

TH101: Intro to Transgender History

Spring 2025

Teacher: Mr. Blue

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Course Description:

This is an introductory course to transgender history in the US. The course work is built upon Susan Striker's *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. We will start with course terms and work our way from the 1800s to the early 2000's. The book discusses research, activists, and major historical events. Course content will build throughout the semester.

This is an online introductory course open to all individuals who would like to learn more about the transgender community. Course work will not be graded, and participation is optional. I do hope to build a welcoming classroom where people feel safe to engage in open discussions. The course lectures will be live on YouTube with recordings uploaded to the YouTube page. Class discussions will be held on the discord channel. Documents and further course descriptions can be found at satyrarts.com under Intro Trans History

Learning Outcomes:

- To learn terms relevant to transgender identity
- To have self-reflective discussions around the transgender history in the US
- To explore historical movements for social change in the transgender community
- To understand where today's misinformation has stemmed from in the US

Course Readings:

Stryker, S. (2017). *Transgender history: The roots of today's revolution* (2nd Ed.). Seal Press

Course Content:

Lectures: <https://youtube.com/@introtranshistory?si=1g6HVpOMsViln8H1>

Discussion Board: <https://discord.gg/apX967tWMX>

Course Resources: <https://satyrarts.com/syllabus>

Course Assignments:

Discussion Boards

Discussion Boards are on the discord server Intro Trans Studies. You will need to introduce yourself in the welcome chat in order to enroll in the course and engage with class discussion. There will be weekly Discussion questions set up in the chapter channels. The main goal of the discussion questions is:

- How did the topics from this chapter confirm or change information you already knew about transgender history?
- What was the biggest take away you learned from the people in this chapter?
- How do events from this chapter reflect in the transgender community today?
- What was the most meaningful movement in this chapter for you?

Transgender History Events

On Satyrarts.com under Intro Trans History is a chapter Breakdown of major events and people. Pick one person or event from that list from any chapter and complete one of the following using information from the book and outside sources

Paper: Write a 3–5-page double space paper providing further information about that person/event. Think of this like a magazine/news article where you highlight great accomplishments and major points that stood out to you.

Video: Create a 3–5-minute video discussing further information about that person/event. Think of this like a skit or short presentation where you highlight great accomplishments and major points that stood out to you.

Creative Project: Create any form of visual art that was inspired by that person/event. Try to incorporate symbolic imagery or key words. Think of this as a collage or as creative inspiration.

Email this project to introtranshistory@gmail.com if you would like your project shared on the website or YouTube channel with the name you would credit to be given to. Projects can also be shared with the discord channel for discussion.

Self-reflection

At the end of the course type a 2-page double space or make a 3-minute video about what you learned from the course. Was any of the information new? Did you come into the course with your own misgivings about the transgender community?

Email this project to introtranshistory@gmail.com if you would like your project shared on the website or YouTube channel with the name you would credit to be given to. Projects can also be shared with the discord channel for discussion.

Student Etiquette

Harassment of other students, trolling, or bullying will gain you a 7 day temporary ban from course engagement. You will still be able to see the course content but not engage in discussions.

Continued behavior will progress to a month-long temporary ban and then a permanent ban.

Investigation of such accusations will be allocated to the teacher until such point that the course grows big enough for assigned moderators.

Doxxing or stalking students is cause for a permanent ban with no/low course access.

This includes harassing individuals that are not a part of the transgender community that are asking questions or trying to learn. Not everyone may have transgender individuals in their life, and this is a space for education.

Monetization

Due to course lectures being on YouTube there is a chance this course grows big enough to reach a point where it gains an income. In the event that this happens a proposed breakdown of funds is:

20% to Susan Striker due to course content being developed off of her book

30% to Mr. Blue due to building the course, creating lectures, and allocating time to moderating course discussions and assignments

50% to proposed transgender non-profit towards transgender rights in the US

Chapter Breakdown:

Chapter One

The first chapter breaks down the overall goals of the book. Since there has been a lot of changes in terms and definitions in the last hundred years the author is focusing on people that move away from their assigned gender. This chapter also provides a comprehensive list of terms surround the trans community. It breaks down the differences between gender and sex as well as examining how sex is not a binary and how it diverges. This goes well with some of the work early researchers did in the 1930s-1950s that she goes into later.

Chapter Two

Though the book focuses mainly on the 1900s, to give context to the movement we get some background into the 1800s. This chapter contains a list of cities that made cross dressing illegal in the 1850s and tells of the first wave feminism that began at that same time which ties into later chapters. It delves into the work of Magnus Hirschfeld, whose work focused on a just society that would understand that sex and gender was rooted in biology (2017, Ch. 2, Para. 13). His work was destroyed during the Nazi book burnings while he was touring Europe giving conferences on trans care. His story explains the setbacks from early progress for trans care and the erasure of a lot of trans history. The chapter also focuses on the trans network in the US that helped provide health care and necessities to trans people across the country. This network was started by Virginia Prince who faced police harassment for her postal relationship with another cross dresser. This leads into the next chapter that focuses on the riots from the 1950s-1970s.

Chapter Three

As we head into the mid-1900s we move into political activism. 1965 was when the first successful multiracial gay-straight alliance began when the Tenderloin neighborhood was being displaced for urban renewal and redevelopment (Ch.3, Para. 17). This was after a series of riots due to the mass arrests of cross dressers for suspicion of prostitution, vagrancy, or nuisance crimes that the author sets up to explain how things got so bad and how different groups came together to fight against it. During this time discrimination against trans people in housing and employment were at an all-time high.

Chapter Four

Chapter four leads into the 1970s and the separation of the trans movement from gay and feminist movements. Homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This broke ties between the gay and trans movement as the gay community was celebrating its freedom from the mental health establishment while the trans community was working to seek out medical care and fighting how the mental health establishment treated them. The feminist movement during this time was becoming more critical of gender roles. Butch and fem lesbians were being marginalized within the lesbian feminist community. The author includes this narrative to tie in the changes later as butch lesbians find a new home in society as men. Transgender feminist Beth Elliot had accusations come out from an old college friend that she was a pervert and a rapist. As this controversy spread, the trope of “transsexual rapist” circulated through grassroots lesbian networks (Ch. 4, Para. 21). This same trope is used in propaganda for anti-trans legislation today.

Chapter Five

Going into the 1990s, a lot of small progress was made. Postoperative transsexuals could marry as their current gender. Transgender became a catch all term for all nonnormative forms of gender expression. *The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto* shifted old trans-exclusionary feminist debates into a new register. This is when the author starts to wrap up a lot of the narratives the previous chapters had threaded together. She focuses on how different social movements that had separated in the last 40 years finally start working together again. Though the relationships are tedious and there were still groups of people that were not accepting of other political groups. The author explores how in the past transmasculine people would often disappear into the woodwork of society but now they were the forefront of the idea of transgender.

Chapter Six

This chapter ties in 2000's history. The author focuses on the rise in visibility for the trans community but also the conflicting medical and political fights. There is growing social media attention and films featuring trans stories. There is also the mistreatment and political fights coming against trans people as cases start coming out around whether title VII and Title IX protect trans rights and discrimination. This chapter focuses on a desire for the fight to continue and a questioning hope for the future.