

Aven Peters, Northwestern University

## “(Dis)orderly Bodies: Gender Identification and Disability in Social Context”



**Thursday**  
**April 16, 2026**  
12:30-1:50pm

**Parkes 222**

1870 Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60208

**Description:** Despite a multitude of social processes that enforce a binary gender system, an increasing share of Americans identify as transgender. Why do some individuals adopt gender variant identities while others do not? In this paper, I propose that alienation from normative categories, in addition to social support for trans identities, shapes gender identification. I argue that people with bodies viewed as orderly are less likely to adopt trans identities than those whose bodies are perceived as disorderly. Using three population-based surveys of U.S. adults, I find that people with physical disabilities are more likely than people without physical disabilities to identify as transgender, particularly in younger cohorts. I also draw from a survey of Colorado high school students to underscore that the relationship between disability and transness depends on contextual meanings of gender and disability. I conclude that gender and disability are co-constituted within social interactions.

**Aven Peters** is a PhD candidate in the sociology department at Northwestern. Their research and teaching interests include gender, sexuality, quantitative methods, health inequalities, disability, and sociological theory.

**For Zoom info  
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