

Women's Studies 3214
Queer Studies
Fall 2021
Friday, 11:30-2:30
Dr. Lori Chambers
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office hours: Friday, 10-11

Course Description

This course provides an overview of queer theory and history and explores challenges still faced by queer communities and individuals. Students are not expected to have a developed knowledge of queer issues or theory prior to taking this course.

Land Acknowledgement

As participants together in this course, we acknowledge that Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the ancestral lands of the ᐱᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ (Anishinabe) people, signatories to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850, in particular Fort William First Nation. Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We acknowledge the history these nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and are committed to relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration. We recognize the continual commitment needed by non-Indigenous people and institutions to learn from and about Indigenous peoples and to reconcile this colonial relationship.

Required Texts

You do not need to purchase any texts for the required readings for this course. The required readings for each week are listed with a link or posted on D2L. However, you may have to purchase or borrow a book or film for the review assignment depending on what item you choose to review.

Evaluation

Seminar Participation:	20%	
Reading Response:	20%	Due: October 1, 2021
Film, TV, or Book Review:	40%	Due: November 5, 2021
Creative Portfolio:	20%	Due: November 26, 2021

Participation

Discussions require that everyone participates (speaks or writes on D2L and listens) in a meaningful and civil way. Please keep in mind that this is a scholarly environment. While there will be lots of disagreement and debate, everyone is expected to be respectful of others in the class. This requires that we listen to and value ideas and political positions that are different from

our own. Personal attacks, gender and racial slurs, disrespectful comments on ability or sexuality, or other such behavior, is unkind, constitutes academic misconduct, and will not be tolerated.

While everyone must listen attentively, please note that I understand some students are very shy about speaking in class. I will post questions about the readings each week, and students may respond on D2L instead of speaking in class if they are more comfortable with this approach.

Participation grades will reflect attendance, willingness to contribute to class discussions, and ability to listen respectfully to others. A full mark out of 20 will be subtracted for each absence from class for which the student does not a) provide explanation in writing or b) provide alternative evidence of reading and participation by posting on D2L. Marks will be delivered twice, in sections of 10%, in order to provide feedback for improvement.

Reading Response

The purpose of the reading response assignment is to think about the wider implications/importance of an article from the required course materials and to connect it to personal experience and/or a media question or problem currently in the news.

Content of the Review:

In your introduction:

Identify the article - do NOT do this just as a list. Include the information in your intro paragraph.

Summarize the content – Briefly outline the central /objective of the article but do not give a detailed description.

State your thesis with regard to the effectiveness of the article.

Clearly set out how your paper will prove this argument. I call this giving the reader a ‘road map’.

In the body of your essay:

Describe the Argument – This should not be lengthy but should provide your reader with a precis of what is argued in the article.

Evaluate/Critique – This is the most important component of the review and should form the majority of the paper. In this section, you must critically assess (“review”) the article.

Your critique should be based on issues such as:

- What is the purpose of the article?
- Does the argument engage and convince you?
- Are there weaknesses/problems in the argument?
- What was the objective of the author? Is it met?
- How does the article connect to issues currently in the news/personal concerns?
- What does it teach us about making the world a better place for queer folks?

In your conclusion:

Summarize your arguments. Your conclusion should not introduce new points but should re-state the points you have made in the body of the review.

The reading response should be approximately 6 typed, double-spaced pages (12 pt Times New Roman with 1-inch margins).

Film, TV, or Book Review

The purpose of the book, TV, or film review is to consider how protest can be registered through films, television, and fiction. You must consider the central argument/purpose of the book, show, or film and assess its effectiveness in presenting a vision of a world without gender/sexuality binaries. How does the film, series, or book challenge current myths and beliefs.

Content of the Review:

In your introduction:

Identify the book or film - do NOT do this just as a list. Include the information in your intro paragraph.

Summarize the content – Briefly outline the central /objective of the book or film but do not give a detailed description.

State your thesis with regard to the effectiveness of the book or film.

Clearly set out how your paper will prove this argument. I call this giving the reader a ‘road map’.

In the body of your essay:

Describe the Story or Argument – This should not be lengthy but should provide your reader with a precis of what happens or is argued in the book or film.

Evaluate/Critique – This is the most important component of the review and should form the majority of the paper. In this section, you must critically assess (“review”) the book or film.

Your critique should be based on issues such as:

- What is the purpose of the book or film from a perspective of promoting social change?
- Does the story line or argument provide a critique or alternative vision that will be convincing for the public?
- Does the story or argument engage the reader or viewer?
- Are there weaknesses/problems in either the story line or the argument?
- What was the objective of the author/producer? Is it met?

In your conclusion:

Summarize your arguments. Your conclusion should not introduce new points but should re-state the points you have made in the body of the review.

The book, TV, or film review should be 5-7 double-spaced, typed pages (12 pt Times New Roman with 1-inch margins).

Students will choose one of the following books, TV shows, or films for the review. I am open to you writing about something else, but you MUST discuss it with me, get it approved, and ensure that I have an opportunity to watch or read your selected item:

Gay Identities/Experiences Pre-AIDS

Milk, dir. Gus Van Sant, 2008.
 Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street* (St. Martins, 2008).
 Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy* (McClelland and Stewart, 1994).
 Shyam Selvadurai, *Cinnamon Gardens* (Mariner Books, 1998).
Uncle Frank, dir. Allan Ball, 2020.
Call Me By Your Name, dir. Luca Guadagnino, 2018.

AIDS

Philadelphia, dir. Jonathon Demme, 1993.
 Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* (Macmillan, 2007).
 Cleve Jones, *When We Rise* (Hachette Books, 2016).
It's A Sin, BBC, dir. Russell Davies, 2021.
 Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (Picador, 1998).
The Hours, dir. Stephen Daldry, 2003.

Lesbian Identities/Experiences

But I'm a Cheerleader, dir. Jamie Babbit, 1999.
If These Walls Could Talk 2, dir. Jane Anderson and Martha Coolidge, 2000.
Eddie and Thea, A Very Long Engagement, dir. Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir, 2009.
 Audre Lorde, *Zami* (Crossing Place, 1982).
 Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* (Pandora Press, 1985).
 Emily Danforth, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* (Balzer and Bray, 2012).

Trans and Non-Binary Identities/Experiences

Disclosure, dir. Sam Feder, 2020.
Boys Don't Cry, dir. Kimberly Peirce, 1999.
 Ivan Coyote, *Tomboy Survival Guide* (Arsenal Press, 2016).
 Ivan Coyote and Rae Spoon, *Gender Failure* (Arsenal Press, 2014).
 Jennifer Finney Boylan, *Stuck in the Middle with You: Parenting in Three Genders* (Crown, 2013).
 Kim Fu, *For Today I am a Boy* (Harper Collins, 2014).

Creative Portfolio

The objective of the portfolio exercise is to produce a series of different short writings (5 in total). The writings should engage, discuss, explore or reflect upon ideas raised in class. Show the relevance of these ideas to the world around you in a scrap book, reflective journal, zine, web page or creative writing. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to continuously

engage with course ideas, topics, and texts and to explore their own responses to the readings with a variety of textual formats and styles. A complete assignment will contain 5 different pieces of writing, each a minimum of 250 words (1 typed, double spaced page) in length. Each piece of writing must explore a different topic/theory/idea from the course materials. This means that you must begin working on this assignment early in the term. If you are artistic, you may want to create pieces about which you will write artist statements. If you have technical skills, you may wish to create a website. If you prefer to focus on the written work, you may produce a reflective journal. You may incorporate any other materials (clippings from the newspaper or magazines, music, stories, creative writing, artwork) into the work that you wish. Such additions do not, however, replace the written work that is required in this assignment. You are encouraged to experiment and to have fun with this work. Any visual imagery must be accompanied by an artist's statement, explicitly connecting the image to the theme/idea you are exploring. You may critique theories, relate them to your own life, summarize arguments from the readings, or simply raise questions about the works we are exploring. There really are not any limits on the writing formats you may choose. It is important that you make reference to specific ideas from the course. This is not simply a personal journal, but a reflexive exercise which must take into consideration ideas outside the realm of the personal (although relating them to personal experience is encouraged).

NOTE: For all written assignments, you will be evaluated on the overall quality of your content (comprehension and depth of engagement with the course materials) and expression (quality of writing, absence of grammatical errors, and originality). I welcome the submission of rough drafts in advance of the due date. I will read, evaluate, and return your papers so that you can complete revisions in advance of final submission. Try to make use of this opportunity which is available to all students on all assignments. It makes a big difference.

Issues for Student Information:

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you have previously or simultaneously submitted in another course is also academic dishonesty. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. Students might also be subject to more severe academic penalties, up to and including expulsion for multiple offences. All students are required to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. Please review the university guidelines at <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/skills-for-success/responsibilities>, or speak with the professor. All cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures approved by Senate and the Board of Governors.

Accommodations: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities/medical conditions to ensure everyone has an equitable opportunity to participate in all their academic activities. I make every effort to meet the

varied needs of students. Please feel free to speak to me directly about your needs. If you are a student with a disability/medical condition you are also strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and to register with them as early as possible. For more information, please email sas@lakeheadu.ca or view <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>.

Assignment due dates: All assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due dates. If you have trouble meeting a due date, please discuss it with me in advance of the date on which the assignment is due. I am happy to work with you if you need accommodations, but we need to communicate about your needs in order for me to meet them.

Expectations and marking: All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar, and clarity as well as content. Writing is a process and it is only learned through practice and repetition. It is also an important skill you can take into the workplace. Written communication can be very powerful. However, your first draft is unlikely to be the best possible work you can produce. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to submit rough drafts of papers for review. I will mark your paper as many times as you want to submit it, and only the final mark will count towards your grade, but the paper must be ready for review one week before the final due date.

Student Success Centre: Both speaking in public and writing are important skills we will develop together in this class. Good writing does not happen the night before an assignment is due. You should expect to spend a significant period of time, well before each due date, preparing your assignments. These are guidelines to assist:

1. Start assignments early.
2. Read the instructions for your assignment carefully and ask questions if there is anything which is unclear.
3. Seek support. I am happy to read rough drafts for all assignments in this course. You can (and should) also get writing support from the Student Success Centre.
4. Put in the time required to write, edit, revise, and re-submit. Writing is a process. And it is a skill which takes time to develop.
5. Visit the Academic Support Zone at <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/academic-success/student-success-centre/academic-support-zone> and make an appoint for assistance at mysuccess@lakeheadu.ca.

Student Health and Counselling Centre: We will be dealing with difficult material, and self-care is very important. Please monitor your well-being, keep me informed if you need accommodations, and seek help as needed. For assistance and counselling with personal and/or medical issues, please visit the Student Health and Counselling Centre. Phone 343-8361. <http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Weekly Schedule for Lectures and Readings

Week 1 – September 10

What is Queer Theory/Queer Studies Anyway?

In this class an overview of course objectives/guiding questions will be provided and the requirements for students will be explained. We will introduce ourselves to one another.

Week 2 – September 17

Querying/Queering our Terms: Sex, Gender, Race, and Heteronormativity

Readings:

- Ann Fausto-Sterling, “Dueling Dualisms”, in *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 1-30.
- Linda Wayne, “Neutral Pronouns: A Modest Proposal Whose Time Has Come”, *Canadian Woman Studies* 24 (2/3) (Winter/Spring 2005), 85-91.
- Christine Overall, “Heterosexuality and Feminist Theory”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 20 (1) (March 1990), 9-17.
- Alok Menon, “The Difference Between Trans Rights and Ending the Gender Binary”: <https://www.alokmenon.com/blog/2020/9/10/the-difference-between-trans-rights-and-ending-the-gender-binary>.
- M. Kravitz, “The Gender Binary is a Tool of White Supremacy”: <https://aninjusticemag.com/the-gender-binary-is-a-tool-of-white-supremacy-db89d0bc9044>.

Week 3 – September 24

Origins of Queer Theory

Readings:

- Riki Ann Wilchins, “Foucault and the Disciplinary Society”, in *Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer* (Alyson Publications, 2004), 59-70.
- Judith Butler, “From Parody to Politics”, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1990), 194-203.
- Riki Anne Wilchins, “Butler and the Problem of Identity”, in *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*, (Alyson Publications, 2004), 123-139.

Week 4 – October 1

The Invention of Homosexuality

Readings:

- Siobhan Somerville, “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (2) (October 1994), 243-266.
- Ivan Dalley Crozier, “Taking Prisoners: Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, and the Construction of Homosexuality, 1897-1951”, *Social History of Medicine* 13 (3) (2000), 447-466.
- Heike Bauer, “Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline, and Gender at the Fin de Siecle”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18 (1) (2009), 84.
- Terrence Kissack, “Alfred Kinsey and Homosexuality in the 1950s”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (4) (2000), 474-491.

NOTE: Reading Response assignment is due today.

Week 5 – October 8**Illegality/Erasure and Early Gay/Lesbian Resistance**

- John D’Emilio, “Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco since WWII”, in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, eds., Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, eds., (Penguin, 1990), 456-477.
- Karen Pearlston, “Something More: The State’s Place in the Bedrooms of Lesbian Nation”, in *No Place for the State: The Origins and Legacies of the 1969 Omnibus Bill*, eds. Christopher Dummitt and Christabelle Sethna (University of British Columbia Press, 2020), 200-222.
- Tom Hooper, “The State’s Key to the Bedroom Door”: Queer Perspectives on Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s ‘Just Society’ in an Era of Bathhouse Raids”, in *No Place for the State: The Origins and Legacies of the 1969 Omnibus Bill*, eds. Christopher Dummitt and Christabelle Sethna (University of British Columbia Press, 2020), 101-121.

Week 6 – October 15**READING WEEK****Week 7 – October 22****AIDS and Politicization****Readings:**

- Allan Brandt, “AIDS: From Social History to Social Policy”, *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics* 14 (5-6) (1986), 231.
- Deborah Gould, “Solidarity and its Fracturing”, in *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 328-395.
- Isabel Grant, “The Boundaries of the Criminal Law: Criminalization of the Non-disclosure of HIV”, *Dalhousie Law Journal* 31 (2008), 123.
- Kathy Rudy, “Radical Feminism, Lesbian Separatism, and Queer Theory”, *Feminist Studies* 27 (1) (2001), 191-222.

Week 8 – October 29**Bisexuality****Readings:**

- Steven Angelis, “Introducing Bisexuality”, in *A History of Bisexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-22.

- Amber Ault, “Hegemonic Discourse in an Oppositional Community: Lesbian Feminists and Bisexuality”, *Critical Sociology* 20 (3) (1994), 107-122.
- Brian Dodge et. al., “Attitudes Towards Bisexual Men and Women”, *Plosone*: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0164430>.

Week 9 – November 5

Intersexuality

Readings:

- Morgan Holmes, “In(to) Visibility: Intersexuality in the Field of Queer” in Dawn Atkins, ed., *Looking Queer: Body Image and Identity in Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay and Transgender Communities* (New York: Haworth Press, 1998), 221-226.
- Alice Dreger and April Herndon, “Progress and Politics in the Intersex Rights Movement”, *Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15 (2) (2009), 199-224.
- T. Nyong’o, “The Unforgivable Transgression of Being Caster Semenya”, *Women and Performance* 20 (1) (2010), 95-100.
- Cheryl Chase, “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism” in Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader* (Routledge, 2006), 300-314.

NOTE: Film or Book Review assignment is due today.

Week 10 – November 12

Transgender and Non-binary Politics

Readings:

- Riki Ann Wilchins, “What Does it Cost to Tell the Truth?” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Susan Stryker and Steven Whittle, eds., (Routledge, 2006), 547-551.
- Lori Chambers, “Unprincipled Exclusions: Transgender Jurisprudence, Feminist Theory and Kimberly Nixon”, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 19 (2) (2007), 305-334.
- *I am Skylar*, dir. Rachel Bower, 2020.
- Samuel Singer, “Trans Rights Are Not Just Human Rights: Legal Strategies for Trans Justice”, *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 35 (2) (2020), 293-315.

Week 11 – November 19

Solitary Sex and Asexuality

Readings:

- Michael Bliss, “Pure Books on Avoided Subjects: Pre-Freudian Sexual Ideas in Canada”, *Historical Papers* (1970), 89-108.
- Thomas Laqueur, “Solitary Sex in the Twentieth Century”, in *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 359-420.
- “I don’t want sex with anyone: The growing asexuality movement”, *The Guardian* March 21, 2021: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifestyle/2021/mar/21/i-dont-want-to-have-sex-with-anyone-the-growing-asexuality-movement>.

Week 12 – November 26

The Marriage Debate and Queer Family Making

Readings:

- Christine Davies, “Canadian Same-Sex Marriage Litigation”, *University of Toronto Faculty Law Review* 66 (2) (2008), 101-134.
- Fiona Kelly, “Producing Paternity”, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 21 (2) (2009), 316.
- Malcolm Dort, “Unheard Voices: Adoption Narratives of Same-Sex Male Couples”, *Canadian Journal of Family Law* 26 (2) (2010), 289-338.

NOTE: Creative Portfolio assignment is due today.

Week 13 – December 3

Disability and Borders

- Robert McRuer, “As Good as it Gets: Queer Theory and Critical Disability”, *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 9 (1-2) (2003), 79-105.
- M. Jacqui Alexander, “Imperial Desire/Sexual Utopias: White Gay Capital and Transnational Tourism”, in *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 66-90.
- Susan Berger, “Production and Reproduction of Gender and Sexuality in Legal Discourses of Asylum in the United States”, *Signs* 34 (3) (spring 2009), 659-685.