transition Vlogs of Gigi Gorgeous”</p>
Unit 3: Trans Feminism & Queer Theory		
M 9/27	Call and Response: Transphobic Feminism	<p>Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto”</p> <p>Sara Ahmed, “An Affinity of Hammers”</p>
W 9/29	Imagining Trans Feminism	<p>Emi Koyama, “The Transfeminist Manifesto”</p> <p>Julia Serano, “Reclaiming Femininity”</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Elias Cosenza Krell, “Is Transmisogyny Killing Trans Women of Color? Black Trans Feminisms and the Exigencies of White Femininity”</p>
M 10/4	Call and Response: Cis Queer Theory	<p>Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination”</p> <p>Susan Stryker, “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory’s Evil Twin”</p>

W 10/6	Trans of Color Critique	<p>C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife”</p> <p>Treva Ellison, Kai M Green, Matt Richardson, and C. Riley Snorton, “We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies”</p> <p>Due: Midterm assignment</p>
Midterm Break – No Class		
Unit 4: Contesting Disciplines & Institutions		
M 10/18	Trans Rights and the Law	<p>Dean Spade, “What’s Wrong with Rights?”</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> B. Lee Aultman and Paisley Currah, “Politics outside the Law: Transgender Lives and the Challenge of Legibility”</p>
W 10/20	Trans Methods in Education Studies	<p>Z Nicolazzo, "Just go in looking good": The resilience, resistance, and kinship-building of trans* college students”</p> <p>A. Finn Enke, “The Education of Little Cis”</p>
M 10/25	Exploring Trans Histories	<p>“One from the Vaults” podcast – pick any episode to listen to</p> <p>Susan Stryker, “Prologue” and “One Hundred-Plus Years of Transgender History”</p> <p>Jules Gill-Peterson, “Transgender Childhood is Not a ‘Trend’”</p>
W 10/27	Trans Methods in Sociology & Anthropology	<p>Evan B. Towle and Lynn M. Morgan, “Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the ‘Third Gender’ Concept”</p> <p>Tey Meadow, “Studying Each Other: On Agency, Constraint, and Positionality in the Field”</p>
Unit 5: Literature & Memoir		
M 11/1	What is Trans Literature?	Leslie Feinberg, <i>Stone Butch Blues</i> chs 1-6

		Casey Plett, “The Rise of the Gender Novel”
W 11/3	No class: Beloit & Beyond Conference	
M 11/8	Life Writing	Janet Mock, <i>Redefining Realness</i> Introduction, Part 1
W 11/10	Contemporary Trans Storytelling	Casey Plett, “Other Women” Carter Sickels, “Saving”
Unit 6: Survival, Community, & Care		
M 11/15	Ballroom Culture	Watch at home: <i>Pose</i> S1E1 Julian Glover, “Customer Service Representatives: Sex Work amongst Black and Latinx Transgender Women in the Ballroom Scene” <i>Optional:</i> Marlon Bailey, “Gender/Racial Realness: Theorizing the Gender System in Ballroom Culture”
W 11/17	The “Border Wars” from the ‘90s to 2020s	Jack Halberstam, “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Wars and the Masculine Continuum” Thomas Page McBee, “Self-Made Man #13: Queerly Beloved”
M 11/22	T4T Politics	Hil Malatino, “Surviving Trans Antagonism” Dean Spade, “Crisis Conditions Require Bold Tactics,” “What is Mutual Aid?,” and “Three Key Elements of Mutual Aid”
W 11/24	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
M 11/29	Radical Trans Politics	Eli Clare, “Body Shame, Body Pride: Lessons from the Disability Rights Movement” S. Lamble, “Transforming Carceral Logistics: 10 Reasons to Dismantle the Prison Industrial Complex Using a Queer/Trans Analysis”
W 12/1	Academia & Activism: Where do we go from here?	Watch: Raquel Willis, “I BELIEVE IN BLACK TRANS POWER”

		Z. Nicolazzo, "Imagining a Trans* Epistemology: What Liberation Thinks Like in Postsecondary Education"
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University Policies & Statements:

Alert Slips: Alert slips are electronic forms emailed by faculty to students (and cc'd to advisors and coaches) to indicate concerns about academic performance, changes in behavior, and/or attendance. In addition to helping students improve performance before it's too late, alert slips regarding absences can help ensure students do not lose their financial aid and can stay enrolled, so to keep the college in compliance with federal regulations, I will promptly send an alert slip if and when a student has missed the equivalent of a week of class. If you receive an alert slip, read it carefully and seek assistance.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be handled according to the College's policy. Such dishonesty includes cheating, deliberately interfering with the work of another student, or plagiarizing. Plagiarizing means representing the work of someone else (such as another student, an author of a book or article, a site on the internet, etc.) as your own. If you use the words or ideas of someone else, you must cite the source of the information. When an act of academic dishonesty appears to have occurred within the academic process, I will discuss the apparent violation with you as soon as possible and shall give you an opportunity to explain the action.

Accessibility and Support Services: You have the *right* to an education in a way that works for you. If you have a disability (or just suspect that you have one) and need some sort of accommodation, contact Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEADS) located on 2nd floor Pearsons (north side), 608-363-2572, learning@beloit.edu or through olesena@beloit.edu. For accommodations in my class, please bring me an Access Letter from the Director of LEADS and then we will discuss how to implement the accommodations. Contact that office promptly; accommodations are not retroactive.

Free peer tutoring is available for most classes. For a tutor, apply by going to your Portal, to the Student Life tab, and then apply using the Tutoring Forms (on left) and Request a Tutor. If you have any questions, contact LEADS. If you want support from an Organizational Tutor, they are available in the Learning Lab (Blaisdell 103B) Sundays through Thursdays from 6-8 pm. You also can request an organizational tutor on the portal.

For support with writing, including one on one consultations at any stage of the writing process, visit the Writing Center: <https://www.beloit.edu/offices/writing-center/>.

Land Acknowledgement: Beloit College is located on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, and we want to respectfully acknowledge the Potawatomi, Peoria, Miami, Meskwaki, and Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) people who have stewarded this land throughout countless generations. As we gather here in the weeks to come, please consider the legacies of violence, displacement, and settlement that they have faced. We are always on Indigenous land, and here on the campus we have a constant reminder in the form of the mounds. To recognize the land is

an expression of gratitude to those on whose territory we reside--a way of honoring Indigenous people. Land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense, or outside historical context: colonialism is an ongoing process, and we need to be mindful about our present participation.
(Adapted from Bill Quackenbush, Tribal Preservation Office, Ho-Chunk Nation)