

Sonoma State University

Women's and Gender Studies

WGS 255 Introduction to Queer Studies, Spring 2019

Instructor Contact Information

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Office Location: Stevenson 3016i

Office Hours: Mondays by appointment, Wednesdays 1-3 pm (best way to contact me)

General Course Information

Class Days/Time: Mondays 8 -11:40 am

Classroom: Stevenson Hall 3072

GE/SSU Studies Category: Satisfies upper division GE Area D1

Course Description

Catalog Description: This interdisciplinary course offers an introduction to the field of Queer Studies by analyzing the role of race, gender, sexuality, and nationalism in the social construction of modern gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) identities. Students also learn of queer theoretical approaches to politics, culture, and society.

What is queer studies? What does it mean to be “queer,” to “queer” something, or to engage in “queer” activism? This class introduces queer politics, queer theory, queer critique, and queer art and culture by reading and engaging with creative texts, including a graphic history, memoirs, documentaries, and fictional films.

The format of this course will include screenings of several films, short lectures, large group discussion, and small group activities.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Overall Area D

- 1) Apply the principles, methodologies, value systems and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry to construct evidence-based arguments and to express them in writing.
- 2) Develop knowledge of discipline-based methods of reasoning and research in the social sciences.
- 3) Examine social, political, economic, and environmental issues in temporal and spatial settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.
- 4) Understand how cultural diversity and complexity influence individuals, institutions, and societies.
- 5) Gain an understanding of United States and California history and government.

Area D1

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of how cultural diversity and social factors influence the individual, society, and social institutions.

- 2) Demonstrate understanding of the interchange among individuals and social systems and institutions, and how these develop.
- 3) Apply social science perspectives to social issues and problems as manifested in individuals, groups, societies, and/or internationally.
- 4) Demonstrate understanding of the factors influencing inequality and social justice among individuals, groups, societies, and/or across nations.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Books

Queer: A Graphic History by Meg-John Barker and Julia Scheele, Icon Books, 2016, ISBN: 978-1785780714 (“Queer” in reading schedule; available to rent; E-Book through the library)

Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness and Liberation by Eli Clare, Duke University Press, 2015, ISBN: 978-0822360315 (“Exile” in reading schedule; available to rent; currently not in the library, but I am working on securing a copy to place on reserve)

Dirty River: A Queer Femme of Color Dreaming Her Way Home by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2015, ISBN: 978-1551526003 (“Dirty” in readings schedule; available to rent; E-book through the library)

Other Readings

Additional readings listed in the syllabus will be made available on the course Canvas page. Please print these out if possible, OR take detailed notes that you can bring with you to class.

Course Expectations

Read the material assigned for class prior to the discussion section. For you to do well in this class it is important for you to keep up with the readings. It will be difficult to catch up if you get behind. I expect you to bring to class your copy of the texts we are reading that week, OR your detailed notes. Reading for ideas requires you to take notes on the text (or on a separate piece of paper), to identify key points, and to bring questions about what you read. Whether or not you personally agree with various author’s arguments, you are required to be able to articulate an accurate understanding of the issues, concepts, theories, and arguments discussed by each author.

Check your university e-mail regularly. Any changes to reading assignments, instructions for completing assignments, and any other announcements will be sent via e-mail.

Regularly attend class. You are expected to attend each scheduled class period and to arrive to class on time. If you need to miss a class, it is your responsibility to follow up with one of your classmates to get their notes and find out what was discussed. Missing more than 1 class meeting will affect the attendance and participation portion of your overall grade. *If you have an emergency or serious extenuating circumstance that requires you to miss more than 1 class, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation.* I will be more understanding if you talk to me than if I am unsure about where you are.

Participate respectfully during class time. Active participation includes coming to class prepared to engage with your fellow students on the topic, and to meaningfully contribute to discussions and

exercises while respecting the contributions of other students. Respect includes turning off non-class related apps and internet browsers on your electronic devices, including iPods, cell phones, laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. before class starts. You will lose participation points for the day if you are using an electronic device for any other purpose than taking notes or completing class assignments.

Complete all assignments to the best of your ability and on time. You should expect to put in several hours of homework per week to keep up with assigned readings and complete assignments. You are responsible for keeping track of when assignments are due. Late policy: Quizzes cannot be made up late. I accept film analyses, glossary entries, and zine proposals **up to one week late (and no longer) for partial credit.** If you have an extreme, unavoidable, and documentable reason preventing you from turning in your assignment on time, please come speak with me. Again, I am more understanding if you talk to me. The final zine project cannot be accepted late.

Course Requirements

Class Attendance and Participation: 5 points

Your presence and active participation in the class is crucial to your success in the class as a whole. You will be graded on your preparedness to participate. You may miss **1** class period without needing to notify me. After 1 absence, additional missed classes will affect this portion of your grade. *Students missing 4 or more classes will fail the class.*

Annotated Keyword Glossary: 30 points

The Keyword Glossary is an on-going project that you add to each week. See the course schedule for the weekly keywords you should be entering. Each entry should include:

- A 2-3-sentence definition of the term with a clear citation of its source from our lectures, readings, films, and/or discussions, and,
- At least one relevant example from the reading materials, lectures, or films (not any other source, including personal life).

If you miss any keywords, it is your responsibility to come to office hours to discuss them with me. You will turn in your accumulated key words through Canvas three times throughout the semester.

For a more elaborate example, see the Keywords section of *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, nos. 1-2 (May 2014): 19-272, <http://tsq.dukejournals.org/content/1/1-2/107.full.pdf>.

Reading Quizzes: 15 points

Five short quizzes will be given in class randomly throughout the semester *at the beginning of class* to measure your preparedness for class, especially your reading of assigned materials.

Film Analyses: 25 points

In class we will watch several films, and you will be responsible for writing a double-spaced, typed 2-page analysis of FIVE of these films, due in hard copy the following class period. You must complete the first FOUR assigned analysis, and choose ONE of the remaining three films (although you still must attend class for those you do not choose). Your analysis should include:

- A very short summary of the content and themes, or plot and characters of the film (no longer than a half a page);

- An explanation of how the film connects to the themes of class, using keywords and at referencing at least one assigned reading (use a different reading, or at least different chapter from the readings, for each analysis);
- A subjective response to the film, addressing such questions as: How did you feel about the film, and why? How did the film relate to your own personal experience? What do you wish were different about the film?

Queer Zine Project: 25 points

The final project for this class is your production of an 8-16 page zine (standing for “homemade magazine”) related to personal and/or political reflections on course themes and concepts. The assignment will allow you to demonstrate in a creative format the ideas that you will be taking from the course, as well as incorporate your own personal reflections. You will turn in a paragraph zine proposal a few weeks before the project is due, and bring an outline or rough draft of your zine on the last day of class. The final zine will be due during our scheduled final exam time. More details, as well as more information about what a zine is, will be distributed in class.

Overall grades will be based on the following points earned:

A = (94-100); A- = (90-93)
 B+ = (87-89); B = (83-86); B- = (80-82)
 C+ = (77-79); C = (73-76); C- = (70-72)
 D+ = (67-69); D = (60-66)
 F= (≤ 59)

Note: At any point in the course, you can calculate your grade by adding up the points you have earned and comparing that to the remaining points available.

University Policies and Resources

[Important Policies and Procedures for Students](http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/studentinfo.shtml)

<http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/studentinfo.shtml>.

Content warning

A course on queer studies necessarily requires us to encounter texts discussing violence. I attempt to give content warnings for material that has the potential to be upsetting. I also recognize that we cannot always predict when and where we will be triggered into a trauma response. If you need support, there are people who can help 24/7:

- Counseling and Psychological Services: 707-664-2153
- Sonoma County Crisis Line: 707-576-8181
- Sonoma County’s Rape Crisis and Trauma Center: 707-545-7273

Disability and Access Information

I ask everyone to please refrain from wearing strongly scented products and fragrances to class, and to refrain from coming to class smelling strongly of smoke, so that those who have chemical sensitivities can be present with us. I encourage all students to communicate their other access needs with me. If you have a campus accommodation letter, it would be helpful to get a copy as soon as possible. If you think that you could benefit from an accommodation, even if you do not have a diagnosis, please contact Disability Services for Students and they will walk you through the process. DSS is located is Salazar 1049, Voice: (707) 664-2677, TTY/TDD: (707) 664-2958,

or [Disability Services for Students http://web.sonoma.edu/dss/](http://web.sonoma.edu/dss/).

Gender inclusive bathrooms

The nearest seem to be in either International Hall 1st Floor: 1 Gender Neutral Single Stall, 2nd Floor: 2 Single Stall Gendered Bathrooms; or in the Library 1st floor near Writing Center: 1 Gender Neutral Single Stall.

Academic honesty

I take the responsibility of students to present their own academic work honestly very seriously. Any work that you turn in to me must be written in your own words. Any phrase, sentence or paragraph that is an exact copy of what somebody else wrote (or said) must be attributed to the author (or speaker) by name and include a page number, using the format of your chose, or Chicago Style as a default. In addition, any idea from an author or theorist that you use in your work, even if it is not a direct quote, must also be attributed to that author by name, using a citation format. To present someone else's words as your own is considered plagiarism, whether you intended to steal their work or not. Intentional plagiarism is a form of cheating and you will be referred to the student conduct system if you are caught intentionally plagiarizing.

Sexualized Violence and Reporting Requirements

According to policy, all employees are required to report incidences of sexual assault and sexual harassment to the campus Dean of Students office. That means that professors and other employees who become aware of sexual assault or harassment must contact the Dean, although it would be your choice to pursue any action beyond the initial report. You do not have to talk to the Dean at any point, even if a report is made about you. Anyone who would prefer to talk to someone confidentially about sexual assault or harassment can contact:

- Susan T. Pulido, Confidential Sexual Assault Victim's Advocate
707.664.2698 AND susan.pulido@sonoma.edu
- Sonoma County's Rape Crisis and Trauma Center 707-545-7273

Course Schedule

Subject to change with fair notice – announced in class and posted on Canvas.

Week	Date	Assigned Readings & Topics for Discussion	Deadlines & Assignments
1	Jan. 21	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No class	
2	Jan. 28	<p>Introductions and Overview: A Short History of the Word “Queer”</p> <p>Introductions Overview of Class Film in class: <i>United in Anger</i></p>	Enter weekly keywords: Queer (an adjective and verb) Queer Activism
3	Feb. 4	<p>Queering Politics</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Queer” pgs. 3-26; and 51-54 <p>Rather than meet in class this week, watch the following two films (#1) on your own time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Screaming Queens: The Compton Cafeteria Riots</i> • <i>Pride Denied: Homonationalism and the Future of Queer Politics</i> <p>Both are available online through https://sonoma.kanopystreaming.com/ by using your campus login</p> <p><i>Complete your first analysis assignment on one of these films – due next week</i></p>	Enter weekly keywords: Identity politics Assimilationist Anti-Assimilationist Urban renewal/Gentrification Pinkwashing
4	Feb. 11	<p>Queering Theory 1</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Queer” pgs. 27-50, 84-97, 111-115, 120-122, and 154-157 <p>Quiz #1 in class (quizzes 2-5 will be random)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key ideas of queer theory? • How does queer theory challenge dominant ideas of sex, gender, and sexuality? • What are heteronormativity and homonormativity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film analysis #1 due in class • Enter weekly keywords: Biological Essentialism (“Nature”) Social Construction Binary Opposition Compulsory Heterosexuality Norm Heteronormativity Homonormativity
5	Feb. 18	<p>Queering Theory 2</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Queer” pgs. 55-83, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossary Part 1 due through Canvas • Enter weekly keywords:

Week	Date	Assigned Readings & Topics for Discussion	Deadlines & Assignments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siobhan Somerville “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body” (Canvas) <p>Watch short video clips in class introducing Foucault and Butler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are categories of sex, gender, and sexuality socially constructed? Why are queer theorists concerned about claims that sexuality is biological, as in “born this way”? 	<p>Queer Theory Subjectivity Biopower Doing Gender (aka Gender Performativity)</p>
6	Feb. 25	<p>Queering Theory 3</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Queer” 126-134, and 136-146 Cathy Cohen “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens” (Canvas) <p>Film #2 in class: <i>A Place of Rage</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has racism and the experiences of people of color been marginalized in queer theory and queer politics? Why is an analysis of race and racism important for queer studies? What alternative approaches to queer theory and queer politics have activists and theorists proposed? 	<p>Enter weekly keywords:</p> <p>Intersectionality Queer of Color Critique (see also Critical Race Theory, Post-Colonial Theory, Quare Studies) Strategic Essentialism Biphobia Cisgenderism</p>
7	March 4	<p>Queering the Queer Experience: Crip Theory</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Queer” pgs. 164-165 “Exile” Part II, pgs. 67-138 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What connections does Clare make between the experience of “crip” and “queer”? How has ableism and the experiences of disabled people been marginalized in queer theory and queer politics? What can queer theory and activism learn from crip theory? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Film Analysis on #2 due in class Enter weekly keywords: <p>Objectification Paternalism Ableism The Cure Crip Theory</p>

Week	Date	Assigned Readings & Topics for Discussion	Deadlines & Assignments
8	March 11	<p>Queering the Queer Experience: Rural Queers</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Exile” pgs. 1-64 • Dorothy Allison “A Question of Class” (Canvas) <p>Film #3 in class: <i>Pride</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways have queer theory and queer activism overlooked the experiences of rural and working class people? • What does capitalism have to do with queer? • How can queer activists build solidarity with rural working class people? 	<p>Enter weekly keywords:</p> <p>Urban-centrism & Rural Invisibility Class Capitalism Coalition/Solidarity</p>
Spring Break	March 18	No Class	
9	March 25	<p>Queering the Queer Experience: Surviving Violence 1</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dirty” pgs. 15-132 <p>Watch Film #4: <i>Free CeCe</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What forms of violence do queer and trans people face, especially queer and trans people of color? • What roles does violence play in keeping heteronormativity and gender conformity in place? • How has the criminal justice system responded to violence against queer and trans people of color? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film analysis on #3 due in class • Enter weekly keywords: Sex work Sexualized violence Intimate partner violence Criminalization
10	April 1	Cesar Chavez Day – No class	Glossary Part 2 due on Canvas
11	April 8	<p>Queering the Queer Experience: Surviving Violence 2</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Dirty” pgs. 135-231 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film analysis #4 due in class • Enter weekly keywords Transformative Justice Healing

Week	Date	Assigned Readings & Topics for Discussion	Deadlines & Assignments
		Watch short Mia Mingus talk in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does healing from violence look like for queer and trans people? • What alternative forms of justice have queer and trans people imagined? 	Accountability Prison Abolition
12	April 15	Queering Art & Culture 1 Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chela Quint “Activism through Zines” (Canvas) • Alison Piepmeier excerpts from <i>Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism</i>, pgs. 23-55, 123-154 (Canvas) • Alex Wreck excerpts from <i>Stolen Sharpie Revolution: A DIY Resource for Zines and Zine Culture</i> (Canvas) Watch Film #5 in class: <i>Valencia</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is queer about <i>Valencia</i> as a cultural production? Is it the identity of the characters or something else? • Workshop in class on zines and zine-making 	Enter weekly keywords: New Queer Cinema Cultural Production Riot Grrrl Zine
13	April 22	Queering Art & Culture 2 Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tav Nyong’o, “After the Ball,” Bully Bloggers, July 8, 2015, https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2015/07/08/after-the-ball/ • Laurie Penny, “The Queer Art of Failing Better,” The Baffler, July 24, 2018: https://thebaffler.com/latest/the-queer-art-offailing-better-penny • Additional article TBD Watch Film #6 in class: <i>Paris is Burning</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do queers create community through art and performance? • What are the risks, including commodification, in creating queer art and culture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zine concept paragraph due in class • Film analysis #5 due in class (choose one of 5, 6 or 7) • Enter weekly keywords: Queer Subculture Commodification Politics of Representation

Week	Date	Assigned Readings & Topics for Discussion	Deadlines & Assignments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is queer art for queers, or someone else? • What are the politics of representation at work in a film like <i>Paris is Burning</i>? 	
14	April 29	<p>Queering Art & Culture 3</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Queer” 99-109 • José Estaban Muñoz, “‘The White to Be Angry’: Vaginal Crème Davis’ Terrorist Drag,” from <i>Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics</i>” (Canvas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies have queer theorists proposed to queer queer culture? Or, what does it mean to disidentify from queer culture, and how is this a political act? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film analysis #6 due in class (choose one of 5, 6 or 7) • Enter weekly keywords: Queer Reading Interpellation Disidentification
15	May 6	<p>Queering the Future!</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee, and Dean Spade, “Building an Abolitionist Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We’ve Got” (Canvas) <p>Watch Film #7 in class: <i>Homotopia</i> and <i>Criminal Queers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the future of queer activism and queer politics? • What kind of future are queer activists fighting for? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glossary Part 3 due on Canvas • Bring outline draft of zine to class • Film analysis #7 due Sunday, May 10 at midnight (choose one of 5, 6, or 7)
Finals week	May 13, 8-9:50 am	Final exam scheduled for Monday, May 13, 8-9:50 am – I will bring bagels and fruit to share	Zine due in class at scheduled exam time – be prepared to share your zine with others!