

Stem the Tide: Trans Studies Against Authoritarianism

2026 Summer Session in Gender/Sex/uality In/Justice

Instructors: Ava L.J. Kim, Ph.D., & Christoph Hanssmann, Ph.D.

Organizer: Sari van Anders, Ph.D.

Administrative Support: Kyla Mayne

Days/Times & Format: 4 online sessions, 3 hrs each 10am-1pm Pacific time/1-4pm EST: June 10th, June 17th, June 24th, & July 8th.

Meetings on Zoom!

Summary: This four-week mini-course examines the global rise of anti-trans politics and how authoritarian movements increasingly mobilize “gender” and “transness” as a central mobilizing language. Both nationally and transnationally, attacks on trans life may appear to be a moral panic, but they also reflect broader efforts to dismantle redistributive social institutions and undermine research-based knowledge. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship in trans, queer, and feminist studies; political theory; comparative literature; and the social sciences; the course traces how these dynamics operate across interrelated domains where the legitimacy of trans existence is being systematically contested. Among these are political economy, science and medicine, systems of imprisonment, immigration, state bureaucracies, and competitive sport. Through weekly readings and discussion, participants will analyze how these arenas emerge as testing grounds for broader authoritarian strategies that reshape bodily autonomy, the function of the state, the politics of knowledge, and public life more generally. At the same time, the course will engage key debates within trans studies and activism that question whether “gender” itself remains a sufficient analytic framework for understanding these political transformations. By situating present conflicts within longer histories of authoritarianism and social movements, the course aims to equip participants with conceptual tools for interpreting and resisting the contemporary escalation of anti-trans politics.

Goals for Summer Sessions in General:

- Develop a critical language and transnational analysis for the rise of authoritarianism across nations, with a particular eye for the role of anti-trans violence
- Draw connections to abolitionist, feminist, queer, disability, and anti-colonial social movements in various locations
- Create tools for sharing key learnings with (your own) comrades, students, and co-conspirators

Principles & Guidelines: The summer session is a collective product and process. While the summer session theme and readings have been prepared for participants, how we engage with them and what we take from the experience will result, in part, from our individual and collective preparation and participation practices. We will discuss group guidelines during the first meeting and can have additional discussions throughout the session. The following expectations, guidelines and advice can help participants show up intentionally in the summer session:

1. **Own your intentions and your impacts.** Respect each other’s experiences and feelings by taking responsibility for the effects of your words. On the other side, if you have a strong reaction to something, let others know. Be open to dialogue.
2. **Take risks and lean into discomfort.** We are all in process. Challenge yourself to contribute even if it is not perfectly formulated.
3. **Give space, take space.** Share speaking time and try to speak after others who have not spoken. Listen and respond to others instead of simply waiting for your turn to speak.
4. **Actively listen.** Find ways to respectfully challenge others and be open to challenges of your own views. Think about how to question ideas without personal attacks.

5. **Strive to meet everybody's access needs.** Listen to and learn about the things people say they need in class. Pay attention and make room.
6. **Refer back to the topics and readings that we're discussing.** Keep in mind that the only thing we have in common is this course and the readings we've completed. If you refer to things outside the session, try to relate them back to the readings and lecture at hand so that everyone can contribute.

Roles: Ava and Chris' primary role within the summer session is as a facilitator, with Sari's support – helping to monitor and manage the space and guide discussions in productive and sometimes challenging directions. If you receive feedback about the direction of the conversation or the amount you've spoken, please do your best to accept the feedback in the spirit it was offered, with respect and a sense of community. You are always welcome to reach out to Chris, Ava, or Sari directly with questions, concerns, and suggestions! For more technical issues, like access to the readings, please contact Kyla, Sari's Lab & Research Coordinator.

Accessibility: Please let us know if there are ways we can make the summer session more accessible to you, whatever your dis/abilities and accommodation needs are. You can contact us with any questions or notes.

Location of Course Materials: All required readings and course materials will be available through Google Drive.

Week 1: June 10th, Foundational Concepts (~55 pgs)

- Bassi, S., & LaFleur, G. (2022). Introduction: Trans-exclusionary politics by other means. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 9(3), 460–462. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-9836106>
- Amin, K. (2025, April 23). How anti-trans attacks forge the anti-social state. LPE Project. <https://lpeproject.org/blog/how-anti-trans-attacks-forge-the-anti-social-state/>
- Butler, J. (2024). Introduction: Gender ideology and the fear of destruction. In *Who's Afraid of Gender?* (pp. 3–36). Random House.
- Callison, W., & Gago, V. (2025). The far-right international versus anti-fascist internationalism. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 124(4), 858–868. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-11963160>
- Ferreira da Silva, D. (2024). Untitled (notes on fascism this time). *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 123(2), 418–428. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-11086811>

Week 2: June 17th, The State and Materialism (71+ pgs)

- Gleeson, J. J., & O'Rourke, E. (2021). Introduction. In *Transgender Marxism* (pp. 13–47). Pluto Press.
- Bhattacharya, S. (2026). Apocalyptic everyday: Koti lessons on Queer Theory. *GLQ*, 32(1), 31–55.
- Editorial Board. (2025, May 20). Deep state chainsaw massacre: Elon Musk's DOGE moonshot. *N+1*. <https://www.nplusonemag.com/issue-50/the-intellectual-situation/deep-state-chainsaw-massacre/>
- Atuk, T. (2024). "If I knew you were a travesti, I wouldn't have touched you": Iatrogenic violence and trans necropolitics in Turkey. *Social Science & Medicine*, 345, 116693.
- OPTIONAL: Mai, Y. (2025). Navigating constraints: Activist strategies in the Vietnamese LGBT+ movement. *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and-National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 13(1), 59–71.

Week 3: June 24th, Affect, Victim, Space, Panic (~46 pgs)

- Lamble, S. (2026). Carceral diagonalism: The punitive safety politics linking left and right transnational anti-gender mobilizations. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 51(3), 595–620. <https://doi.org/10.1086/738987>

- Schall, T. E., Moses, J. D., Dietz, E. A., Stamm, L. E., Penny, J., & Scheim, A. I. (2026). Dangers of a politically motivated research agenda on transgender health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 116(2), 192–196.
- Adjepong, A. (2023). Queer African feminist orientations for a trans sports studies. *TSQ Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 10(2), 153–159.
- Andermann, J., & O'Bryen, R. (2025). Introduction: The new right and Latin America – Affects, discourse, media, performance. *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 34(4), 471–484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569325.2026.2619077>

Week 4: July 8th, Where we go from here (~50+ pgs)

- Tudor, A. (2026). Right-wing times: Fascism, left/right convergences, and the relationship of “gender-critical” to anti-gender. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 51(3), 621–647. <https://doi.org/10.1086/738994>
- Gill-Peterson, J. (2025, July 21). Reject transgender liberalism. *The Baffler*. <https://thebaffler.com/latest/reject-transgender-liberalism-gill-peterson>
- Stephens, Ash, & Hereth, J. (2026). “Queer” Means Centering Criminalized Survivors: Lessons from Abolition Feminism. In A. Walker & A. Wodda (Eds.), *Abolition and Queer Justice* (1st ed., pp. 214–226). University of California Press. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.34829432.16>
- Lee, C. J., Stanley, E. A., DeCristo, J., & Hwang, R. (2024). Introduction: Enemies and friends. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 11(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-11131649>