

Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies

**CUNY Graduate Center
MA Program Liberal Studies
Fall 2020
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Zoom Meeting Room: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9029481020>
Office Hours: Mondays, 5:30 – 6:30pm; By appointment

Course Description:

Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies (MALS 72300)

In *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us* Kate Bornstein writes, “The first question we usually ask new parents is: ‘Is it a boy or a girl?’” Bornstein recommends the response, “We don’t know; it hasn’t told us yet.” This course explores the ways in which gender and sexuality are pronounced, embodied, and negotiated within specific historical and cultural contexts. Through a close reading of interdisciplinary, foundational, and recent scholarship the class will examine and theorize the ways in which categories of gender and sexuality inform and shape our understanding of the world. Investigating the intersections and collisions of gender and sexuality with race, class, ability, nationality, ethnicity, and age, the class will consider societal and institutional systems of power, privilege, oppression, and marginalization. Course requirements include an oral presentation, two 4-6 page response papers, and a 15-20 page, staged researched essay.

This online course will use a synchronous teaching model, but students may select an asynchronous option upon consultation with the instructor.

Class Meeting Time: Mondays, 6:30pm to 8:30pm (via Zoom)

Performance Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate an introductory understanding of gender and sexuality studies across various geographical regions and historical periods.
2. Exhibit a rich comprehension of the interdisciplinary tools and approaches for analyzing gender, sex, and sexuality.
3. Engage with a variety of primary and secondary research resources and develop a critical understanding of the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, nationality, ability, and age.

4. Analyze political discourse, cultural artifacts, and performative examples applying relevant feminist and queer theories and methodologies.
5. Demonstrate superior written and oral communication skills within a variety of formal and informal circumstances.

Readings:

All of the course texts, except Thomas Page McBee's *Amateur* are available in the course Blackboard file.

Texts Recommended for Purchase:

Freud, Sigmund. *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.

McBee, Thomas Page. *Amateur: A Reckoning with Gender, Identity, and Masculinity*. Scribner, 2019.

Course Requirements and Grading Standards:

1. **Attendance.** Absence is excused for the first occurrence. After that students will write a 2-3-page response to the class readings for missed sessions. Excessive absence (more than three classes) will result in a non-passing grade.
2. **Analytical Responses and Class Participation:** 24 hours before each class session, students need to post a short Blackboard response (300-500 words) to the class readings. The responses may include questions to pursue in discussion, observations about the relevance of the texts, and perceived connections across the historical, theoretical, and geographical divides. **10%**
3. **Class Presentation and Short Facilitator Paper:** Each student will choose one class session during the term and organize a mini-lesson around one of the texts listed on the syllabus. The presentation will include leading the class discussion (about thirty minutes per student) and providing the historical, cultural, and theoretical context in which the article/chapter was written. In the class session following the facilitation, the presenter will submit a short paper (4-6 pages) that contains a somewhat formal academic response to the text as well as a rationale behind and reflection about the facilitated class discussion. **20%**
4. **Mid-Term Response Essay:** In week seven of the class please submit a short essay (4-6 pages) that addresses a particular author, issue, or perceived gap in the scholarship. The response should not focus on the text used for the facilitated class session, but it may provide a starting point for a final researched essay. These are due October 26. **10%**
5. **Seminar Paper Assignment #1:** A two-to-three page prospectus and annotated bibliography (of at least ten sources) for final paper. These are due November 9. **20%**
6. **Seminar Paper Assignment #2:** A short (5-7 minute-) presentation of research in progress. Presentations will be on December 7. (Optional first draft of final paper will also be accepted on November 30.) **10%**
7. **Seminar Paper Assignment #3:** A final paper (15-20 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, and correct and consistent citation style). Paper due no later than December 14. Please, no late papers. **30%**

Statement on Academic Integrity

This course is taught in compliance with the Graduate Center Policy on Academic Honesty. Copies of the Policy on Academic Honesty and guidelines for “Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism” are available on the Graduate Center website, in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (Room 7301), and the Provost’s Office (Room 8113).

Class Topics and Assignment Schedule Subject to Modification

August 31: Introductions: Gender Aptitude

Readings: Iantaffi and Barker, Introduction and Section 1 from *How to Understand Your Gender*

September 14: Sex on the Couch: Gender, Sexuality, and Psychoanalysis

Readings: Freud, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*
Irigaray, Excerpt from *This Sex Which Is Not One*

September 21: Riding the Waves: Histories of Feminisms

Readings: Caughie, “theorizing the ‘first wave’ globally” (*Feminist Review*)
Halberstam, “Gaga Feminism for Beginners” from *Gaga Feminism*
Hewitt, “Feminist Frequencies” (*Feminist Studies*)
Kitch, “Memory, Interrupted” from *Front Page, Front Lines*

September 29: Theoretical and Political Foundations

(Tuesday) Readings: de Beauvoir, “Introduction” from *The Second Sex*
The Combahee River Collective, “Black Feminist Statement” (Reprinted in *WSQ*)
Foucault, “We ‘Other Victorians’” from *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*
Wittig, “One Is Not Born a Woman” from *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*

October 5: Intersectionality: Theories and Applications

Reading: Brim, “You Can Write Your Way Out of Anywhere” from *Poor Queer Studies*
Cho, Crenshaw, McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectional Studies” (*Signs*)
Monforti, “The Latinx Gender Gap in the 2016 Election” from *Latinos and the 2016 Election*
Stögner, “New Challenges in Feminism” from *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism*

October 14: **Queer Theories and Disabilities Studies**

- (Wednesday) Readings: Chang, "Asian Americans, Disability, and the Model Minority Myth" from *Flashpoints for Asian American Studies*
Clare, "Gawking, Gaping, Staring" (*GLQ*)
Kafer, "Compulsory Bodies" (*Journal of Women's History*)
McRuer, "Disabling Sex" (*GLQ*)

October 19: **Queering the Air: Failure, Performance, and Performativity**

- Readings: Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" from *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*
Halberstam, "Queer Art of Failure" from *The Queer Art of Failure*
Martínez, "Dressed Like a Man?" (*Journal of the History of Sexuality*)
Patterson, "Do You want to be Well?" (*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*)

October 26: **Documenting Lives and Experiences**

- Readings: Doan, "Queer History, Queer Memory" (*GLQ*)
Jaime, "Chasing Rainbows" (*TLQ*)
Takemoto, "Looking for Jiro Onuma" (*GLQ*)
Wilson, "In My Well of Loneliness" from *Bulldaggers, Pansies and Chocolate Babies*
Written Assignment: Midterm Response Essay

November 2: **Manhood, Manliness, and (White) Masculinities**

- Readings: Connell, "Social Organization of Masculinity" from *Masculinities*
McBee, *Amateur*

November 9: **Marriage, Family, and Homonormativity**

- Readings: Ahmed L., "The Veil Debate—Again" from *On Shifting Ground*
Duggan, "Beyond Marriage" (*S&F Online*)
Lorde, "Man Child" and "Sexism" from *Sister Outsider*
Peterson, "More than a Mask" from *Ms. Marvel's America*
Rosky, "Same-Sex Marriage Litigation" (*GLQ*)
Written Assignment: Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography

November 16: **Learned Behaviors: Gender, Sexuality, and the Classroom**

- Readings: Clarkson, "Teaching Trans Students, Teaching Trans Studies" (*Feminist Teacher*)
hooks, "Building a Teaching Community" and "Eros, Eroticism, and the Pedagogical Process" from *Teaching to*

Transgress

Pascoe, "Dude, You're a Fag" from *Dude, You're a Fag*
Wilson, "Unfit to Teach" from *Teacher Representations in
Dramatic Text and Performance*

November 23: **Health, Services, and Reproductive Rights**

Readings: Fassler, "How Doctors Take Women's Pain Less
Seriously" (*The Atlantic*)
Gill, "Chatting Back an Epidemic" (*GLQ*)
O'Brien, "Tracing this Body" from *The Transgender
Studies Reader 2*
Overall, "Reproductive Freedom" from *Why Have
Children?*

November 30: **Policing Gender: Legislation, Enforcement, and the Legal System**

Readings: Davis, "Feminism and Abolition" from *Freedom is a
Constant Struggle*
Rios, "Queering Protest" from *Black Lives and Spatial
Matters*
Rubin, "Thinking Sex" from *Culture, Society and Sexuality*
Spade, "What's Wrong with Rights?" from *Normal Life*
Written Assignment: Optional First Draft of Final Paper

December 7: **Surveying the Field: A Gender and Sexuality Studies Conference**

Written Assignment: Paper Abstract and Presentation Notes
Final Paper (No later than December 14)