My name is Mark McBeth and I will be teaching the summer course, entitled “Queer Academics: Where and to What Queer Theory Can Apply.” I am an Associate Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a consortial faculty member in the English Ph.D. program. I specialize in the field of Composition & Rhetoric, specifically looking at the intersections of that field with Queer theory. In December 2019, I published a new book called *Queer Literacies: Discourses and Discontents* which analyzes the homophobic discourses of the twentieth century and how certain Queer literate groups worked to countermand those deeply embedded discourses and beliefs. The literacy labors of those Queer literates reshaped society’s rhetoric around the subject of homosexuality.

In “Queer Academics” we will look at how Queer scholarly energies have shaped Academia, made Queer theory distinct from Gay and Lesbian studies, and influenced activist work. I have designed the course into weekly modules that address particular Queer themes that have emerged and re-emerged as Queer and Gender Studies have evolved over the past thirty years. While we will look at the writing of Queer researchers from the last five to ten years — or “current Queer scholarship” — we will also “back pedal” to read earlier Queer scholars who first posed the themes in the field or contributed to their ongoing discussions.

These weekly readings and discussions will also look across a variety of disciplines to expose how different disciplinary fields have used queer theory. Our topics will range from a sociological look at Queer truck drivers, to Queer literary critiques, to Queer memoir, to Queer fashion. How have scholars from a variety of fields used Queer theory as a generatively-bendy perspective for their intellectual labors?

While we will do a broad survey of the idea-generating and world-making of Queer studies, we can’t conceivably cover all of the expansive developments. This course should inspire students to delve into research of their own, uncovering both primary and secondary sources of Queer investigation. While reading for this course, students should pay attention to other scholarly references to which the scholars that we read may lead you. I’ll give you some strategies to do that type of intellectual labor. They should make you aware of the conversations that Queer scholars have elicited, but also reveal to you the “gaps” in Queer research that you might want to uptake. I hope this course will inspire you to seek out Queer scholarship that will fulfill your individual Queer interests.

Prior to taking this course, I suggest that you read two supplementary books: first, Lillian Faderman’s book *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* and, second, J. L. Austin’s *How to Do Things with Words*. In Faderman’s
history, she lays out a long and detailed history of the various Gay rights movements of the 20th century. This historical background knowledge will help you have a more grounded understanding of the later Queer theories that we will read for this course. Austin’s theory on the performative utterance offers a theoretical framework that drives much of Queer theory’s contemplations.

Now to the logistics of the course compelled by our new social conditions. We will do this course online in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. I hope that the pedagogical structure of this course may offer you some alternatives for your own course designs as we move out of face-to-face classrooms and into more virtual teaching realms. In the first weeks of the course we will meet via Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday at 6PM (when the normal course would have met). These synchronous meetings will give us some time to see each other's faces, discuss the course's strategies and objectives as well as to develop tactics for reading some difficult materials. We will meet synchronously once a week to discuss readings and have individual presentations but the Thursday meeting will be online lectures and exercises from me that you will do asynchronously on your own. At the end of the course, we will move to nearly fully asynchronous mode so that you can complete your own projects, and I might meet with individuals (on a case by case basis) to discuss your final projects. Depending on course participants’ mutual interests, I also hope to set up some focused research groups among your peers so that you can help each other think through your projects. I will lay out these scheduling details in the course syllabus. I hope that this alternative course structure should replicate the robust face-to-face time that we would have had in normal conditions, but also I want to leave you ample time to pause, reflect, and analyze what we read and then to offer you opportunities to explore your own Queer intellectual endeavors.

Thanks you for your time and consideration

Course Objectives:

- Students will familiarize themselves with both current Queer investigations as well as older texts that influenced them.
- Students will consider the cross-disciplinary intellectual work of Queer Studies.
- Students will learn some of the foundational questions posed by Queer Studies.
- Students will conduct some close analytical readings of Queer scholarship and formulate presentations of that material.
- Students will investigate gaps that they identify in the field and make their own contributions to that Queer knowledge base.

Course Assignments

- Do required readings.
- Each week every seminar participant will compose a reflective annotated bibliography (RefAnnBib) and an approximately 8 - 10 minutes presentation of your assigned reading that you will present to the class. Everyone should read all of the readings for the week; however the assigned person will be responsible for explaining and contextualizing their one reading. Once you have completed your RefAnnBib, you should place it in the GDrive folder that I will share with everyone. By the end of the semester after we have completed all of the readings and RefAnnBibs, we will have a collective
reflective annotated bibliography of our entire reading list. See directions for Reflective Annotated Bibliography at the end of this document.

- Participate in in-class activities and group work
- Write a script in which three to four of the experts we read in the course discuss an issue related to queer theory. This “one-act play” should draw upon the knowledge you learn in this course, synthesizing ideas as well as inferring new ones. The scene and other theatrical devices you use to write this script should bear meaning. Be creative . . . be divergent . . . even be naughty, if you wish.
- Prepare a two-page proposal for a scholarly project related to the course work accompanied by an annotated bibliography of the secondary sources that you would use for this endeavor (at least 10 entries and some may be from our course readings). Also, choose three to four images that could meaningfully accompany this piece of scholarly work. In one of our final courses, each course participant will do a 4-5 minute presentation of their project (with visuals please).

Course Schedule

**Week 1 Queer Defining (May 26: synchronous meeting)**

Course Introductions


**Week 1.2 Queer Historicizing (May 28: synchronous meeting)**


Conrad, Florence. (July/August 1965) “Research Is Here to Stay” *The Ladder* v.9, nos. 10/11.


**Week 2 Queer Normalizing (June 2: synchronous meeting)**


Week 2.2 Queer Polemicizing (June 4: synchronous meeting)


Week 3.1 Queer Performing (June 9: synchronous meeting)


Week 3.2 Queer Catching Up (June 11: asynchronous work; sending Mark assignments)

Week 4.1 Queer Economizing (June 16: synchronous meeting)

Kameny, Frank. Article about losing job


Week 4.2 Queer Languaging/Composing (June 18: asynchronous work: sending Mark assignments)


Week 5.1 Queer Catching Up (June 22: asynchronous work)

Week 5.2 Queer Transitioning (Or Not) (June 24: synchronous meeting)


Kobabe, Phoebe. (2019) Gender Queer: A Memoir. Lion Forge, LLC.

Week Eleven Queer Visualizing (June)


Week Twelve Queer Sociologizing


Week Fourteen Queer Finishing Up

Week Fifteen