The Gender Binary and American Empire

Spring 2023
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00AM-10:15AM
Gilman 10
Course # AS.100.396 (01)

Figure 1. Photograph of We’Wha, c. 1879-1894, via the Getty Museum

Professor Jules Gill-Peterson
Pronouns: she/her/her’s
Office: Gilman 392
Office Hours: Thursday, 1:30-2:30PM, or by appointment
Email: jgillpe1@jh.edu

This discussion-based seminar explores some of the ways that the sex and gender binary was transacted through colonialism and statecraft in Americas, and particularly through US imperialism. The course will loosely cover the period from the fifteenth century to present, but will focus primarily on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will consider US imperialism as a form of racialized gender and sexual governance of both Indigenous and settler populations.
within and beyond the contiguous states, including Hawai‘i, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. What happens to the study of the modern gender binary if it is treated as a transnational artefact of US imperialism’s encounters with, and subjugations of, a multitude of cultures and nations that have survived the experience?

This is a writing intensive course that will involve learning history research methods.

**Learning objectives:**

- To survey a range of transnational historical and historiographical sources on gender and colonialism in the Americas, as well as US imperialism around the world. You will explore how to combine a range of different periods and areas of historical and interdisciplinary research, rather than following a preset narrative.
- To use history to think theoretically about gender, race, and colonialism. And to use theories of gender, race, and colonialism, in turn, to think about the practice and writing of history.
- To do historical research and write a short paper contributing to the scholarly debates in this subject area.

**Readings:**

There are no books required for this course. All readings will be made available in electronic format through Blackboard, either as scanned PDFs or online links.

**Assignments and Grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Source Interpretation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper Proposal</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Presentation (in class)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participation** (15 points): This is a qualitative grade, not a mathematical one. Our class is a seminar and relies on vibrant discussion. If you prepare for class by reading and taking notes, you can use those to prompt and reinforce your participation in discussion, to pose questions, or to try to answer questions posed by your peers and by me. Aim to bring one thing to class each session to share with the group if you are unsure how best to fulfill this part of your grade. Respond to your peers and offer thoughts, questions, confusions, and other interventions in the moment, as well. Our classroom is a space where we have permission to be vulnerable and exploratory in our participation, rather than be sure of everything we say.
**Primary Source Interpretation** (15 points): This assignment, due during Week 4, asks you to offer an interpretive reading of a primary source document concerning a colonial encounter between European colonizers and indigenous people. Drawing on the secondary sources we have read, the supplementary readings, and our classroom discussions, you will closely read one of the primary source documents from Thursday February 17th’s readings list. Answer the following question: do the colonizers seem to be acting from a belief in a gender binary in their encounters and clashes with Indigenous people? You will need to use textual evidence from the primary source, contextualized and supported by readings, to make your case. Your interpretation should be no longer than two pages, double spaced.

**Due date:** Thursday, February 17, by 9:00AM. Submit on Canvas.

**Final Paper Proposal** (15 points; automatic full credit if you complete this assignment): You will write up a three-page (double-spaced) proposal for your research term paper this semester. You are free to work on any time period and geographical location related to the course. Your proposal should have three components:

1. A provisional title for the paper and an abstract. An abstract is a one paragraph description of what you intend to research and explore in your paper. Introduce the topic and describe its scope (with relevant info like time period, geography, key figures, and so on). Offer a provisional argument, hypothesis, question, or problem that your paper intends to examine.

2. A research proposal: in one paragraph, or a bullet point list, explain what sort of research you will need to undertake to write this paper. Identify archives or special collections in which you would like to work (pandemic permitting; many good quality archival sources are available online), or other collections of primary sources that will form the core of your original research (there are many held at Hopkins; and a huge range of world-renowned archives in the Baltimore/DC region, though you are not obliged to pick a physical research site).

3. An annotated bibliography: identify three secondary sources that will help guide you with broader historical context, the historiography on your subject (if any exists), and relevant theories or other interdisciplinary scholarship you might need. Provide a full citation (in Chicago style) and then a short annotation of 2-3 sentences in which you explain why this secondary source is important to your work.

**Due date:** Thursday, March 9 on Canvas by the end of the day. If you complete this assignment, you will automatically get full credit. I will give you feedback on your ideas without it affecting your score.

**Research Report** (10 points; automatic full credit if you complete this assignment): Write up a two-page (double-spaced) report summarizing the findings of your primary and secondary source research so far. Explain how your hypothesis, or preliminary argument, has developed since your proposal. Explain any shortcomings or surprises that came during your research. Do
you have enough to write your paper now? Do you have too much material? Share any challenges, worries, or concerns you might have.

Due date: Thurs March 30th by the end of the day on Canvas. If you complete this assignment, you will automatically get full credit. I will give you feedback to help you develop your final paper without it affecting your score.

**Peer Review** (15 points; automatic full credit if you complete this assignment): On Tues April 12 we will not meet as a class. Instead, you will exchange drafts of your final paper by email. Read your partner’s draft and complete the Peer Review Worksheet (available on Canvas), answering all the questions as substantively as you can to help your partner. You will submit this worksheet on Canvas as an assignment to earn credit, but you also need to email a copy to your partner. They will email you their peer review of your draft, in turn. Use their peer review to help you revise your final paper. On Thurs April 14th you will meet with your peer review partner on zoom, or on campus if you can do so safely, to talk about one another’s papers and go over your peer review worksheets.

Due date: On Thurs April 12 send your draft to your peer review partner by 6PM. On Thurs April 14 submit your Worksheet on Blackboard and email it to your partner before class begins. You will use class time that day in a breakout room to talk about one another’s papers.

**Final Paper** (25 points): Your final paper should take the form of an academic essay, 10-12 pages double spaced, using Chicago style citation format with footnotes and a works cited list (the page count does not include the works cited).

Your essay, based on your proposal, subsequent research, and peer review, should have a clear argument that touches on the subject of the class: the gender binary and American imperialism (or colonialism in the Americas). Your argument should be substantiated by primary sources and your interpretation of those sources should be supported by secondary sources, whether historiographical, theoretical, or from other relevant disciplines. You should use the Chicago style of citation to clearly document your sources and citations, using footnotes as needed and with a works cited list at the end of your paper.

I will grade your paper using the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Argument</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Primary Sources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Secondary Sources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Work (from proposal to final)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Chicago Style</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Due date:** May 4th, by 11:59PM, on Blackboard.
In Class Presentation (5 points; automatic full credit if you complete this assignment): During the last week of class everyone will present on their research and final paper. You will give a 5-7 minute oral report on your research, the argument you are developing, and how the work has progressed so far. You can also mention any challenges you are facing as you complete your paper, or areas you are still mulling over. After each presentation there will be 5 minutes for your peers to ask questions and talk with you about your work. You are not required to have a visual presentation or powerpoint; you may simply speak from notes. Please do not read from your paper.

As long as you give your presentation, you will get full credit for this assignment. The goal is to get comfortable sharing your research and asking questions of your peers. I will randomly assign each half of the class to a presentation day during the last week of classes.

Ethics:

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on “Academic Ethics for Undergraduates” and the Ethics Board Web site (http://ethics.jhu.edu) for more information.

Disability Services:

Anyone who may need accommodations in this class can obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu. I will be very happy to provide any accommodations that I can. I am also committed to exceeding the university’s definition of accommodation whenever possible.

Classroom Climate:

I am committed to creating a classroom environment that values the diversity of experiences and perspectives that all students bring. Everyone here has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. I believe fostering an inclusive climate is important because research and my experience show that students who interact with peers who are different from themselves learn new things and experience tangible educational outcomes. Please join me in creating a welcoming and vibrant classroom climate. Note that you should expect to be challenged intellectually by me and your peers, and at times this may feel uncomfortable. Indeed, it can be helpful to be pushed sometimes in order to learn and grow. But at no time in this learning
process should someone be singled out or treated unequally on the basis of any seen or unseen part of their identity.

If you ever have concerns in this course about harassment, discrimination, or any unequal treatment, or if you seek accommodations or resources, I invite you to share directly with me. I promise that we will take your communication seriously and to seek mutually acceptable resolutions and accommodations. Reporting will never impact your course grade. You may also share concerns with the Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion (Darlene Saporu, dsaporu@jhu.edu) or the Office of Institutional Equity (oie@jhu.edu). In handling reports, people will protect your privacy as much as possible, but faculty and staff are required to officially report information for some cases (e.g. sexual harassment).

How to Take This Class:

- Complete readings before class meets. It will always benefit you to plan ahead to read over the course of the week, rather than in one sitting or the day of class. Take notes while you read, noting three types of information in particular: page numbers for key phrases, passages, and other references you might want to come back to; the key ideas, arguments, and modes of expression in the text; and your reactions, feelings, interests, questions, confusions, and other things you are left thinking about from the text.

- Come to class and participate consistently. Attendance is always conditional on your health; do not come to class if you are feeling unwell. Take notes during class, not to produce a transcript, but to help organize your ideas. You don’t have to answer a question or make an argument about the reading to participate. You can also ask a question, express a confusion or frustration, or form an opinion and ask for help of your peers. The classroom is a collaborative process, especially in this course.

- Turn in your written assignments on time. If you foresee an inability to turn in an assignment on time, please reach out to me with as much advance notice as possible so that we can find a fair accommodation.

- Seek out proactive support when you need it. I am available each week in office hours to support your success in this course however I can. We can also do much of the same by email, though it is less ideal. It always benefits you to get ahead of challenges and ask for help before the added pressure of deadlines.

How to Be OK:

I will teach this class from the premise that none of us—myself included—are going to be “ok” at all times. The pandemic has created a massive amount of uncertainty and exhaustion that has built up over time. We will follow university procedures, but we can also choose to exceed them in the name of caring for one another. I care deeply that each of us be as safe as possible, and I will prioritize that. I am committed to making this course humane and empowering under difficult circumstances.
With that in mind, some principles for this semester:

- We are all allowed to have trouble or difficulty. I will not judge you or ask for justification if you tell me you are having a hard time in the course.
- You do not owe me or anyone in this class any personal information. Johns Hopkins does not require any of us to disclose personal or health-related information in the classroom, or to take the course. You can make whatever choices you wish, and change them as need be, to take care of yourself.
- You are always welcome to talk to me about anything you might be going through and if I feel that I can't help you I will suggest someone else or a resource that can.
- If you need extra help, you need to miss class, or need more time with something, please ask. I'll do my best to work with you.

**COVID-19 University Policy**

General information about COVID-19 related policies at the university can be found at this site:

https://covidinfo.jhu.edu/

FAQs about these policies are available here.

If you are feeling unwell, even if you don’t think you are experiencing COVID symptoms, please do not come to class. If you do test positive for COVID, I will happily work with you to make sure you can take adequate time to rest and recover without it affecting your progress in the course. I am also committed to accommodating any difficulties arising from persistent COVID symptoms during recovery, or long COVID challenges.

**Course Schedule**
(February 23-April 28, 2023)

Note: recommended supplementary readings are not required each week. These readings are listed for several purposes. Given that our course covers a huge time span, geographical area, cultures, and countless historical events, the supplementary readings can help you get a better context for our discussions. Many are like “background readings,” while others are the essential texts or reference scholarly writings on a subject. You can also use the supplementary readings to help you with assignments, particularly the Primary Source Interpretation assignment. They will also be helpful starting points when you are looking for secondary sources for your research paper. These readings are either available electronically through the Hopkins library, or else I have uploaded PDFs to Blackboard.

<p>| Week 1 |
| Getting Situated: Transnational Histories of Sexuality |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues Jan 24</td>
<td>No readings—class introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended supplementary readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Getting Situated: The Coloniality of Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs Feb 3</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended supplementary readings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Did The Spanish Colonize with a Gender Binary?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Recommended supplementary readings:


### Week 4

**Interpreting the Colonial Encounter**

**Tues Feb 14**—*no class meeting*

**Thurs Feb 17**


**Assignment Due:** Primary Source Interpretation (submit on Canvas by 9:00AM)

### Recommended supplementary readings:

Week 5
Slavery and Gender

Tues Feb 21

Thurs Feb 23
- Harriet Jacobs, “Trials of Girlhood” and “Jealous Mistress” in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written By Herself* (Boston, 1861),

Recommended supplementary readings:
- Kristen E. Wood, “Gender and Slavery,” *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas* (Oxford University Press, 2010),

Week 6
American Anthropology as Two-Spirit Archive

Tues Feb 28
- Eliza McFeely, *Zuni and the American Imagination* (Hill and Wang, 2001), pp TBD.

Thurs Mar 2: No class meeting

Recommended supplementary readings:

**Week 7**  
**Research Week**

**No class meetings this week:** you will complete your final paper proposal (due Thurs) and spend time beginning your research.

**Tues Mar 7**

**Thurs Mar 9**

**Assignment due:** Final Paper Proposal

**Week 8**  
**Case Study: Hawai‘i and Mahu**

**Tues Mar 14**


**Thurs Mar 16**


**Recommended supplementary readings:**
- Andrew Matzner, *O Au No Keia: Voices from Hawai‘i’s Mahu and Transgender Communities* (Xlibris, 2001).

**Week 9**  
**NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK**

**Tues Mar 21**

**Thurs Mar 23**
### Week 10

**Case Study: The Philippines**

**Tues Mar 28**


**Thurs Mar 30:**


**Assignment due:** Research Report

**Recommended supplementary readings:**


### Week 11

**Case Study: Puerto Rico**

**Tues Apr 4**


**Thurs Apr 6**


**Recommended supplementary readings:**

Week 12
Peer Review Week

Tues Apr 11
No readings and no class meeting today; submit your draft paper to your peer and read it during our class time.

Thurs Apr 13
No readings and no class meeting today; instead of meeting today, get together with your peer review partner. Use the time we would have spent in class to talk with each other about your papers and share your peer review worksheets with one another.

Assignment due: Peer Review

Week 13
Case Studies: South Korea and Taiwan

Tues Apr 18

Thurs Apr 20

Recommended supplementary readings:

Week 14
In-Class Presentations

Tues Apr 25
No readings; in-class presentations

Assignment Due: Paper presentation
Thurs Apr 27
No readings; in-class presentations

**Assignment Due:** Paper presentation

**Assignment Due:** Final Paper Due Thursday May 4