

Course ID 041546

Trans Theory

ENGL 71831

Credit rating 30

ECTS credits 15

Unit coordinator: Honor Gavin

Semester 1

English and American Studies

Postgraduate Taught

Level 7

FHEQ level ' Masters/Integrated Masters P4'

Marketing course unit overview

This module will introduce students to a set of key, interconnected discussions within trans studies and trans theory. Topics considered will include: the development of trans studies as a field as well as the tensions and affiliations with its queer sibling or counterpart; the question of history and the historical in relation to the emergence of trans as an intelligible category, site of knowledge production, and movement; the relationship between trans identities and the operations of colonialism and capitalism; the interface between transsexuality and the medical as well as between gender and population management more broadly; the relationship between trans and non-binary experience and feminism; the so-called 'border wars' between lesbianism and transmasculinity; 'self-made men' and neoliberalism; sex, work, and pleasure in relation to transness; and trans aesthetics and creative practice beyond memoir. C. Riley Snorton's suggestion that the 'condensation of transness into the category of transgender is a racial narrative' (*Black on Both Sides*, p.8) will orientate our discussions throughout the module; rather than be considered separately, in an isolated week or section, questions of race and racialisation will frame, intersect, and overlap with each topic on the course. We'll also consider the ways in which trans is thought and taught across disciplines and trace shifting conceptualisations of trans politics from approaches that emphasise rights and visibility, to those that call for the radical redistribution of life chances and a trans-articulated Marxism.

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Aims

The module has two assessment pathways, making it suitable for students from both critical/theoretical MA programmes in EAC and the MA in Creative Writing. Creative Writing students should note that the course is reading-intensive and strongly theoretical in emphasis.

As well as providing an introductory knowledge and understanding of current approaches to trans studies and crucial conceptual and theoretical conversations within the field, the module is designed to enable students to:

i) identify a particular interest, focus, or set of questions in connection with the topics considered; and ii) develop a response to this focus via EITHER a critical research essay OR a creative work of equivalent weighting. Students opting for the latter must demonstrate a background in creative writing. The assessments are intended to structure students' appreciation of the topics covered and the development of their own critical discussion / practice-based research.

As such, the course aims to equip students with the ability to: develop skills of critical thought, speech and writing in relation to trans theory; engage with, and critically evaluate, key theoretical concepts and arguments in relation to trans theory; and (where relevant) develop innovation in creative practice in a manner that incorporates and draws upon critical thought.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate a good familiarity with a range of theoretical texts in relation to trans;
- critically evaluate key theoretical concepts and discussions in relation to trans;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of the relationship between trans studies and queer theory;

Intellectual skills

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- analyse course texts in a critical manner
- identify, trace, and evaluate the development of key discussions within trans studies
- reflect critically on the question of history and the historical in relation to trans

Practical skills

- plan and execute independent research in relation to trans theory
- make good use of library, electronic, and online resources relevant to the module

Transferable skills and personal qualities

- retrieve, sift, organise, synthesise and critically evaluate material from a range of different sources, including library, electronic, and online resources;
- demonstrate good teamwork skills by acknowledging the views of others and working constructively with others;
- develop and complete an effective research project
- demonstrate the ability to improve one's own learning through critical reflection and good time management

Employability skills

Other

This course enhances student employability by enabling students to develop a range of transferable skills. These include: good oral and written communication skills; resourcefulness in the ability to gather, interpret, analyse and/or evaluate critical sources; time management skills (via the completion of assessments and meeting of deadlines); articulacy and presentation skills (through participation in seminars and group discussions).

Assessment methods

Assessment task Formative or Summative Weighting within unit (if summative)
Literature Review Essay F + S 20% Critical Essay (5000 words) OR Creative Work (4000 words or equivalent) & Critical Commentary (1000 words) S 80%

Feedback methods

Feedback method	Formative or Summative
Numerical grade and written comments on both assessments 15 working days	F & S
Oral feedback in project workshops	F

Requisites

NONE

Academic programs

MA Gender, Sexuality and Culture	PGDT Taught Component	Optional
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Available as free choice? Y

Recommended reading

Indicative Reading:

Susan Stryker's, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (New York: Seal Press, 2008)

C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (University of Minnesota Press: 2017)

Scheduled activity hours

Practical classes & workshops	2
Seminars	33

Independent study hours 265 hours