

FANS & TRANSFORMATIVE WORKS

MRTS 4410/5400

Contact Info:

Instructor: Dr. Tanya D. Zuk

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4 pm, Wednesday 9-12 noon, and Fridays by appointment

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About Me:

I earned my Ph. D. in Moving Image Studies at Georgia State University. My work at GSU has focused on new media and collaborative storytelling, with a particular emphasis on LGBTQ self-representations in transmedia narratives. I use a cultural studies approach that leans heavily on audience reception and fan studies in my research, keeping in mind text and industrial constraints.



Course Description

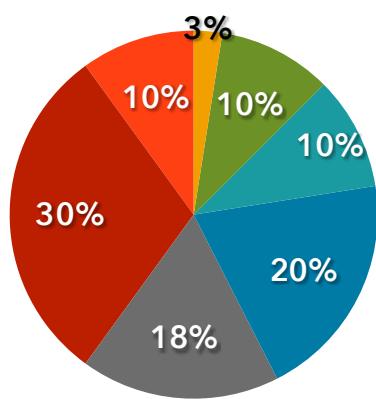
This course looks at fans as authors, and their fan works as transformative contributions to media culture — work that is creative, meaningful, and community building. Fans are no longer the psychologically fraught “fanatic” obsessing about the object(s) of their devotion, but creative producers of media content that critique, expand, and even replace the content which inspires them. When this happens, fans become authors, and their works become transformative and creative contributions of their fandom community, and larger culture. This class is devoted to understanding the relationships between fans and their media texts and the creative works produced as art.

We will examine the conceptualizations of fans within larger culture, and within fandom subculture. We will analyze fan created art, including cosplay, fan fiction, podcasting, fan art, and fan videos. Each week students will read a combination of



Assignments

Autoethnography	25 pts
Closet Cosplay	25 pts
Reflection	75 pts
Fanfic Snippet	25 pts
Reflection	75 pts
Fancast	100 pts
Reflection	100 pts
Fanactivism Poster	75 pts
Reflection	100 pts
Fandom Mood	50 pts
Reflection	50 pts
Final Remix Project	150 pts
Response	150 pts



Grade Scale

90-100 A 80-89 B
70-79 C 60-69 D

theoretical work on fan studies and a complimentary fan-produced transformative work.

In class discussion will tackle major issues of identity, authorship, copyright, remix culture, fan activism, criticism, world-building, and the boundaries of audience participation. Students will participate in the fandom(s) of their choice throughout the semester by creating transformative works, and reflect critically on the fan works as meaningful (or not) contributions to culture.

Course Goals

By the end of this course you should be able to...

- Identify the different fan practices and creative works
- Discuss the implications of copyright, authorship, and fair use in terms of media fandom's creative works
- Create multimedia fan works of your own that are transformative in nature
- Think critically about the connections between fandom, culture, and media industries

Course Texts

Booth, Paul and Rebecca Williams, Eds. *A fan studies primer*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2021.

Additional required readings are available online at the course website, located in the resources section, and linked in the schedule. Readings will include a mix of theoretical writing on fan studies and creative fan works.

Course Policies

Class Environment

It is in the best interests of you as an individual and us as a classroom to create a positive, inclusive, classroom environment. One of the greatest challenges as an instructor is to provide an engaging, entertaining, and intellectual classroom experience. I need your collaboration to create the best educational experience for all involved. By participating in class discussion, being respectful of others opinions, and preparing for class we can all

Creative Assignments

There are six creative assignments this semester, where we will learn new technical skills and practice storytelling, parody, criticism in the fannish tradition. For each assignment you will be provided detailed technical instructions, including tutorial videos.

Use these assignments to flex your creative production muscles. Fan creative works and authorship is one of the many ways to practice technical and creative skills.

Reflection Assignments

Alongside each creative project is a reflection assignment. This is a traditional writing assignment and you will be expected to use proper grammar, syntax, and structure. Each of these assignments (there are seven) will have specific prompts that you will need to respond to. Additionally, you will find it necessary to leverage course materials and potentially even outside research.

Remix Project

Your final project will be a transformative work that remixes content from at least two sources, and that is multimodal in nature (you can pick which mediums/modes to work in). There are a variety of options to choose from for your final project to be discussed in class. Additionally, there is a longer response paper.

work together to create a creative and dynamic experience on and off screen.

Accommodations

I endeavor to make this class accessible to every student and will do my best to make this class fit your needs. If you need special arrangements for a documented disability, please contact the **Office of Disability Access**. If you would like to share pertinent medical information, request special arrangements for class seating, or need special assistance in the event of a building evacuation, please contact me in the first week of class. I am happy to alter content formats and provide multiple points of access to course materials.

Basic Needs & Security Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in this course is urged to contact the **Dean of Students** for support. For immediate food assistance, visit **UNT Food Pantry**. For emergency housing needs, visit **Cloud 9 Charities**. There are additional **Wellbeing and Safety Services** through Student Affairs. If you are comfortable, please let me know what is going on. I am ready and able to make course accommodations based on your circumstances, and assist in providing resources. Course Site(s)

Late Policy

No assignments will be accepted late unless you have (a) the permission of the instructor; (b) jury duty notice; or (c) permission from the Dean of Students.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade: within a week of getting your assignment back you must hand in, along with the assignment you want re-graded, a typed



one page paper explaining why you believe your grade was incorrect and should be regraded. I will respond in writing within a week. Please note, that re-grading does **NOT** guarantee a better grade.

Instructor Availability & Response Time

I will be available for drop-in hours on **Mondays 9-12 noon and Tuesdays 3-5 pm** where we can talk face-to-face or virtually via Zoom. You can make in-person appointments with me by following this link or Friday virtual only appointments here. Please send emails directly through Canvas. **I will generally provide a response within 24 hours.**

Academic Honesty

Please note that by staying in this class you are agreeing to abide by all the standards of academic integrity as found in the [Honor Code](#). Please review the policies on AI generated content as developed by the Media Arts department in Canvas. Additionally, you agree to hold to the legal and professional standards set within the media industries in regard to credits.

Subject to Change Statement

The instructor reserves the right to modify the course requirements and other related policies as circumstances may dictate, and with sufficient notification to all students. Even the professor can have an unanticipated emergency, and the university—or the community at large—may experience an emergency that requires changing the class schedule or requirements. Any change will also be posted to Canvas.

REVISE & RESUBMIT

I have a long-standing, open, revise and resubmit policy for all my classes. I firmly believe that students are more likely to review and use feedback if they can apply it immediately. Therefore, you can revise assignments during the semester using the feedback provided and resubmit for an improved grade. To complete the revise/resubmit, just re-submit the assignment in its original dropbox.

RESOURCES

UNT Writing Center

There are several small papers, as well as a final project required in this class. You may find over the course of the semester, that you want help revising your work. You can sign-up for a session at:

<https://writingcenter.unt.edu>.

I've used writing assistance throughout my academic career. No one gets citations or grammar naturally. Use every resource at your disposal!

Media Library

The **Media Library** contains the UNT Libraries' non-print, audiovisual, tabletop games, and video games collections. The Media Library also has **The Nest**, which is an e-sports and game design space. The mission of the UNT Media Library is to support the instructional and research needs of UNT faculty, staff, and students by collecting, maintaining, and providing access to media materials that represent all academic disciplines and all genres of film.



Course Schedule

All readings, screenings, and assignments are due by the **START** of class on the date below.

	READINGS & MEDIA	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1	1/12 - Course Intro • Jenkins, "Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten" (PDF)	
Week 2	1/19 MLK Day No Class	
Week 3	1/26 - Who are Fans? • "What Does Fan Studies Feel Like?" (Ch 1 <i>Primer</i>) • "Don't Try this at Home, Boys and Girls: Negotiating the Acafan Position" (Ch 5 <i>Primer</i>) • Spurlock, <i>Comic-Con Episode IV: A Fan's Hope</i>	Autoethnography
Week 4	2/2 - Community • "Naming Whiteness: Interrogating Fan Studies Methodologies" (Ch 2 <i>Primer</i>) • Busse, "Geek hierarchies, boundary policing, and the gendering of the good fan" (PDF) • Nerd Hierarchy (URL)	Fandom Mood & Reflection
Week 5	2/9 - Copyright & Fandom • Tushnet, "Copyright Law, Fan Practices, and The Rights of the Author" (PDF) • Fadden, "A Fair(ly) Use Tale" (URL) • Lessig, "How Creativity is Being Strangled by The Law" (URL) • Organization for Transformative Works (URL)	
Week 6	2/16 - Cons & Cosplay • Gasser, "What are we waiting for? A look at line culture" (PDF) • "The Dual Imagining: Afrofuturism, Queer Performance and Black Cosplayers" (Ch 12 <i>Primer</i>) • Anderson Howell, "Fan Conventions, Accessibility..." (PDF) • <i>Cosplay Boom</i> (URL)	Closet Cosplay & Reflection
Week 7	2/23 - Canon, Headcanon, Fanon • Gray, "From canon to fanon and back again" (URL) • "Iconography of Fan Art" (Ch 13 <i>Primer</i>) • Search your fandom and #headcanon accepted in Tumblr (URL)	Final Project Proposal
Week 8	3/2 - Fan Fiction • "Defining Fan Fiction" (Ch 11 <i>Primer</i>) • Wilson, "The Role of Affect in Fan Fiction" (URL) • Read a fanfiction story of your choice at AO3 or FanFiction.net	Fanfic Snippet & Reflection

READINGS & MEDIA		ASSIGNMENTS
SPRING BREAK 3/9 - 3/13		
Week 9	3/16 - Fan Criticism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenkins, "Fan Critics" (PDF) • Goodman, "Disappointing Fans" (PDF) • Listen to a fan podcast of your choice. 	In-Class FanZine Workshop!!
Week 10	3/23 - Fan Economies & Labor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hellekson, "A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture" (PDF) • Moura, "Go Rogue: A Case of an Official Fan Contest" (PDF) 	
Week 11	3/30 - Fan Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linden, "Fans and Tourism" (PDF) • Waysdorff, "The Wizarding World" Immersion, Authenticity and the Theme Park as Social Space" (PDF) 	Fancast & Reflection
Week 12 (Guest Lecture)	4/6 - Fantipathies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, "Fan-agonism: Factions, Institutions, and Constitutive Hegemonies of Fandom" (PDF) • "Scandalous Black Feminine Gaze(s)" (Ch 8 <i>Primer</i>) 	
Week 13	4/13 - Fan Activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Into the Threshold: Analyzing HP Fan Activism" (Ch 14 <i>Primer</i>) • Gilliland, "Racebending fandoms and digital futurism" (URL) • Kligler-Vilenchik, et al., "Experiencing fan activism" (URL) 	
Week 14	4/20 - Queering Fandom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kreisinger, "Queer video remix and LGBTQ online communities" (URL) • Nordin, "Queerbaiting 2.0" (PDF) • Schneider, "Reclaiming Queerbaiting" (PDF) • LexaPledge - Fans Deserve Better (URL) 	Fanactivism Poster & Reflection
Week 15	4/27 - Race & Fandom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pande, "Recalibration Necessary, Mr. Spock" (PDF) • "As #EndOTWRacism Fights for AO3 Policy Changes, Fandom Racism Bubbles to the Surface" <i>TeenVogue</i> (URL) 	
FINALS WEEK	5/4 - Final Project Watch Party & Potluck <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fandom Cookbooks (URL) 	Remix due at start of class. Response paper due by midnight.

Graduate Student Addendum



Additional Grad-Only Meetings: Graduate students and I will meet monthly for at least an hour to talk about the graduate readings (and other course materials). These additional meetings will be scheduled after the first class based on everyone's availability. I preferred to have these meetings in-person, but if needed we can schedule virtual meetings.

Additional Graduate Readings:

Week 1: Waysdorff, "Placing fandom, studying fans: Modified acafandom in practice" ([URL](#))

Week 2: NO CLASS MLK DAY

Week 3: Hansal, "Toward a fannish methodology: Affect as an asset" ([URL](#))

Willard & Scott, "The Ethics of Exposure" (Ch 17 *Primer*)

Week 4: Stewart, "Towards a Theory of 'Appropriate Fandom'" ([PDF](#))

Week 5: Lerner, Fan film on the final frontier: Axanar Productions and the limits of fair use in the digital age" ([URL](#))

Week 6: Hanna, "The Liminality of the Line" ([PDF](#))

Week 7: Winter, "Fanon Bernie Sanders: Political real person fan fiction and the construction of a candidate" ([URL](#))

Week 8: Kennedy, "Fan binding as a method of fan work preservation" ([URL](#))

Week 9: Soegito, "Fans vs. critics: Challenging critical authority through memes" ([PDF](#))

Week 10: Scott, "Repackaging fan culture: The regifting economy of ancillary content models" ([URL](#))

Week 11: Baker, "Creating virtual homes during COVID-19: #HomemadeDisney and theme park fandom's response to crisis" ([PDF](#))

Week 12: Otebele, "The Anti-Fan is Black" ([URL](#))

Week 13: Zuk, "Carrie Fisher Sent Me: Gendered Political Protest, Princess Leia and the Women's March" ([PDF](#))

Week 14: Page, "How Teen Wolf's transmasculine fans use online fandom to build community and representation" ([URL](#))

Week 15: Johnson, "Transformative racism: The black body in fan works" ([URL](#))

Finals Week: Final Project Watch Party & Potluck

Graduate Assignments

Grad Discussion Lead: Pick one of the grad readings and prepare a mini-lesson on the reading for the class. Your mini-lesson should include at least 1 key concept from the reading with a thorough explanation, an example to show to the class, and 2 discussion questions that connect your concept to the common readings from class. *Your mini-lesson should take 15-20 minutes of class time including discussion.*

Creative Reflections: You must incorporate at least one graduate reading in addition to one regular reading into each of your reflection components throughout the semester.

Remix Project & Final Response Paper: For your final project the creative component is not significantly different from your undergraduate classmates. However, if you are an MFA student and would like to discuss additional parameters or extended running time for your project, please reach out and we can work together to find a good solution for you. With that said, the final response paper of the semester for graduate students should be significantly longer than the undergraduates—around 3000 words or roughly 10 pages double spaced (not including bibliography). This is roughly the length of a conference paper. You may approach this as a theory paper that complements the creative work, but you may also only indirectly reference the project and instead focus this as a research paper or literature review.