

WGS. 101 SESSION #20 OUTLINE

1. Perspectives on Transgender

- a. *Ma Vie en Rose* (1997, Alain Berliner) –Discussion groups
- b. The trans* spectrum:
Transgender: Associations with “transcending” and “transit”

Transgender (often *trans**), an umbrella term, describes a broad range of people who would characterize themselves as gender-nonconforming; *trans** people may also identify by other terms (e.g. *agender*, *genderqueer*). They may experience and/or express their gender differently from what most (*cisgender*) people expect of them. *Trans** people may express or present as a gender different from the sex they were assigned at birth, cross gender boundaries (e.g., cross-dressing) or physically change their sex to affirm/align with their internal sense of gender identity. The term *transsexual*, with clinical roots, usually describes a person who has transitioned or is in the process of transitioning to align with his or her internal sense of gender. This transition may involve medical treatment such as hormones and/or surgery, but not necessarily.

2. Problems of Definition, Conceptual Confusion and False Assumptions: *transgender/transsexual, intersex; gender identity and sexual orientation*

3. Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Transgender

- Historical Examples: Passing; Crossing Over (e.g., Deborah Sampson)
- Two-Spirit people (Native American), hijras (South Asian)
- Transgender: secular identity definition

4. The Struggle for Transgender Rights in the U.S.: 1950s- present.

Affiliation with lesbian/gay rights movement; distinct issues

5. Contemporary Issues

- a. Safety: 2009: Federal anti-hate crime legislation
- b. Psychiatric/Medical: From “Gender Identity Disorder” (DSM-IV-1994-2013) to “Gender Dysphoria” (to DSM-V- 2013 on); insurance coverage
- c. Occupational: Legal protection against discrimination; 2012: EEOC decision – transgender as a category of discrimination under Title VII
- d. Representational: popular and alternative media
- e. Educational: access, visibility, safety

6. Oral Presentation

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

WGS.101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
Fall 2014

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.