

GTU RSHS-8241
Transgendering Faith: A Brief History
An Online Course
Summer: 2012

**NOTE: This is a provisional version of the course syllabus;
The Final Version will be available on 11 June 2012**

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Course Description

An exploration of the Transgender history in contemporary American history with a particular focus on important aspects of Transgender history in American Christianity from the late 20th to early 21st centuries. While the presence, voice, and witness of Transgender persons in American Christianity is the main focus of this course, other religious traditions will also be explored. (This is an online course.)

NOTE: This course uses the Moodle online education system through The Graduate Theological Union (GTU). Access to the Internet (including email) is required for enrolling in this course.

Course Learning Objectives

Course learning objectives are to be demonstrated in online postings; Analytical Essays (which are to be posted on the course site); participation in Online Discussion Forums; feedback given to other course participants; and in the writing of a research paper:

1. Students will gain the ability to engage in intelligent discourse relating to Transgender history in the United States from the late 20th to the early 21st centuries;
2. Students will develop an understanding of important religious and spiritual concepts at play in the history of American Transgender Christian history during this period of time;
3. Students will develop an understanding of major religious and social issues involved in the history of contemporary Transgender Christian religious movements in the United States.

Course Requirements & Grading Criteria

1. This is an on-line class using the GTU Moodle system (<http://moodle.gtu.edu/>)
2. The readings for the course will serve as the primary material for online discussions and for the writing of Analytical Essays.
3. If possible, two brief conversations (via telephone) with the Instructor (at the beginning and end of the semester) during Weeks 1 and 6. (For students living in the San Francisco Bay Area meet it may be possible to meet with the instructor at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley: if you are interested, please email me to set up your appointments.)
4. Participation in six weekly on-line discussion forums.
5. The writing of five written Analytical Essays (sent to instructor as e-mails and posted on the course website; each approximately 500 words in length) on assigned readings. These essays are DUE EVERY FRIDAY at 12:00 noon (Pacific Time). These essays should reflect your own critical analysis of one or more aspects of the week's readings.

NOTE: What I am looking for in the Analytical Essays are critical evaluations of the reading(s) under question, that is, your written essay should analyze aspects of the topic under question and reflect your own critical thought on the issue(s). Feel free, of course, to include items relating to personal belief or issues pertaining to pastoral practice. In fact, if you are studying for the ministry, you might want to address topics from the texts that relate to pastoral issues that you care about. However, you are not required to make such connections.

6. One research paper, 15-20 pages in length (on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor). Double-spaced; 12-point font; 1" page margins.
 - a. No "double dipping," please: that is, this paper cannot be "recycled" from another course (current or previous).
 - b. SEE VARIOUS DUE DATES IN UPPER CASE LETTERS BELOW.

Course Texts for Purchase

1. Feinberg, Leslie. *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

2. Jacobs, Sue-Ellen, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds. *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
3. Meyerowitz, Joanne. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
4. Mollenkott, Virginia R. *Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001.
5. Tanis, Justin. *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003.

NOTE: Pacific School of Religion Faculty Policy on Grading

“The PSR faculty has adopted a consistent, single policy of grading that insists on a broad use of the available grading scale, including B’s, B-‘s, and C’s, on a regular basis; that A+ grades only be assigned to work that would qualify in the faculty member’s mind as “publishable,” other A’s to work that is excellent, B’s to work that is good and solid, and C’s to work that is fair but weak...” For more information, see: <http://www.psr.edu/grades>.

NOTE: Please familiarize yourself with PSR’s Plagiarism Policy: see <http://www.psr.edu/plagiarism-policy>

Weekly Topics

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| Week # 1 | Course Introduction and Participant Introductions |
| Week # 2 | A History of Transsexuality in the United States |
| Week # 3 | The Diversity of Transgender Identities |
| Week # 4 | Native American Two-Spirit Identities and Communities |
| Week # 5 | Transgender Christian Identity and Ministry: One View |
| Week # 6 | Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach to Gender and Faith |

Course Outline of Weekly Classes

1. **Week # 1 (Week of 2 July 2012):** Course Introduction

- a. Introductions
- b. Telephone (or in-person) Interviews with Instructor

No Readings for This Week

One Assignment: Online DISCUSSION FORUM #1 THIS WEEK: Please introduce yourself to the class this week no later than 11:50pm (Pacific Time) on THURSDAY, 5 July, and preferably earlier than this date. Also, please fill out the “Student Information Sheets” and return to the instructor no later than FRIDAY, 6 July.

2. Week #2 (Week of 9 July 2012): A History of Transsexuality in the United States

- a. From Sex To Gender
- b. Sexual Revolutions
- c. The Next Generation

Reading for This Week: Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*.

Two Assignments:

1. Online DISCUSSION FORUM #2 THIS WEEK: Answer the posted questions no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, 11 July. Respond to at least two other student postings no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Thursday, 12 July. **Note: Questions for this week will be posted by Monday, 9 July at 9:00am (Pacific Time).**
2. Written Analytical Essay #1 DUE THIS SATURDAY, 14 July. Approximately 500 words in length and based on this week’s assigned readings. Must be e-mailed to instructor and posted on the course’s Moodle webpage no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) THIS SATURDAY, 14 July.

3. Week #3 (Week of 16 July 2012): The Diversity of Transgender Identities

- a. **PAPER TOPIC #1 STATEMENT DUE THIS WEEK:** Email statement to instructor no later than THIS FRIDAY, 20 July (11:59pm, Pacific Time)
- b. The Sacred Past of Transgender Persons
- c. Warriors
- d. The Varieties of Trans Experience

Reading for This Week: Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul*.

Two Assignments:

1. Online DISCUSSION FORUM #3 THIS WEEK: Answer the posted questions no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, 18 July. Respond to at least two other student postings no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Thursday, 19 July. **Note: Questions for this week will be posted by Monday, 16 July at 9:00am (Pacific Time).**
2. Written Analytical Essay #1 DUE THIS SATURDAY, 21 July. Approximately 500 words in length and based on this week's assigned readings. Must be e-mailed to instructor and posted on the course's Moodle webpage no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) THIS SATURDAY, 21 July.

4. Week #4 (Week of 23 July 2012): Native American Two-Spirit Identities and Communities

- a. **PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE THIS WEEK:** Email statement to instructor no later than THIS FRIDAY, 27 July (11:59pm, Pacific Time)
- b. The Western notion of the "Berdache"
- c. Gender Variance in Native American Communities
- d. From Berdache to Two Spirit

Readings for This Week: Several selections from Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*. To Be Announced.

Two Assignments:

1. Online DISCUSSION FORUM #4 THIS WEEK: Answer the posted questions no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, 25 July. Respond to at least two other student postings no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Thursday, 26 July. **Note: Questions for this week will be posted by Monday, 23 July at 9:00am (Pacific Time).**
 2. Written Analytical Essay #1 DUE THIS SATURDAY, 28 July. Approximately 500 words in length and based on this week's assigned readings. Must be e-mailed to instructor and posted on the course's Moodle webpage no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) THIS SATURDAY, 28 July.
5. **Week #5 (Week of 30 July 2012): Transgender Christian Identity and Ministry: One View**

- a. **PAPER OUTLINE DUE THIS WEEK:** Email statement to instructor no later than **THIS FRIDAY, 3 August (11:59pm, Pacific Time)**
- b. Gender Variance: Hebrew and Christian Scriptures
- c. Transgender People in Christian Communities of Faith
- d. Transgender Theologies

Reading for This Week: Tanis, *Trans-Gendered: Theology, Ministry, and Communities of Faith*.

Two Assignments:

- 1. Online DISCUSSION FORUM #5 THIS WEEK: Answer the posted questions no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, 1 August. Respond to at least two other student postings no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Thursday, 2 August. **Note: Questions for this week will be posted by Monday, 30 July at 9:00am (Pacific Time).**
 - 2. Written Analytical Essay #1 DUE THIS SATURDAY, 4 August. Approximately 500 words in length and based on this week's assigned readings. Must be e-mailed to instructor and posted on the course's Moodle webpage no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) THIS SATURDAY, 4 August.
6. **Week #6 (Week of 6 August 2012): Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach to Gender and Faith**
- a. **FINAL PAPER IS DUE ON Friday, 24 August at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)**
Email your paper to Instructor **NO LATER THAN Friday, 24 August at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)**
 - b. The Gender Crisis
 - c. Judaism, Christianity on Trans Issues
 - d. Imagining and Constructing an Omnigendered Society

Reading for This Week: Mollenkott, *Omnigender: A Trans-Religious Approach*.

Two Assignments:

- 1. Online DISCUSSION FORUM #6 THIS WEEK: Answer the posted questions no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Wednesday, 8 August. Respond to at least two other student postings no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) on Thursday, 9 August. **Note: Questions for this week will be posted by Monday, 6 August at 9:00am (Pacific Time).**

2. Written Analytical Essay #1 DUE THIS SATURDAY, 11 August.
Approximately 500 words in length and based on this week's assigned readings.
Must be e-mailed to instructor and posted on the course's Moodle webpage no later than 11:59pm (Pacific Time) THIS SATURDAY, 11 August.