

**This is a sample syllabus for 3 hour seminar.  
The course will be revised this year, as it is  
every time it's taught.**

## **GSWS-1800-401 202230 Introduction To Queer Art**

**GSWS/ARTH 1800-401**

**Jonathan D. Katz (he/him)**

TA: Elliot A Mackin

**WILL 29      Monday 1:45 PM-04:44  
PM**

**Office Hours for Jonathan: Fridays 1:30-2:30 in Fisher Bennett 307,** but as I'm often booked, please make an appointment even during regular office hours. But you need not wait to come during office hours, as I am widely available at other times as well, so feel free to contact me via email and we can set up an appointment.

**Cell Phone: 646 241 5241, E-mail: [Jonathandavidkatz@gmail.com](mailto:Jonathandavidkatz@gmail.com)**

### **Course Description**

It's no exaggeration to note that queers have long been at the forefront of innovation in the arts, and that the arts, generally, have been a comfortable home for queers, even at moments when society at large was distinctly hostile. In fact the concepts of modern art and homosexuality that we use today are twins, for they were both founded in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and grew up together. *Introduction to Queer Art* thus begins with the coining of the word "homosexual" in 1869, and surveys how painting, sculpture, poetry, music, and film shifted in response to that development. Along the way, we will work towards answering two related questions: 1) Why were queers creators largely responsible for the introduction of modernity in

the arts, and 2) why do we find so often that queer social and political dissent found form in, and as, aesthetic dissent as well? In creating new forms for art that often seem far removed from any traditional definition of sexuality, queer artists pushed the boundaries of normativity, leading to new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling and thinking that often dared to encode queer meanings as part of their formal innovation. Were queer artists driven by a utopian hope that in a more modern world, the egregious homophobia/transphobia of the past would finally be no more? And finally we will ask about the social and political usefulness of forms of queer political dissent if those forms still remain illegible as queer to a wider audience. Throughout, new methods informed by queer, gender, and critical race theory will be utilized.

## Course Context

By the end of this course, it will be very clear that modernism and queerness are so intimately bound up as to be inseparable, a fact all the more remarkable in that it is so rarely acknowledged. I am less concerned with your mastering a given set of facts than I am in giving you the tools to do your own queer histories. Your course assignments will reflect this imperative. Almost every artist we cover in this class would be covered in any modernism survey—and by artist I include a full range of mediums, for we will examine, visual art, decorative art, poetry, prose, music, stage design, and performance. My goal is to interrupt the imponderable and impersonal forward march of an art history written largely in formal terms and restore to it the personal and the political, the individual actors in specific social conditions, many of whom were queer at a time when this was literally illegal. However, to argue, as I am now doing, that art and sexuality are not separate spheres is not the same as arguing that artist image their queerness in ways that we can readily recognize. Indeed, for many of these queer artists, any recognizable forms of queerness would have been far too dangerous. No surprise then that we will often find that the import of queerness can be recovered from art forms—variously abstract, non-objective, silent, still, freighted with absence and denial—that seem to deny anything personal or political about them. And that's the point: the most effective camouflage is always to hide in plain sight.

## Course Requirements

In addition to doing the reading in advance of each class meeting—as a seminar this is imperative—I will require a midterm and one short reader response paper of less than 2 pages. There is also a final exam and a short final paper of 5-8 pages, double spaced, in 12 point type. Any bibliographic format (Chicago, MLA, etc.) is acceptable, but it must be consistently applied. The final paper due **December 16th , and because grades are due shortly thereafter, I cannot give any extensions.** You have remarkable freedom in selecting your topic, for you will be charged with developing an argument about the relation between queerness and the work of one artist (on rare occasions, I may allow a comparison between 2 artists but never more than that) just as we have been doing in class. You will receive extra points for originality, so if you

can make a novel argument as yet unrecognized in the literature, you have extra credit to balance out that risk. We will discuss the assignment in great detail later on, but in essence, you will be asked to correlate an artist's modernist innovations and their sexuality. Each paper requires the submission of a research abstract and bibliography consisting of at least 8 works, split among articles, reviews, and books. This is frankly a teacher trick to ensure you don't begin your papers the week they're due, so please note that no extensions will be allowed for this requirement. Every student will be asked to present a short (no more than 4 minute), graded critical assessment of one of the readings as well, which you will turn in as your short paper.

**Grading:** You will be graded on your critical assessment, short paper and final paper. The breakdown for grading is as follows:

Critical assessment	5%
Midterm	25%
Final exam	35%
Final paper	35%.

### **Absences, late papers**

Since this class takes place in front of images, music, video, etc., I will allow only one unexcused absence all semester. Even missing one class will put you at a serious disadvantage. You may be excused if you write me in advance with one of the following reasons:

1. If you are participating in a college-listed religious holiday.
2. If you are ill.

Late papers: Unexcused late papers lose ½ of a grade for every day they're late.

**Course Organization:** The organization is largely chronological and entirely interdisciplinary. We will shift our attention fluidly between various forms of representation towards an historical consideration of queer depictions and their significance. Throughout the course, in every respect, we will be attentive to the ways race, gender and social class cross-cut the story of sexuality and its representations.

**Sept. 12          The First Homosexuals (Whitman to Sargent)**

[PPT](#)

[Download PPT](#)

**Sept 19          Duchamp and the Baroness to Demuth and Hartley**

[Franklin, Paul, “Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and the Art of Queer Art History”](#)

[Download Franklin, Paul, “Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and the Art of Queer Art History”](#)

[Weinberg, Jonathan “Demuth and Difference,” \*Art in America\* \(April 1988\): 188-223.](#)

[Download Weinberg, Jonathan “Demuth and Difference,” \*Art in America\* \(April 1988\): 188-223.](#)

***PPT: [Duchamp, Demuth and Hartley](#)***

***[Download Duchamp, Demuth and Hartley](#)***

**Sept 26          International Early Queer Art**

**Read selections from Katz, *The First Homosexuals***

**Oct 3          Modernism in America: Gertrude Stein, Chick Austin and the Wadsworth Atheneum to Surrealism**

**Barg, Lisa, “**

**[Download “Modernism in tableaux : race and desire in Four saints in three acts”](#)**

[Download Modernism in tableaux : race and desire in Four saints in three acts”](#)

**Latimer, Tirza, “[Entre Nous: Between Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore](#)”**

[Download Entre Nous: Between Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore”](#)

[Stein, Gertrude. “Miss Furr and Miss Skeene,” in \*Geography and Play\* \(1922\), 17-23.](#)

[Download Stein, Gertrude. “Miss Furr and Miss Skeene,” in \*Geography and Play\* \(1922\), 17-23,](#)

[Stein and Romaine Brooks.pptx](#)

[Download Stein and Romaine Brooks.pptx](#)

## **Oct 10 Queer Realism to Surrealism**

**Oct 17 American Architecture (Louis Sullivan & Philip Johnson) & Music (Harry Partch, Aaron Copeland and John Cage)**

**Katz, Jonathan** [“John Cage’s Queer Silence](#)

[Download “John Cage’s Queer Silence](#)

Cage, John, "[Lecture on Nothing](#)"

[Download Lecture on Nothing"](#)

[Queer Architecture.pptx](#)

[Download Queer Architecture.pptx](#)

[John Cage, Copland, Partch .pptx](#)

[Download John Cage, Copland, Partch .pptx](#)

**Oct 24 Georgia O’Keeffe to George Platt Lynes, Paul Cadmus and Pajama**

**Chave, Anna,** [“O’Keeffe and the Masculine Gaze,” \*Art in America\*,](#)

[Download “O’Keeffe and the Masculine Gaze,” \*Art in America\*,](#)

**Weinberg, Jonathan,** [“Cruising with Paul Cadmus,” in](#)

[Download Cruising with Paul Cadmus,” in \*Art in America\*](#)

**Crump, James,** [George Platt Lynes :](#)

[Download George Platt Lynes : photographs from the Kinsey Institute](#)

[O’Keeffe.pptx](#)

[Download O’Keeffe.pptx](#)

[Cadmus\\_PaJaMa\\_.pptx](#)

[Download Cadmus\\_PaJaMa\\_.pptx](#)

**Oct 29      Make Up Class in usual room, 3-5 PM on Poetry: Frank O'Hara vs. the Beats to Larry Rivers**

O'Hara, [Frank Art Chronicles, 1954-64](#)

[Download Frank Art Chronicles, 1954-64](#) and [selected poems](#)

[Download selected poems](#)

Katz, J, "[Allen Ginsberg, Herbert Marcuse, and the Politics of Eros,](#)"

[Download Allen Ginsberg, Herbert Marcuse, and the Politics of Eros,](#)"

**Oct 31      Rauschenberg, Johns, Twombly**

Roth, Moira "[The Aesthetic of Indifference,](#)

[Download "The Aesthetic of Indifference,"](#) In *Difference/Indifference*, 33-48.

Katz, Jonathan "["Committing the Perfect Crime': Sexuality, Assemblage and the Postmodern Turn in American Art,"](#) *Art Journal*, vol. 67, no. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 38-54.

[Download 'Committing the Perfect Crime': Sexuality, Assemblage and the Postmodern Turn in American Art,](#)" *Art Journal*, vol. 67, no. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 38-54.

**LAST hour of class will be the Midterm Exam**

[Johns Rauschenberg.pptx](#)

[Download Johns Rauschenberg.pptx](#)

**Nov 7      Outsiders: Jess & Duncan, Baldwin, David Hockney & Gilbert and George**

**NOTE: Hard copy of paper proposals due at start of class!**

See the documentary *I am Not Your Negro* on Kanopy

[Bacon, Jess, Hockney, Hamilton](#)

[Download Bacon, Jess, Hockney, Hamilton](#)

**Nov 14      Abstraction (Leon Polk Smith, Kelly, Indiana, Martin, Kusama, Nevelson, Chryssa, Tony Smith)**

**Katz, Jonathan** “[Reaching for the Corporeal: Leon Polk Smith...](#)

[Download Reaching for the Corporeal: Leon Polk Smith...](#)

**Katz, "Agnes Martin"**

[Download Agnes Martin"](#)

[Hard edged abstraction,](#)

[Download Hard edged abstraction,](#)

[Martin](#)

[Download Martin](#)

**Nov 21** **Andy Warhol and Underground Film** (Jack Smith, Barbara Rubin, Kenneth Anger) **and Harlem Renaissance**

**Koch, Stephen** “[The Tycoon of Passivity,” i](#)

[Download The Tycoon of Passivity,”](#) in *Stargazer: Andy Warhol and his Films* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1985), 17-46.

**Garber, Eric** ["A Spectacle in Color"](#)

[Download "A Spectacle in Color"](#)

**Nugent, Richard Bruce** " [Smoke, Lillies and Jade" \(1926\)](#)

[Download Smoke, Lillies and Jade" \(1926\)](#)

[Warhol](#)

[Download Warhol](#)

[Harlem Renaissance](#)

[Download Harlem Renaissance](#)

**Nov 28** **Feminist art (Damon, Corinne, and Hammond) and Queer Theater: Jack Smith, Robert Wilson and the Cockettes**

**Damon, Betsey** “[The 7000 Year Old Woman,” \*Heresies\*, no. 3, \(Fall, 1977\).](#)

[Download The 7000 Year Old Woman,” \*Heresies\*, no. 3, \(Fall, 1977\).](#)

**Hammond**, Harmony [“Class Notes,” \*Heresies\*, no. 3, \(Fall, 1977\).](#)

[Download “Class Notes,” \*Heresies\*, no. 3, \(Fall, 1977\).](#)

**Rachel**, Joseph, [Glittering Junk: Jack Smith and the Vast Landfill of Identity”](#)

[Download Glittering Junk: Jack Smith and the Vast Landfill of Identity”](#)

See the Cockettes Film

### **Feminist Art**

[Download Feminist Art](#)

**Dec 5**                    **The Rise of Queer Photography( Steven Arnold, Hujar, Mapplethorpe, Tee Corinne, Jeb) Installations and Performances (Mark Bradford, Kent Monkman, Keijuan Thomas, Rudy Lemcke)**

**Katz**, Jonathan, [“Robert Mapplethorpe’s Queer Classicism”](#)

[Download Robert Mapplethorpe’s Queer Classicism”](#)

**Gogarty**, ["Mark Bradford"](#)

[Download "Mark Bradford"](#)

### **Queer Photo and performance**

**Download Queer Photo and performance**

**Dec 12,**                    **AIDS and Culture War,**

**Katz**, Jonathan [“How AIDS Changed American Art” in \*Art AIDS America\*.](#)

[Download How AIDS Changed American Art” in Art AIDS America.](#)

[AIDS art &](#)

[Download AIDS art & Paul Thek](#)

[Download Paul Thek](#)

**Final Exam Thursday, 12/15 at 9-11am in MCNB-286-7**

**AND**



**Final Papers Due December 16 before 5 PM!**