Spring Term 2018: GSWS2270, "Queer Theories"

Tuesday 2:30-5:00 / GSWS Library (402E Cathedral of Learning)

Prof. Todd Reeser, Director of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

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Office: 401F Cathedral of Learning

Office hours: after class and by appointment (email me to set up a time)

Description of the course:

While some might say that with the dawn of a new millennium, the era of queer theory had passed, work in queer studies is without a doubt as vibrant as ever. Queer theory has had a major influence on the academy and continues to be integrated and transformed in today's academic culture. One of the goals of this course will be to consider the relation between the past and present of "queer studies." We will focus on very recent work in queer studies (much of it published after 2000) and, as a group of scholar-teachers, think through what have emerged as some of the key issues, questions, and debates in this wing of gender studies.

As this course is not a survey of the full trajectory of queer theory, we will not read the "classics" of queer theory (e.g. Butler, Foucault) per se, but much of the recent critical work that we will take employs these thinkers as jumping-off points. Consequently, we will necessarily (re)consider those classics and think about how they have recently been reworked and reread by later thinkers. For instance, we will ask: How has Michel Foucault's hyper-canonical notion that "sodomy" becomes "homosexuality" in the late nineteenth century been rethought by theoretically-informed historians? How have Butler's ideas on performativity been challenged by transgender theorists and critical race scholars? Students will thus complete the course with a solid understanding of where queer studies has been and where it is today.

The course will be run as an interdisciplinary seminar, and we will profit from the various backgrounds in the classroom to learn more about fields outside our own "home." Course requirements will include: regular engagement with the readings and the class discussions, discussion-leading on a chosen text, a series of short responses on Courseweb, and a final paper.

Books to Purchase (ordered at the Bookstore):

- Thomas Piontek, *Queering Gay and Lesbian Studies* (U Illinois P) (also available on-line in Pittcat)
- Jay Prosser, Second Skins (Columbia UP)
- David Halperin, *How to Do a History of Homosexuality* (Chicago UP)

Purchase *one* of the following two books:

- Martin Manalansan, Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora (Duke UP)
- Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires*: *Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Duke UP)

Other texts will be available on Courseweb. Videos will be on reserve at Hillman Multimedia.

Grading:

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Preparation, quantity and quality of participation in class and group discussions, discussion-leading, weekly written responses and responses to someone else's response (see below), attendance, attendance at two GSWS queer-content events this term, presentation of final paper 60%

Final paper, including abstract two weeks before paper due 40%

Students who miss more than one class will suffer a penalty in the first part of the grade. Students who miss more than three seminars will receive a failing grade for this part of the course. Students who miss more than four seminars will not pass the course.

It is important to meet external gender studies scholars. You are thus required to attend any two GSWS events focused on queer topics this term. You should plan in advance. Events are listed here: www.gsws.pitt.edu/events. I will need an email to me documenting your attendance and letting me know in 3-5 sentences your take on the content of the event. How was "queer" involved in the presentation? What did "queer" mean? Please use the subject heading "GSWS outside event" for your email.

You will lead the class discussion on a text from the course (20-25 minutes). This is *not* an oral presentation: you can talk at the beginning for no more than two minutes, but you should spend almost all of the time dialoguing with your fellow students about the text in question. Do not give us background on the text. If you need to make a point before asking a question, that is fine but focus on something specific and analytic. Recall that we have all read the text and are ready to discuss. This activity will require you to know your text very, very well, and to have some well thought-out questions ready to go. You need to be able to answer questions about the text as well. Your questions should not be yes or no questions, but questions that bring out debates or complications or relations related to the topic.

Each week, you will write a short on-line response (500 words minimum), each response on one (or more) of the required class readings, to be posted to Courseweb discussion board by Monday 5 p.m. the day before the class period in which it will be discussed (at the latest). These are meant to help you engage closely with the texts of the class. In your response, do not simply summarize the piece (you can assume that we have read it and understand the basic elements). You can summarize when it helps you make another point ("Critic x says this, but I think this..."). Expand on one aspect of the text, critique it, discuss what is omitted, enlarge its scope, and/or apply the thesis to some particular case. You must provide a personal "take" of some kind on the writing. Your discussion must show a close engagement with the texts of the course and must respond to the spirit

of the article or work, not to one sentence of it. Do not spend most of your time talking about your personal life or some book or article the rest of us have not read. You are responding to the text at hand.

You may "pass" three times during the semester (so you need at least 9 total responses). Doing all 12 responses will be viewed favorably.

You must also respond at least three times during the term to someone else's response (100 words minimum). You should respond to one or more of the responses that were posted on Courseweb by class time (at the latest). The same guidelines apply as above. You should have a "take" on someone else's "take." This will help prepare you to respond to your colleagues in the class discussion. You are welcome to respond to posted responses regularly: this is an especially good thing to do if you do not speak much in class and prefer to interact in the written medium. So doing will contribute to your grade in a positive manner. I fully understand students can participate in a variety of manners, orally in class and in the written medium.

The final paper (12-20 pages) will be due on the last day on class or the following Friday. You will present your work on the last day of class or the week before. For this paper, you can integrate one or more of the theoretical texts you have been reading into your own "home" discipline. You might conduct a theoretically-informed reading of a literary, cultural, or cinematic text. You could also do a reading of a theoretical text itself. But your paper should follow the rules of good North-American-style, graduate-level paperwriting. It must be thesis/argument-driven, do a reading of some kind of "text," integrate queer theory, introduce the topic in a way that makes sense, and have some kind of conclusion. This paper can be an exploration of an aspect of OT for future work, or can be a chunk of a dissertation chapter. But your paper must "embed" the course in some way: I must be able to see clearly how the paper relates to the course. Translations for all quotes not in English should be supplied in the text below the original language or in footnotes/endnotes. Assume an educated audience that knows English. The paper must be formatted according to MLA or Chicago style, or it will be returned to you unread. Note that the page minimum is for your own prose and not for a title page, etc. Use standard margins and font size.

You also have the option of a queer studies literature review (same length and requirements as above). You would generate a bibliography of work not on the syllabus (but related to it) including at least 5 books and 5 substantial articles, approved by me at least three weeks before the paper is due. You could include books from which we read one chapter in class. Your paper would then survey all this work, evaluate its main claims, discuss relations among the texts (whether directly stated or not in the work itself), consider what is at stake in the work, locate holes or problems as defined by you, and finally make conclusions about where the sub-area should or could head in the future. There must be coherency in the paper around the broad topic.

University and GSWS Policies:

Disability resources and services:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/.

Academic integrity and plagiarism:

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html

Violation of the Academic Integrity Code requires the instructor to submit an Academic Integrity Violation Report to the Dean's Office.

Classroom recording policy:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

E-mail policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (<u>username@pitt.edu</u>) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Cell phone and laptop policy:

All cell phones and other electronic communication devices are to be turned to the off setting during class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking only.

Non-discrimination policy:

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf

Gender-Inclusive language guidelines:

Aspiring to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives to academic discourse, the University of Pittsburgh Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program provides guidelines and resources regarding gender-inclusive/non-sexist language (gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432). Following these guidelines fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthens academic writing, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (e.g. first-year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html.

Content warning and class climate:

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political and personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are

struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Sexual misconduct, required reporting, and Title IX:

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

* Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

* SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121. Other reporting information is available here: http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0

Date:	Topic:	Reading/Viewing for Class [*=student-led discussion text]:
Tues.	Queer Theory:	Introduction to the Course: What is/was queer theory?
Jan. 9	Past, Present, Future	The Basics and Beyond: Butler, Gender Trouble and Foucault, History of Sexuality, Vol. 1
Jan. 16	The State of Queer Studies Today	Piontek, <i>Queering Gay and Lesbian Studies</i> (2006): read intro, chap. 1 ("Forget Stonewall"), and at least one other chapter (2-5)
	What about LGBT studies?	Sedgwick, introduction from <i>Epistemology of the Closet</i> (1990), esp. pp. 22-27 and 40-48 (on nonce taxonomies and minoritizing/universalizing approaches)
	Is Queer Theory too white?	Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz, "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?," in <i>Social Text</i> (2005)
	Is Queer Theory dead?	Hames-García, "Queer Theory Revisited," in <i>Gay Latino Studies</i> (2011)
		Warner, "Queer and Then," in <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> (2012)
		Suggested: Jagose, Queer Theory: An Introduction (for general background on "classic" queer theory, not on Courseweb)
		Valentine, "The Categories Themselves," in GLQ (2004)
Jan. 23	Queer beyond Gender Trouble	Butler, "Introduction" (pp. 1-16) and "Critically Queer," from <i>Bodies that Matter</i> (1993)
		Muñoz, "Performing Disidentifications," from <i>Disidentifications</i> : Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics (1999)
		*Johnson, "'Quare' Studies," in Text and Performance Quarterly (2001)
		McRuer, "Compulsory Able-bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," in <i>The Disability Studies Reader</i> (2002)
		Suggested: Riggs, <i>Tongues Untied</i> (1989) (documentary to pair with Muñoz and Johnson)
		Butler, "Introduction: Acting in Concert," from <i>Undoing Gender</i> (2004), esp. pp. 15-16

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Jan. 30	Transsexual Transgender Trans*	*Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," in <i>Body Guards</i> (1991)
	Trans*	*Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage," from <i>The Transgender Studies Reader</i> (1994, repr. 2006)
		Puar, "Disability," in <i>Transgender Studies Quarterly (TSQ)</i> (2014)
		Bey, "The Trans*-Ness of Blackness, the Blackness of Trans*-Ness," in <i>TSQ</i> (2017)
		Read at least one of the following 4 pieces on representation: • Halberstam, "The Transgender Look," from <i>In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives</i> (2005)
		 Eastwood, "How, Then, Might the Transsexual Read?: Notes toward a Trans Literary History," in <i>TSQ</i> (2014) Horak, "Trans on YouTube: Intimacy, Visibility, Temporality," in <i>TSQ</i> (2014)
		• Steinbock, "Generative Negatives: Del LaGrace Volcano's <i>Herm Body</i> Photographs," in <i>TSQ</i> (2014)
		Suggested: Baudrillard, "Transsexuality," from <i>The Transparency of Evil</i> (1990, trans. 1993)
		Rubin, "Phenomenology as Method in Trans Studies," in <i>GLQ</i> (1998)
		Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality," in <i>GLQ</i> (2001)
		Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," from <i>The Transgender Studies Reader</i> (highly recommended for those who have not read)
		Currah, "Gender Pluralism under the Transgender Umbrella," from <i>Transgender Rights</i> (2006)
		Valentine, "Imagining Transgender," from <i>Imagining</i> Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category (2007)
		Gayle Salamon, Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality (2010)

Feb. 6	The Anti-Social and the Anus	Hocquenghem, "Capitalism, the Family and the Anus," from <i>Homosexual Desire</i> (1972)
		*Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?," in October (1987)
		*Edelman, "The Future Is Kid Stuff," from <i>No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive</i> (2004)
		Halberstam, opening pages of introduction and "The Queer Art of Failure," from <i>The Queer Art of Failure</i> (2011) (esp. pp. 106-11, critique of Edelman)
		Suggested: Bersani, "The Gay Outlaw," from <i>Homos</i> (1995)
		Nyong'o, "[]Intersections of Punk and Queer in the 1970s," in Radical History Review (2008)
Feb.	The Anti-anti- Social, the	Grosz, "Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity," from Space, Time, and Perversion (1995)
	Advantages of Debasement, Queer Futurity and Potentiality	Stockton, "Embracing Shame: 'Black' and 'Queer' in Debasement," from <i>Beautiful Bottom, Beautiful Shame: Where "Black" Meets "Queer"</i> (2006)
		Muñoz, introduction and chap. 1, from Cruising Utopia (2009)
		Read at least one of the following pieces:
		 Halperin, chapter 5 from What do Gay Men Want? (2007) Rodríguez, "Queer Sociality and Other Sexual Fantasies," in GLQ (2011)
		• Tan Hoang, introduction from A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation (2014)
		• Nash, "Black Anality," in <i>GLQ</i> (2014) (pairs well with Stockton)
		Suggested: Warner, "The Ethics of Sexual Shame," from <i>The Trouble with Normal</i> (1999)
		Halberstam, "Shame and White Gay Masculinity," in <i>Social Text</i> (2005)
		"Queer Theory without Antinormativity," differences (May 2015)

Feb. 20	Queer Affects	*Cvetkovich, intro and chap. 1 from An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures (2003)
		Ahmed, "Queer Feelings," from <i>The Cultural Politics of Emotion</i> (2004), pp. 144-55
		Puar, "queer times, terrorist assemblages," from <i>Terrorist Assemblages</i> (2007)
		Crawford, "Transgender without Organs?: Mobilizing a Geo- affective Theory of Gender Modification," in <i>Women's Studies</i> <i>Quarterly</i> (2008)
		*Love, introduction and chapter 1 from Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History (2007)
		Suggested:
		Muñoz, "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position," in <i>Signs</i> (2006)
Feb. 27	Space, Race, and the Transnational	Grewal and Kaplan, "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality," in <i>GLQ</i> (2001)
		 Read <i>one</i> of the following book sections: Manalansan, <i>Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora</i> (2003) (at least intro, chapter 1, and one other chapter) Gopinath, <i>Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures</i> (2005) (at least chapter 1 and one other chapter)
		Suggested: Boone, "Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism," from <i>Postcolonial, Queer</i> (2001)
		Sang, introduction from <i>The Emerging Lesbian: Female Samesex Desire in Modern China</i> (2003)
		Hall, "Can We Teach a Transnational Queer Studies?," in Pedagogy (2009)
		Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," in <i>GLQ</i> (2010)
March 6		Spring break

March	The Closet,	Sedgwick, chap. 1 from Epistemology of the Closet (pp. 67-75)
13	Knowledge, Indifference	*Ross, "Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm" (2005)
		*Documentary to watch: Dangerous Living: Coming out in the Developing World (2003) (available through Pittcat)
		Kahan, "The Expressive Hypothesis," from <i>Celibacies</i> (2013) (esp. pp. 1-13)
		Menon, "Indifference," from Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism (2015)
		Suggested: de Villiers, "Opacities: Queer Strategies," from <i>Opacity and the Closet: Queer Tactics in Foucault, Barthes, and Warhol</i> (2012)
March 20	Queer Spaces, Queer Times	Halberstam, "Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies," from In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives (2005)
		Dinshaw, et.al., "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion," in <i>GLQ</i> (2007)
		Freccero, "Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past," in <i>A Companion to LGBTQ Studies</i> (2007)
		Read at least one of the following pieces: • Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public," in <i>Critical Inquiry</i> (1998)
		• Rohy, "Three Analogies: History, Psychoanalysis, Literature," from <i>Anachronism and Its Others: Sexuality,</i> Race, Temporality (2009)
		Herring, introduction to Another Country: Queer Anti- Urbanism (2010)
		Kafer, "Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips," from Feminist, Queer, Crip (2013)
		Suggested: Freeman, "Queer and Not Now," from <i>Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories</i> (2010)
		Tongson, introduction to Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries (2011)
March 27	Post-Foucauldian Histories of Sexuality	Halperin, How to Do the History of Homosexuality (2002), esp. intro and chapters 1, 2, 4 (*chapters 1-2) =>

		"And that other, licentious Greek love," paragraph from Montaigne (p. 138), "Of Friendship" (1580): test case for Halperin's approach to historicity Suggested: Freccero, "Undoing the Histories of Homosexuality," from Queer/Early/Modern (2006) (critique of Halperin)
		Queen Eurly Modern (2000) (chilque of Haiperin)
April 3	Transgender Temporality	Prosser, <i>Second Skins</i> (1998), esp. introduction and chapters 1-2, and pp. 99-103, 171-77, 200-205 (*chapter 1, "Judith Butler")
		Film to watch: Lifshitz, <i>Wild Side</i> (2004) (DVD on reserve at Hillman)
		Suggested: Prosser, "Transsexuality in Photography—Fielding the Referent," in <i>Second Skins</i>
April 10	Lesbian Ghosts, Lesbian Histories	Castle, introduction to <i>The Apparitional Lesbian</i> (1993)
	Sequencing Lesbianism	*Jagose, "First Things First: Some Second Thoughts on Lesbianism," from <i>Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and</i> the Logic of Sexual Sequence (2002)
		Watch "The Visit": 'Lesbian' Advertisement (3 minutes): www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef27m5ocK6Q
		*Traub, "The Sign of the Lesbian," from <i>Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns</i> (2016)
		Suggested: Halberstam, "Perverse Presentism," from <i>Female Masculinity</i> (1998), esp. 45-59
		Traub, introduction to <i>The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England</i> (2002)
		Traub, "The Present Future of Lesbian Historiography," in <i>A Companion to LGBTQ Studies</i> (2007)
		***Abstract of your final paper due: April 12 (200-300 words)
April 17		Final Paper Presentations
April 24		Conclusions and Paper Presentations Final papers due before noon Friday, April 27 via email