ENGL 5380-002: Advanced Problems in Literature  
Boundaries, Bridges, and Crossings: Transnational Feminist and Queer Studies  
Fall Semester 2016

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(and by appointment)  
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Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to two important modes of thinking and activism, their separations, and the political and academic potential of an intersectional approach to race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality. When women’s studies and gay and lesbian studies emerged in the Euro-American academy in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the work of lesbian feminists such as Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, and Gloria Anzaldúa provided an important model for building bridges and crossing political, activist, and academic boundaries. While women’s studies provided a sustained analysis of gender, and later, race and class, gay and lesbian studies analyzed sexuality as the primary factor determining social positioning. The complementarity of these two approaches in responding to the AIDS crisis and the sex panics of the decade prefigured the emergence of queer studies in the 1990s.

Transnational feminist thinkers have challenged the exclusive Americanist focus of women’s, gay, lesbian and queer studies since the late 1980s at the same time that the inflection of global concerns in queer studies has corrected the dominant focus on white, male, able-bodied, gay sexualities. Among the issues raised by transnational feminist and queer studies are: emergence of new categories of work such as migrant sex workers and cross border communications service providers; normalization of labor practices such as gay sex tourism, and the predominantly female workforce in export processing zones all over the world; new forms of affective intimacy in late capitalism including the adoption of a global vocabulary of identity politics such as ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’ or ‘queer’ in places which prohibit expression of erotic autonomy outside the heterosexual matrix; women’s, gay, lesbian and queer responses to changing public and private roles including an increase in religious fundamentalism and social violence.

We will read a necessarily selective representation of work which charts the emergence of transnational feminist and queer studies. The twentieth and twenty-first century focus of this course does not preclude the study of period-based literature from a theoretical lens.
Objectives:
• To understand that transnational feminist and queer studies is an interdisciplinary mode of analysis: Class participation and presentations (20%)
• To examine the major currents in transnational feminist and queer analysis such as new labor practices, modes of consumption, patterns of travel and migration, changing definitions of the nation and family: Responses (40%)
• To develop critical skills conversant with modes of feminist, queer, and cultural studies: Paper 1 (20%) and Paper 2 (20%)

Assignments:
• Presentations: Two 10-minute class presentations during the semester. Please use PPTs or Prezi to make your presentation clear and concise.
• Responses: Four three-page responses to the readings to be submitted on Blackboard
• Paper #1 (10 pages) which employs transnational modes of analysis as listed in bulleted points in the learning objectives. The paper may focus on either the contexts we have discussed in the course or any other that the student wishes to explore. This paper must use at least 5 external research sources.
• Paper #2 (16-18 pages) at the end of the course. Please discuss the topic with me. This paper can build on the research undertaken for the short paper but must use additional sources. A minimum of 10 additional sources are required for this paper, 3 of these can be ones used for the first paper if the topic is closely related.

Attendance policy: Since you will be making presentations on the readings, sharing your viewpoints during online discussions, and working on writing assignments, attendance is mandatory. You may miss a maximum of 1 class without the prior permission of the instructor. For every subsequent class missed you will be required to submit a 2-page response on the reading assigned for the day. In the absence of this submission you will be marked down half a letter grade on the overall grade for the course for each class you miss. Missing more than 2 classes without adequate documentation will lead to a fail grade for the course. Documented absences (illness, emergencies etc.) will be excused. However, prolonged absences, for whatever reason, will not be excused.

Regarding the observance of a religious holy day: a student will be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day and the time necessary to travel for this observance. The student will not be penalized for the absence and will be permitted to take an exam or complete an assignment missed during the excused absence. No prior notification is required.

Class Participation: All students are required to show evidence of familiarity with the assigned readings for the day, to participate in weekly chats, and to make constructive contributions to them. The films are part of the course material. You may not miss or excuse yourself from a film discussion. Because we are in a formal learning environment, courtesy demands that you may not take any calls during class. In addition, you are expected to show respect for diverse opinions during class discussions. Also expected is
respect for gender, racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual differences. Expression of racism, sexism, and homophobia will not be tolerated. Students who do not follow norms of polite discussion may be asked to leave the online classroom. Class participation requires at least five substantive comments related to the course material during the time the class meets.

Class Presentations: Each student is required to sign up for one 10-minute class presentation on any aspect of the required reading related to the course. These presentations should be in the form of Power Point with textual, photographic or video materials. The presentations may be reworked as papers to be submitted during the semester in consultation with the instructor.

Discussion: Discussion entries are meant to be responses to the readings we are doing in class and are to be submitted electronically on Blackboard. Please feel free to bring in additional information about other texts, which may relate to the reading. In addition, you may include photographs, film clips, and links to other material available on websites that may be pertinent to your discussion entry. I will read through the discussion every week, and occasionally comment on them as an indication of your class participation.

Papers: All papers demonstrating a clear thesis, introduction, and conclusion, and adequate use of research sources, must be completed and submitted at the beginning of class on the day assigned in the proper format. Late submissions are unacceptable except in the case of documented medical emergencies. A late submission will be marked down one letter grade for each day after the due date. Each paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced with one-inch margins with your name, course number, the name of the instructor and the date on the top left hand corner of the first page. You should keep a copy (xeroxed, printed or saved to disk) of each paper turned in.

Please remember that papers test your critical and analytical skills. Extensive use of block quotes with minimal analysis does not fulfill the paper requirements for this course. Evidence of plagiarism (use of another's ideas, data, and/or statements without acknowledgment or with only minimal acknowledgement) will lead to an “F” for the course.

We are committed to academic integrity in all its practices. The faculty value intellectual integrity and a high standard of academic conduct. Activities that violate academic integrity undermine the quality and diminish the value of educational achievement. Cheating on papers, tests, or other academic works is a violation of College rules. No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor of the class, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or distribution of these materials and other academic work. This includes students who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior. Please review Department of English "Ethics in English: A Guide for Students." Further, you are expected to follow "netiquette." Related to this, if you see spam in your blog, you might use word verification.
**Disability Policy:** Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or call 806-742-2405. (OP10.08).

See also the TTU Department of English Emergency Action Plan in case of fire, bomb threat, flood, tornado, or active shooter/armed subject emergency.

**Assignment Expectations**

The following is a general description of expectations for assignments:

- **A.** Your project is of impeccable (or almost impeccable) quality in both content and format design, with no major weaknesses in any area. It provides adequate information that users need and effectively fulfills the intended purposes. Presentation is of professional quality. There are few if any mechanical errors.
- **B.** Your project is of high quality in most of the major areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes quite effectively. Presentation is quite professional. There are only a few mechanical errors.
- **C.** Your project is of reasonable quality in most areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes to a large extent, although major deficiencies are observable. Presentation is of semi-professional quality. There are some mechanical errors, but not to the extent of seriously affecting readers' comprehension.
- **D.** Your project is of acceptable quality in most areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes to some extent, but major deficiencies exist in several areas. Presentation quality is acceptable but low. There are a significant number of mechanical errors.
- **E.** Your project is unacceptable in quality. It does not fulfill the user's needs or your intended purposes. Major deficiencies are observed in most areas. Presentation quality is poor, and there are too many mechanical errors.

**Grade Range**

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**Required Reading**


2. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders*
3. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*

4. Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*

5. Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction*

6. David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, eds. *WHAT'S QUEER ABOUT QUEER STUDIES NOW? Social Text Volume 23, Number 3-4 84-85, Fall-Winter 2005 (Available online through TTU)*

7. Judith Butler, *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*


**Films:**

*Life and Debt* (2003) Dir. Stephanie Black

*Southwest of Salem* (2016) Dir. Deborah Esquenazi

**Weekly Reading Schedule:**

**Introduction: Transnational Theory and Activism**

Week 1 (September 2): Introduction to the course; discussion on Inderpal Grewal and Karen Kaplan’s “Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality” *GLQ* 7.4: 663-679 (PDF on Blackboard); *This Bridge Called my Back* (pages xv-53)

**Sept. 5, 7:30 pm: Screening of *Southwest of Salem* (2016) at the Alamo Drafthouse. Optional but recommended attendance.**

Week 2 (September 9): *This Bridge called my Back* (pages 81-97; 195-218); Mohanty *Feminism without Borders* (1-84)

Week 3 (September 16): Mohanty *Feminism without Borders* (Chapters 124-189, 221-251); Choose one report or policy paper to read either from Development alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) or Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUMU) or the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) websites. Share this information with the class.

**Week 4 (September 23): No class (I am at Penn State for a workshop); Response Paper #1 due**

**Justice Imagined**

Week 4 (September 30): Fraser *Fortunes of Feminism* (1-138); Braidotti *Nomadic Theory* (25-54).
Week 5 (October 7): Butler “Merely Cultural” (PDF on Blackboard); Fraser *Fortunes of Feminism* (159-208), please pay special attention to Fraser’s response to Butler.

Week 6 (October 14): Braidotti *Nomadic Theory* (125-149); Jagose, *Queer Theory* (please read the entire book as this is an introductory account); **Response Paper # 2 due**

Week 7 (October 21)): **Class meets online**; Eng, Halberstam, and Esteban Muñoz “Introduction: What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?”; Hiram Perez “You Can Have My Brown Body and Eat It Too!”; Judith Halberstam “Shame and White Gay Masculinity” (PDFs on Blackboard); **Paper # 1 due.**

**Sexual States**

Week 8 (October 28): Butler, *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (1-122)


Week 10: (November 11): **Class meets online; Discussion on web sources and research for Paper 2**; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (ix-113)

Week 11 (November 18): Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (114-165 and 203-222); **Response Paper # 4 due**

Week 12 (November 25): **No class (Thanksgiving Break)**

Week 13 (December 2): Mini-conference on Transnational Feminist and Queer Studies

**Paper # 2 due on December 9, 2016 by 4.00 p.m.**