Theorizing Identity, Historicizing Queerness
Gender and Women’s Studies 340: Special Topics in LGBTQ Sexuality

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Office:                               Office Hours: T & TH 2:30-3:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will critically analyze queer histories and queer theories, helping us to understand the complex interactions between gender, sexuality, race and class. Focusing on the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States, we will examine the process of community formation, the emergence of homosexual identities, the evolution of queer politics, and the changing relationship between gender and sexuality for individuals and movements. This historical perspective will offer students a chance to analyze social constructions of non-normative desire and identities in the past that might relate to but are not the same as their own. Queer theory offers us the gateway for this type of analysis. For the purposes of this class, “queerness” will include non-normative genders and sexualities, acts and identities.

We will begin with some of the central questions that queer theory and queer history have posed: Where does (or should) LGBTQ history begin? How have LGBTQ people defined themselves and how have social institutions defined them? How do LGBTQ communities develop and how have these movements changed over time? What is the relationship between sexuality, gender, race, and the body? To answer these questions, we will trace LGBTQ experience, the policing of queer communities, and the constructions of queerness in pop culture, medicine, oral histories, and politics over time and throughout space.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Copy Packet

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation in Lecture: 30%
Attendance in lecture is required. You are expected to show up for all lectures on time having completed the course readings and all assignments. You will grade your own participation daily based on attendance, promptness, preparedness, and participation.

Reading Responses: 20%
For each of the three full-length books you are reading for this class, you will write a 2 page reading response. This response should (1) summarize the main argument of the piece, (2) discuss some part of the work that was most interesting to you, and (3) make connections to other readings or major themes of the course.

Midterm and Final: 30%
You will take a short midterm and final. Each will cover course material from half the course.

Final Oral History Project: 20%
You will write a paper on some aspect of the LGBTQ experience or queer theory using LGBTQ oral histories. This paper will be 5-8 pages long.

Grades: If you have questions about a grade, speak first to your instructor. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Jane Collins, or the Associate Chair, Christina Ewig. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

Accessibility: Everyone, regardless of disabilities or special needs, is welcome in this course. Please let me know if you need any accommodations in the instruction or evaluation procedures in order to facilitate your full participation. The McBurney Center provides useful assistance and documentation.

Computers and cell phones: I ask that you do not use laptops in class unless, for reasons of disability and accessibility, you need one to fully participate in lecture. Let me know if this is the case. I also ask that you turn off cell phones before lecture starts, and keep them in your bag for the duration of lecture.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Unit One: Foundations

Week of September 6: Finding the LGBTQ Past
Sept. 9: Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, pp. 3-44.

Week of September 13: Queering the Body
Sept. 16: Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity, pp. 1-43.
Extra Credit: Listen to “81 words,” This American Life, January 18, 2002.
Write a one page response to this radio show. In this response, engage one reading you have done for the class so far. Due September 23, in class

**Unit Two: Queer Modernities**

**Week of September 20: Capitalism and Urban Space**


**Week of September 27: The Queer Career of Jim Crow**


**Week of October 4: Sexology and Sex Tourism at the Turn of the Century**

*Sapphic Slashers* response due.

**Week of October 11: Midterm**

Oct. 12: No class
Oct. 14: Midterm

**Unit Three: Identities and Movements**

**Week of October 18: Postwar Communities**


**Week of October 25: Making LGBT Identities in the Postwar Period**


**Week of November 1: Gay Liberation and Feminism**

Nov. 4: Anne Enke, “If I Can’t Dance Shirtless, It’s Not A Revolution: Coffee House, Clubs, and
the Construction of ‘All Woman,’” pp. 217-51.
*Wide Open Town* response due.

**Week of November 8: Understanding Transgender: Identities and Movements**

Nov. 9: Minnie Bruce Pratt, *S/he*, pp. 11-98.

**Unit Four: Pop Culture and Cultural Politics**

**Week of November 15: Family Values Politics**

*S/he* response due.

**Week of November 22:**

No Class, Thanksgiving Recess

**Week of November 29: Beyond Will and Grace: Visibility and the Media**


**Week of December 6: Current Questions, Current Movements**


**Week of December 13**

Copy Packet Citations


Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 3-44.


