

[revised 1/21/19]

Black Queer Art Worlds
AFR 317E (30455) / ANT 310L (31610) / WGS 301 (45500)

Professor Lyndon K. Gill

Description

This multi-disciplinary course covers over two decades of work produced by and about black lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people both within and beyond the borders of the United States. While introducing various artists and intellectuals of the black queer diaspora, this seminar explores what it might mean to think of artistry (film, fiction, photography, painting, poetry) as a form of theorizing. We will spend time with black queer subjects in the Americas, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. Our aim is to use artistry to highlight the dynamic relationship between Black Diaspora Studies and Queer Studies.

**Please Note:*

- 1) *This course carries flags for Cultural Diversity in the United States and Global Cultures.*
- 2) *This course deals with aspects of gender and sexuality in a candid and explicit manner at times. Students who do not feel comfortable with this approach should not take the course. If you choose to take this course, you have agreed to respect our classroom as a safe space. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or xenophobia of any sort will not be tolerated.*

Requirements & Assignments

1. Attendance: Each student is required to attend *every* class session. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. More than one unexcused absence during the term will result in a reduction of the overall course grade for each session missed (A→A-, B+→B, etc.).

**Note: The use of laptops and mobile phones is NOT permitted in the classroom*

2. Informed participation: Each student will complete the assigned readings and bring hardcopies of these readings to class. Students will come to class on time and prepared with questions and comments on each reading.

3. Films: As part of the course, the viewing of films is required. Most of these films are on reserve at the Library.

4. Reading responses: Each week, students will post *a reading response on Canvas by Monday at 11:59pm*. These posts are intended to provoke conversation. The week's assigned readings must be addressed directly, but no need to summarize. Critique, compare, and pose questions for discussion or clarification. Each post must comment on at least one other person's reading response. ***The first reading response is due on Monday 2/4 at 11:59pm***. These responses will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students will receive *no credit* for late posts.

5. Discussion facilitation: Each student will be assigned two class sessions to lead as a facilitator (groups of two or more students may be necessary). Facilitators are required to meet with the instructor during office hours prior to each facilitation. Facilitators are expected to draft questions for discussion based on the assigned readings and are required to read all reading responses posted for that week. The inclusion of course-relevant audio/visual material as a way to encourage conversation is highly encouraged. Students will receive a grade for these facilitations. **Discussion facilitators are NOT required to write reading responses for the week of their facilitation.**

6. Final project proposal: Students will form groups and each group will write a **2-3-page proposal** (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced) for a final project. This proposal will explain the form of the final project and the texts the group will be using. These texts must include course related readings/films, but may also include outside resources. This proposal will be ***accompanied by a briefly annotated bibliography*** (the bibliography does NOT count toward the minimum page limit). Each group member will receive the same grade.

7. Final project: Each group will complete a ***final project to be accompanied by a 5-7 page explanatory essay*** (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced). The project will be due on the first day of Final Exams). Each group members will receive the same grade.

- For the ***Final Project*** students will produce a creative work in the medium of their choice (performance, film, painting, sculpture, photography, literary text, web, etc. or using multiple media). This work **MUST** engage directly with texts/films assigned for the course and themes raised by the course. Outside sources are encouraged but not required.

Please note for all assignments:

* ***Late proposals and projects will be penalized for every day they are late*** (i.e. A → A- if one day late, A → B+ if two days late, etc.). Students are required to ***proofread*** their material prior to submission (ideally, someone else will also read the material for grammatical/spelling/flow errors your eyes might miss). Materials that show evidence of

not having been proofread will be returned and marked late. Extensions may be considered only under extenuating circumstances and in emergency situations. When possible, advance notice is encouraged and documentation will be required.

* For assistance with cultivating your ideas, outlining your written work and tips on proofreading/editing your polished writing, please make an appointment at the ***Undergraduate Writing Center***: www.uwc.utexas.edu

* Students are expected to comply with the University of Texas at Austin's **Honor Code** and its standards of academic integrity:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with this code and these university-wide standards; ignorance will be unacceptable as an excuse for violations. All written assignments may be scanned for plagiarism.

* Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the University. To determine if you qualify, please contact the coordinating office at 471-6259 (voice), 232-2937 (video phone) or www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd.

Course Grade Percentages

Reading responses	10%
Class participation/ Discussion facilitation	20%
Final project proposal (due 3/14)	30%
Final project (due 5/15)	40%

Required Texts

Ekine, Sokari and Hakima Abbas
2013 Queer African Reader. Dakar: Pambazuka Press.

Etaghene, Yvonne FLY
2015 For Sizakele. Washington, DC: Redbone Press.

Gill, Lyndon

2018 Erotic Islands: Art & Activism in the Queer Caribbean. Durham: Duke University Press.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Glave, Thomas

2008 Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing from The Antilles. Durham: Duke University Press

Johnson, E. Patrick and Mae G. Henderson

2005 Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology. Durham: Duke University Press.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Matabeni, Zethu

2014 Reclaiming Afrikan: Queer Perspectives on Sexual and Gender Identities. Cape Town: Modjaji Books.

Osman, Diriye

2013 Fairytales for Lost Children. London: Team Angelica Publishing.

The above texts are available for purchase at the Co-Op and have been put on reserve at the Perry-Castañeda Library. Additional required readings (book chapters, articles, etc.) are also available as pdf documents on Canvas.

Required Films

Aïnouz, Karim

2004 Madame Satã. New York: Fox Lorber.

Baker, Sean

2015 Tangerine. New York: Magnolia Pictures.

Brooks, Phillip and Laurent Bocahut

1998 Woubi Chéri. San Francisco: California Newsreel.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Camara, Mohamed

1997 Dakan [Destiny]. San Francisco: California Newsreel.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Frilot, Shari

1995 Black Nations/Queer Nations: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities in the African Diaspora. New York: Third World Newsreel

Jenkins, Barry

2016 Moonlight. New York: A24.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]

Larry, Sheldon

2012 Leave it on the Floor. Almaden: Wolfe Video.

Lescot, Anne and Laurence Magloire

2002 Of Men and Gods [Des Hommes et des Dieux]. Watertown: Documentary Educational Resources.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]

Mortimer, Kareem

2007 Float. San Francisco: Frameline.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]

Nwandu, Adaora

2006 Rag Tag. London: Muka Flicks.

Ramaka, Joseph

2001 Karmen Gei. San Francisco: California Newsreel.

[Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]

Trengove, John

2017 The Wound [Inxeba]. Johannesburg: Urucu Media.

Welbon, Yvonne

2012 Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100. Chicago: Our Film Works.

X, Campbell

2013 Stud Life. New Almaden: Wolfe Video.

The films above not available online through UT Libraries or on Reserve, may be rented or purchased online.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

**Please Note: It may be necessary to make slight changes to this schedule as the course progresses. You will always receive prior notice of any changes.*

Part I: The Americas

Week #1: Introductions

1/22

Introductions to each other and the course

1/24

Introductions to each other and the course

Watch: Welton *Living With Pride?*

Week #2: Black/Queer/Diaspora

1/29

[20pgs.]

Allen "Black/Queer/Diaspora" (in GLQ Vol. 18, No. 2-3 2012: p. 211-230)

Watch: Frilot *Black Nations/Queer Nations*

1/31

[20 pgs.]

Allen "Black/Queer/Diaspora" (in GLQ Vol. 18, No. 2-3 2012: p. 231-238)

Holland "Foreword" (in *Black Queer Studies*: p. ix-xiii)

Black LGBTQI History Timeline

Crenshaw "Black LGBTQ Films"

Read UT Libraries' Black Queer Studies Collection explanation and
browse the collection: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/collection/bqsc>

Watch: Rees *Pariah*

Week #3: A Politics of Desire

[First Reading Response due Monday 2/4 at 11:59pm]

2/5

[17 pgs.]

Johnson & Henderson "Introduction" (in *Black Queer Studies*: p. 1-17)

2/7

[19 pgs.]

Cohen "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens" (in *Black Queer Studies*: p. 21-37),

Hemphill "In the Life" (in Aab-Richards et al. 1987: p.53),

Lorde "On a Night of the Full Moon" (in Lorde 1997: p.172)

Watch: Jenkins *Moonlight* [Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Week #4: Afropolitan Love & Loss I

2/12 [68 pgs.]
Final Project Proposal Group Work
Etaghe *For Sizakele* p.1-67

2/14 [61 pgs.]
Final Project Proposal Group Work
Etaghe *For Sizakele* p.69-129

Watch: Baker *Tangerine*

Week #5: Afropolitan Love & Loss II

2/19 [55 pgs.]
Final Project Proposal Group Work
Etaghe *For Sizakele* p.131-185

2/21 [55 pgs.]
Final Project Proposal Group Work
Etaghe *For Sizakele* p.187-241

Watch: Larry *Leave it on the Floor*

Week #6: The Black Queer South

2/26 [21 pgs.]
Johnson *Sweet Tea* p.1-12
Johnson *Black. Queer. Southern. Women* p.1-8
[Both available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]

2/28 [20 pgs.]
Johnson *Sweet Tea* p.13-23
Johnson *Black. Queer. Southern. Women* p.9-17

Week #7: Transcendence & Desire in the Afro-Americas

3/5 [20 pgs.]
View Mickalene Thomas' Gallery: <http://mickalenethomas.com/gallery.html>
Kino "A Confidence Highlighted in Rhinestones"
Smith "Loud, Proud & Painted"
Murray "Loving Aberrance" p.111-126

Watch: *Soul Kitchen: Mickalene Thomas* <http://lifeandtimes.com/soul-kitchen>

3/7 [24 pgs.]
Walcott "Fragments of Toronto" (in *Our Caribbean*: p. 360-367)
Murray "Loving Aberrance" p.126-142

Watch: d'bi.young Kosmopolis interview: <http://vimeo.com/50538517>
"Gendah Bendah": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0RWbVN1ZjE#t=46>

Watch: Aïnouz *Madame Satã*

Part II: Europe

Week #8: Crossing the Pond: Black Queer Britain I

3/12 [20 pgs.]
Browse Fani-Kayodé's photography:
<http://imagebank.autograph-abp.co.uk/search/results/search?&category=rotimi-fani-kayode>
Mercer "Mortal Coil" (in Squires 1999: p.183-192),
Fani-Kayodé "Traces of Ecstasy" (in Fani-Kayodé et al. p. 5-10)
Read Campbell X interview:
<https://queeriouslife.wordpress.com/2011/01/11/interview-with-campbell-ex-fierce-queer-black-filmmaker-from-uk/>
Perrée "Ajamu: Queer Photographer & Activist"
<https://africanah.org/ajamu-queer-photographer-and-activist/>

Watch: Campbell X *Stud Life*

3/14 [20 pgs.]
Mercer "Mortal Coil" (in Squires 1999: p.193-210)
Browse website: <https://www.ajamu-studio.com/>
Bailey "Bodyscapes" & Mercer "The Camera as Kinky Machine"

[Submit Final Project Proposals via Canvas by the beginning of class]
[Midterm Evaluations]

Watch: Nwandu *Rag Tag*

Week #9: Spring Break

3/19 [41 pgs.]
Spring Break
Osman *Fairytales For Lost Children* p.3-43

3/21 [28 pgs.]
Spring Break
Osman *Fairytales For Lost Children* p.47-74

Part III: Africa

Week #10: Queer Africa?

3/26 [39 pgs.]
Final Project Group Work
Osman *Fairytales For Lost Children* p.77-115

3/28 [38 pgs.]
Final Project Group Work
Osman *Fairytales for Lost Children* p.119-156

Week #11: Contesting the Heterosexuality of a Continent

4/2 [16 pgs.]
Ekine & Abbas "Introduction" (in the *Queer African Reader*: p.1-5)
Migraine-George "Beyond the 'Internalist' vs. 'Externalist' Debate" p.45-56

Watch: Camara Dakan [Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

4/4 [17 pgs.]
[All readings in Matebeni Reclaiming Afrikan catalogue]
White "Foreword" p.4
Matebeni & Pereira "Preface" p.7-9
Ouma & Mutloane "Performing Queer" p.36-43
Musangi "In Time and Space" p.52-59
Nyanzi "Queering Queer Africa" p.65-68

Watch: Brooks & Bocahut *Woubi Chéri* [Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Week #12: Longing Glances: Queer African Visibility

4/9 [14pgs.]
Muholi "Mapping Our Histories" (p.4-13)
Muholi "Faces & Phases" (in the *Queer African Reader*: p. 169-172)

View Muholi's *Faces and Phases* series:

<http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/facesphases.htm>
http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/index_faces2014.html

Watch: Trengove *The Wound*

4/11 [17pgs.]
Muholi “Mapping Our Histories” (p.14-30)

View Muholi’s “Being” series online:
<http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/being.htm>

Week #13: *Queer Visibility: Expect the Unexpected*

4/16 [21 pgs.]
Salley “The Face I Love” (in the *Queer African Reader*: p.107-118)
Naughton “Photos That Celebrate Ghana’s LGBT Community”
https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2017/04/04/photos-celebrate-ghana-lgbt-community/?_r=0
Ekotto “The Erotic Tale of Karmen Gei”

Watch: Zanele Muholi, *Visual Activist*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aiufq04dp0#t=63>

Watch: Ramaka Karmen Gei [Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Part IV: The Caribbean

4/18 [23 pgs.]
Glave “Introduction” (in *Our Caribbean*: p.1-11)
PRIDE JA Magazine, Issue #4: https://issuu.com/j-flag/docs/pride4_update_final
p.8-10, 16-21
PRIDE JA Magazine, Issue #5: https://issuu.com/j-flag/docs/pride5_final
p.2, 20-24, 26-27

Watch: Mortimer *Float* [Available online <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Week #14: *Queering the Caribbean*

4/23
Final Project Group Work

4/25 [27 pgs.]
Hopkinson “Fisherman” (in Hopkinson 2001: p.119-145)

Week #15: An Archipelago of Desire

4/30 [23 pgs.]

Tinsley "Songs for Ezili" p.417-425

Brand "Elizete, Beckoned" (in *Our Caribbean*: p.70-77)

Gill *Erotic Islands* p. xxi-xxv [**Available online** <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Watch: Lescot & Magloire *Of Men and Gods (Des Hommes et Dieux)*
[**Available online** <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

5/2 [22 pgs.]

Tinsley "Songs for Ezili" p.425-436

Saunders "La Lucha Mujerista" p.8-12

Gill *Erotic Islands* p. xxv-xxx

Watch: *T Con T: Lesbian Life in Contemporary Havana*
<https://vimeo.com/groups/feminista/videos/11078800>

Week #16

5/7 [17 pgs.]

Gill *Erotic Islands* p.1-17

5/9

Concluding Assessment & Evaluations

5/15 (*First Day of Final Exams*)

Final Projects Due

Other Required Reading Text Citations

Aaab-Richards, Dirg et al.

1987 *Tongues Untied*. London: Gay Men's Press.

Allen, Jafari

2011 *Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba*. Durham: Duke

University Press.

Johnson, E. Patrick

2008 Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Johnson, E. Patrick

2018 Black.Queer.Southern.Women: An Oral History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Lorde, Audre

1984 Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Trumansburg: Crossing Press.

1997 The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde. New York: Norton.

Migraine-George, Thérèse

2003 "Beyond the 'Internalist' vs. 'Externalist' Debate." In the *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol.16, No.1: p. 45-56.

Muholi, Zanele

2010 Faces and Phases. Munich: Prestel.

Murray, Derek Conrad

2016 Queering Post-Black Art: Artists Transforming African-American Identity After Civil Rights. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.

Saunders, Tanya

2009 "La Lucha Mujerista: Krudas CUBENSI and Black Feminist Sexual Politics in Cuba." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* Issue #3. St. Augustine: University of the West Indies Centre for Gender & Development Studies

Squiers, Carol

1999 Over Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography. New York: New Press.

Grading Schema

(Informed by "Grading Standards II" by Maxine Rodburg)

The following are the standards I adhere to when I grade essays/projects. Pluses and minuses represent shades of difference, as do split grades (e.g. B-/C+). I assign grades on the evidence of the work submitted, not on effort or time spent.

- A:** An excellent essay/project (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive essay/project that grapples with interesting, complex ideas, responds discerningly to counter-arguments, and explores well-chosen evidence revealingly. The work enhances— rather than underscores— the reader’s and writer’s knowledge (it doesn’t simply repeat what has been discussed in class). There is a context for all the ideas; someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by reading the essay or encountering the project. Its beginning opens up— rather than flatly announces— its thesis. Its end is something more than a summary. The language is clean, precise, and often elegant. As a reader/witness I feel surprised, delighted, changed. There’s something new here for me, something only the specific group could have offered and explored in this particular way. The group’s stake in the material is obvious.
- B:** This is an essay/project that reaches high and achieves many of its aims. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more analysis and/or some stray thoughts or elements do not quite fit together well. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little. The context for the evidence may not be sufficiently explored, so that I have to make some of the connections that the writer should have made clear for me.
- OR** This is an essay/project that does not reach as high as an ‘A’ essay, but thoroughly achieves its aims. This is a solid essay/project whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine— in this case the limitation is conceptual.
- C:** This is an essay/project that has real problems in one of these areas: 1) conception (there is at least one main idea but it is obscure and hard to get to); 2) structure (the logic behind the ordering of the materials is far from clear); 3) use of evidence (there is no evidence presented or that which is provided is weak and/or the connections among the ideas are unclear or without context; the text/project is plagued by generalizations and absent substantial proof); 4) language (the articulation is awkward and generally stands in the way of comprehension). Overall, the essay/project may be repetitive, poorly organized, and/or superficial in its treatment of the subject matter. In addition, punctuation, spelling, grammar, citations, and transitions may be problems as well.
- OR** This is an essay/project that largely summarizes any given text or other work (of art or analysis), but is undertaken without too many major problems.
- OR** This is an essay/project that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. This is perhaps well written/executed, but there is scant engagement with course content or other scholarly material; it is mostly opinion.
- D:** This is an essay/project that demonstrates very little effort to grapple seriously with the ideas it hopes to explore.

- OR** This is writing/a project that is extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: conception, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.
- OR** This is writing/a project that does not come close to meeting the expectations of the assignment.
- F:** This is an essay/project that should most definitely be re-conceptualized and revised drastically so that it can be re-submitted if that option is available.

Grading Scale

A+	100
A	99 – 95
A-	94 – 90
B+	89 – 85
B	84 – 80
B-	79 – 75
C+	74 – 70
C	69 – 65
C-	64 – 60
D+	59 – 55
D	54 – 50
D-	49 – 45
F	44 or less