

GSWS 1170 Queer Theory (Fall 2017)

Schedule: Monday & Wednesday 3:00pm – 4:15pm

Location: 402 Cathedral of Learning

Instructor: Dr. Julie Beaulieu

Email: jrb107@pitt.edu

Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2:00, Tuesday 12:30-2:00, & by appointment

Office Location: 402B Cathedral of Learning

Required texts

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*

Course description

Queer studies offer us one method for imagining, not some fantasy of an elsewhere, but existing alternatives to hegemonic systems.

—J. Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*

Queer denotes not an identity but instead a political and existential stance, an ideological commitment, a decision to live outside some social norm or other. At the risk (the certainty) of oversimplification, one could say that even if one is born straight or gay, one must decide to be queer.

—Richard Thompson Ford, *After Sex?*

Queer Theory offers an introduction to “queer” as a method of analysis and as an approach to activism and cultural activity. Through the course readings, we will explore the historical precedents that participated in the emergence of “queer” as a school of thought and political stance. This course aims to provide students with the tools to apply queer theory to contemporary questions, enabling them to create queer readings of culture, identity, and politics. We will consider the connectedness of sexuality to other aspects of life, global sexual identities, queer responses to cultural norms, and applications of queer theory to everyday life.

Course objectives

- Develop and demonstrate an understanding of key terms, concepts, and ideas in queer theory
- Recognize and articulate how queer theory challenges normative ideas about identity and desire
- Develop research and writing skills that reflect a critical awareness of major topics in the field
- Articulate the relationship between sexuality and other social categories like race, ability, and class
- Explore the interdisciplinary possibilities of queer theory

Assignments

- Participation/attendance (10%)
- Reading Quizzes (10%)
- Short Paper 1 (2-3 pages) (10%)
- Short Paper 2 (2-3 pages) (10%)
- Final Paper draft (5-7 pages) (15%)
- Final Project Presentation (5%)
- Event Review (2-3 pages) (10%)
- Final Paper (10-12 pages) (30%)

** Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted in courseweb/blackboard*

Course information & policies

Attendance

Attendance is required. Please come to class on time and prepared. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to contact me about missing work and subsequent assignments. “Excused” absences will be given if you provide documentation. Please expect your grade to reflect your commitment to this course. More than three absences will strongly affect your final grade. If you miss 4 or more classes, you risk failing the course.

Assignments

You are responsible for keeping up with your work. Assignments and readings are due on the day that they appear on the syllabus. If you are absent, your work is still due. Late assignments will be marked down 10% per day. It is your responsibility to contact me about missed work.

All written work must be proofread. Please use MLA in-text citation for all sources. You must submit a final paper in order to pass the class.

Assignment descriptions with grading rubrics will be passed out in class and uploaded to courseweb (under documents) one week before they are due. Please contact me if you have any questions about the assignments.

Reading quizzes will be periodically assigned throughout the term. Reading quizzes can be made up (during office hours) if you have an excused absence.

Grade Scale

Highest	Lowest	Letter
100.00 %	94.00 %	A
93.99 %	90.00 %	A-
89.99 %	87.00 %	B+
86.99 %	84.00 %	B
83.99 %	80.00 %	B-
79.99 %	77.00 %	C+
76.99 %	74.00 %	C
73.99 %	70.00 %	C-
69.99 %	67.00 %	D+
66.99 %	60.00 %	D
59.99 %	0.00 %	F

Required readings

All required readings are listed on the syllabus. *The History of Sexuality* is available at the Pitt bookstore and PDFs can be found in courseweb under documents. Please bring the readings to class. All readings on the syllabus are required.

Participation

Thoughtful participation is expected, appreciated, and part of your grade.

“A” participants: maintain solid attendance; contribute to the class environment by being awake, alert, and engaged; demonstrate a willingness to participate in productive, academic, and relevant ways; refrain from private

conversations during class time; do not use a telephone or any other electronic device for anything besides coursework; contribute to class discussions during every class.

“B” participants: follow the above rubric 85% of the time.

“C” participants: follow the above rubric 75% of the time; arrive late and/or have poor attendance.

“D” participants: follow the above rubric 65% of the time; arrive late and/or have poor attendance.

“F” participants: follow the above rubric 50% of the time; arrive late and/or have poor attendance.

University and GSWS Program Policies and Statements

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: www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html.

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

“Turnitin”

Students agree that by taking this course all required assignments may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

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 (username@pitt.edu) 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.

Please give me time to respond to emails. I will do my best to reply to emails within 24 hours (M-F). I will respond to weekend emails when time permits; I will reply to urgent weekend emails as soon as possible, but otherwise please wait until Monday for a response. Email is ideally used for quick questions/clarifications. All other concerns—questions about your progress, written work, your grade, class in general—should be addressed during office hours. Please feel free to send a reminder/follow up if I have missed an important email.

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 & PDF reading 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. 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. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff 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>. For additional information please visit the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program: <http://www.gswstudies.pitt.edu/>

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>

List of readings, assignments, & events

Week One/introduction

Monday 8/28

- Introduction to the course

Wednesday 8/30

- Annamarie Jagose, "Limits of Identity" & "Queer" (cw)
- Nikki Sullivan, "The Social Construction of Same-Sex Desire: Sin, Crime, Sickness" (cw)

Week Two/queer roots & axioms

Monday 9/4

- No Class/Labor Day

Wednesday 9/6

- Suzanna Danuta Walters, "From Here to Queer: Radical Feminism, Postmodernism, and the Lesbian Menace" (cw)
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Axiomatic" (cw)

Week Three/early theories: Foucault

Monday 9/11

- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pgs. 1-102

Wednesday 9/13

- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, pgs.103-159
- Riki Wilchins, "Homosexuality and the Politics of the Self" (cw)

EVENT (lecture):

"Sexuality and Islam in France"

Denis Provencher

9/13 from 1:30pm - 3:00pm in 602 CL

Week Four/the "science" of desire

Monday 9/18

- Marjorie Garber, "The Return to Biology" (cw)

Wednesday 9/20

- Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body" (cw)
- Short Paper 1 Due

Week Five/the queer child

Monday 9/25

- Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff” (cw)
- *A Road to Home: Stories of LGBTQ Youth of New York City* (film) (watch on Pitt Kanopy)

Wednesday 9/27

- Kathryn Bond Stockton, “The Queer Child Now and its Paradoxical Global Effects” (cw)

EVENT (lecture):

“Race, Face, Ravage, and Lyrical Fat: Deleuze and Childhood Poverty”

Kathryn Bond Stockton

9/29 from 4:00pm - 5:30pm in 548 WPU

Week Six/homonormativity & homonationalism

Monday 10/2

- José Esteban Muñoz, “Queerness as Horizon” (cw)

Wednesday 10/4

- Jasbir Puar, “Homonationalism and Biopolitics” (cw)
- *Pride Denied: Homonationalism and the Future of Queer Politics* (film) (watch on Pitt Kanopy)

Week Seven/global queer identities

Tuesday 10/10

- Martin Manalansan, “The Borders Between Bakla and Gay” (cw)

Wednesday 10/11

- Giancarlo Cornejo, “For a Queer Pedagogy of Friendship” (cw)
- Short Paper 2 Due

Week Eight/queering feminism

Monday 10/16

- Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex” (cw)
- Gayle Rubin, “The Catacombs: A Temple of the Butthole” (cw)

EVENT (conversation):

“A Conversation with Gayle Rubin for Undergraduates”

Gayle Rubin

10/17 from 2:30pm – 3:45pm in Auditorium 5 Scaife Hall

EVENT (lecture):

“Gay Sex and the Post-Industrial City: Leathermen and San Francisco's South of Market”

Gayle Rubin

10/17 from 5:00pm – 7:00pm in 602 CL

Wednesday 10/18

- Judith Butler, “Critically Queer” (cw)
- Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex, Gender, and Desire” (cw)

Week Nine/anarchy & manifestos

Monday 10/23

- Jack Halberstam, “Go Gaga: Anarchy, Chaos, and the Wild” (cw)
- Jack Halberstam, “Gaga Manifesto” (cw)

Wednesday 10/25

- Anon., “Queers Read This” (cw)
- *We Were Here: The AIDS Years in San Francisco* (film) (watch on Pitt Kanopy)

EVENT (presentation):

“Teaching Queer”

Stacey Waite

10/26 from 12:30pm – 2:00pm in 501 CL

EVENT (lecture):

“Wild Things: Notes on Queer Anarchy”

Jack Halberstam

10/26 from 6:00pm – 7:30pm 125 Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

EVENT (conference):

The Kristeva Circle

10/27-10/28 (full schedule online)

Week Ten/queer history

Monday 10/30

- Benjamin Kahan, “Conjectures on the Sexual World-System” (cw)

EVENT (lecture):

“Sex in the Age of Fordism: The Standardization of Sexual Objects”

Benjamin Kahan

10/31 from 2:30pm – 4:00pm in Auditorium 5 Scaife Hall

Wednesday 11/1

- John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity” (cw)

Week Eleven/working-class queers

Monday 11/6

- Alan Bérubé, “Intellectual Desire” (cw)
- Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics” (cw)
- Dorothy Allison, “A Question of Class” (cw)

EVENT (film screening/Q & A w/director):

REAL BOY

11/7 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm in Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Wednesday 11/8

- Anne Balay, “Sex and Surveillance on the Highway” (cw)
- Final Paper Draft due

Week Twelve/queer of color critique

Monday 11/13

- Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic” (cw)
- Roderick A. Ferguson, “Of Our Normative Strivings: African American Studies and the Histories of Sexuality” (cw)

Wednesday 11/15

- Jeffrey McCune, “The Queerness of Blackness” (cw)
- *Out in the Night* (film) (watch on Pitt Kanopy)

EVENT (lecture):

“The ‘Crooked Stitches’ of Desire: Sewing and Sexual Awakening in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*”

Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder

11/16 from 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Week Thirteen/queer indigenous studies

Monday 11/20

- Jodi Byrd, “*Loving* Unbecoming: The Queer Politics of the Transitive Native” (cw)
- Qwo-Li Driskill, “Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies” (cw)

Wednesday 11/22

- No Class/Thanksgiving Break

Week Fourteen/queer abilities & queer affects

Monday 11/27

- Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence” (cw)
- Alison Kafer, “Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips” (cw)

Wednesday 11/29

- Ann Pellegrini, “Touching the Past; or, Hanging Chad” (cw)

EVENT (lecture):

Ann Pellegrini

11/30 (time & location TBA)

Week Fifteen/final paper presentations & workshop

Monday 12/4

- Final Paper Presentations

Wednesday 12/6

- Final Paper Presentations & workshop

Finals Week/final paper due

Wednesday 12/13

- Final Paper due by 4:00 pm