In the last three decades, the surge of interest in “diaspora” and “transnationalism” is such that few in the humanities and social sciences can ignore it. From deterritorialized nations to flexible citizens, displacement to hybridity, exile to travel, postcoloniality to transnation, the large body of concepts related to “diaspora” and “transnationalism” suggests that the two are not just descriptive terms, but may be productive tools to examine global flows and connections.

Nevertheless, the seeming capaciousness of “diaspora” and “transnationalism” has also invited many concerns and critiques. They include unspecific use, excessive focus on culture and identity, neglect of structural conditions, or even being completely “unempirical.” While these criticisms are sometimes justified, it still leaves the question of how else to represent social formations that do not fit in a local or nation-based framework, but rather to allow opportunities to re-examine both. One way of doing so is to keep returning to the most basic questions: Where did the terms come from and how have they evolved? Who use them and why? What are they good for and in what contexts?

Diaspora and transnationalism are multidisciplinary fields, covering literature, anthropology, sociology, geography, history, poststructuralist theory, and cultural studies. To bring together a broad range of theoretical texts and case studies, seminar readings are organized into three sections:

I. Space
   Covers attempts to reconceptualize space beyond empire and nation by re-tracing movements of people and things across borders; includes critiques of such an approach.

II. Culture
   Examines efforts to challenge fixed notions of race, ethnicity, identity, and culture, and re-examine them as products of multidirectional and contingent flows.

III. Politics
   Questions the earlier formulations; explores them in the contexts of gender, sexuality, labor, and global capitalism; puts the empire and nation back in.

Readings
   All books are available at College Library Course Reserves and the University Bookstore. Additional readings (marked with an asterisk) are available electronically.


**Requirements**

-- Attendance and Participation (20%). Attend and contribute to every meeting. Please email me in advance if you must miss class.

-- Weekly Learn@UW Postings (20%) by 9 am on the day of class. Each post should consist of a quote, a commentary, and a discussion question per assigned reading/author. Alternatively, you may choose to post one such set that draws connections between all the pieces. Everyone should read all the posts by others before class.

-- Discussion Leading with another student, rotating in the following tasks: 1. summary and response; 2. coordination of discussion questions (10%).

-- Historiographical Essay of approx. 20 pages based on seminar readings, due December 13 (50%).
Schedule

September 3: Introduction
Discuss course goals and themes. Get to know each other’s research interests.

I. Space

September 10: Postcolonial and Transnational
Paul Gilroy, “The Black Atlantic as Counterculture of Modernity.” In Braziel and Mannur.

September 17: Global
Cohen, Global Diasporas

September 24: Cosmopolitan

October 1: Critiques
Rey Chow, “Against the Lures of Diaspora.” In Braziel and Mannur.

II. Culture

October 8: Difference and Hybridity
Bhabha, The Location of Culture
Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.” In Braziel and Mannur.

**October 15: Travel and Culture**
Clifford, *Routes*
Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” In Braziel and Mannur.

**October 22: Exile**
Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*

**October 29: Visual Culture**
Shih, *Visuality and Identity*

**III. Politics**

**November 5: Gender and Queer**
Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*
Gayatri Gopinath, “Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora.” In Braziel and Mannur.

**November 12: Global capitalism**
Tsing, *Friction*

**November 19: Nation and Ethnicity**
Lesser, *A Discontented Diaspora*
Lisa Lowe, “Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity.” In Braziel and Mannur.

November 26: No Class. Write your paper.

December 3: No Class. Write your paper.

**December 10: War and Terror**
Rana, *Terrifying Muslims*

Final paper is due in my mailbox 4015 on Friday December 13.