

Introduction to Queer Studies

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QS 100, Section 01
Spring Semester 2020

Office: Simpkins 109
Hours: M, 2:00-4:00 p.m.; TTh, 1:00-2:00

TTh, 3:30-4:45 p.m.
Simpkins 27

Required Texts

Aoki, Ryka. *Seasonal Velocities*.
Bechtel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*.
Bordo, Susan. *The Male Body*.
Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*.
Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*.
Gibson, Michelle A., et al. *Finding Out: Introduction to LGBT Studies*.
Kaufman, Moisés. *The Laramie Project*.
Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.
Wojnarowicz, David. *Close to the Knives*.

We will also watch films, view artworks, and listen to music.

Course Introduction

What are “Queer Studies”? For cultural conservatives, these words signify at best the decline of academic study into the trivial and the obscene, and at worst the recruitment of innocent youth into a life of depravity, despair, and disease. Many self-identified lesbians and gay men, moreover, object to the word, “queer.” Some argue that it has an implicit masculine bias, like the word, “gay,” before it; others find it an ugly term of derogation; still others see it as too inclusive, deeply uncomfortable with the fact that certain practicing heterosexuals have appropriated “queer” as the adjective of choice for their own activities. Often queer activists outside academia disparage “queer studies,” along with its kissing cousin, “queer theory,” as ivory tower mumbo-jumbo, useless to people’s everyday struggles. Even queer studies supporters disagree about what this newly-emerging field should become.

Yet the discipline of queer studies provides indispensable tools for studying sexual diversity, the diversity that this class will explore in a variety of media, including literature, film, and visual art. It will also provide historical context and delve into political controversies. Queer studies does not simply affirm non-normative sexuality, but interrogates the meaning of human eroticism in all of its forms, including the heterosexual. It offers powerful modes of social critique. Perhaps this conjunction of sex and study appears nonsensical, or silly. Listen, then, to the words of Audre Lorde: “Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning within our lives. And this is a grave responsibility, projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe.”

Requirements

Introduction to Queer Studies (IQ) involves two five-page analytical essays, two creative assignments, one personal narrative, and a final, self-reflective essay. There will be an assignment sheet for each.

If the class has seven or more students, I will assign two students, on a rotating basis, the responsibility to fashion five typed discussion questions. The questions should be handed in at the end of the session. If there are less than seven, that assignment goes to one student each session.

Participation means doing the readings and joining in class discussion regularly. *No headphones in class!*

Please see <<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>> for student rights & responsibilities.

Grading

Participation:	10%
Discussion Questions:	10%
First Creative Assignment:	5%
Second Creative Assignment:	5%
Personal Narrative:	10%
First Essay:	20%
Second Essay:	20%
Self-Reflective Essay:	20%

Missing classes, or arriving late, will affect the participation grade. *A student with more than three **unexcused** absences automatically fails the course.* I am lenient, though: if you give me a valid reason to miss, or to have missed, a session, I will probably excuse you (I may ask for documentation.). Please let me know, if you have another class or responsibility right before our session begins that prevents you from arriving on time. Whenever you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make sure I've recorded your attendance.

All essays, except the Self-Reflective Essay, can be rewritten.

Visiting My Office

Please take the opportunity to meet with me during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings, or your writing. I very much appreciate any kind of feedback about the course.

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). It's also in Simpkins 326. 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 am open to making changes to keep the learning situation active and dynamic.

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| January 14 : | Introduction to the course. <i>Paris Is Burning</i> (film). |
| January 16: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 1; <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> , 1-49. |
| January 21: | <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> , 51-124. |
| January 23: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 2; finish <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> . |
| January 28: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 3; <i>52 Tuesdays</i> (film). |
| January 30: | <i>52 Tuesdays</i> (film). <i>The Laramie Project</i> , Introduction-49. |
| February 4: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 4; finish <i>The Laramie Project</i> . |
| February 6: | First Essay due. Del LaGrace Volcano (art). <i>Bodies that Queer</i> (film). |
| February 11: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 5; <i>The Male Body</i> , 3-35. |
| February 13: | <i>Finding Out</i> : Chapter 6; <i>The Male Body</i> , 36-104. |

- February 18: *The Male Body*, 107-52.
 February 20: **First Creative Assignment due.** *Finding Out*: Chapter 7; *The Male Body*, 153-225.
- February 25: *Seasonal Velocities*, 3-29.
 February 27: *Finding Out*: Chapter 8; *Seasonal Velocities*, 33-102.
- March 3: *Seasonal Velocities*, 105-39. *History of Sexuality*, 3-13.
 March 5: **Personal Narrative due.** *History of Sexuality*, 15-73.

SPRING BREAK

- March 17: *Finding Out*: Chapter 9; *History of Sexuality*, 75-114.
 March 19: *Finding Out*: Chapter 10; finish *History of Sexuality*.
- March 24: *Fun Home*, 1-86.
 March 26: *Finding Out*: Chapter 11; *Fun Home*, 87-150.
- April 7: **Second Creative Assignment due.** *Damned in the USA* (film).
 April 9: *Finding Out*: Chapter 12; finish *Fun Home*.
- April 14: *Finding Out*: Chapter 13; *Close to the Knives*, 3-23. Queer poetry (WO).
 April 16: *Close to the Knives*, 24-63. Queer Poetry (WO).
- April 21: **Second Essay due.** *Finding Out*: Chapter 14; *Close to the Knives*, 64-110.
 April 23: *Close to the Knives*, 111-23; 138-62.
- April 28: *Finding Out*: Chapter 15. *Fire in My Belly* (film). *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (film).
 April 30: *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (film).
- Exam Week: **The Self-Reflective Essay is due on Monday, May 4 at 3:30 p.m. (Due Friday, May 1 by midnight, if you want my comments).**