

# SOCI 520

## Selected Topics in Contemporary Sociology: Trans Activism

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### Course Description

In recent years, there are stories in the media about trans and gender variant people almost every day, and trans and gender variant people (trans for short) are increasingly becoming accepted in all areas of society. Although it may seem as though trans and gender variant people have just spontaneously come into the spotlight, trans and gender variant activists have been working for recognition and rights for many decades. In this course we will look at some of the work that has been done by trans and gender variant activists over the past 50 years. Topics May Include: Historical context for trans activism. Major issues in trans activism. Methods of trans activism. Campaigns of trans activism. Controversies in trans activism. Major trans activists. Future directions in trans activism. Among other sources, we will make use of the world's largest collection of original records of trans activism held in the [Transgender Archives](#) at the University of Victoria.

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Spring 2017  
Tues: 6:30-9:20 PM  
Classroom: COR A317

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Devor  
Email: [ahdevor@uvic.ca](mailto:ahdevor@uvic.ca)  
Phone: (250) 721-7577  
Office: COR A367  
Office Hours: Tues 4:30-5:30 PM  
Tues 9:30-10:00 PM

### Contacting me

The best way to contact me is via email. Please see the Electronic Communications Policy at the end for more details.

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### Class time

This is a three-hour seminar once a week. You should come to class prepared for a sustained and concentrated classroom discussion.

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### Required Books

Teich, N. (2012). *Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue*. New York: Columbia University Press.  
US \$20.00

Meyerowitz, J. (2002). *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.  
US \$28.50

Stryker, S. (2008). *Transgender History*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.  
US \$14.50

Irving, D. & Raj, R. (2014). *Trans Activism in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.  
CAD \$70

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You will be evaluated in four ways.

1. Class discussion. This is a small seminar class. Your participation is essential for its success. I expect you to have done all the reading before class and to come to class prepared to be an active participant in class discussions every week. Class participation is worth 10% of your final grade.
2. Each week, after the first week, you will be required to write a 500-word commentary on the assigned readings. Each week will be graded 0, 1/2, or 1 on each commentary. Worth 10% of your grade.
3. Each student will lead one or more seminars (depending on the number of students in the class). On your week(s), you will come prepared with questions to spark discussion and you will lead the discussion. You will do a self-evaluation of your leadership, and your colleagues will provide you with feedback about how you did, but I will actually grade you. Worth 30% of your final grade.
4. You will be required to research one trans activist or activist organization and create, or significantly update, a Wikipedia entry on them. There are two parts to this assignment.
  - a. Choose a person or organization. Do research about them in the Transgender Archives and elsewhere. Produce an annotated bibliography. Create an outline for your Wikipedia page. Worth 30% of your final grade.
  - b. Create your Wikipedia page. Worth 20% of your final grade.

## Important Dates

### **Weekly commentaries**

Due each week starting in week two. Tuesdays @ 3:00 PM. Late assignments will not be graded

### **1<sup>st</sup> part of project**

Due February 21 @ 5:00 PM. Please submit it to CourseSpaces.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> part of project**

Due March 28 @ 5:00 PM. Please submit it to CourseSpaces.

**Jan 17.** Last day for 100% reduction of tuition fees for first-term and full-year courses

**Jan 20.** Last day for adding courses

**Feb 13-17.** Reading Break.

**Feb 28.** Last day for withdrawing from second-term courses without penalty of failure

## Weekly activities

<b>Week 1</b> Jan 10	<b>Introduction to course</b> <b>Introduction to Transgender</b>	Come prepared to talk about your academic interests and how they relate to the topics of this course.  Background: Teich, N. (2012). <i>Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue</i> . New York: Columbia University Press.
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 17	<b>Wikipedia Skills</b> <b>Christine Jorgensen</b>	Meyerowitz, J. (2002). <i>How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States</i> . Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. Intro, Chapters 1 and 2.
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 24	<b>Virginia Prince</b>	Meyerowitz, J. (2002). <i>How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States</i> . Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 3 and 4.
<b>Week 4</b> Jan 31	<b>Reed Erickson</b>	Meyerowitz, J. (2002). <i>How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States</i> . Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. Chapters 5, 6, 7.
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 07	<b>Student-led seminar</b>	Stryker, S. (2008). <i>Transgender History</i> . Berkeley, CA: Seal Press. Chapters 1-3.
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 14	<b>Reading Break</b>	<b>Reading Break: February 13-17</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 21	<b>Student-led seminar</b> <b>1st part of project due</b>	Stryker, S. (2008). <i>Transgender History</i> . Berkeley, CA: Seal Press. Chapters 4-5
<b>Week 8</b> Feb 28	<b>Student-led seminar</b>	Irving, D. & Raj, R. <i>Trans Activism in Canada</i> . Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Part I
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 07	<b>Student-led seminar</b>	Irving, D. & Raj, R. <i>Trans Activism in Canada</i> . Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Part II
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 14	<b>Student-led seminar</b>	Irving, D. & Raj, R. <i>Trans Activism in Canada</i> . Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Part IIIA
<b>Week 11</b> Mar 21	<b>Student-led seminar</b>	Irving, D. & Raj, R. <i>Trans Activism in Canada</i> . Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Part IIIB: Chapters 20, 21, 22
<b>Week 12</b> Mar 28	<b>Student-led seminar</b> <b>2nd part of project due</b>	Irving, D. & Raj, R. <i>Trans Activism in Canada</i> . Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Part IIIB: Chapters 23, 24, 25 and Afterword
<b>Week 13</b> Apr 04	<b>Wrap up</b>	Your Wikipedia pages

## Official Grading Standards

Graduate Records, University of Victoria, 2014

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage *	Description	Achievement of Assignment Objectives
A+	9	90 - 100	Exceptional Work	Technically flawless and original work demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations; often publishable.
A	8	85 - 89	Outstanding Work	Demonstrates a very high level of integration of material demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations.
A-	7	80 - 84	Excellent Work	Represents a high level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity, as well as mastery of relevant techniques/concepts.
B+	6	77 - 79	Very good work	Represents a satisfactory level of integration, comprehensiveness, and complexity; demonstrates a sound level of analysis with no major weaknesses.
B	5	73 - 76	Acceptable work that fulfills the expectations of the course	Represents a satisfactory level of integration of key concepts/procedures. However, comprehensiveness or technical skills may be lacking.
B-	4	70 - 72	Unacceptable work revealing some deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques	Represents an unacceptable level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity. Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking. Every grade of 4.0 (B-) or lower in a course taken for credit in the Faculty of Graduate Studies must be reviewed by the supervisory committee of the student and a recommendation made to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such students will not be allowed to register in the next session until approved to do so by the Dean.
C+	3	65 - 69		
C	2	60 - 64		
D	1	50 - 59		
F	0	0 - 49	Failing grade	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements.
<b>Other Failing or Temporary Grades</b>				
N	0	0 - 49	Did not write examination or otherwise complete course requirements by the end of term or session. This grade is intended to be final.	
INC	N/A	N/A	Incomplete (requires "Request for Extension of Grade" form). Used for those graduate credit courses designated by the Senate and identified in the course listings; also used, with Dean's permission, for those graduate credit courses with regular grading (A to F, including N) which are not complete by the end of the term or session due to exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the instructor or student. INC must be replaced by a final grade not later than the end of the next term.	
WE	N/A	N/A	Withdrawal under extenuating circumstances. The WE registration status will replace a course registration or grade when approved by the Dean following a request for academic concession from a student. This registration status is excluded from the calculation of all grade point averages; it will appear on the official transcript.	

## University Course Policies

### **Commitment to Inclusiveness and Diversity**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. The Department of Sociology is committed to inclusiveness and to a welcoming, friendly learning and working environment. We condemn sexism, ageism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia, transphobia, and inappropriate behaviour toward people with a disability. <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GI/GUPo.html>

### **Examination and Assignment Policy**

As per university policy, absence is only permitted in cases of illness, accident, family affliction, or religious obligations. Missing an exam or assignment for other reasons will result in an "F." Students are responsible for providing official documentation to justify their absence, e.g. a doctor's note. In cases of justified absences, the student has the right to request a make-up exam. Please note that exams will not be rescheduled to accommodate students' personal circumstances, including travelling plans. There are no exceptions to this policy.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/AcCo.html>

### **Grading**

In accordance with Senate Regulations, grading on the curve is not permitted. The grades students receive in this course reflect their performance in relation to specified academic expectations. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standings. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. All exams remain the property of the University of Victoria.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

### **Attendance**

As per university policy, attendance to all classes is mandatory. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness, accident or family affliction should report to the instructor as soon as possible. Absences that cannot be justified in accordance with university policies will be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. If you are absent for reasons other than those specified under university policies, then it is not the responsibility of the instructor or the TA to help you catch up with missed lecture material.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Atte.html>

### **Academic Integrity**

The Department of Sociology fully and rigorously enforces the Senate Policy on Academic integrity. It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation. Students caught cheating in the course will be expelled and reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the Dean of Social Sciences for disciplinary action.

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html>

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Students must note the statement on “Plagiarism” in the UVic Calendar, and all regulations under the “Policy on Academic Integrity.” Quotes and citations must be used for any material longer than five words in succession that is not the student’s original work. See also the Libraries’ plagiarism guide <http://library.uvic.ca/instruction/cite/plagiarism.html>.

### **Accommodations**

The University of Victoria accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. As per university policy, students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date. <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GI/StAf/RCfoSwaDR.html>

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Distractions can easily hinder the difficult process of conveying knowledge. Please observe standard classroom etiquette. Entering the classroom after the instructor’s presentation has started can be distracting to all of us. While occasional lateness may be unavoidable, your dedication to being on time is greatly appreciated. The use of electronic communication devices is also a distraction to everyone. This includes texting and browsing the internet. Please turn off your phones before entering the classroom and refrain from using them during class. If there is a justifiable reason for using your phone during class (e.g., expecting an urgent call related to family members, health or illness), please notify the instructor ahead of time, keep the device on vibrate, and exit the room if you must receive a message.

### **Harassment**

The Department of Sociology supports the University’s policies on harassment, and is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty are able to exercise fully their rights to participate in activities at the University without fear of harassment. <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2014-09/GI/GUPo.html>

## Specific Course Policies

### **Digital Etiquette**

Phones etc: Please turn off sending and receiving functions of your phone and/or other devices before you enter the classroom. I understand that your phones connect you with your friends and family, but the classroom should be a place apart, however briefly, from the outside world. If you have child or elder care responsibilities and cannot turn your phone off, please let me know. Please leave it face down on your desk and on vibrate. If you need to take a call or respond to a text, please leave the room to do so. You will learn more if you can concentrate on the course while you're in the classroom.

Laptops & tablets: You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes during this class, however research shows that student do better when they take notes by hand (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014, doi:10.1177/0956797614524581). However, in-class electronics also present temptations that many students find irresistible. Please do not use a phone, laptop, or tablet during class to check Facebook, play games, text, respond to email, etc. Such activities not only distract you (meaning you will probably do worse in the class), they also distract other students sitting near you (who probably will also do worse in class) (Sana, Weston & Cepeda, 2013, doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2012.10.003).

### **Late Assignments**

If you have a documented illness, accident, or family affliction, please report it to me as soon as possible, and I will accommodate your needs. In all other cases, we'll need to discuss how to address your lateness.

### **Communications Policy**

#### **Communications Policy**

The best way to communicate with me is via email. I will usually answer emails within two business days. Do not expect an answer on the weekends. If you send an email late on Friday, you may not hear back until late on Tuesday. Plan ahead! If your issue is truly an emergency (*not just lack of planning or attention on your part*), put "520 Emergency" in the subject line. I'll answer as quickly as I can. Please do not abuse this option.