

DTS 1000H1 Comparative Research Methods in Diaspora and Transnational Studies
Centre for Diaspora & Transnational Studies
Fall 2023

Instructors

Alejandra González Jiménez - alejandra.gonzalezjimenez@utoronto.ca

Edward Sammons - ted.sammons@utoronto.ca

Office Hours

González Jiménez – Wednesdays, 3pm –4pm (JHB235D)

Sammons – Thursdays, 2pm-3pm (JHB 230)

Weekly Meeting Time and Location

Thursdays, 2pm-4pm, JHB 230

Course Description

This graduate seminar course examines a variety of research methods and methodologies through the lens of different research topics related to diaspora and transnational studies. This semester, we will examine an assortment theoretical approaches and methods used to examine questions related to migration, human trafficking, leisure travel, and global medicine.

This course is paired with the DTS Speakers' Series. The assigned readings will prepare students for a meaningful engagement with the lectures presented as part of the Fall 2023 series. For five of our scheduled course meetings, students will attend lectures delivered by scholars whose work we will discuss in remaining meetings, as a group. In each instance, students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these special opportunities to engage directly with working scholars, inquire about their work, and workshop your own ideas.

Learning Outcomes

This course has two central aims:

- 1) to introduce students to different methodologies and research methods used across the humanities and social sciences.
- 2) to help students develop their critical analytical and communication skills.

Course Material

All books and articles are in print and available for purchase, and for accessing through the [University of Toronto Libraries](#) as e-books and hardcopies.

Methods of Evaluation and Due Dates

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Participation and exit notes 20% | weekly |
| 2) Reading responses 15% | weekly |
| 3) In-class presentation 10% | schedule TK |
| 4) Book review 15% | November 16 th |
| 5) Book review workshop 10% | November 23 rd |
| 6) Final paper 30% | December 7 th |

Course Expectations

Participation

Students are expected to come to class well prepared with questions and comments about what they have read, and ready to actively participate in class discussions. Participation will be evaluated according to the frequency and quality of interventions and the extent to which they contribute to class discussions. **Attendance for speaker appearance weeks is expected with any unexcused absence counting against final participation grade.**

Exit notes

At the end of each class, students will be asked to write a hard copy note outlining two or three comments or questions on the lecture and that week's readings. Comments can be about the clearest and the muddiest point of class/readings, or firmly understood points. Index notes are informal pieces of writing, we only want to know your thoughts. You will write an exit note five minutes before the end of every class and hand it over as you leave. You will write your note on an index card that we will provide. **Students are allowed to miss one exit note; subsequent misses will negatively impact final participation grade.**

Reading responses

Each student will complete six reading responses throughout the term – one each for each set of readings assigned. Reading responses represent the opportunity to show, in a more thorough manner, students' respective understanding of difficult texts. Everyone enrolled will submit five reading responses throughout the term based on the course readings.

Responses are not summaries of the readings. Instead, responses should identify reactions to the material (positive and negative) and elaborate. It is not enough to say "I like the book" or "I don't agree with the author;" the objective is to compose a response that can engender further discussion by way of how points are expressed and substantiated.

Each response should also include at least two questions that could be productively posed to the scholar whose work is under discussion. To facilitate use in discussions, each student will submit reflections and questions in advance of our meetings, so we can work together and refine them so you can ask them at the colloquium. Please note that, although reading responses are pieces of informal writing, you must proofread your work before submitting it. **Responses are due no later than Wednesday 10 a.m. and should not exceed 500 words. All reading responses must be submitted on time (extensions and submissions will not be accepted without exceptional arrangements).**

In-class presentation

Each student will give an in-class presentation (10-15 mins) of the readings assigned for a particular week. On the first day, students will pick the week they will present. **Presentations are not summaries of the readings. Instead, they should draw out connections, contradictions, and complexities that the readings examine. You are encouraged to bring in readings from previous weeks and current events if fitting. Your presentation must state the main idea of the texts and argument using your own words.** The aim of this assignment is to strengthen students' presentation and communication skills, as well as their capacity to synthesize

others' writings and to initiate a stimulating discussion. It also provides students with the opportunity to continue working on their skills of interpreting difficult scholarly texts, cultivate their questioning and critical thinking skills, as well as to present their ideas with sound evidence.

Book review

Each student will pick a book and compose a written review of it. Academic journals have a list of books available for review and will provide you with the book. This assignment aims at continuing developing your critical thinking and writing skills and to encourage you to publish your review in the journal from which you received the book. Your review should be between 750 and 1,500 words. More guidance will be given in class.

In-class book review workshop

Students will circulate their book review among peers for feedback. Grades will be based on active participation in the workshop and constructive feedback.

Final paper on research methods for MA students

Each MA student enrolled in DTS1000 will write a 10-12-page (~3000wd) paper discussing, comparing/contrasting as well as evaluating the methodologies and research methods of four books we are reading in this class. Questions that will guide your paper should include: What is the argument? Are there any counterarguments? What is the evidence? How was the evidence gathered? What are the assumptions present in the book that allow the evidence to support the argument? What is the theoretical paradigm guiding the book and how these shape the author's questions?

Final research paper for PhD students

You will write a 15-20-page (~5000wd) paper expounding and elaborating on some dimension of your dissertation research interests.

Course Schedule

Week 1: September 7

- Introductions

Week 2: September 14

- Faier, Lieba and Lisa Rofel. 2014. "The Ethnography of Encounters." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43(1): 363-377.
- Faier, Lieba. 2018. "Introduction: Elusive Matsutake." *Social Analysis* 62(4): 1-16.

EITHER

- Walters, Kimberly. 2020. "Moral Security Anti-trafficking and the Humanitarian State in South India." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 289-320.

OR

- Ramachandran, Vibhuti. 2019. "Saving the Slaving Child: Domestic Work, Labor Trafficking, and the Politics of Rescue in India." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 10(3): 339-362.

Week 3: September 21 - Talk by Lieba Faier

- "The Banality of Good: The UN's Global Fight Against Human Trafficking to Japan."

Week 4: September 28

- Williams, Bianca C. 2018. *In Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams, and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Navarro, Tami; Williams, Bianca C.; Ahmad, Attiya (2013). "Sitting at the Kitchen Table: Fieldnotes from Women of Color in Anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (3): 443–463.

Week 5: October 5

- Menon, Alka V. 2023. *Refashioning Race: How Global Cosmetic Surgery Crafts New Beauty Standards*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 6: October 12 – Bianca Williams and Nisrin Elamin in Conversation

Recommended:

- Elamin, Nisrin. 2018. "‘The Miskeet Tree doesn’t belong here’: Shifting land values and the politics of belonging in Um Doum, central Sudan." *Critical African Studies* 10(1): 67-88.
- -----, 2021. "[What Lies in the Rubble of the Muslim Ban after its repeal.](#)" *Cultural Anthropology Hot Spot Series*.

Week 7: October 19 - Talk by Alka Menon

Week 8: October 26

- De León, Jason. 2015. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 9: November 2

- Boaz, Danielle. 2021. *Banning Black Gods: Law and Religions of the African Diaspora*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University.

November 9 – Talk by Danielle Boaz

- Reading Week

Week 10: November 16

- Cheng, Sealing. 2010. *On the Move for Love: Migrant Entertainers and the U.S. Military in South Korea*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

*****Book review due*****

November 17 – Talk by Sealing Cheng

Week 11: November 23

- Book review workshop
- Research presentations by PhDs

Week 12: November 30

- Research presentations by PhDs
- Wrap-Up

*****Final paper due on December 7th*****