#TransJusticeSyllabus

Sociologists for Trans Justice, 2021

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Contact Information:

Should you want to contribute to the syllabus or have any questions, please contact sociologistsfortransjustice@gmail.com.

About the Syllabus:

In society today, we are presented with a paradox of sorts: on one hand, there have been significant social and political advances regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. Yet, on the other hand, with increasing visibility and progress, there is also a simultaneous and almost inevitable increase in the backlash targeting the most vulnerable segments of the LGBTQ population – trans and non-binary people, and particularly trans and nonbinary communities of color. In 2020, at least 44 trans people in the U.S. lost their lives to fatal violence, the majority of whom were Black transgender women including Monika Diamond, Nina Pop, Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells, and Riah Milton. Additionally, trans people experience social, economic, and political marginalization due to the lack of legal representation, violence in public spaces, barriers to gender-affirming healthcare, legal name and gender changes, as well as other seemingly neutral administrative systems that force people into narrow binary categories of gender in order to get their basic needs met. It is clear that racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, and cissexism intersect in ways that shorten the lives of trans people.

The #TransJusticeSyllabus seeks to uplift the work of trans Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (TBIPOC) scholars and centering scholarship on the intersections of racial justice and trans justice, much of which emerges from work resisting anti-Blackness and colonization. The term TBIPOC is meant to include all Black trans people, Indigenous trans people, and all other trans people of color (i.e., Latinx trans people and Asian trans people) We chose to use the term TBIPOC instead of TPOC to acknowledge the ways in which Black and Indigenous people’s unique experiences of violence and cultural erasure differ from other people of color’s experiences of marginalization. This decision was based in part on scholars’ and activists’ use of the term QTBIPOC.

To learn more about how the #TransJusticeSyllabus differs from the other resources available on this site (such as the Trans Studies Bibliography), please click here. This page will also review how to properly cite the syllabus and to integrate it into your course.

We would like to acknowledge those who were able to help inspire, compile, and adapt this syllabus. Thank you to everyone who submitted recommendations to the committee, to everyone
who was part of Sociologists for Trans Justice who contributed to this version of the syllabus, and to the American Sociological Association for their support.

If you are planning on adapting this syllabus for a course of your own:

1. Be sure to include the following disclaimer statement at the top or bottom of your bibliography: “This syllabus was adapted from the “#TransJusticeSyllabus compiled by the Sociologists for Trans Justice Committee for Advancing Trans and Intersex Studies in Academia” and include the link: https://s4tj.com/transjusticesyllabus/.

2. Send a courtesy email to sociologistsfortransjustice@gmail.com, notifying us of your intention to use this syllabus.

Suggested ASA Citation:


Following the recommendations of Dr. Z Nicolazzo, should any person want to honor the labor and effort it takes to create and maintain this bibliography, you can contribute financially to trans people in several ways, including:

1. Making a one-time or ongoing donation to community-based trans organizations;
2. Contributing to causes and initiatives tagged with the #TransCrowdFund hashtag;
3. Ensuring that trans people, particularly trans women of color, are brought to your campus/organization/association and compensated fairly for their intellectual contributions.
4. Volunteering your time to work alongside trans-centered and led committees and organizations including Sociologists for Trans Justice.

Should you want help identifying organizations to contribute to financially and/or with your time, please reference Week 14 of the Weekly Readings section of Dr. Z Nicolazzo’s Trans* Studies in Higher Education syllabus as well as resources provided by S4TJ.

A Note on Accessibility, Logic, and Design:

We recognize that students come from a variety of backgrounds and have different experiences within the higher education system that may bar their full participation and access to our courses. As such, we provide links to all materials. Whenever possible, we link to free, open-access resources. For those without institutional access to academic journals, we recommend searching Trans Reads.

We also recommend considering ways of making the content and structure of courses more accessible to students, as disabilities can be both visible and invisible, and formal accommodations can be difficult to acquire. Additional resources regarding accessible syllabi and practicing pedagogy can be found here: Accessible Syllabus and here: Trans Inclusive Classrooms.
In organizing this syllabus, we recognize the sections we have provided are not the typical sections you would expect to find in a transgender studies syllabus. We chose themes that we felt captured central debates in trans studies without isolating trans traumas from a broader context of trans joy, resilience, and life. Please read the section descriptions for more information about how we conceptualized these section titles, and feel free to use and adapt as you would like. As such, some articles are occasionally listed twice throughout the syllabus as they are relevant to more than one content area/debate. At the end of the syllabus we also include a list of non-academic organizations engaged in crucial work and theorizing on the intersection of trans liberation and racial justice.

Suggested Sources:

Trans of Color Theorizing

While race, gender, and sexuality have traditionally been separate spheres of study, TBIPoC scholars and scholarship offer intersectional analyses that center their lived experiences and speak back to trans studies, queer studies, gender studies, and other disciplines. These selected readings reconfigure our understanding of language, categories, history, power, and more.

Aizura, Aren Z., Marcia Ochoa, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, Trystan Cotten, Carsten Balzer/Carla LaGata (Eds.). 2014. Decolonizing the Transgender Imaginary [Special Issue]. Transgender Studies Quarterly 1(3).


Matika Wilbur & Adrienne Keene. 2019. “Episode #6: Indigiqueer” from All My Relations Podcast

Feminisms

While feminism and trans liberation may seem like natural allies, sharing a commitment to gender equality, their relationship is somewhat fraught. Since the 1970s, feminists have debated whether trans people are “good” for feminism or advance its goals. Trans people, in part through the development of transfeminism, assert their own theories of gender and inequality, carving out multiple visions of trans liberation that both converge with and depart from other feminists.


Bettcher, Talia M. and Susan Stryker (Eds.). 2016. **Trans/Feminisms** [Special Issue]. *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3(1-2).


Camminga, B. “**Disregard and Danger: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the Voices of Trans (and Cis) African Feminists**.” The Sociological Review 68, no. 4 (July 2020): 817–33.


Ideadestroyingmuros. 2009. “**Manifiesto para la insurreccion transfeminista**” *Blogspot*.

Stay Alive, Fight Back: Imagining Trans Futures

This week, we focus on the resistance and resilience of people and communities to multiple forms of violence and the ways TBIPOC folks survive and thrive in the midst of and in response to violence. Instead of separating trans history from trans activism, this section envisions TBIPOC legacies of struggle, resistance, and resilience alongside the context of current activism, with both past and present building of trans futures.


Dharmadhikari, Sanyukta. 2018. “Equal to killing us”: Why India’s transgender community rejects trans bill.”


Hunter, Lourdes Ashley. “Every Breath a Black Trans Woman Takes is An Act of Revolution.”


Inquiry.


Nation and Citizenship

*These selected readings (re)conceptualize nation, belonging, and citizenship from trans perspectives. They also review how colonization, the policing of borders, and the criminalization of migration impact trans, intersex, and gender diverse people.*


The Trouble with Whiteness

*In the context of this syllabus as one that uplifts racial and Indigenous justice through trans studies scholarship, this week focuses on the relationships between trans lives, trans studies, and whiteness. The critical approach of these articles toward whiteness challenges the normative position of whiteness and troubles the production and reproduction of white supremacy.*


The Many Arms of the U.S. Carceral State

This week, we consider the impact of policing and prison on TBIPOC in the United States. While many articles focus on the prison itself, the carceral state is defined broadly to include the policing activities of other state entities. These articles demonstrate the hyper-policing of TBIPOC, as well as considering alternatives to the carceral state.

Abi-Karam, Andrea. 2015. “There is no such thing as prison reform: An interview with CeCe McDonald.” Open Democracy.

BCRW Videos. 2014 (Mar. 31). “CeCe McDonald, Reina Gossett, and Dean Spade: Police + Prisons Don’t Keep Us Safe - We Keep Each Other Safe” (Video).


Gossett, Che. 2014. “We Will Not Rest in Peace: AIDS Activism, Black Radicalism, and Queer and/or


Representation: A Double-Edged Sword?

*This week, we examine (mis)representations of TBIPOC. Articles cover representation in film, television, social media, and news media, sometimes touching on multiple media. Most representations either reduced TBIPOC to pitiable, yet inevitable victims of violence, or flattened and defanged their identities through transnormativity and homonormativity.*


Green, Kai M. 2015. “‘Race & Gender are Not the Same!’ is Not a Good Response to the ‘Transracial’/Transgender Question OR We Can and Must Do Better,” TheFeministWire.com


Trans Bodies and Health

This week, we think critically about the medical, medicalized, and pathologized paradigms of TBIPOC experience. Instead of a focus on health disparities, articles in this section primarily cover topics related to medical and mental health access and responses to unjust health systems.


Social Policy 4(7).


Hwahng, Sel J., Bennett Allen, Cathy Zadoretsky, Hannah Barber, Courtney McKnight & Don Des Jarlais. 2019. *Alternative Kinship Structures, Resilience and Social Support among Immigrant Trans Latinas in the USA, Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 21:1, 1-15,


**Higher Education**

This week, we consider TBIPOC experiences in higher education. Most articles examine the complex exclusion TBIPOC experience in Primarily White Institutions (PWIs), although some consider Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).


Work in Formal and Informal Economies

This week’s readings focus on discrimination against TBIPOC in the workplace, and on how they navigate these formal and informal economies. Because the criminalization and stigmatization of sex work disproportionately harm TBIPOC, these topics are included in the study of work/employment.


“Know Your Rights - Employment General” National Center for Transgender Equality. [Report]

Trans of Color Methodologies

In this section, we consider trans of color as methodology. How do TBIPOC ontologies offer unique ways of knowing the self and others? How does centering TBIPOC alter or disrupt established methodologies? These readings cover a range of methods including qualitative approaches, auto/ethnography, content analysis, and archivism.


Organizational Profiles

[Baltimore Safe Haven](#)
[Black & Pink](#)
[Black Trans Travel Fund](#)
[Brown Boi Project](#)
[Casa Ruby](#)
[House of Tulip](#)
[Immigration Equality](#)
[Marsha P. Johnson Institute](#)
[No Justice, No Pride (DC)](#)
[Okra Project](#)
[Sylvia Rivera Law Project](#)
[Trans Tech](#)
[Trans Women of Color Collective](#)
[Transformative Justice Law Project](#)
[TransLash](#)
[TransLatin@ Coalition](#)