

GSWS 0003 *TENTATIVE PROSPECTUS - PLEASE EMAIL WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS*****

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This course provides a historical perspective on queer theory and sexuality studies, including pivotal historical moments like, in the United States, the Stonewall riots and the HIV/AIDS crisis. No prior knowledge of the field is required: we will work together to establish an understanding of queer theory and sexuality studies from the 1970s and 1980s into the present.

Considering medical, legal, social, literary, cultural, and lived experience/memoir perspectives, we will sample a variety of texts — fiction, memoir, chapters and critical essays, movies, tv episodes — to think about the past, present, and future of queer lives, and the sorrow, joy and (in)justice experienced in them. Our work sits on a foundation of considering how sexuality studies connects with other forms of identity such as gender, race, class, neurodivergence, ability, etc.. On the way to radical freedom and equality, we will ask questions such as: on what platform do people tell their stories? Whose voice can we hear, and in what format? What are the economic conditions of sexuality and gender? How does cultural and popular representation matter? What are possible avenues of building, organizing, and using knowledge about gender, and studying gender within US academia? How can we reclaim love and love stories from determination of gender and society?

Attending to historical figures like Marsha P. Johnson and Sarah Schulman, memoirists like Lanya H. and Maia Kobabe, and fiction writers like Mazey Eddings, Malinda Lo (in genres such as literary fiction, romance, and historical fiction), we will think about how to make and hold space for our own and each other's bodies, souls, and minds. To frame both political questions and cultural reflections, we will read — amongst others — classic queer theory by Michel Foucault, Sharon Marcus, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and foundational essays by Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga & Amber Hollibaugh and Susan Stryker, as well as others. We will also watch movies such as *Carol* and television episodes from shows such as *Heartstopper* to understand how popular culture can help navigate, make

sense of, and communicate about sexuality. Underlying themes and objects of analysis include popular and/or historical fiction, activism and protest, and encounters of the academy with everyday life.

Further Notes on the Readings:

If you have any difficulties with or concerns about access to required materials, please come and talk to me; I am confident that I can be helpful, and am happy to do so.

Content and Trigger Warnings (CW and TW)

A note on content and trigger warnings, and taking good care of yourself while preparing for and participating in class: the syllabus includes a few general trigger warnings, but please feel free to inquire about any triggers that you would like to know more about ahead of preparing for class. I am always glad to discuss what kind of content we will be engaging with and can suggest alternate readings when needed.

Assignments

Always: Participation in class (25%)

This is a seminar, so coming prepared and ready to engage is important and crucial not only for your own success but also that of your peers. Please come see me in office hours if you'd like to talk about strategies, feedback, or concerns.

A Further Note on Participation

This is a seminar and participation in class is crucial. Please be strategic about not missing classes during the semester if at all possible. If you do have to miss more than two classes, please write to me ahead of time so I know you're accounted for and also submit a quick response to the readings for the classes you've missed when you had a chance to catch up on readings. I won't grade this, but submitting a reading response can balance out your participation grade, which suffers when you can't be in class. Suggested length is around 200-300 words. This isn't mandatory and if you can't do it your grade won't be negatively affected, but just an option to make sure you get a chance to engage all of the materials.

Four times in the semester: Reading Response on your choice of readings; try not to wait until the last month of the semester. Post these responses by 5pm the day before class on Blackboard, and comment on at least one other response (for the same reading or a different one). (10 %)

Date TBD: Short Essay (15%)

A brief analysis of one of our class readings from the first half of the syllabus.

Date TBD: Final Paper or Project Proposal (10%)

Date TBD: Informal Presentation on Final Paper or Project Proposal (10%)

Date TBD: Final Paper or Project (30%)

I am very flexible and supportive of various interests and curiosities for the final projects. It could be a critical paper/literary analysis, a Digital Humanities project (come talk to me about options and methods), or a creative project. This is a great opportunity to either deepen your understanding of a topic that has come up in the class or turn to a place, time, or context we have not considered.

If any of these deadline become a problem for you, please communicate with me ahead of time. We can work out solutions for almost any problem you might face with class work, but only if you reach out as soon as you feel things are becoming overwhelming or difficult.

Course Policies

Academic practice, plagiarism: This is an introduction course and I am here for you to ask about academic and writing practices. Please do not hesitate to raise any issue or concern as they come up. All work submitted to the course must be original and quotes and references noted, preferably in MLA style or any style used coherently.

Diversity, Pronouns, Preferred First Name: This is a class about identity and representation and as such we will discuss many different points of views, identities, and cultural contexts. Please be respectful and prepared to learn about other people's experiences and consider them as valid as your own. Please share your pronouns and preferred first name in the beginning by sending me an email.

Support, Disability and Life Circumstance: If you have a disability, care responsibility, or wage work that might impact how you participate in this class, let me know so we can discuss suitable arrangements.