

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
GSWS 3710G
Transnational Sexualities: Beyond Borders and Binaries
Winter 2026

Instructor: Cornel Grey
Class Time:
Location:
Office
Phone:
Email:
Office Hours:

This course examines how sexuality is shaped by global forces such as migration, colonialism, economic inequality, and international governance. Drawing on insights from feminist, queer, and trans scholarship, we investigate how sexual and gendered identities are constructed, managed, and contested across diverse cultural and political contexts. Key concepts explored include sexual citizenship, homonationalism, pinkwashing, biocitizenship, and sexual economies—frameworks that help us understand how inclusion and exclusion are structured on a global scale. We engage with case studies and scholarship from regions including the Caribbean, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, moving beyond Euro-American perspectives to highlight the intersection of sexuality with race, class, nation, and empire. Students will gain interdisciplinary tools to critically analyze how sexuality intersects with global power dynamics and becomes a key site of regulation, resistance, and transformation in the contemporary world.

ASSESSMENTS

Reading Responses (15%), ongoing

Throughout the term, students will submit three (3) reading responses (350-500 words each) engaging with different course themes. Each response should critically analyze at least two readings from a given week and explore their significance within transnational sexualities. Students should move beyond summary to engage critically with the authors' arguments, make connections between readings, and apply key concepts to contemporary issues, historical case studies, or personal reflections. Strong responses will demonstrate original thinking, draw comparisons across contexts, and reflect an understanding of the broader stakes of transnational feminist and queer scholarship.

Oral Presentation (20%), ongoing

Each student will deliver a 10–12 minute presentation on a topic related to course themes. Presentations should critically engage with at least two course readings and one external source and apply them to a contemporary issue, activist campaign, policy debate, or media representation. Students should craft an argument rather than simply summarize materials and should guide the class through key ideas using slides, handouts, or discussion questions.

Students are encouraged to select a topic that aligns with their research interests and can draw from a range of sources, including news articles, legal cases, social movements, cultural productions, or personal experiences. Creativity is encouraged—students may incorporate audio, visuals, or performative elements as long as they maintain a strong analytical foundation.

Op-Ed (15%), February 10,

Students will write a 800–1000 word opinion editorial (op-ed) that applies course concepts to a contemporary issue in transnational sexualities. The goal of this assignment is to practice writing for a public audience. Students should use accessible language, a clear argumentative structure, and compelling evidence to communicate why their topic matters.

Op-eds should take a clear stance on an issue related to sexual citizenship, homonationalism, pinkwashing, biocitizenship, transnational reproduction, sexual economies, or other course themes. Students should integrate at least three course readings and engage with a relevant current event, policy debate, or cultural phenomenon. Successful op-eds will be persuasive, well-researched, and written for a non-specialist audience. Students should study examples of op-eds from publications like *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, or *The Conversation* to get a sense of style and tone.

Submission Requirement: Students must include a short pitch paragraph (200–300 words) summarizing their argument before submitting the final piece.

Film Response (20%), February 17, March 10, March 17 OR March 24

Students will write a 1500-word critical response to **one** of the assigned films (*Pride Denied*, *Oriented*, *Made in India*, *First Person Plural*), using it as a lens to analyze a key theme from the course. The response should do more than summarize the film. It should offer a critical analysis of its politics, representation, and narrative choices, situating it within broader transnational feminist and queer frameworks.

Students should select at least two course readings to support their analysis and consider questions such as:

- How does the film depict sexuality in relation to race, migration, nationalism, or capitalism?
- What are the ethical implications of the film's perspective?
- How does the film challenge or reinforce dominant narratives about sexuality and citizenship?

Responses should be analytical and argumentative, making a clear case for how the film contributes to discussions on transnational sexualities.

Digital Project (30%), March 31 and April 7

Students will work in groups of 2–4 to create a multimedia digital project that explores a key issue in transnational sexualities. This can take one of three formats:

Option A: Podcast

Option B: Digital Zine or Website

Option C: Video Documentary

ASSIGNED READINGS

ORIENTATIONS¹ (January 6)

Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 2001. "**Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality**." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7 (4): 663–79.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1984. "**Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses**." *Boundary 2* 12/13:333–58.

MAPPING METHODOLOGIES² (January 13)

Browne, Kath, Niharika Banerjee, Nick McGlynn, Sumita B., Leela Bakshi, Rukmini Banerjee, and Ranjita Biswas. 2017. "**Towards Transnational Feminist Queer Methodologies**." *Gender, Place & Culture* 24 (10): 1376–97.

Ghisyawan, Krystal Nandini. 2022. "**Subjective Mapping: Queer Decolonial Methodology**." In *Erotic Cartographies: Decolonization and the Queer Caribbean Imagination*, 39–74. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

SEXUAL CITIZENS³ (January 20)

Alexander, M. Jacqui. 1994. "**Not Just (Any) Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas**." *Feminist Review*, no. 48: 5–23.

Carrillo, Héctor. 2017. "**Immigrant Sexual Citizenship**." In *Pathways of Desire: The Sexual Migration of Mexican Gay Men*, 159–78. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Gosine, Andil. 2015. "**CAISO, CAISO: Negotiating Sex Rights and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago**." *Sexualities* 18 (7): 859–84.

HOMONATIONALISM⁴ (January 27)

Bacchetta, Paola, and Jin Haritaworn. 2016. "**There Are Many Transatlantics: Homonationalism, Homotransnationalism and Feminist-Queer-Trans of Color Theories and Practices**." In *Transatlantic Conversations: Feminism as Travelling Theory*, edited by Kathy Davis and Mary Evans, 127–43. Routledge.

Murray, David A.B. 2014. "**Real Queer: 'Authentic' LGBT Refugee Claimants and Homonationalism in the Canadian Refugee System**." *Anthropologica* 56 (1): 21–32.

Wahab, Amar. 2016. "**Calling 'Homophobia' into Place (Jamaica): Homo/Trans/Nationalism in the Stop Murder Music (Canada) Campaign**." *Interventions* 18 (6): 908–28.

FILM: **Pride Denied**

PINKWASHING⁵ (February 3)

Atshan, Sa'ed. 2020. "**Global Solidarity and the Politics of Pinkwashing**." In *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*, 71–111. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

¹ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 2220E (Feminist Theory and Practice across the Disciplines).

² Interested in more? Check out GSWS 3320 (Introduction to Gender and Feminist Methodologies).

³ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 1024 (Introduction to Equity, Diversity and Human Rights).

⁴ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 3173 (Introduction to Queer Theory).

⁵ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 3173.

- Jackman, Michael Connors, and Nishant Upadhyay. 2014. "**Pinkwatching Israel, Whitewashing Canada: Queer (Settler) Politics and Indigenous Colonization in Canada.**" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 42 (3/4): 195–210.
- Ritchie, Jason. 2015. "**Pinkwashing, Homonationalism, and Israel–Palestine: The Conceits of Queer Theory and the Politics of the Ordinary.**" *Antipode* 47 (3): 616–34.

FILM: **Oriented**

WAR ON TERROR⁶ (February 10)

- Cerretti, Josh. 2019. "**No Politician Can Afford to Let Women Come Home in Body Bags: The Militarization of Sexual Violence.**" In *Abuses of the Erotic: Militarizing Sexuality in the Post-Cold War United States*, 25–52. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Puar, Jasbir K., and Amit Rai. 2002. "**Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots.**" *Social Text* 20 (3): 117–48.
- Thobani, Sunera. 2019. "**The Visuality of Terror: Gender, Sex and Desire in War.**" *Social Identities* 25 (4): 523–41.

READING WEEK (February 17)

BIOCITIZENSHIP⁷ (February 24)

- Charles, Nicole. 2022. "**Risk and Suspicion: An Archive of Surveillance and Racialized Biopolitics in Barbados.**" In *Suspicion: Vaccines, Hesitancy, and the Affective Politics of Protection in Barbados*, 45–65. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Chávez, Karma R. 2018. "**The Necropolitical Functions of Biocitizenship: The Sixth International AIDS Conference and the U.S. Ban on HIV-Positive Immigrants.**" In *Biocitizenship: The Politics of Bodies, Governance, and Power*, edited by Kelly E. Happe, Jenell M. Johnson, and Marina Levina, 117–32. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Dryden, OmiSoore H. 2024. "**Blood Donor Questionnaire and Anti-Black Homophobia.**" In *Got Blood to Give: Anti-Black Homophobia in Blood Donation*, 75–91. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRODUCTION⁸ (March 3)

- Calkin, Sydney. 2023. "**How Indian Abortion Pills Travel the Globe.**" In *Abortion Pills Go Global: Reproductive Freedom Across Borders*, 25–45. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Kroløkke, Charlotte Halmø, and Saumya Pant. 2012. "**'I Only Need Her Uterus': Neo-Liberal Discourses on Transnational Surrogacy.**" *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 20 (4): 233–48.
- Twine, France Winddance. 2017. "**The Fertility Continuum: Racism, Bio-Capitalism and Post-Colonialism in the Transnational Surrogacy Industry.**" In *Babies for Sale?: Transnational Surrogacy, Human Rights and the Politics of Reproduction*, edited by Miranda Davies, 105–22. London, UK: Zed Books.

⁶ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 1022 (Gender, Justice, Change), GSWS 1024, GSWS 2270 (Women, Law and Social Change).

⁷ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 2244 (Women and Health).

⁸ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 2244 and GSWS 2440 (Reproductive Justice).

FILM: **Made in India**

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION⁹ (March 10)

- Briggs, Laura. 2012. "**From Refugees to Madonnas of the Cold War.**" In *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*, 129–59. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hubinette, Tobias. 2021. "**From Orphan Trains to Babylifts: Colonial Trafficking, Empire Building, and Social Engineering.**" In *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption*, edited by Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, 139–49. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Myers, Kit W. 2025. "**A Genealogy of Transracial and Transnational Adoption.**" In *The Violence of Love: Race, Family, and Adoption in the United States*, 21–51. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

FILM: **First Person Plural**

SEXUAL ECONOMIES¹⁰ (March 17)

- Blanchette, Thaddeus, and Ana Paula da Silva. 2023. "**Whore's Passport: Racism, National Identity, and the Trafficking of Brazilian Women.**" In *White Supremacy, Racism and the Coloniality of Anti-Trafficking*, edited by Kamala Kempadoo and Elena Shih, 103–18. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brennan, Denise. 2004. "**Selling Sex for Visas: Sex Tourism as a Stepping-Stone to International Migration.**" In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, 154–68. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Tyburczy, Jennifer. 2025. "**Introduction: Sex on the Move.**" In *Queer Traffic: Sex, Panic, Free Trade*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR¹¹ (March 24)

- Ben-Lulu, Elazar. 2021. "**Let Us Bless the Twilight: Intersectionality of Traditional Jewish Ritual and Queer Pride in a Reform Congregation in Israel.**" *Journal of Homosexuality* 68 (1): 23–46.
- Lim, Jason, and Alexandra Fanghanel. 2013. "**Hijabs, Hoodies and Hotpants': Negotiating the 'Slut' in SlutWalk.**" *Geoforum* 48 :207–15.
- Riggio, Milla Cozart. 2020. "**Playing and Praying: The Politics of Race, Religion, and Respectability in Trinidad Carnival.**" *Journal of Festive Studies* 2 (1): 203–35.

TRANS*/NATIONAL¹² (March 31)

- Chea, Jolie. 2024. "**Toward a Trans* Refugee Critique: Notes on the Southeast Asian American Antideportation Movement.**" *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 11 (1): 97–110.

⁹ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 1024, GSWS 2270 and GSWS 4464.

¹⁰ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 1022, GSWS 1024, GSWS 2270 and GSWS 4464.

¹¹ Interested in more? Check out GSWS 1022, GSWS 1024 and GSWS 2263 (Intersections of Race, Class and Sexuality).

¹² Interested in more? Check out GSWS 2273E, GSWS 2274 (Introduction to Transgender Studies), GSWS 3173.

- Clarkson, Nicholas L. 2020. "**Terrorizing Transness: Necropolitical Nationalism.**" *Feminist Formations* 32 (2): 163–82.
- Falek, Joshua. 2024. "**Passports, Prisons, and Every Space Between: Gender Self-Determination, Anti-Blackness, and the Capacity of X.**" *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 11 (1): 111–34.

DIASPORIC FORMATIONS¹³ (April 7)

- Bain, Beverly. 2017. "**Fire, Passion, and Politics: The Creation of Blockorama as Black Queer Diasporic Space in the Toronto Pride Festivities.**" In *We Still Demand!: Redefining Resistance in Sex and Gender Struggles*, edited by Patrizia Gentile, Gary Kinsman, and L. Pauline Rankin, 81–97. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Diaz, Robert. 2016. "**Queer Unsettlements: Diasporic Filipinos in Canada's World Pride.**" *Journal of Asian American Studies* 19 (3): 327–50.
- Oswin, Natalie. 2015. "**World, City, Queer.**" *Antipode* 47 (3): 557–65.

¹³ **Interested in more?** Check out GSWS 1024, GSWS 2230 (Introduction to Black/African Diaspora), GSWS 2263, and GSWS 2412 (Black Geographies).