

Trans* Pedagogy



“The resilience of transgender students gets them to campus. Once they are there, colleges must do a better job providing equal access to the education and support they deserve.”

Faughn Adams, “Transgender Students Deserve Equal Access”

Focus Questions

1. How do we create trans* inclusive syllabi?
2. How do we flag trans* inclusivity in our course descriptions?
3. How do we teach trans* topics?

Tips for developing syllabi

- **Add trans* authors to your syllabus.** These can include trans* authors writing about non-trans topics. Think about texts both *about* and *by* trans people.
- **Include a diversity of narratives** across gender identification, race, class, ability, religion, age, citizenship status, and so on.
- **Don't just have a “trans* day” or “diversity day.”** Try to draw connections and keep the topic relevant all quarter long.
- When choosing texts, remember that we can critique trans* texts; they are not perfect and can be used to **constructively explore erasures, growth of the field, historical shifts, etc.**
- Don't forget to **utilize the Stanford Library resources**, including Special Collections and databases like “LGBT Life” and “Alexander Street” on [Searchworks](#).

Writing course descriptions

- Is it enough to simply include “gender” as an axis of analysis in your course?
- Does “LGBT” or “queer” signify that the course contains trans*/transgender content?
- What are the terms we want to be certain to work into course descriptions? Are there terms we should *not* include?

When considering these questions, we ought to consider how students are finding our courses (e.g. what key terms are they searching in the course catalog); what is the promise of a course (e.g. how much trans* content is expected in a course that names “trans*” or “transgender” in the course description); and what is the purpose/goal of the course description?

Tips for Teaching Trans* Content

- Use proper language and pronouns, for all people present in the classroom as well as in your discussions or lectures about the material and authors.
- Pay attention to inclusive language more generally in your lectures and discussions. For example, if you are talking about “men” and “women,” do those categories include trans* people and if not, do we need to start marking the unmarked categories by referring instead to “cisgender men” and “cisgender women”?
- Don’t ask trans* students to teach these issues for you. Instead, invite a guest lecturer, get comfortable enough to teach the material yourself, or use supplementary videos/interviews/texts to help you teach the material.

Resources

Beemyn, Genny and Susan Rankin. *The Lives of Transgender People*. Columbia University Press, 2011.

Chronicle Special Report: *Transgender on Campus*. [Click here.](#)

Chronicle Video: “Ask Me: What LGBTQ Students Want Their Professors to Know” [Click here.](#)

“Trans Pedagogy 101” blog post. [Click here.](#)