

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
Collaborative Specialization in Diaspora and Transnational Studies  
**DTS1000 - Comparative Methods in Diaspora and  
Transnational Studies**

**Time:** Thursday, 3-5 pm

**Location:** Teefy Hall 200 (57 Queen's Park Cres. East)

**Instructor:** Professor Ken MacDonald

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**Office:** 230A Jackman Humanities Building

**Office Hours:** Tues 2-4

**1) COURSE DESCRIPTION:** How much diversity can any society really tolerate? Postcolonial migrancy and the resulting diasporas/dispersions present not only a new cultural diversity and richness but also problematic differences that challenge social, political, and epistemological categories in terms of concepts such as exclusion and hierarchy, inclusion and equality, home and diaspora, native and stranger. This course introduces students to recent scholarship in Diaspora and Transnational Studies. The intent of the course is to both read broadly across relevant disciplines, but to read books as the products of research projects and to understand the structure of research design and the process of research carried out in each of the volumes. Our learning objectives, then, are as much oriented toward understanding the research process - understood as the practice of inquiry - as the accumulation of current knowledge in DTS. Understanding research within DTS is, of necessity, an interdisciplinary project as the subjects and methods of inquiry straddle conventional disciplinary boundaries. This doesn't diminish the importance of disciplinary training, but it does point to the need for DTS scholars to develop a theoretical, empirical, and methodological fluency that transcends conventional disciplinary boundaries. This course is designed to aid in that process. The books we will read have their roots in particular disciplinary perspectives but each of them, in different ways, point to how their projects both derive from and inform concerns that transcend disciplinary boundaries. This is a core course for the [Collaborative Specialization in Diaspora and Transnational Studies](#).

**2) COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- 5 Response papers (500 words maximum) (20%)
- Discussion Facilitation (5%)
- Innocent (5%)
- Annotated Bibliography of 30 items (20%) to be discussed in class - October 24 to be discussed in class
- Preliminary research problem and question (15%) Nov 7 - to be discussed in class
- A Research Proposal following standard SSHRC guidelines (to be provided) (35%). Further details will be provided but this should take your topical or theoretical interests and develop them into a research project - Nov. 28

### 3) COURSE FORMAT:

*Readings:* Discussions form the basis for this course. It is essential, then, that you complete the reading and are prepared to talk about them each and every class. Make sure that you are sufficiently informed to participate in a discussion during class. Given the particular concern of the class with methodological approach, we expect you to pay particular attention to research practice in the books. As you're reading, try to identify the research problem, research questions, and objectives that structure the project. These are often not made explicit in writing, so you will often need to interpolate. As you're reading and making notes, pay particular attention to the relationality among research problem, questions and objectives, and how these are expressed and addressed empirically in the books. Also, critically think about what insights you are drawing from the work and assess the logical argumentation (e.g., what are the author's main arguments or claims? Why do you agree/disagree with them? Are they adequately supported with reason and is primary or secondary evidence provided to support the reason? Is the relationality between the claim and the reason warranted? Etc.) Even when it is not your turn to lead discussion, come prepared with relevant questions, issues, or concerns to contribute to the discussion.

#### *Discussion Facilitators and "The Innocent(s):*

- I would like discussion to be student initiated as much as possible. To encourage this, each of you will be responsible for leading discussion for at least one class. When it is your turn to lead discussion, you will prepare a guide to discussion. These should not be summaries but commentaries on the readings and should be oriented toward generating discussion. That is, you should identify questions, insights, and quotations from the readings that will serve as the focus for class discussion. Each discussion will open with a 'review of the readings' in which you will be responsible for highlighting what you take to be the key concepts, ideas, theoretical perspectives, methodological concerns, thoughts, etc. developed in the readings for the week, (i.e. what's the primary value or contribution of the work) and your own thoughts on how the week's readings relate to each other and to material already covered in the course.
- The Innocent is a role that each of you will get to play once during the semester. The innocent must not read for the week. The innocent must also have no previous knowledge of the reading. You're coming in 100% cold. The role of the innocent is to keep each other accountable to the concepts being discussed and your ability to explain them. This is how it goes: Instructor or facilitator asks a question. Discussion ensues. At a point in the discussion I will turn to "the innocent" and ask for a recap. If there are gaps in "the Innocent's" recap, I'll students to provide for a clearer explanation: to effectively teach "the innocent."

*Response Papers:* You must write a response to the readings assigned for five classes. These should be 500 words (max) and:

- a) Provide a brief (one paragraph) summary. Where appropriate, identify the objectives and primary claim? How is it supported? What narrative strategies are used to

communicate the primary point? Where appropriate, identify the research question or problem being addressed? What methods of analysis are employed? Are you convinced by the author's argument? Why (not)? Etc.

b) Provide a critical analysis of the readings. What does the author do well (e.g., excellent conceptualization of a research problem, good articulation of research design, good sequential development of an argument, excellent narrative style, good application of appropriate evidence, etc.)? What flaws are apparent in the analysis (e.g., poorly developed research problem, limited consideration of perspectives, inarticulate presentation of discussion, poor logical argumentation, etc.)? What provocative or valuable insights are generated by the readings? What methodological, theoretical or empirical concerns do you have with the readings?

c) Provide two (2) well-conceived, clearly articulated, and non-rhetorical questions pertaining to the reading. These should be sincere questions that you would like to have responses to from your colleagues in the class. Discussion leaders for class that week should feel free to call on any of you and ask you to explain and address your questions.

You should also feel free to draw on other materials, experiences and texts in your commentary, but always do this in ways that illustrate, challenge, or emphasize some aspect of the weekly reading.

*Posting your Responses:* You are required to post your weekly writings to Quercus. These writings are an ongoing record of your interpretations of and reactions to the readings and course discussions. You will also be encouraged to respond to your classmates' entries every week. Your entry must be posted by 9 p.m. Wed night prior to the next class. You should read the posts from others in the class. This allows you to get a better understanding of what each other are taking away from the material and allows discussion leaders to better focus class discussion around your insights. Discussion leaders should incorporate reflections and questions from the Discussion page. **Because of the vagaries of Quercus, you will need to post your responses twice. Once to "Discussion" so your classmates can see them and once to "Assignments" so I can access them to grade.**

*Participation:* This course is built around discussion. Participation is important and expected. We learn from each other but that only works if we all engage. If you have difficulties expressing yourself, please meet with me and we can discuss ways to help you engage. Participation includes regular attendance; a demonstration that readings have been completed, commentaries carefully prepared; insightful contributions to class discussion, cooperation and tolerance for differing opinions, and attentive listening. For each class meeting you should come prepared to specify a passage or an idea from the reading that you found interesting or provocative and be able to explain your reasons for selecting this to the class. You should also be prepared to discuss how a particular reading aids or confuses your understanding of the issues we have been addressing in the course.

## PRIMARY ASSIGNMENT

The primary assignment for this class will be a research proposal following standard SSHRC Insight Grant guidelines (to be provided). Further details will be provided in class but this project allows you to take your topical or theoretical interests and develop them into a research project that could be carried out in practice. Elements of the assignment will be ‘scaffolded’ during the course and the point of the exercise is to provide training in conceiving of a research project from identifying an ‘object of study’ and establishing the research problem, through to methodological design. Even if you’re not engaged in a thesis based graduate program (e.g., course work or MRP M.A./MSc. Programs, this project allows you to develop a research project that you could possibly carry out, given the opportunity.

#### 4) READINGS

##### 1) WEEK 1 (SEPT 5) - INTRODUCTION: - SITUATING DTS

##### 2) WEEK 2 (Sept 12) - SCALING DIASPORA PART 1

Ho, Enseng (2006) *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Facilitator(s): Shadya Abu-Naim, Yasmine Agocs, Yixin Su

Innocent(s): Edward Yuan, Emily Udle

##### 3) WEEK 3 (Sept 19) - SCALING DIASPORA PART 2

Mays, Kyle T. (2022) *City of Disposessions: Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, and the Creation of Modern Detroit*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.

Facilitator(s): Adesola Anyaegbu-Lamuye, Ola Barqawi, Emily Udle

Innocent(s): Andrew Thomas, Yixin Su

##### 4) WEEK 4 (SEPT 26) - CONTINUANCE PART 1

Bartov, Omer (2022) *Tales from The Borderlands: Making and Unmaking the Galician Past*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Facilitator(s): Jaqueline Girard, Xie Xin Lin, Andrew Thomas

Innocent(s): Cameron Sparling, Igor Solokov

##### 5) WEEK 5 (Oct. 3) - CONTINUANCE PART 2

Bawalsa, Nadeem (2022) *Transnational Palestine: Migration and the Right of return Before 1948*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Facilitator(s): Ai Liu, Robert McConney, Eduard Yuan

Innocent(s): Sophie Shields, Manal Shakeel

6) **WEEK 6 (Oct 10) - DIASPORA AND THE TRANSNATIONAL IN MEMOIR**

Shimoda, Brandon (2019) *The Grave on the Wall*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers.

Facilitator(s): Matthew Molinaro, Maor Oz

Innocent(s): Mehtab Purewal, Veronika Puddubna

7) **WEEK 7 (Oct 17) - DIASPORA AND THE VIOLENCE OF BORDERS**

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

Facilitators(s): Teresita Padron de la Paz, Tasha Pendawa

Innocent(s): Shadya Abu-Naim, Yasmine Agocs

8) **WEEK 8 (Oct 24) - DIASPORA, TRANSNATIONALISM AND SCRIPTS OF RACIALIZATION**

Ndiaye, Noémie (2022) *Scripts of Blackness: Early Modern Performance Culture and the Making of Race*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Facilitators(s): Veronika Piddubna, Mehtab Purewal

Innocent(s): Adesola Anyaegbu-Lamuye, Ola Barqawi, Tasha Pendawa

9) **Week 9 (Oct 31)- Reading Week (No class)**

10) **WEEK 10 (Nov 7) - DTS Speaker Series - Bertin M. Louis (University Of Kentucky) - "Anti-Haitianism, Statelessness, and Religious Practice in the Bahamas."**

Louis Jr., Bertin, M (2024) Symbolic Boundaries among Evangelical Bahamians of Haitian Descent and Haitian Evangelicals in the Bahamas. In Celucien L. Joseph and Lewis A. Clorméus (eds.) *Evangelicals, Catholics, and Vodouyizan in Haiti: The Challenges of Living Together*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Joseph, D. and B.M Louis Jr . (2022) Anti-Haitianism and Statelessness in the Caribbean. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 386–407.

Louis Jr., Bertin M. (2019) Haiti's Pact with the Devil?: Bwa Kayiman, Haitian Protestant Views of Vodou, and the Future of Haiti. *Religions* 10, 464; doi:10.3390/rel10080464.

### 11) Week 11 (Nov 14) – TRANSNATIONALISM, CULTURAL POLITICS AND ART

Chin Davidson, Jane (2022) *Staging Art and Chineseness: The Politics of trans/nationalism and Global Expositions*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Facilitator(s): Manal Shakeel, Sophie Shields

Innocent(s): Jacqueline Girard, Xie Xin Lin, Maor Oz

### 12) Week 12 (Nov 21) - TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE REGULATORY APPARATUS OF GOVERNANCE

Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette and J.C. Sharman (2022) *NGOs as Enforcers of International Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Facilitator(s): Igor Sokolov, Cameron Sparling

Innocent(s): Ai Lu, Robert McConney, Matthew Molinaro

### 13) Week 13 (Nov 28) – DTS Guest Speaker - Naa Koshie Mills

## Other Important Information

### Academic Integrity

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic

*work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."*

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

### Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

### Equity and Diversity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.