

Willamette University
Department of Gender Studies

GEN 342: Theories in Queer Cultures

Office: 503-376-6327 (Eaton 431)
Class: TTh 9:40-11:10am, WLT 427

Office Hours: TTh 2:00pm-4:00pm
or by appointment

Course Description

Our purpose in this course is to examine intersectional ties between queer sexualities, genders, and cultures. Through historical and theoretical lenses, we will examine political actions, social implications, and other issues in regards to queerness from a variety of different perspectives. Theoretical, historical, and political readings in conjunction with queer blogs will provide some necessary background knowledge to examine power and privilege as it affects and is affected by intersecting and conflicting notions of sexualities, genders, races/ethnicities, and classes, among other identities.

Required Texts

1. Christopher A. Shelley, *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing*
2. Michael Warner, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*
3. Mark Simpson, *Anti-Gay*
4. Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction*
5. Donald E. Hall, *Queer Theories*
6. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, *The Transgender Studies Reader*
7. Online queer blogs (selected on the first day of class)
8. All additional readings will be accessible via WISE e-reserve or handouts

Required Assignments

4 short papers (4 pp each), weekly WISE blog postings (reflections and responses to selected queer bloggers), a final research paper and presentation, various writing assignments and reading quizzes both in and out of class

Course Objectives

1. You will demonstrate through paper writing and class discussion the ability to identify and analyze a diverse range of historical and contemporary queer issues as well as key concepts and theoretical strains as they relate to topics surrounding sexuality, gender, and queer cultures.
2. You will demonstrate through paper writing, WISE postings, a presentation, and class discussion the ability to articulate and apply queer theories to a variety of social, political,

and cultural issues and make connections between theoretical arguments as well as the lived realities of the queer writers and bloggers that you analyze.

3. You will demonstrate through paper writing, WISE postings, and class discussion the historical and contemporary social implications that affect are affected by queer cultures, politics, and activism.
4. You will demonstrate through paper writing an understanding of the complexities of academic writing and be able to develop an innovative thesis, anticipate your reading audience, reason and argue convincingly, and support your claims with concrete, textual evidence.
5. You will demonstrate through paper writing the ability to practice writing as a process that entails brainstorming, research, outlining, and revision through multiple drafts.
6. You will demonstrate through WISE postings the ability to identify and evaluate (via blog) useful research sources as well as relate it to the lived experiences of bloggers, theorists, and other writers.

Some Ground Rules

The best learning environment is a result of the efforts of both students and instructors. As this is a course that deals with sensitive social issues, it is even more crucial that we recognize the right of others to engage with the material and to hold opinions and beliefs that may differ from our own. The following guidelines can be used to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and productive exploration of the subject matter:

1. Actively engage. Whether you are speaking or listening, be critically engaged in the class discussion. Questions to generally have in mind are: *Why? How? and So what?* Your responses and comments should reflect that you are engaged in the conversation and productively move the discussion.
2. Respect the comments, opinions, and perspectives of others. Everyone in the class is coming from a different background, but we are exploring the topics *together*. Everyone in the class has the right to feel safe and respected; comments should reinforce this.
3. Step up, Step back. If you find that you are speaking a lot, step back and give someone else a chance to share. If you find you are not speaking much, step up, we would love to hear your ideas.
4. Sparkles. In order to create a supportive atmosphere and be mindful of each other's time, it is appropriate (and appreciated!) if when you agree with someone or you are thankful someone shared a certain idea, wiggle your fingers in their direction to show support (sparkles!). This allows the conversation to move forward swiftly without much repetition.
5. Challenge ideas, not people.

6. Support your statements. Use evidence and provide rationale for your points.
7. Out of respect for each other, all electronics (including but not limited to computers, phones, and music players) should be turned off and put away during class time.

Disability Statement

Willamette University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Services Office strives to facilitate reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office directly at 503-370-6471.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of the courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may, therefore, be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.

Class Preparedness

Always come to class prepared and having read all of the assigned material for that day. Your success in this course will depend not only on the quality of your papers and/or exams but also on your contribution to in-class and online discussions. Also, please bring your primary texts and all supplementary materials to class each day. It is impossible to perform adept close readings and analyses without a text in front of you. Failure to bring your text will count against your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance is crucial. Because this course relies upon collaborative discussion, more than three unexcused absences will lower your participation grade by one full letter unless appropriate justification is given **before** the missed class session. Your participation in in-class draft workshops will also be crucial to your grade, so these days are not to be missed.

Tardiness

I will close the classroom door at precisely 9:40 am. If you come in after the door is closed, you will be considered tardy. Three tardies translates into an unexcused absence that will affect your grade. Please be on time.

Writing Center

Please use Willamette's Writing Center. It is a valuable resource that offers writing guidance, peer tutoring, paper feedback, and assignment advice and preparation. Find more info at: <http://www.willamette.edu/dept/wcenter/>

Queer Blogs

In addition to required class attendance, reading, and papers, you are expected to regularly follow at least two queer blogs and write weekly responses on WISE. In your responses, you are expected to respond to the themes discussed on the queer blogs, as well as connect the ideas, topics, and readings from class.

The goal of this assignment is to help you make associations between queer theory and “real life.” While the blogs you read should not and cannot be read as the generic experience and reaction of all queers, the perspectives you read in the queer blogs often shed light on and respond to issues and discussions that are prevalent for many queers who identify similarly to the authors. In your responses, you might consider the following questions: How do queer issues in the blogs shed light on the theoretical ideas we are broaching in class? How do they complicate or enhance your understanding of academic theories? Were you surprised to find links/similarities between “theory” and “praxis”? What are those links? How does this conversation impact the way you operate in the world or who you imagine yourself to be?

All responses should include the title, date, and source of the blog(s) and at least two paragraphs: a brief summary paragraph of 4 to 5 sentences, and a reflection/reaction paragraph of at least 5 sentences. Spend a minimum of one hour per week reading and writing responses. Posts will be due every Thursday at 5pm (unless otherwise noted on the syllabus or in class.) You may select from two of the following blogs or approve an unlisted blog with me.

<http://effingdykes.blogspot.com/>
<http://fitforafemme.com/blog/>
<http://nobodypasses.blogspot.com/>
<http://sartorialbutch.wordpress.com/>
<http://queerfatfemme.com/>
<http://www.youngcreature.net/>
<http://abrowngirl.com/>
<http://grumpygranny.wordpress.com/>
<http://tnkgirl.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.blogher.com/member/lesbian-dad>

<http://midwestgenderqueer.com/>
<http://www.Essin-Em.com>
<http://qpdx.com>
<http://excloset.wordpress.com>
<http://www.ourbiggayborhood.com>
<http://getyourqueeron.wordpress.com>
<http://queerwarhol.blogspot.com/>
<http://queerblogs.blogspot.com>
<http://whatqueer.blogspot.com/>
<http://maxattitude.wordpress.com>

Queer Activism Research Project

Paper:

Individually, you will research any queer activist group and prepare a final paper (5pp) reflecting on the historical, political, and cultural significance of that group. Tying in readings from the course as they relate, the paper should examine the goals of the group, the strategies the group employs/employed, and whether or not the group is successful in meeting their goals. Questions to be considered are: What historical, political, and cultural aspects deemed the group’s activism successful or unsuccessful? Why is this significant? What are the implications of the group’s successes or failures? What critiques do you have of the group’s goals or activist strategies? What are suggestions you would make to the group?

Presentation:

Individually, you will prepare a formal presentation that explains your research findings and the conclusions made in your paper. You may be as creative as you would like,

bearing in mind that the purpose of the project is to communicate the overall intent and impact of the group's activism. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes in length and will be shared on the day of the final.

Grading Policies

Assignment Punctuality

All papers must be turned in to the instructor **in person on the date they are due**. Email submissions and late assignments will **NOT** be accepted unless otherwise discussed. If you are going to miss class, your paper is due **beforehand**, and you must notify me of your absence or it will go unexcused. **No make-up exams** will be allowed without prior arrangement. Make-up exams **MUST** be taken when rescheduled.

Paper Requirements

All papers must meet the following requirements in order to be graded:

1. Times New Roman font, size 12
2. MLA format
3. Double-spaced
4. A strong title
5. Some papers may have citation requirements. In these cases, you must have a works cited page and proper citation rules must be followed in the essay.

Grading System

Participation, including weekly WISE postings, other writing, and quizzes: 25%

4 Papers: 60% (4pp each)

Final paper and presentation: 15%

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.”

Numerical Grading Criteria

A 4.0 Performance at this level is exceptional. The student consistently demonstrates excellent command over the content and methods of the course as well as originality, depth, and distinctive insights.

A- 3.7 Performance at this level is of very high quality. The student demonstrates well above average command over the content and methods of the course as well as significant originality, depth, and distinctive insights.

B+ 3.3 Performance at this level is very good. The student demonstrates a strong command over the content and methods of the course, reflects clear comprehension, and achieves all the stated objectives.

B 3.0 Performance at this level is good. The student demonstrates an adept command over the content and methods of the course, reflects comprehension, and achieves the stated objectives.

B- 2.7 Performance at this level is above average. The student demonstrates general command over the content and methods of the course and reflects and achieves the stated objectives.

C+ 2.3 Performance at this level is slightly above average. The student demonstrates fair competence over the content and methods of the course and achieves nearly all the stated objectives.

C 2.0 Performance at this level is average. The student demonstrates average competence over the content and methods of the course and achieves most of the stated objectives.

C- 1.7 Performance at this level is below average. The student demonstrates less than average competence in the content and methods of the course. Clear comprehension and mastery of course objectives is not apparent.

D+ 1.3 Performance at this level is less than satisfactory. The student demonstrates inadequate knowledge of the content and methods of the course and minimal engagement with course objectives.

D 1.0 Performance at this level is marginal. The student demonstrates insufficient knowledge of the content and methods of the course and fails to meet the course objectives.

F 0.0 Performance at this level is unacceptable. The student fails to demonstrate any knowledge of the methods and content of the course or to engage in any way with course objectives.

Course Schedule

(schedule is subject to change)

Tue **Introduction to the “Queericulum”**
Donald E. Hall, Queer Theories
-Introduction: What ‘Queer Theories’ can do for you

Thur **What’s “queer” and why should I care?**
Donald E. Hall, Queer Theories
-Who and What is ‘Queer’? (1-85)

Tue **Gaining a historical framework**
Annamarie Jagose, Queer Theory: An Introduction (1-70)

Thur
Annamarie Jagose, Queer Theory: An Introduction (71-132)

What’s culture got to do with it?

Tue
David Shneer and Caryn Aviv, American Queer: Now and Then
-I Am That Name: American Queer Activism, Now and Then (217-221)

Thur ******Paper #1 Assigned******
David Shneer and Caryn Aviv, American Queer: Now and Then
-Sticks and Stones: Bullying, Battering, and Beating American Queers, Now and Then (181-207)
Mark Simpson, Anti-Gay
-Toby Manning, Gay Culture: Who Needs It? (98-117)

Tue
Michael Warner, Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory
-Janet E. Halley, The Construction of Heterosexuality (82-102)
-Steven Seidman, Identity and Politics in a ‘Postmodern’ Gay Culture: Some Historical and Conceptual Notes (105-142).

Thur
Michael Warner, Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory
-Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, Queer Nationality (193-229)
Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, We Are Everywhere; A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics

-Michael Denneny, *Gay Politics: Sixteen Propositions* (485-498)

Tue

Max H. Kirsch, *Queer Theory and Social Change*

-Meta-identity, performativity, and internalized homophobia (79-93)

-Theory, politics, and the community (114-123)

Scott Tucker, *The Queer Question: Essay on Desire and Democracy*

-There's No Place Like Home: Straight Supremacy, Queer Resistance, and Equality of Kinship (202-245)

Thur

Mark Simpson, *Anti-Gay*

-Lisa Power, *Forbidden Fruit* (55-65)

Scott Tucker, *The Queer Question: Essay on Desire and Democracy*

-Too Queer to be Gay? A Populist Group Fails to Support Sexual Minorities (10-15)

Tue

******Paper 1 DUE at the start of class******

Mark Blasius, *Sexual Identities: Queer Politics*

-Robert W. Bailey, *Sexual Identity and Urban Space: Economic Structure and Political Action* (231-255)

Compilation by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, CUNY, *Queer Ideas*

-Samuel R. Delany, ...3, 2, 1, *Contact* (101-135)

Susan Driver, *Queer Youth Cultures*

-Andil Gosine, *Fobs, Banana Boy, and the Gay Pretenders: Queer youth navigate sex, 'race,' and nation in Toronto, Canada* (223-242)

What's race got to do with it?

Thur

******Paper #2 Assigned******

Compilation by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, CUNY, *Queer Ideas*

-Barbara Smith, *African American Lesbian and Gay History: An Exploration* (53-61)

-Vickie M. Mays, *I Hear Voices but See No Faces: Reflections on Racism and Woman-Identified Relationship of Afro-American Women* (476-481)

-Third World Gay Revolution, *The Oppressed Shall Not Become the Oppressor* (400-401)

-J.R. G. DeMarco, *Gay Racism* (549-555)

Tue

Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality* (524-529)

Exerpts from Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*

Kathryn Bond Stockton, *Beautiful Bottom, Beautiful Shame: Where "Black" Meets "Queer"*

Thur

Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, *We Are Everywhere; A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*
-James S. Tinney, *Why a Black Gay Church?* (556-559)
-Audre Lorde, *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities* (472-476)
David Shneer and Caryn Aviv, *American Queer: Now and Then*
-Barbara Smith, "Introduction to *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*" (236-241)
Donald E. Hall, *Queer Theories*
-*Queering Class, Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation* (86-111)

Tue

Michael Warner, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*
-Heny Louis Gates, Jr., *The Black Man's Burden* (230-238)
-Phillip Brian Harper, *Eloquence and Epitaph: Black Nationalism and the Homophobic Impulse in Responses to the Death of Max Robinson* (239-263)

Silence or Solidarity?—Some Sexualities under the Queer Umbrella

Thur Lesbianism

******Paper #2 DUE at the start of class******

Kristin G. Esterberg, *Lesbians and Bisexual Identities: Construction Communities, Constructing Selves*
-*Essentially Lesbian? Performing Lesbian Identity* (80-97)
Mark Simpson, *Anti-Gay*
-Suzanne Patterson and Anne-Marie Le Blé, *Move Over Darling : Beyond the Daddy Dyke* (118-139)

Tue

Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, *We Are Everywhere; A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*
-Joan Nestle, *The Fem Question* (542-547)
Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, *The Transgender Studies Reader*
-Jacob Hale, *Are Lesbians Women?* (281-299)

Thur

******Paper #3 Assigned******

Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan, *We Are Everywhere; A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*
-Marilyn Frye, *Lesbian Feminism and The Gay Rights Movement: Another View of Male Supremacy, Another Separatism* (499-510)
Kristin G. Esterberg, *Lesbians and Bisexual Identities: Construction Communities, Constructing Selves*
-*Race, Class, Identity* (98-113)
-*Beyond Identity and Community?* (170-176)
Karla Jay, *Dyke Life*
-Paula Ross, *What's Race Got to Do with It?* (141-148)
-Jeanne Adleman, *We Never Promised You Role Models* (77-86)

Tue Bisexuality and Pansexuality

William E. Burleson, *Bi America: Myths, Truths, and Struggles of an Invisible Community*
-Relating Bisexuality to the World (13-28)
-Bisexuality Defined (29-55)
-In Search of a Bisexual Community (57-77)

Thur

Merl Storr, *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*
-Amanda Udis-Kessler, Notes on the Kinsey Scale and Other Measures of Sexuality (49-56)
-Philip W. Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz, *Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues* (59-74)
-Clare Hemmings, *Locating Bisexual Identities: Discourses of Bisexuality and Contemporary Feminist Theory* (193-200)
Merl Storr, *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader*
-Jo Eadie, *Activating Bisexuality: Towards a Bi/Sexual Politics* (119-137)

Tue

Naomi Tucker, *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, and Visions*
-Elias Farajajé aka Manuel Kalidas Congo, *Fluid Desire: Race, HIV/AIDS, and Bisexual Politics* (119-130)
-Elizabeth Armstrong, *Traitors to the Cause? Understanding the Lesbian/Gay “Bisexuality Debates”* (199-218)
-Stacy Young, *Bisexuality, Lesbian and Gay Communities, and the Limits of Identity Politics* (219-228)
-Nishanga Bliss, *Why You Must Say “and Bisexual”* (257-259)
-Jill Nagle, *Framing Radical Bisexuality: Toward a Gender Agenda* (305-314)

Silence or Solidarity?—Sex and Gender under the Queer Umbrella

Thur Trans and Gender Queer

****Paper #3 DUE at the start of class****

Christopher A. Shelley, *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing* (1-30)

Tue

Christopher A. Shelley, *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing* (31-120)

Thur

****Paper #4 Assigned and Final Project Assigned****

Christopher A. Shelley, *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing* (121-214)

Tue

Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, *The Transgender Studies Reader*
-Charles Shepherdson, *The Role of Gender and the Imperative of Sex* (94-102)
-Cheryl Chase, *Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism* (300-314)
-Stephen Whittle, *Where Did We Go Wrong? Feminism and Trans Theory—Two Teams on the Same Side?* (194-202)

- Judith Butler, Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality (183-193)
- Aaron H. Devor and Nicholas Matte, ONE Inc. and Reed Erickson: The Uneasy Collaboration of Gay and Trans Activism, 1964-2003 (387-406)

Thur

- Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, The Transgender Studies Reader
- Gayle Rubin, Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections on Butch, Gender, and Boundaries (471-481)
 - Jamison Green, Look! No, Don't! The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men (499-508)
 - Jason Cromwell, Queering the Binaries: Transsituated Identities, Bodies, and Sexualities (509-520)

Tue

- Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, The Transgender Studies Reader
- Nikki Sullivan, "Transmogrification: (Un)Becoming Other(s) (552-564)
 - Viviane K. Namaste, Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender, and the Regulation of Public Space (584-600)
 - Leslie Feinberg, Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come (205-220)

Thur

******Paper #4 DUE at the start of class******

- Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, The Transgender Studies Reader
- Marjorie Garber, Transvestism and the Erotics of Cultural Appropriation (635-654)
 - Katrina Roen, Transgender Theory and Embodiment: The Risk of Racial Marginalization (656)
 - Emi Koyama, Whose Feminism Is It Anyway? The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate (698-705)

Tue

I'm not queer—What does this have to do with me?

- Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 186-209
 Exerpts from Jonathan Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality"
 Queers United, Heterosexual Privilege

Thur

No Class—Prepare for final presentations. Extra office hours available for consultation

Tue

**FINAL
 Final Project Presentations**