

Class Information and Objective(s)

This course is a special topics course in the WGS Program. Queer theory builds from the work of feminist and LGBT studies and activism. In 1990, Teresa de Lauretis distinguished queer theory as, “an effort to avoid all of these fine distinctions in our discursive protocols [gay and lesbian studies], not to adhere to any one of the given terms, not to assume their ideological liabilities, but instead to both transgress and transcend them – or at the very least problematize them” (*Differences* v). Rather than a strictly historical approach to queer theory, this semester we will begin with some genealogies, allowing them to be the nucleus of our study. We will then build, examining several orbitals that create the queer theory “atom” (discourse). This queer theory class is but a very small piece of the queer theory pie and yet we all have to start somewhere! While I have started a path for this class, I hope that you will join me in a curious engagement of materials. I am excited to share this exploration with you and see where then next 14.5 weeks take us.

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Course Objectives

1. You will understand a diverse range and scope of queer theory.
2. You will be able to identify and explain key concepts and theoretical strains in queer theory.
4. You will understand the role of queer theory in promoting activism and social change.
5. You will make connections between the theoretical arguments advocated by queer theorists and contemporary LGBTQ issues in our world.

Course Texts

One reader will be used in class and is available at the campus bookstore or online.

Hall, Donald E. *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*. London; New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Other support materials will also be located on WISE.

Credit Hour Compliance

Students will spend 3 hours on homework and outside assignments for every hour in class. Simply stated, expect to work 9 hours a week on homework and/or co-curricular activities. Plan to spend 12 hours/week working on this course outside of the classroom.

Attendance: Due to the way in which this course is taught, class attendance is mandatory. A missed class will constitute a severe drop in one's grade. Prompt attendance is also required. Tardiness and Absences are considered synonymous. Lateness is defined by (1) not in class at appointed time or (2) come to class after I arrive - whichever is the later.

Participation: Active participation in class discussion is expected and will be a factor in each student's grade. The participation grade will be based upon thoughtful contributions in discussion and other class exercises. You will be expected to participate in thoughtful discussions of close readings. Note that class participation does not simply entail speaking, but also listening in an engaged and respectful manner. All in-class projects/presentations will have a group critique attached to the assignments. Each student is required to participate in group critiques. Active participation in

group critiques will count as significant part of the assignment as well as participation credit for the day.

At their heart, the group critiques come from a place of openness and generosity. Asking hard questions is an important part of the process, however mean spirited critiques will not be tolerated. Each student is asked to participate in each critique so that the work grows. Students will have the opportunity to adjust work based on the critiques given in class.

Reading Assignments: This is a seminar class not a lecture course. We are going to be talking and listening to one another. engaging in collective enterprise and exploration. We will be discussing concept concepts in theatre that are central to our personal identities and aesthetics. Accordingly, we can and should expect that we will not all agree with one another regarding the topics we will be discussing. This course should neither be seen as an opportunity to compel others to “achieve” a proper stance, nor as a space for trying to impress people. Vital to the success of this class is the commitment we make to listening and speaking with one another with respect and thoughtfulness.

The reading and assignments for this course are rigorous and challenging. You are required to *thoughtfully* read every assignment. When I say that you are required to read, I do not mean that you should mechanically scan every page, but you should *grapple with the ideas*. You will be required to take notes on each text so that you will *read for comprehension* rather than reading for completion. I want you to *ponder every idea* rather than looking at every word. This means that you may need to read and reread sections of the articles/chapters. Reading means *engaging yourself with the ideas of the texts*.

The reading load will be quite heavy at times. To stay afloat, plan for a sufficient amount of time to complete the assignment, and read aggressively. Remember to make use of your resources: meet with me outside of class, form reading groups with your classmates, check-out the writing center, TALK TO ONE ANOTHER!

Forum: For each class with a viewing and/or reading assignment, each student is to prepare one (1) compelling question that could be used in class discussion. A compelling question is one that challenges all of us to think critically about the texts – what they mean, their relation to objects/events/relations in our daily lives, etc. The questions are not simply journalistic-type questions about "facts" in the texts themselves.

In addition, you are to compose a short paragraph (at least 150 words) in which you begin to answer your compelling question. You do not have to answer the question completely, but must demonstrate that you have thought about where the answer might lie (or, at a minimum, where a discussion of the answer would begin). The goal is to demonstrate that you are reading closely and critically, and beginning to synthesize texts and your beliefs in conjunction with the texts.

Your compelling questions and short paragraphs must be posted to the Forum tab on our course WISE site by 8AM THE DAY OF CLASS. Late postings will not be evaluated but may be considered in class discussion. Please note that your notes will help you through this process.

Reflection Papers: For four of the articles we cover this semester (you choose which four), you will need to write a (3) page reflection paper. The reflection paper is an expansion of the forums. You will begin with one significant question that has arisen from reading the article. Using the article’s main points as well as connecting this work to the larger discourse, attempt to answer the question. The reflection papers are academic papers and should be written as such with appropriate citations and support. Works cited page will not be included in the (3) page limit.

Final Paper OR Project: The class will come to a consensus as either a final paper or a final project for class. The decision will be made by the end of the first week of classes. The class will not be split in its decision. In other words, the entire class will either participate in a final project or a final paper.

The final paper is an (8-10) page queer analysis. You may draw on any of the articles we’ve read in class for theoretical inspiration; you may also use other queer theorists or other books and articles by the authors we’ve read. The core of your paper should be the queer analysis of anything you can think of to look at from a queer perspective. I strongly urge you to find a topic that is urgent to you and your community and to be open to all aspects of culture. The paper is an academic paper and should be written as such with appropriate citations and support. Works cited page will not be included in the (10) page limit. You will present your final paper in-class. The in-class presentation will be a formal conference style presentation. At the time of the presentation, you should be 85% complete. Your group critique will give you time to rework challenging sections due on Thursday, May 4th at 2PM on WISE.

The final project would be a collaborative effort with no less than 3 classmates working together. Using the theories discussed in class, develop a creative project to support an urgent issue within the community. This is where theory will meet practice. The project may take any form. Regardless of form, the project must be “off-the-ground” or “live” no later than our final exam day. The group will present the project in class as a formal project presentation. Your group critique will give you time to rework challenging sections due on Thursday, May 4th at 2PM on WISE.

Grading of all written work will be based on clarity and organization of thought, use of specific supporting evidence, and pertinence of conclusions. These factors, along with quality of research, careful analysis, and general writing skills will constitute the basis for grading.

I will use the grade descriptions outlined in the CLA Catalogue: (A) excellent; (B) good; (C) satisfactory; (D) below standard; and (F) failing.

Paper Criteria

An “A” paper offers a persuasive, eloquent, stylistically sophisticated argument. It presents a compelling thesis, which is then developed into a well-structured, coherent essay. An “A” paper uses evidence effectively. Such a paper thoughtfully considers and analyzes other viewpoints, including the views of the paper’s intended audience. An “A” paper’s style is distinctive, and this style helps further the writer’s argument.

A “B” paper also offers a convincing argument. It has an interesting thesis and is, on the whole, well-structured. Like an A paper, it too considers alternative positions and does so in a thoughtful manner. A “B” paper’s style is clear and relatively free of errors that could hinder its readability and/or persuasiveness. A “B” paper grasps the significance of style in making an effective argument.

A “C” paper makes an argument but does not do so effectively. It may fail to present evidence in support of its thesis or it may present evidence in a haphazard and hence unconvincing manner. In addition, a paper will receive a “C” if it is stylistically unsophisticated, replete with digressions, lacks a sense of audience, or ignores opposing opinions.

A “D” paper fails to present an argument. The paper lacks a thesis and is merely a string of ideas, some of which may be very interesting but none of which are developed into a clear, rational, coherent essay. Additionally, a plethora of typos, stylistic problems, or grammatical flaws may turn any paper into a “D” paper if such lapses significantly affect the essay’s readability.

An “F” paper results when the writer neglects to hand in the assignment; refuses to address the paper topic; or violates common standards of decency. Additionally, plagiarism also will result in a paper grade of “F.”

Critical Reading Criteria

These will be the guiding questions that inform both our discussions and writing assignments. Class time will be most productive if you come to class having already thought about how you might respond to the questions that are most important to you.

Arguments:

- What are the main claims or points of the author’s argument?
- What terms or assumptions are being called into question?
- What kinds of evidence does the author use to support these arguments?
- What terms and concepts are being challenged or redefined?
- What are the underlying assumptions of the text?
- What is the evidence that leads me to infer this?

Theories:

- What theories or theorists are used as resources?
- What is the evidence of this use?
- How are theories or theorists positioned?
- What is the evidence of this positioning?
- How do the theories reflect complexity and contradiction?
- What is being re-imagined, or imagined in new ways?
- What is the significance to the argument of using theories in this way?

Purpose:

What are the purposes of this text?
 What is the evidence for my claim about purposes?
 What is at stake theoretically and practically?
 What is the evidence for my claim about the stakes?
 What are the arguments and assumptions that the author is trying to challenge?
 What evidence leads me to infer this?

Intellectual Relationships:

How are experts, scholars, allies, or opponents mentioned?
 Who is being put into what camp?
 What evidence is there for my claims?
 What are the implications of such use?

Rhetorical Strategies:

What significant or comment-worthy rhetorical strategies are used by the author?
 What specific examples and quotations demonstrate these strategies?
 What is the significance of these strategies for making the author's argument?

The following is the grading breakdown for this term:

Attendance: 10%
 Class Participation: 15%
 Reflection Papers: 25%
 Forum: 15%
 Final Paper OR Project: 35%

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible. Also, please request that the counselor for students with disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics.

We will be analyzing multiple standpoints and, at times, we may encounter individual resistance to the text(s). At times, such resistance may provoke unexpected responses. In such cases, please take personal care. Support services are available through Bishop Wellness and the Chaplain's office. I will always be available to assist as desired/needed.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. The OED defines plagiarism as, "the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own; literary theft". Willamette University's plagiarism policy can be found in the College of Liberal Arts Catalog. The Willamette Student Honor Code states, "We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of moral, academic excellence. We will proudly submit only our original work. We will never attempt to give ourselves or others an unfair advantage. We will commit to upholding our honor and the value of our work. Through this commitment we will serve as examples to our peers." Non nobis solum nati sumus (Not unto ourselves alone are we born).

Class Schedule

T	1/17	Introduction & Setting the Tone
TH	1/19	deLauretis, Teresa "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Studies" (WSIE) *class discussion without me.
T	1/24	Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky "Queer and Now"
TH	1/26	Butler, Judith "Critically Queer"
T	1/31	Prosser, Jay "Judith Butler: Queer Feminism, Transgender, and the Transubstantiation

		of Sex”
TH	2/2	Angelides, Steven “The Queer Intervention”
T	2/7	Johnson, E. Patrick “‘Quare’ Studies, or ‘Almost Everything I know About Queer Studies I Learned from my Grandmother”
TH	2/9	Ferguson, Roderick “Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism and Canonical Sociology”
T	2/14	Duggan, Lisa “Queering the State” (WISE)
TH	2/16	Hennessey, Rosemary “The Material of Sex”
T	2/21	Dean, Tim “Lacan Meets Queer Theory”
TH	2/23	TBD *to be chosen by class based on previous readings – what’s missing?
T	2/28	TBD *to be chosen by class based on previous readings – what’s missing?
TH	3/2	Grosz, Elizabeth “Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity”
T	3/7	Freeman, Elizabeth “Turn the Beat Around: Sadomasochism, Temporality, History”
TH	3/9	Halperin, David M. “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality”
T	3/14	Eng, David L. “Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas” & “First Person Plural” (film) http://www.mufilms.org/films/firstpersonplural/- .WGFuo7YrLdQ
TH	3/16	Provinelli, Elizabeth A. “Notes on Gridlock: Genealogy, Intimacy, Sexuality”
T	3/21	Cvetkovich, Ann “AIDS Activism and Public Feelings: Documenting Act Up’s Lesbians”
TH	3/23	Ahmed, Sarah “Queer Feelings” *discuss final paper or project in class
T	3/28	Spring Break (No Classes)
TH	3/30	Spring Break (No Classes)
T	4/4	Muñoz, José Esteban “Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position”
TH	4/6	Tropicana, Carmelita “Milk of Amnesia” (play) (WISE)
T	4/11	Halberstam, Judith “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and The Masculine Continuum”
TH	4/13	McRuer, Robert “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence”
T	4/18	Puar, Jasbir “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages”
TH	4/20	Arondekar, Anjali “Border/Line Sex: Queer Postcolonialities or How Race Matters Outside the U.S.”
T	4/25	Final Paper or Project Presentations
TH	4/27	Final Paper or Project Presentations
T	5/1	TBD *to be chosen by class based on previous readings – what’s next in queer theory?
TH	5/4	Final Project Due on WISE by 2PM