

History 275, Fall '09: Trans/Gender in Historical Perspective
Professor Anne Enke

Office Hours: 102B Ingraham, Tues 12:15-1:00, and Thurs 2:15-3:30

Most social institutions of Europe and the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries have presumed that there are females and there are males, and that there is a clear distinction between them; laws, customs, and social arrangements enforce behaviors that support the appearance of binary gender. And yet, throughout recorded history, humans have also belied this neat appearance: people have defied culturally constituted ideas of maleness and femaleness, sometimes crossing from one to the other (and sometimes back again), sometimes “passing,” sometimes “becoming,” and sometimes refusing an either/or designation altogether. Biological bodies, as well as social roles, tell a complex story in which the determination of male and female is neither obvious nor simple. In body, behavior, and/or belief, people have regularly exceeded cultural expectations of binary sex/gender, confounding efforts to determine whether sex/gender does or should reside in body, behavior, psyche, clothing, or culture, as well as whether people’s sex/gender is fixed and stable or malleable and changing.

This course focuses on relatively recent sex/gender crossing from the 19th century Europe through the 20th century United States up to the present day. We will consider the perspectives of people who themselves passed, crossed, transitioned, transed, or otherwise defied binary sex/gender appearances. Alongside, we will consider medical perspectives, gender theory, and the work of contemporary trans activists. Through our readings, lectures, and discussions, we will gain an understanding of the historically and culturally specific ways that people have addressed sex/gender crossing and/or ambiguity, from an era in which medical experts fixed sex/gender on the body to current efforts to protect gender expression for all people. We will also seek a better understanding of the ways in which “crossing” is intricately connected to social status, race, age, and class. Our sources include memoir, medical documents, historical monographs, autobiography, law, queer and transgender theory, film, and social movement treatises.

Required Course Books

(available at Room of One’s Own; and on Reserve at College Library)

Stryker, *Transgender History*

Foucault, *Herculine Barbin*

Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*

Boylan, *She’s Not There*

Beattie, *Labor of Love*

Required Course Reader

(available at Student Copy, Memorial Union; and on Reserve at College Library)

Course Requirements:

You must fulfill all requirements in order to receive a passing grade.

Attendance at all lectures and discussions sections is required.

Lectures: You should come to lectures having read the material for that day, and be ready to actively engage in lecture/discussion. Occasionally, I will hand out a notecard on which you should write a question and/or comment related to the reading. This is *required* and I will read it, but it will *not be graded*. I will also occasionally give you *self-graded* quizzes that are designed to help *you* assess your understanding of the material (you will not hand them in).

Attendance and Participation in Discussion Sections: 30%

Your teaching assistant, Ashley Cundiff, will clarify the components and expectations for your section participation grade.

Two Reflection Papers, 1 single-spaced page. 5% each (total 10%). You will write one reflection paper for each unit of the course, reflecting on some part of the unit that you found particularly challenging or compelling. Ashley and I will read them. They will be *ungraded*, but *they are required* (thus, you receive a score of 0% if you do not hand it in, or 5% if you do).

Due September 29 and November 5.

Three Exams: 15% each (total 45%)

There will be one exam taken at the end of each unit that will correspond to that unit. Study guides for the exams will provide a list of possible terms and questions that might appear on the exam; they will be distributed early in each unit so that you may study for the exam as we proceed through the readings and lectures.

Exam dates: October 6, November 10, December 15.

Final Paper or Zine Project: 15%.

This requires work with course material; it does not require external research. You will receive an assignment sheet detailing the requirements and expectations early in the semester, and it will be due near the end of the semester.

Accessibility: Everyone, regardless of disabilities or special needs, is welcome in this course. Please let me know if you need any accommodations in the instruction or evaluation procedures in order to facilitate your full participation. The McBurney Center provides useful assistance and documentation.

Computers and cell phones: I ask that you do not use laptops in class unless, for reasons of disability and accessibility, you need one to fully participate in lecture (let me know if this is the case). I also ask that you turn off cell phones before lecture starts, and keep them in your bag for the duration of lecture.

Class Schedule:

Introduction: Sex/Gender Puzzles, Myths, and Terms

Sept 3 (no reading)

Unit One: Gender Crossing and the Medical Creation of Binary Sex

Sept 8 Stryker, *Transgender History*, Prologue and Chapter 1

Sept 10 Foucault, *Herculine Barbin*, "My Memoirs" p. 3-115

Sept 15 *Herculine Barbin*, "The Dossier" and "A Scandal at the Convent" (119-end)

Sept 17 Alice Dreger, "Prologue" and "Chapter One: Doubtful Sex" from
Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex

Sept 22 Anne Fausto Sterling, "Dualing Dualisms" from *Sexing the Body*

Sept 24 Fausto-Sterling, "That Sexe Which Prevaieth"

Sept 29 Cheryl Chase, "Hermaphrodites with Attitude"

Reflection Paper 1 Due

Oct 1 Judith Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone"

Unit Two: Passing and the Rhetoric of Deception: Trans at Mid-20th Century

Oct 6 **Unit 1 Exam** *Transgender History*, Chapter 2

Oct 8 Talia Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers"
Gladys Bentley

Oct 13 Harold Garfinkel, "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status"

Oct 15 Virginia Prince, "Men Who Choose to be Women"
Harry Benjamin, "Transsexualism and Transvestism"

Oct 20 Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*

Oct 22 *Stone Butch Blues*

Oct 27 *Stone Butch Blues*

Oct 29 *Stone Butch Blues*
Feinberg, "A Movement Whose Time Has Come"

Nov 3 Harry Benjamin Institute *Standards of Care*; Brice Smith guest lecture

Nov 5 *Transgender History*, Chapter 3

Reflection Paper 2 Due

Trans/Gender Fall '09

Unit Three: Why Bodies Do/Don't Matter: Trans at the Turn of the Millennium

Nov 10 **Unit 2 Exam**

Nov 12 *Transgender History*, Chapters 4 and 5

Nov 17 Jennifer Finney Boylan, *She's Not There*

Nov 19 *She's Not There*

Nov 24 Taylor Flynn, "The Ties that (Don't) Bind"

Dean Spade, "Compliance Is Gendered"

MKD and Asher, "Hatch! Mister Sister"

Nov 26 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec 1 Thomas Beattie, *Labor of Love*

Dec 3 *Labor of Love*

Dec 8 Jamison Green, "Look! No, Don't! The Visibility Dilemma"

Riki Anne Wilchins, "Birth of the Homosexual" and "Imaginary Bodies,
Imaginary Minds"

Dec 10 International Bill of Gender Rights

Dec 15 **Unit 3 Exam**