DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES

GDST 301-4 – Queer Genders Poetics of the Body: Transgender and Transsexual Desire, Subjectivity, and Cultural Productions

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Lecture: Fridays 09:30 – 13:20 AQ 4120
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Course Description:
This course examines the cultural production of transgenderism and transsexuality in relation to questions of embodiment, desire, subjectivity, space, language, community making, policies and institutional boundaries. Our methodology will be interdisciplinary (arts, humanities, and social sciences) and our theoretical framework will be grounded in a Foucauldian analysis of the discursive construction of bodies and sexualities ("somatechnics"), postmodern feminist theory, and queer studies.
The broad context of our investigations will be the analysis of the historical constructions of trans identities and the relation of trans culture and knowledge production to power (economics, law, medicine, and the state apparatus). In pondering on the limits of representability and the constraints of the legible body, we will look at the different ways in which trans individuals and communities articulate their subjectivities and social identities against the erasure, invisibility, and containment imposed by larger social structures. Works of literature, cinema, and visual arts will help us explore through a psychoanalytical framework the structures of desire, fantasy, identification, and fetishism underlying the articulation of the trans body, as well as the constructed binaries between trans and non-trans individuals, and our “fantastic investments” on the trans body. Finally, we will consider the production of space for trans identities and communities, the role of the city (especially Vancouver), urban subcultures, social movements and academic scholarship, and the vexed relation of transgender and transsexuals to feminist and queer positionalities.

Course Texts and Courseware:

In-class Screenings:
Kiss of the Spider Woman (dir. Hector Babenco, 1985) She’s a Boy I Knew (dir. Gwen Howarth, 2007)
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (dir. J. Cameron Mitchell, 2001)

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
25% Attendance and participation (includes presentation and research activities)
10% Blogs
10% Critical response to literature (4 pages)
15% Paper (6 pages)
15% Final creative project
25% Final research project (12 pages)

Prerequisites: GDST 200

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW POLICY T10.02 WITH RESPECT TO “INTELLECTUAL HONESTY,” AND “ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE” (WWW.SFU.CA/POLICIES/TEACHING)