

WOST 292
Course Syllabus

Queer America:
Alternative Genders and Sexualities in Twentieth-Century United States

Instructor: Mitch Boucher
Office: Bartlett 266
Office Hours: M 3:30-5:00, Th 12:30-1:30
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Course Description:

Welcome to Queer America! In this course we will explore the ways in which alternative genders and sexualities have been conceptualized and lived in twentieth-century United States. Through literature (autobiography, poetry, novels), film (mostly documentary) and historical studies, we will look at key moments in GLBTQ history from a perspective that understands race, sexuality, class and gender as always influencing and shaping one another. We will look at the history of political activism in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities and their relationship to other social movements. This course is open to students for whom the topic might be new, as well as to those with experience or familiarity with the subject matter.

Required Texts:

All of the following texts are available at Food for Thought Books in Amherst
Bannon, Ann. *Beebo Brinker*
Feinberg, Leslie. *Stone Butch Blues*
Jagose, Anne Marie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*
Lorde, Audre. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

All other readings will be posted on E-Reserves or occasionally on WebCt . You can access E-Reserves through the library home page under "Course Reserves" and then "Electronic Reserves." You are responsible for accessing and completing these readings. You can print out the articles, or take enough notes on the articles that you will be able to contribute to class discussion without having the article in front of you in class. **Password for E-Reserves is Sylvia (after Sylvia Rivera)**

Assignments and Grading

40% Reading Response Questions:

Throughout the semester, I will post nine reading/viewing response questions to WebCT. These questions are meant to help you read articles and listen carefully to films, synthesize the material, grasp the main points of the readings/films, and be prepared for discussion. You are required to answer eight of these questions over the course of the semester in 2-3 page, typed, double-spaced papers for each question. If you clear it with me ahead of time, you can write about something other than the question, as long as it pertains to the same readings my question covers. The response due dates are listed on the syllabus.

25% Final Exam:

The final exam will be cumulative, and will take place during our assigned final exam time. Please do not make plans to leave campus until after our scheduled exam.

15% Quizzes:

For each novel, there will be a very short quiz that is meant to allow you to show that you have completed the reading. The quiz will be factual and based on the content of the books. If you've done the reading, the quiz will be simple. **No make-up quizzes will be given without a documented excuse for missing class.**

20% Class Participation and Attendance:

You are expected to attend class and to participate in discussion. If you are someone who absolutely cannot speak in class, come talk to me and we will find another way for you to convey your thoughts. You are allowed four unexcused absences without penalty. Please use these absences for illness, doctor's appointments and family emergencies. If you need to go over your three allotted absences for any of these reasons, please bring me documentation. You do not need documentation or to explain your absences to me if you have not been absent more than three times. If you will be absent due to religious observance please see me ahead of time and let me know. **For every absence over the first four, your grade will be reduced by one third of a letter grade.**

A Note on Participation:

Speak up, ask questions, and make this class your own. Please listen carefully to what others are saying or trying to say, and I will do the same. I will do my best to encourage your participation and I am interested in what each of you has to say. **You don't have to agree with me to participate.**

In order to create a safe space for discussion and learning, **I require that you speak to each other with respect. It's OK to have different opinions, but I ask that you share them in a way that is educational for and respectful to others**

Contacting Me and Office Hours:

I encourage you to come to my office hours. In a course of 35-40 students, it's nice for me to meet and talk with you individually. You don't have to have a particular agenda to come talk to me during office hours. If you would like to meet with me, but can't make my office hours, please come speak to me and set up an appointment. I hope I see you all at some time during the semester during office hours!

Please see me immediately if any problems arise for you during the course; the sooner we address any difficulties, the more time we have to find a solution to the problem together. **Please give me at least 24 hours to respond to e-mails!**

Plagiarism:

The University's policies on plagiarism apply to ALL written work in this course. Taking a sentence, paragraph, or entire paper from an Internet source without using proper citation, or handing in someone else's writing as your own counts as plagiarism. To better understand the definitions of and penalties for plagiarism, please visit the following URL:

http://writingprogram.hfa.umass.edu/student_resources/plagiarism_policy.asp

Learning or Psychological Disabilities:

UMass is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. If you had a documented disability in high school, or if you think you might have a physical, learning, or psychological disability, I strongly urge you to contact Disability Services for consultation. Their number is: 545-0892, or e-mail inquiries to DS@educ.umass.edu

Reading Schedule

The following is a general framework for our reading schedule. If you miss class, please be in touch with me to confirm that there have not been changes in the reading schedule. I will give you a detailed reading schedule for post-spring break to the end of the semester when we return from break.

- Tuesday, January 30: Introductions
- HW:** 1) Waller and McAllen-Walker, "One Man's Story of Being Gay and Dine" on E-Reserve
2) Sabine Lang, "Lesbians, Men-Women and Two-Spirits" On WebCT
- Thursday, February 1: Screening: *Two Spirit People*
Gender, Sexuality, Colonialism, Cultural Appropriation and Native American Cultures
- HW:** 1) Somerville, Intro and Chapter One from *Queering the Color Line*
2) Hirschfeld, Selections from *Racism* (skim)
3) Hirschfeld/Bullogh, Intro to *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*
- Tuesday, February 6: Intersections in the Production of Race and Sexuality
Magnus Hirschfeld and the Institute for Sexual Science
Emergence of Sexual Identities; Sexology/Sexual Science
- HW:** Chauncey, "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality"
First Reading Question Due 2/8
- Thursday, February 8: Discuss Chauncey
Start *Before Stonewall*
- HW:** Excerpt, *Well of Loneliness* (due 2/15)–On WebCT
Radclyffe Hall, "Why I Wrote *Well of Loneliness*" –On E-Reserve
- Tuesday, February 13: Film: *Before Stonewall*
- HW:** Excerpt, *Well of Loneliness*
Radclyffe Hall, "Why I Wrote *Well of Loneliness*"
Second Reading Question Due 2/15
- Thursday, February 15: Discuss *Well of Loneliness*
- HW:** Eric Garber, "Gladys Bentley: The Bulldagger Who Sang the Blues"
Eric Garber, "T'ain't Nobody's Bizness"
Gloria Hull, excerpt *Color, Sex and Poetry*, pgs. 136-47
Poems: Cullen, "Tableau" <http://www.jazzbabies.com/nonflash/cullen.html>
Hughes, "Café 3 A.M."; "Young Sailor"
- Tuesday, February 20: Discuss 1920s and 30s; Harlem Renaissance; Burden of Representation; Race relations and Harlem Renaissance
Fire! Women of HR; Analysis of poems

HW: Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies, Jade" (Due 2/27)
Schwarz, "Richard Bruce Nugent: The Quest for Beauty"

Thursday, February 22: Film: *Brother to Brother*

HW: Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies, Jade"
Schwarz, "Richard Bruce Nugent: The Quest for Beauty"
Third Reading Question Due 2/27
Begin *Beebo Brinker*

Tuesday, February 27: Discuss Nugent and *Brother to Brother*

HW: *Beebo Brinker*
Lapovsky, Jagose, Faderman (Due 3/6)

Thursday, March 1: Guest Speaker: Paisley Currah

HW: *Beebo Brinker*
Jagose, Faderman, Lapovsky

Tuesday, March 6: Intro to 1950s—CRM, McCarthyism, Homophile, Kinsey, Christine Jorgensen

HW: *Beebo Brinker*

Thursday, March 8: Film: *Forbidden Love*

HW: *Beebo Brinker*
"I Am a Woman..."

Tuesday, March 13: Quiz: Beebo Brinker
Discuss Beebo Brinker

HW: *Stone Butch Blues*
Fourth Reading Question Due 3/15

Thursday, March 15: Film: *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*
Stone Butch Blues

Tuesday, March 20: Spring Break

HW: *Stone Butch Blues*

Thursday, March 22: Spring Break

HW: *Stone Butch Blues*

Tuesday, March 27: Discuss *SBB*
Film: Feinberg and Pratt

HW: Nestle, Finish *SBB*
Fifth Reading Question due 3/29

Thursday, March 29: Quiz: *SBB*
Discuss *SBB*

HW: Jagose, Chapters 4 and 5
Rivera, GLF, Radicalesbians

Tuesday, April 3: Intro to Gay Liberation and Lesbian Feminism
Outrage '69

HW: Selected Readings

Thursday, April 5: Radical Lesbians and Womyn's Culture

HW: Selected Readings

Tuesday, April 10: Differences in Lesbian Feminism

HW: *Zami*

Thursday, April 12: *Film: A Litany for Survival*

HW: *Zami*

Tuesday, April 17: No Class. Monday Schedule

HW: *Zami*
Sixth Reading Question Due 4/19

Thursday, April 19: Differences in Lesbian Feminism
Class/Sex Wars/Bisexuality

HW: *Zami*

Tuesday, April 24: Quiz: *Zami*
Discuss *Zami*

HW: Selected Readings

Thursday, April 26: The Gay 80s
Tongues Untied

HW: Selected Readings
Eighth Reading Question Due 5/1

Tuesday, May 1: Discuss *TU*, AIDS

HW: Selected Readings

Thursday, May 3: Film: AIDS

HW: Selected Readings

Tuesday, May 8: Act-Up/ Queer Nation ; Queer Theory

HW: Selected Readings

Thursday, May 10: Queer Theory
Ninth Reading Question Due 5/15

HW: Selected Readings

Tuesday, May 15:

Trans Liberation/ 3rd Wave