

GSWS 2274G Course Syllabus
Intro to Trans Studies
Winter 2026
Tuesdays 1:30PM - 4:30PM
Room TBD

Instructor: Elk Paauw (he/him/his)
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Office hours: Tuesdays 4:30PM-6:30PM
(in-person, TBD)
or by appointment (Zoom)



Illustrations by Jose Pimienta, Joamette Gil, Maia Kobabe

Course Description

Despite *Time Magazine* declaring the year 2014 as the “Transgender Tipping Point”, the recent rise of anti-trans rhetoric and narrowing access to gender-affirming care globally shows “the transgender debate” remains hotly in question. To counter the hateful discourses surrounding trans and gender non-conforming people, students will read scholarly texts, watch films, listen to music, read comics, and play games made by trans people. The course aims to theorize trans lives from the lived experience of trans people themselves, centering the experience of the most marginalized within the community: queer and trans Black and/or Indigenous people of color (QTBIPOC), specifically trans women and femmes, and intersex individuals. From this standpoint, the course takes a critical and interdisciplinary look at trans studies across the fields of anthropology, linguistics, evolutionary biology, history, theory, media studies, law, and the arts, culminating in a capstone project that engages with the community at large.

Antirequisite(s): Women's Studies 4460F/G if taught in Winter 2013; Women's Studies 3343F/G if taught in Fall 2015. Prerequisite(s): GSWS 1020E or 1.0 from 1021F/G, 1022F/G, 1023F/G and 1024F/G.

Course Objectives

Develop a working understanding of the fields within trans studies from an interdisciplinary and intersectional perspective, centering knowledge production from the most marginalized within the trans community.

Approach the subject matter with humility geared towards listening and learning grounded in standpoint theory. Acknowledge the limits of one's own knowledge (professor included) and build appreciation of illegibility, uncertainty, and ambiguity.

Utilize modes of inquiry that are both critical and creative to generate solutions and sustain action-oriented projects within this field of research or equivalent advanced scholarship. Communicate information and analyses orally and in writing to both academic and lay audiences.

Work on various established rhetorical techniques concerning critical evaluation of arguments and abstract concepts, providing context and frameworks for new information as it is received, and mobilizing primary and secondary sources to develop unique thought.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students should have ability to...

1. Sketch an outline of trans studies as a discipline and how it has developed over time, centering Black, Indigenous, transfeminine WOC and intersex individuals.
2. Initiate and undertake critical evaluations of arguments for the purpose of proposing creative solutions and intersectional coalition-building.
3. Mobilize trans theory by bringing theory to the real world.

Course Materials

All readings will be available on the course website through [OWL](#) in PDF format. Physical copies of books from which excerpts are pulled for class will be on course reserves at the Weldon Library (by the printers where the hold pickup area is) in case you want to read the whole thing; rest assured, they are all bangers. Films will be provided through link on OWL that leads to a film viewing portal that requires a UWO login to access; clips will be made available through public YouTube link or will be embedded on the course website. Any further materials will be easily accessible and free of charge through the OWL site.

IF students prefer to own physical copies of books, the following will be available at the bookstore ([Bookstore LINK](#)):

Mac, Amos, et al., editors. *OP Original Plumbing: The Best of Ten Years of Trans Male Culture*. First Feminist Press edition, Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2019.

- Price at bookstore: \$54.60; Amazon: \$33

Sullivan, Lou. *We Both Laughed in Pleasure: The Selected Diaries of Lou Sullivan, 1961-1991*. Edited by Ellis Martin and Zach Ozma, First edition, Nightboat Books, 2019.

- Price at bookstore: \$32.40; Amazon: \$25

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	Concepts	In Class	Due
1 1/6	Trans 101	C. Jacob Hale: "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals..." [1pg] Suggested: Susan Stryker, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin" [5 pages]	Trans Studies Trans 101 Transgender vs Transsexual Gender Flowchart Gender Wheel Cisgender Transgender Intersex GAAB/AGAB Gender Identity vs Expression	- Terminology Activity [non-binary wiki] [gender wiki] - Genderbread Person Activity	
2 1/13	The Question of Biology	1. Joan Roughgarden, <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i> (22-42 [20pg]) 2. Bruce Bagemihl, <i>Biological Exuberance</i> Chapter 1 The Birds and the Bees subsection "Within Genders, Without Genders, Across Genders" (52-9 [7pg]) 3. Ann Fausto-Sterling: "The Five Sexes" [5pg]	Sex vs Gender Sexual Selection Theory Sexual Diversity Gametes Intersex "Hermaphroditism" Biological Exuberance Non-Reproductive Sex Cross-Gender Expression	- Padlet Activity [link]	
3 1/20	Trans-antiquity	1. Ailee Ajoonian, "Monstrum or Daimon: Hermaphrodites in Ancient Art and Culture" [13pg] 2. Valerio Simini, "Cross-dressing and the sexual symbolism of the divine sphere in pharaonic Egypt" [85-91; 6pg] 3. Mary Weismantel, "Towards a Transgender Archaeology: A Queer Rampage Through Prehistory" [9pg] 4. Leah DeVun, <i>The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Gender from Genesis to the Renaissance</i> excerpt [16-18; 2pg]	Transantiquity Transgender Archaeology Androgynoi Galli Monosexual Gay Historiography Hermaphroditus "Sleeping Hermaphrodite" Primal Androgyne	- Virtual Statuary Activity	Personal Essay Due
4 1/27	Indigenous Pasts and Present	1. Evan Towle and Lynne Morgan, "Romancing the Transgender Native" [24pg] 2. Kai Pyle, "Naming and Claiming: Recovering Ojibwe and Plains Cree Two-Spirit Language" [13pg]	The "Generic Transgender Native" Ethnography "Third Gender" Trans*temporal Kinship Two-Spirit (2S)	- Video clips - Kali Spitzer Photography [portfolio website] - Kent Monkman [portfolio website] - El Museo Travesti (web archive)	

		Recommended: Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson, <i>Kumu Hina</i> [75min] [link]	Travesti		
5 2/3	Trans History Goes West	Susan Stryker, Ch 2 <i>Transgender History</i> [30pg] Recommended Reading: C Riley Snorton, <i>Black on Both Sides</i> Ch 4 “A Nightmarish Silhouette: Racialization and the Long Exposure of Transition” p139-175 [29pg]	Transvestism (TV) Cross-Dressing Progress Narrative Dress Code Laws Dress Reform The “Good Transsexual”	- Rhys Ernst (dir.), “We’ve Been Around: Lucy Hicks Anderson” short film [5min] - Transvestia Archive [link] Activity	Historical Figure Worksheet Due
6 2/10	The Invention of Sex (Prewar Era)	Michael Waters, <i>The Other Olympians: Fascism, Queerness, and the Making of Modern Sports</i> excerpt (pages 124-38; 171-83; 224-5) [27pg] Recommended Reading: Jules Gill-Peterson <i>Histories of the Transgender Child</i> Chapter 2	Sex Testing Gender Norms Gender Surveillance Identity Documentation Gender Markers Surgical Requirements Sex Segregation	- Concept Map Workshop	
7 2/17	No Class	READING WEEK			Concept Map Due
8 2/24	The Medical Model (Postwar Era)	1. Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” [16pg] 2. Jules Gill-Peterson: <i>Histories of the Transgender Child</i> introduction [~15pg]	Medical Model Gatekeeping Plasticity Estrogen (HRT) SRS/GRS DIY Hormones Gender Identity Clinic “Wrong Body” Trope Transition Narrative	- Lou Sullivan’s GID Application Activity - Mary Maggic Portfolio [link] - Informed Consent Map [link]	
9 3/3	Ballroom & the Stonewall Uprising	1. Jennie Livingston, <i>Paris is Burning</i> (1990, 78min) 2. <i>STAR Manifesto</i> [2pg] 3. Julia Serano, <i>Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity</i> excerpt “Trans Woman Manifesto” [7pg]	Trans Rights Movement Stonewall Uprising Drag Ballroom Transfemininity Transmisogyny Transfeminism Transmisogynoir	- SOPHIE song lyrics activity - Sign up for discussion lead	Media Analysis Worksheet Due
10 3/10	The Butch/FTM Border Wars	1. Lou Sullivan, <i>We Both Laughed in Pleasure</i> excerpts [34 pages] 2. Selections from <i>Original Plumbing: The Best of Ten Years of Trans Male Culture</i>	FTM Transmasculinity Butch Drag King Boi Testosterone	- Newsletter Activity: FTM Newsletter Archive [link] , Metamorphosis [link] - <i>We Both Laughed</i>	Discussion Lead

			(HRT) Top Surgery Bottom Surgery	<i>in Pleasure</i> activity	
11 3/17	The Transgender Tipping Point	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Transgender Tipping Point [link] 2. Dean Spade, <i>Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics and the Limits of Law</i> Ch 4 Administrating Gender [21pg] 3. Carta Monir, “Stealth Mechanic” [link] 	Visibility Trans Tipping Point Trans Representation TDOV, TDOR Trans Rage Passing Stealth Clocking Bathroom Bills Critical Trans Politics	- Matti Brice, <i>Mainichi</i> [game] - Guest Lecture	
12 3/24	Age of the Internet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avery Dame-Griff, “When It Was Ours: Queer and Trans Counterhistory of the Internet” YouTube video [first 57 minutes] 2. Thomas Page McBee, “Why Tumblr Is Perfect For The Trans Community” BuzzFeed article [link] 3. JB Brager, “Livejournal Made Me Gay” [link] <p>Recommended Reading: Tobias Raun, “Archiving the Wonders of Testosterone via YouTube”</p>	Trans Internet Cultures Tumblr Genders Trans Twitter “I Identify as an Attack Helicopter” Birles Lesbians Who Look Like Justin Bieber	- Group Archive Activity - Bklyn Boihood tumblr archive - Final Project Workshop	
13 3/31	Beyond Binaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jack Halberstam, “Queer Art of Failure” [3pg] 2. Marquise Bey, <i>Black Trans Feminism</i> “Introduction: Abolition, Gender Radicality” excerpt 	Genderqueer Agender Genderfluid Demi-genders Androgyne Neutrois Gender Nihilism Gender Outlaws Gender Failure Black Trans Feminism	- GOD IS. TRANS exhibition [link] - Gender Mapping Activity - 101 Gender Outlaws activity - What to Do Activity	
14 4/7	Conclusion	None	None	- Evals - Final Project Sharing	Final Project

Final Grade Breakdown

In-Class OWL Forum Posts: 30%

Short Assignments: 30%

- Personal Essay 5%
- Historical Figure Worksheet 7.5%
- Media Analysis Worksheet 7.5%
- Discussion Lead 10%

Concept Map: 15%

Final Project: 25%

All assignments generated for this class will be discussed during class itself. In-class forum posts, short assignments, and even your final project will be shared with your peers. In this way, none of the work you produce will be created in a vacuum, as it all has an audience of the other students in this class and even, in the final project, the London community at large. This helps with engaging the course material critically, and should clarify any questions you have, as the work you bring in will be a germ for class discussion. Since most of the assignments can be completed individually, sharing with the group will be necessary in order to test your ideas out before your final project. Much of the work generated is low-stakes or graded credit/no credit in order to encourage creativity, experimentation, and most of all, participation.

Due Dates At-a-Glance

Date	Week #	Assignment
1/20	Week 3	Personal Essay
2/3	Week 5	Historical Figure Worksheet
2/20	Week 7	Concept Map
3/3	Week 9	Media Analysis Worksheet
3/10	Week 10	Discussion Lead
3/31	Week 13	Final Project

In-Class OWL Forum Posts: 30% (x13)

At the beginning of every class will open with a 10-minute forum post to get our juices flowing before we delve into class discussion. On OWL, prompts and questions will be posted that address that week's general topic and/or reading assignment in order to generate topics for discussion. Posts may pose questions of the readings, particularly concerning points of confusion, answer responses written by other students, reflect on the readings generally speaking from a personal perspective, connect to previous readings, raise objections, or make any relevant remarks concerning the material and how it relates to the course or your own life. This is an exercise to help get you into a critical mindset before going into dissecting the readings during class discussion. Please respond in paragraph form in a critical fashion in as little as 4 sentences and topping out at 250 words (2 paragraphs). These posts will be credit/no credit, so as long as the post is something remotely relevant, it will receive full marks. They also function as attendance.

Short Assignments: 30%

#1 Personal Essay 5% (x1 1-2 pages) [Individual Assignment]

By Week 3, write an expository essay on your own personal relationship with gender.

Topics include:

- Growing up as a certain gender
- Feelings of gender alignment or misalignment
- Thoughts about gender roles
- First time you met a queer or trans person
- Coming out as queer or trans (either you or a friend or relative)
- Where your interest in trans studies comes from

Goals for this assignment include:

- Getting comfortable talking about gender and using your own relationship with gender as a jumping-off point for the research you will engage in during the course
- Articulating what you would like to become more knowledgeable about during the course
- Preparing yourself to come into class open to understanding gender in new ways // letting go of preconceived notions surrounding gender

#2: Historical Figure Worksheet 7.5% [Individual Assignment]

By Week 5, choose a trans, intersex, and/or gender-nonconforming historical figure (of your own or from lecture) from before 1960 to analyze on the provided worksheet. Trans figures can include those from antiquity (including mythological or divine figures), [art](#) (sleeping Hermaphroditus, musician Wilmer Broadnax), the American Frontier (see Boag's *Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past*), and more. The worksheet will ask questions on the basic information regarding the figure chosen as well as questions relating to course terms and content.

Goals for this assignment include:

- Diving deeper into a moment in trans history
- Mobilizing terms and concepts from class to explore trans history
- Observing how trans figuration has manifested across time

#3: Media Analysis Worksheet 7.5% [Individual Assignment]

By Week 9, choose a piece of media (on your own or from the [Transgender Media Portal](#)) to analyze on the provided worksheet. Media can include comics, games, films, TV episodes, visual art, and more. The worksheet will ask questions on the basic information regarding the work chosen as well as questions of theme in relation to course content. Be prepared to use fine grain analysis of either quotations/dialogue, stills, imagery, audio, or clips to explore how trans identity is expressed in your piece of media.

Goals for this assignment include:

- Discovering new media by trans artists
- Mobilizing terms and concepts from class to explore media/art
- Analyzing how media can express the nuances of trans identity

#4: Discussion Lead 10% [Individual or Group Assignment]

In week 10, each student gets to focus on a reading of their choice from the Original Plumbing magazine anthology (both required texts you may acquire at the bookstore, or I can send you a digital copy of your section). Students may form groups to present certain readings together as a group. Ideally, students will specialize in an area of interest while learning about a broad range of topics from peers in a divide-and-conquer reading strategy. A signup sheet will be passed around in week 9.

Goals for this assignment include:

- Gaining experience in leadership and public speaking
- Facilitating open conversation with peers and professor as a fellow theorist
- Training for seminar-style upper-level coursework
- Fostering critical thinking and engaging in generous idea sharing
- Decentralizing knowledge structures to encourage horizontal, peer-to-peer learning rather than top-down hierarchical teacher->student learning

Midterm: Concept Map 15%

(x1 11x17 page) [Individual or Group Assignment]

At some point over Reading Week (week 7), students will turn in a concept map in lieu of a midterm, figured on one single-sided 11x17 page (physical or digital) to be posted in the classroom. Students will pick one key concept from the previous 6 weeks of material, pulled from the syllabus “concepts” column, and create a visual map including a focus question that links the term chosen to other terms in the course. These ideas can be linked hierarchically, thematically, rhizomatically, or otherwise, but must be portrayed visually, whether by hand, digitally, or as a collage. Concepts should be approved by the professor. Further directions for this assignment and examples will be shared in class during the “Concept Map Workshop” in week 6 (see schedule).

Goals for this assignment include:

- Linking concepts across readings
- Deeper understanding of one field of inquiry relevant to student’s personal interests and studies
- Engage visual and tactile learning to apply ideas in a hands-on format, then share what was learned with peers

Final Project: 25%

Community Option [Individual or Group Assignment]

Go out in the world and use what you have learned in our class to make connections either locally in London or with trans scholars across the globe, then report what you experienced and learned back to the class. The last week of class, students will present their projects to the group via a research poster akin to what one would present at a conference. Prepare an informal “pitch” to introduce what your project was and what you learned to passers-by. If you have an idea for a

final project that isn't on the topic list, please e-mail me to approve your idea before moving forward with your project.

Here are some activities you can engage in:

- Visit the Pride Library
- Attend a drag show
- Attend an event organized or promoted by HALO, AWOL (Adventurous Women of London), or Pride USC
- Interview the organizer of Camp Wendake or Pride London
- Go to a Forest City Derby Girls or London Middlesex Roller Derby game
- Go to a performance of the Pride Men's Chorus London
- Interview the DJ of Rainbow Radio on 94.9 Radio Western
- Go to a meeting of CCLC-LGBTQ Social/Support Group, Coming Out Over Coffee, Forest City Men's Group, Forest City Queerios, Rainbow Optimist Club, Trans* London
- Interview someone who works for Intersex London or Rainbow Health Ontario
- Plan your own drag show or queer meetup
- Volunteer for PFLAG, HIV/AIDS Connection
- Interview a trans artist (whether a filmmaker, drag queen or king, weaver, etc)

Goals for the Final Project:

- Gain new comfort surrounding discussions of transness outside of the seminar
- Engage with the public in order to share what you learned in the seminar
- Learn more about trans culture in a hands-on way and relate lessons surrounding trans liberation to your own life

Creative Option [Individual or Group Assignment]

Make a comic, manifesto, short film, short story, podcast, video essay, zine, performance piece, pop-up book, or some other form of creative work inspired by the themes of the course. You could make a work about some gender feels™ you may have had, expand an idea from a canvas post into a longer artistic meditation, record a conversation with another student in class, etc, etc. The last week of class, students will present their projects to the group via a research poster akin to what one would present at a conference. Prepare an informal "pitch" to introduce what your project was and what you learned to passers-by. If you have an idea for a final project that isn't on the above list, please e-mail me to approve your idea before moving forward with your project.

Constraints:

- 3-5 pages of comics
- 5-10 pages of writing (creative or non-fiction)
- 3-5 minutes of video or sound-based art

Goals for the Final Project:

- Use course materials as a jumping-off point for your own practice
- Synthesize themes/ideas from other artists and theorists using your own voice
- Using the energy generated from the writings you did throughout the semester to power your creative thought process

Class Expectations

Readings and assignments should be completed prior to coming to class and will be posted about on OWL in detail before the expected deadlines, both in an announcement and under weekly modules. (The first week of class will show how to navigate the course website.) Content warnings for the week's materials will be shared via OWL announcements in advance of the readings and repeated on the first slide before in-person lecture to prepare students for potentially triggering content. (If you would like to excuse yourself from class due to upsetting content, no explanation is necessary, although returning is encouraged at the next break.) Classes meet once a week in person for two hours and 50 minutes with a ten- to fifteen-minute break in the middle. The first 10 minutes of class opens with a freewrite based on a prompt aligning with the week's content. The freewrite is posted to that week's forum on OWL and counts as attendance; ergo, if you miss an in-class freewrite by virtue of being absent from class, the mark cannot be made up. Freewrites are turned in after 10 minutes and marked per attempt (Credit/No Credit) as opposed to marked for quality (for example, if you do not finish, you will not be penalized). The freewrite is typically followed by a combination of lecture (~1 hour), group activities, and/or a workshop related to an upcoming assignment. Often, the last portion of class includes sharing what one turned in for the assignment due that week, so be prepared for your work to be seen and discussed with the whole class.

Finally, every week I will upload the slides from lecture *after* class on OWL for you to review. If for some reason in-person class is cancelled, a video lecture will be posted on OWL.

Email Policy

I typically respond to emails within 1 week of receiving them (most of that time is spent considering how to respond, for I read on delivery). If you want an immediate answer, talk to me after class. Alternatively, type "URGENT" in the subject box so I can prioritize replying sooner. Also, if you don't hear back from me after a week, feel free to email me again if I missed it.

Late Work Policy

TLDR: ask and you shall receive. Shoot me an email, talk to me after class, drop by my office hours, etc., ideally *before* the assignment is due. No need to fabricate an elaborate excuse; I move deadlines no questions asked. In fact, I would prefer *not* to know your intimate health details or wonder if your grandma really did pass away. If as a group the class wants to move a deadline due to other coursework or literally any reason at all, time is built into our in-person sessions to discuss changes both at the beginning and during the semester and can be brought up by students at any time.

Overall, students are not penalized for turning in work late. I would rather receive your work late than give you a zero. The only late work I do not take is the weekly OWL forum posts, since they are meant to generate discussion and are worth very little. However, I will offer opportunities for "bonus" posts in lieu of makeup work to help bump student grades towards the end of the term (this is particularly encouraged for students who missed the first week of class due to schedule changes and are pressed about missing potential marks). The rule of thumb for extensions and makeup work is to not use my magnanimity as an excuse to procrastinate but instead see this

policy as a show of respect towards your other obligations and life outside of school. Many assignments are meant to be shared with your classmates, so missing out on that crucial community-building aspect of the course is the only true loss you will experience from missing deadlines.

Plagiarism & Generative AI Policy

Considering for many this will not be your first college-level class, by now you should understand the pressures of higher education and that juggling a big courseload may create issues in time management. We will take time in class to start working on new assignments to brainstorm ideas or start an outline, so if you foresee issues with an assignment, please let me know and we can work out alternate deadlines. We can discuss this in person, during my office hours, or via email. If you still need time beyond what is given to finish an assignment, that can be resolved without resorting to cheating (see above late work policy). Working with a writing tutor through the school, talking with an academic counsellor for personal issues or an academic advisor for program-related ones, getting accommodations through the school (see below), dropping a class, or, the easiest option, simply asking for an extension are all alternatives to cheating that retain your integrity while alleviating your workload.

Specifically, the use of AI such as automatic translation tools, grammar checkers (including Grammarly, Quillbot, Ginger, ProWritingAid, etc.), image generators, and ChatGPT, in generating or editing work for the course is prohibited. This is due to the environmental impacts of AI, the ethical concerns raised by how sources of information are compensated for their use (such as in image generation), as well as to encourage original thought from students. As your teacher, a part of my job is to help with student writing, including grammar and syntax issues, so please keep your errors in so I can help you improve. If you are gravely concerned about submitting work with mistakes, have a friend or colleague read over your work first.

That said, using AI to help brainstorm ideas or gather information is permitted based on your own discretion, *albeit with an enormous caveat*: much of the work in trans studies is currently being written. Resources like ChatGPT do not have the depth or breadth of knowledge in this niche field to be considered an even remotely reliable source of information. Even asking for recommendations of what to read or who experts are in the field are not stable enough queries for even advanced AI models, as risk for hallucination is high; for example, ChatGPT has provided me made up names of imaginary books by authors I have inquired about, which was certainly unhelpful in my research and in fact wasted more of my time than if I had searched the web myself. To help with this problem, time will be taken in class to develop drafts, outlines, and perform other preliminary work on projects and assignments as a group, so you should have ample opportunities for asking for guidance during those times. If you have further questions, obviously I recommend asking me after class, during office hours, or over email, but you can also ask your peers, post on r/trans on Reddit, or ask other professors in the program.

Now, down to brass tacks: use of machine-generated text is monitored in the course using multiple software including those built into OWL such as Turnitin. If I receive an assignment that I suspect may have been generated using AI, you will receive a zero, a warning, and an offer to revise and resubmit with no penalty (e.g., you can turn in a piece of your own writing, and

your marks will not be reduced as a form of punishment). For your second infraction, you will receive, sign, and return an Academic Offence Form that I will provide to you that describes the cheating scenario and acknowledges you have received a prior written warning. This form will go on your permanent record with the school. Again, your assignment will receive a zero, but this time there will be no offer to resubmit. For your third strike, you're out. You fail the course. If you execute academic offences in other classes, your academic advisor and the director of your program decide whether you will be suspended or expelled altogether. Therefore, the consequences of plagiarism are quite serious, and should be avoided. Of course, alternatives are just one conversation away, whether with me, a colleague, your academic advisor, or otherwise.

Technical Requirements

- Access to OWL (if auditing, ask instructor about access)
- Ability to download and read PDFs and stream online videos
- Stable internet connection (including during class)
- Portable computer (or tablet/iPad) you can bring to class with internet access & typing capabilities

Electronic Devices

You may use any electronic aid you wish in class within reason. Using a computer to take notes, a phone to google a reference, an iPad to pull up a reading, or even headphones during an activity to promote focus are all fair game in my classroom. However, if you require the use of something that might be distracting to me or your peers, please ask permission first, whether verbally or over email in advance of class. This includes talking or texting on your phone, using recording devices, listening to audio using external speakers (as on a laptop or phone), and yes, even keeping an eye on a live soccer match (true story). Further, I highly discourage the use of AI during lecture. I find it extremely distracting. If you have a question about something that has been brought up, please just ask!

Support Services

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity here: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>.

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentssupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Class Ethos

This section contains general advice I like to give students before engaging with the course. This should give you a taste of what my expectations are as well as what the general vibe of the class will be.

- If you do not enjoy some aspect of class/the readings/a peer/the prof, please reach out to your academic advisor and spare yourself. I would rather you drop the course after the first week than be miserable the whole semester. (I promise, I will not take it personally.)
- In class, pay attention and be respectful of other people's time and emotional labour, whether you are taking up too much space or are a space cadet. If you are not attending class in good faith, please remove yourself. You are not obligated to engage with material you deem unacceptable! All I ask is that you do not impede other students' learning.
- Please be mindful before discussing potentially triggering topics and provide a verbal warning before discussing problematic content. This course provides a space for

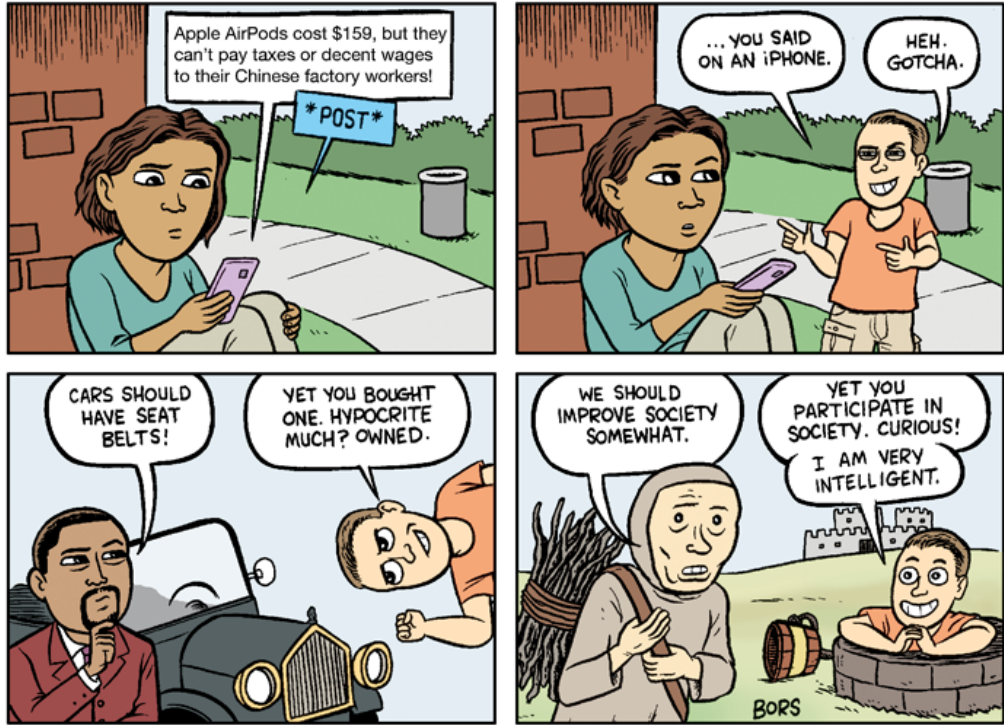
unpacking difficult topics (see footnote¹); so, please prepare yourself emotionally as well as be mindful of others' capacities before engaging with hard topics.

- Read your peers' input in the kindest light possible. The group will not have the same level of familiarity with correct terminology or language around these sensitive topics, and as we are learning together remember to leave your pitchforks online.
- If you think you're not understanding something, please speak up! Odds are if you are asking yourself a question, someone else in the class is wondering the same thing. That's not to say there are no stupid questions (see: devil's advocate policy below), but if you have a genuine question that is brought up in good faith it is always welcome.
- If you think you're the smartest person in the room, leave that attitude at the door. We are all at different levels of experience with the material, and we all have room to improve our understanding.
- We're all in this together. This is as much your course as it is my course. Any suggestions for improvements are encouraged, and most material and even deadlines are flexible if brought to my attention and posed to the group.
- Do the best you can in the time you have available. Submitting something that isn't perfect is better than submitting nothing; *some* effort is better than *no* effort. And, of course, it takes more effort to cheat than it does to just do your own work.

Prof Elk's Ground Rules

- Feel free to ask me or a peer to repeat or rephrase what was just said for clarity. This especially applies if I use an unknown term, as I am happy to provide a definition.
- Feel free to leave the classroom whenever; you do not need permission. That goes for any sort of personal issue that crops up during class that requires your absence like refilling a water bottle or taking a phone call. I will not ask because it is not my business. However, packing up and leaving while I am actively lecturing is distracting, so I kindly ask that you refrain from doing so if possible. If you know in advance you must leave early, let me know before class so I am not surprised. Ideally, please sit next to the exit so other students are not distracted nor follow suit. If you spontaneously need to leave due to an unforeseen event or emergency, if possible, please wait for the break to depart.
- Zero tolerance for sexism, racism, classism, xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia, et. al (includes talking over others/minimizing, playing devil's advocate, whataboutism [see cartoon below], or "it's just a joke" type behavior). This applies to your writing as well.

¹ Potentially triggering topics that can come up in class around trans issues include bodily harm (whether inflicted by self or others), dysphoria or dissociation, conversion therapy, sexual assault, murder, abuse (including of children), racial injustice, the genocide of indigenous peoples, the annihilation of indigenous cultures, and more.



Matt Bors, "Mr Gotcha", published on thenib.com (2016)

Collective Ground Rules

Content Warnings :

Length of Break :

Name/Pronoun Tags :

Technology Policy :

Call-ins?

Raising Hands?

Group Chat :

Other Goals/Objectives/Concerns :