WST 111: Introduction to Queer Studies
Spring 2018 | Mon/Wed 4pm-5:20pm | Physics P128
DEC: G | SBC: HUM

Course Description
This course will provide students with a critical overview of queer studies and major thinkers within the field. This course is an interdisciplinary approach to American queer studies which begins by developing an understanding of foundational texts before turning to more contemporary theorists. We will use this foundational knowledge of queer studies in order to interrogate the relationship between queer theory and other forms of queer expression like film and memoirs. Importantly, this course will not only focus on what queer theory is, but what it does; that is, how it can be used to explore historical as well as contemporary social and political issues. Through the examination of film, literature, and theory, students will learn to read critically through the lenses of queer theory, queer of color critique, trans* studies, disability studies, and feminist theory.

Learning Objectives
- Identify sexuality as a central organizational category of western knowledge production.
- Explain how scholars use “queer” as a methodological approach for studying the politics of sex and identity.
- Analyze how gender, economic structures, racial formations, and hierarchies of dis/ability inform the regulation of sex.
- Discuss the ways in which queer theory and politics have transformed approaches to interdisciplinary fields in the humanities.
- Apply queer, feminist, and trans* theoretical concepts to analyze a wide range of texts, including literature, film, popular culture, and news media stories in the U.S.
- Express critical and analytical thinking skills verbally and in writing.

Course Materials
Required Texts
- Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction
- Alison Bechdel, Fun Home
- All other readings will be posted on Blackboard

Important Dates
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Steps</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 5, In Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Every scheduled meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>6 random pop quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>9/26 and 11/14 In Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Essay</td>
<td>October 17th, Blackboard at Midnight</td>
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<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>December 14th, Blackboard at Midnight</td>
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**Course Requirements**

*First Steps (5%)*

The student will turn in the completed student information sheet by **September 5** in class. If the student does not turn in a completed form, no other assignments will be graded throughout the semester. This is a requirement.

*Quizzes (10%)*

Because frequent evaluation is important to your grasp of the course materials, there will be **6 pop quizzes** throughout the semester. These quizzes will not be announced before the day they are given. If you miss class the day a quiz is given, you do not get to make it up. This is why it is important to always attend class and do all of the readings.

*Attendance/Participation (15%)*

In the feminist classroom, knowledge is understood as a product constructed by the knowers. This means your participation and input into our collective knowledge-making is valuable. As a student in a feminist class, you are responsible to your classmates as well as to yourself for the success of our joint teaching and learning. Therefore your active participation is required. You will demonstrate your commitment to the class by contributing respectfully to discussions. If you wish to use a laptop or a tablet for the assigned readings or taking notes, please do so respectfully. That means do not access social media during class. Also—it is fairly easy to tell when you are texting or on social media rather than paying attention. If you are seen consistently on your phone or on social media, this will negatively impact your final grade.

While participation and attendance are required, I fully acknowledge that participation can take many forms: following along actively in discussion, asking questions, raising concerns or confusion about the material, answering questions, agreeing or disagreeing respectfully with classmates, taking notes, and engagement with the discussion all indicate active participation; falling asleep, texting, side-conversations, not doing the readings, et cetera do not. Again, consistently failing to actively participate in class will negatively impact your final grade.

Over the course of the semester, you may miss **two classes** without explanation or penalty. Unexcused absences after two will negatively impact your final grade. An excused absence must be buttressed by acceptable proof, like a doctor’s note etc. An email from you right before class will not count as an excused absence.

*Contemporary Issue Reflection Paper (20%)*

You are expected to submit **two reflection papers** (2-3 pages) worth 20 percent of the final grade. Locate an article in national or local news that deals with issues surrounding gender identity or sexual orientation. Do not merely summarize the contents, but present your own, unique and informed analysis of the issues involved. For example, you might question what viewpoint the article represents,
who the article is targeting, what preconceived ideas are embedded in the article, or why the events in the article have taken place. You will use the course readings to inform your analysis of the argument or issue. These reflection essays are due Wednesday, September 26 and Wednesday, November 14 handed in during class.

Grading criteria for these essays is as follows:

- **Excellent** – This paper is well organized, with a clear and focused thesis. It meets the length requirement (approximately 2-3 pages). It is well written, with no grammatical or spelling errors. The argument is analytical, concise, and well supported by textual examples. It clearly demonstrates that the author has read and thought carefully about the themes of the course readings.

- **Above Average** – This paper has a clear thesis and well it is written. It clearly demonstrates that the author has read the assigned materials, and is actively engaged with the ideas of the class and readings. It has an original and well-structured argument, which is well supported by examples from at least two course readings. Any quotations are adequately contextualized and interpreted.

- **Good** – This essay has a clearly focused thesis, and is generally well written. It has an interesting argument that is well supported with materials from the class (including at least two readings), and it goes beyond mere summary of the readings, but it does not go beyond class discussions. Also, it may contain some spelling or grammatical errors.

- **Below Average** – This essay has no thesis, or it is unclear and confusing. The argument is unfocused or absent. It may contain substantial grammatical, spelling, and documentation errors, which further obscure the argument. And it either fails to make use of sources, or they are simply inserted into the body of the text without contextualization, interpretation, or analysis. Finally, it may be too brief, generalized, vague, or obscured by grammatical problems to address the material in any depth.

- **Fail** – This paper has no thesis and does not make any sort of argument (or, its argument is seriously obscured by grammatical, spelling, and typing errors). It fails to adequately make use of required sources, and it is clear from reading this essay that the writer has not read assigned materials for class.

- **0 points** – Any paper that is plagiarized earns no points.

**Midterm Paper (20%)**

In place of an in-class examination for the midterm, students will turn in a paper on Blackboard which answers certain prompts. Detailed instructions will be posted to Blackboard and will also be discussed in class. Students are asked not to do any outside research, rather you should rely on assigned course materials, discussions, and lectures. The midterm will focus exclusively on material covered over the first half of the course and will be due electronically by **Wednesday October 17 at Midnight**.
**Final Paper (30%)**
The final assignment for the course will be a take-home final paper. This assignment will deal with the overall themes and questions raised by the course, but will focus on the material covered in the second half of the semester. Students will be asked to answer specific prompts that will be posted on Blackboard. As with other written assignments, detailed instructions will be posted to Blackboard, as well as discussed in class. Students are again reminded that outside research will not be necessary for this assignment. This assignment will be submitted electronically by Friday December 14 at Midnight.

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**Course Policies**

*Course Content*
All course materials are required. Students should keep in mind that the materials presented in this course deal with issues of sexuality, sexual representation, sexual practice, and current politics. If a student perceives there may be a conflict regarding their personal beliefs and the materials required in this course, enrollment in this class may not be appropriate and the student may wish to find a suitable alternative. No exceptions to this policy will be made and the student’s continued enrollment is understood as an explicit agreement to this policy. Please also be advised the syllabus is subject to change.

*Trigger Warnings and Self-Care*
We will be openly engaging with numerous topics and issues that some students might find discomforting. If you feel you need to excuse yourself from the conversation or the classroom because of emotional stress brought on by our discussion, you are certainly permitted to do so. Keep in mind, it is not anyone’s responsibility but your own to make sure you are taking the appropriate steps to care for yourself and your sensibilities. Please be sure to indicate to me at some point before or after if this is the case. You are responsible for any information you might have missed in your absence from class.

*Classroom Environment*
Because this is an introductory course, the range of knowledge you all have about queer studies will vary. Keep in mind that just because you know something doesn’t mean everyone knows it. This classroom is and will remain a space where people feel comfortable asking questions. It is important to have difficult discussions in this class surrounding race, gender, class, sexuality, etc; but it is often times not helpful to “call people out” if they have made a mistake. This is a time to discuss and engage, not shame people.
Late Work
Assignments are considered late if they are handed in one hour past the stipulated due date and time. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points if submitted within 24 hours after the assigned due date (e.g., 90 down to 80 if submitted before class time the following day). After this, assignments will not be accepted. If a student requires an extension, this must be requested at least 48 hours before the assignment is due. Extenuating circumstances must be explained in detail in the email.

If a student is going to be absent or late the day an assignment is due, the student is advised to turn the assignment in early if at all possible. If this is not possible, the student must submit an electronic copy of the assignment to the instructor via email by the due date/time.

Academic Integrity
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Do NOT plagiarize! Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to): the submission of another student’s paper, a purchased paper, or a paper the student also submitted to another class; the inclusion of ideas and/or words from a publication without providing appropriate citations; and the use of essays or sections of essays from the internet without providing appropriate citations. Also, do not copy and paste from Wikipedia. I take plagiarism very seriously and you will received a zero on any assignment that has been plagiarized.

Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/.

Accommodations
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748 or by email at dss@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students requiring emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information, go to the following web site. http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu/fire/disabilities/asp

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information, go to the following web site http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu and search “Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.”

Students who are referred to by a name or gender that is not reflected on the official university roster are encouraged to contact me and let me know of their correct name/pronoun.
Critical Incident Management
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Email
All students are required to use their stonybrook.edu email addresses for this course. I welcome you to email me any questions or concerns you may have that are not answered by this syllabus. Make sure that you include the course name and a brief description of the enquiry in the subject line (e.g., “WST 111: Final Paper Question”). You should expect a 24 hour turn around for any question of concern. If I have not responded within 24 hours, resend the email. I do not respond to emails over the weekend, thus please consider any email sent after 5:00pm on Friday as sent at 8:00am on Monday. Make sure you plan accordingly and do not leave important questions to the last minute.

Office Hours
Students are encouraged to make use of office hours to discuss any of the course materials that are not clear or to seek clarification of any course concepts that are unclear. Outside of my regularly scheduled office hours (Wednesday 12:30-3:30pm), students may make an appointment at a mutually agreeable time. If you plan to see me during my regularly scheduled office hours, please email prior to make an appointment and ensure my availability.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Mon., Aug. 27 Course Overview


Trans Student Educational Resources. Definitions http://www.transstudent.org/definitions

Unit 1: Foundations of Queer Studies

Week 2: Beginnings
Mon., Sept. 3
NO CLASS – Labor Day

Wed., Sept. 5
Rivera, Sylvia. "Bitch on Wheels." Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries: Survival, Revolt, and Queer Antagonist Struggle

Week 3: From Sexual Acts to Identities
Mon., Sept. 10
(Read from 1-35)

Wed., Sept. 12
Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality.
(Read from 17-49)

Week 4: Identity and Performativity
Mon., Sept. 17
In class film: Paris is Burning

Wed., Sept. 19
Edward Ndopu. 2013. “Musings from a Queercrip Femme Man of Color”

Week 5: The Politics of Sexuality
Mon., Sept. 24
Audre Lorde, “I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing across Sexualities”

Wed., Sept. 26

Combahee River Collective, A Black Feminist Statement

*****Assignment Due in Class: Reflection Essay #1 Due

Week 6: Race, Class, and Sexuality
Mon., Oct. 1
Anzaldúa, Gloria. La Pírieta

Allison, Dorothy. A Question of Class

Wed., Oct. 3
Johnson, E. Patrick. Quare Studies, or (almost) everything I know about queer studies I learned from my grandmother
### Unit 2: Desires and Identities

**Week 7:** Representing Queers of Color  
Mon., Oct. 8  NO CLASS – Fall Break  
Wed., Oct. 10  Munoz, Jose Esteban. Performing Disidentifications,” from *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*

**Week 8:** Representations of Sexuality and Kinship  
Mon., Oct. 15  Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home*  
Wed., Oct. 17  Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home*  
*****Midterm paper due electronically at Midnight

**Week 9:** AIDS and the Politics of Knowledge Production  
Mon., Oct. 22  Delany, Samuel. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (Read from 3-57)  
   
The Queer Nation Manifesto

**Week 10:** New Queer Cinema  
   
Wed., Oct. 31  In class film: Gregg Araki, *The Living End*

### Unit 3: Bodies/Politics

**Week 11:** Homonormativity, Neoliberalism, and the Future  
Mon., Nov. 5  Duggan, Lisa. “Chapter 3: Equality, Inc.” from *The Twilight of Equality*? (Read from 43-66)  

**Week 12:** Disciplining Bodies  
and the Production of Docile Patriots.”

*****Assignment Due in Class: Reflection Essay #2 Due

Week 13: Surveilling Trans* Bodies
Mon., Nov. 19 Spade, Dean. “Introduction: Rights, Movements, and Critical Trans Politics,” and “Chapter 1: Trans Law and Politics on a Neoliberal Landscape.” (Whole book is on Blackboard; read from 1-37)

Wed., Nov. 21 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Rethinking Queer


Week 15: Imagining Otherwise
Mon., Dec. 3 Munoz, Jose Esteban. Chapter 1: Queerness as Horizon and Conclusion: “Take Ecstasy with Me”

Wed., Dec. 5 Last Day of Class; Wrap-Up

Friday, December 14 Final Paper due at midnight