

Queer Multiculturalism

Professor Merrill Cole

M-Cole@wiu.edu / 298-1410

<http://faculty.wiu.edu/M-Cole/>

English 359, Section 001

Spring Semester 2017

Office: Simpkins 109

Hours: M, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

TTh, 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

TTh, 12:30 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Simpkins 214

Texts

The Collection: Short Fiction from the Transgender Vanguard. ISBN: 978-0983242215

Hwang, David Henry. *M Butterfly*. ISBN: 978-0452272590

Feinberg, Leslie. *Stone Butch Blues*. ISBN: 978-1555838539

Lorde, Audre. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. ISBN: 978-0895941220

Moraga, Cherríe. *Heroes and Saints & Other Plays*. ISBN: 978-0931122743

Muñoz, Jose. *Disidentifications: Queers Of Color And The Performance Of Politics*. ISBN: 978-0816630158

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. ISBN: 978-0520254060

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. ISBN: 978-0486278070 Just purchase

Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*. ISBN: 978-0802135162

Wojnarowicz, David. *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*. ISBN: 978-0679732273

Womack, Craig. *Drowning in Fire*. ISBN: 978-0816521685

There will be articles to download on WesternOnline.

Course Description & Objectives

Queer multiculturalism examines the politics of queer representation in a variety of media, with a special focus on issues of cultural diversity. Sites of investigation include literary texts, critical articles, film, and visual art. The course explores several overlapping topics. “Coming Out and Closet Games” looks at Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* in the context of Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. “Art, Obscenity, and AIDS” studies the political controversy surrounding the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe—especially concerning his Black male nudes and sadomasochistic images—and the work of other lesbian and gay artists at the height of the American AIDS crisis, including David Wojnarowicz. “Queer Rainbow?” focuses on intersections of race and sexuality in such works as David Henry Hwang’s *M Butterfly*, Audre Lorde’s *Zami: A New Spelling of my*

Name, Cherríe Moraga's *Heroes and Saints*, José Muñoz's *Disidentifications*, and Sherman Alexie's film, *The Business of Fancydancing*. "Transitive" explores trans* and genderqueer communities, looking back with Leslie Feinberg's classic *Stone Butch Blues* and looking forward with Ryka Aoki and the short story writers of *The Collection: Short Fiction from the Transgender Vanguard*, as well as the film, *Three to Infinity: Beyond Two Genders*.

Requirements

The Queer American Novel involves a five-page midterm essay, a final eight-page research essay, and two creative assignments. You will receive instructions for each, and you have the option of rewriting all except the research essay. Send assignments and homework to me through WesternOnline as Microsoft Word attachments. If I don't have assignments at the beginning of class, they will be counted late. Writing should be paginated and double-spaced in a standard-sized font. Handwritten work gets zero credit.

Students will be responsible for leading small group discussions on a rotating basis. When it is your turn, you will prepare five typed, double-spaced questions for discussion and send them to me by email before the beginning of the class. You need to have your own copy in the classroom, electronic or print. There will also be in-class and homework exercises.

Absences will not be taken lightly, only excused with a doctor's note or other suitable documentation. Please refer to <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> for student rights and responsibilities. Everyone *must* actively participate. Lack of participation will damage your grade. This means doing the homework, completing the readings, and joining in class discussion.

Grading

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| Participation | 10% |
| Homework | 10% |
| Discussion Questions | 10% |
| Creative Assignments | 20% |
| Midterm Essay | 20% |
| Final Essay | 30% |

Unless excused, late essays receive a one-time, one-letter grade reduction (12:31 p.m. on the due date is late). I will grant an extension for almost any reason, but only if the student contacts me *at least 24 hours in advance*. Plagiarism will result in an "F", and I will report the student for academic discipline. See WIU's Policy on Academic Integrity at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>. Unexcused absences will affect the participation grade, and four of them is an automatic "F" for the course. Do not expect an "A" if you don't talk regularly in class.

Please take the opportunity to meet with me in Simpkins 109, during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings and your writing. If something about the course bothers you, please don't wait until the end, when it is too late to change it.

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center can assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The tutor's job is to add another voice in response to your writing. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center can help with generating ideas, suggesting organization, and even working through grammatical issues. The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd Floor, West Side). Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. For more information on other locations, see www.wiu.edu/uwc.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Discrimination Policy

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.

Schedule

I give each day's assignment at the end of class. Do not pack your bags until everyone has had a chance to write it down. Contact me by email if you cannot attend.

Week 1: January 17 & 19: Introduction to the Course. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

Week 2: January 24 & 26: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit. The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Week 3: January 31 & February 2: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Week 4: February 7 & 9: *Epistemology of the Closet*.

Week 5: February 14 & 16: *Epistemology of the Closet. Close to the Knives*.

First Creative Assignment due Tuesday, February 14.

Week 6: February 21 & 23: *Close to the Knives*.

Week 7: February 28 & March 2: *Disidentifications. M Butterfly*.

Week 8: March 7 & 9: *Heroes and Saints. The Business of Fancydancing* (film).

First Essay Due by the beginning of class, Tuesday, March 7.

Spring Break.

Week 9: March 21 & 23: *Disidentifications. Looking for Langston* (film).

Week 10: March 28 & 30: *Disidentifications. Zami*.

Week 11: April 4 & 6: *Disidentifications. Drowning in Fire*.

Second Creative Assignment due Tuesday, April 4.

Week 12: April 11 & 13: *Stone Butch Blues*.

Week 13: April 18 & 20: *Stone Butch Blues. 52 Tuesdays* (film).

Week 14: April 25 & 27: *The Collection*.

Week 15: May 2 & 4: *The Collection*.

Final Exam Week

Final essay due on Monday, May 8 at 2:00 p.m. (Due May 5 by midnight if you want comments).