

ENGL 391:

Sexual and Gender Diversity Studies

Instructor: Dr. Steven Greenwood (any pronouns).

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Course goals

- To explore various ways of understanding gender and sexuality as they relate to personal, spiritual, cultural, political and scientific discourses and experiences.
- To explore the significance of queer theory and to highlight critiques of conventional theory-based models of queer studies.
- To develop critical thinking, analysis, and writing skills.
- To discuss ways of mobilizing and using the knowledge produced through academic research/ to explore the intersection between academia and politics, activism, community engagement, work, and life.

Assessment

Breakdown:

All assignments are to be submitted through MyCourses.

More details on each individual assignment available in the “assignments” folder on MyCourses.

Final Assignment (4-6 pages): 30% (3 due date options: May 27 or 31. See below.)

Pragmatic Assignment: 25% (due May 24)

Quizzes: 3 quizzes, each worth 15% (every Thursday: 12, 19, and 26).

BONUS: Community involvement component (5%)

Final Assignment

There are 2 options for your final assignment for this course.

- 1) Submit one essay on May 27 and receive instructor feedback with your grade.
- 2) Submit one essay on May 31 and receive a grade with minimal to no feedback.

Note: because there is no chance for you to get feedback on a first paper before writing the final, it is strongly encouraged that you get instructor approval for your thesis before you submit your final paper. I will discuss this more during the first lecture.

Assignment Expectations

Students enrolled in this course are expected to develop three skills: **comprehension, critical response, and application**. The modes of assessment for this course will assess these three skills. More detailed grading outlines for each assignment will be posted separately on MyCourses.

Note that this means that **comprehension** is not sufficient to succeed in the course; it is not sufficient to simply be able to demonstrate that you understand the course content. Comprehension is only 1/3 of the process: students must also be able to develop their own critical ideas in response to the content and apply it to the creation of an original project, in order to fully complete the course. The midterm and exam will test for comprehension: however, the assignments require you to demonstrate your ability to also critically respond to ideas from the course and apply that response to a creation of original and distinctive scholarly work.

Pragmatic Assignment

One of the biggest challenges in a GSFS course comes from finding ways to take the often theoretical, intellectual ideas learned in class and mobilize them towards making real, pragmatic change. The public engagement project is a chance for you to take something from the course and apply it to something practical.

This can take a few forms. You can plan an event (theoretical or real), create a public engagement platform (podcast, social media campaign, etc.), create something artistic, or otherwise explore a way that you could take the content from class and apply it to something outside of the classroom. More information on MyCourses and in the first lecture.

Bonus

Students who attend 3 queer-related cultural events online or in the city and write a brief response to them will be given a bonus 5% to their final grade.

Note on Recommended Readings

Recommended readings are not mandatory for students to read; however, they are listed because they expand on certain ideas that will be raised in lecture, and some students may find them useful. Concepts from these readings can be tested if they are mentioned in lecture (they will always appear on lecture slides and be explicitly discussed in class if this is the case), but students will not be expected to have read the actual readings, and will not be tested on anything from the readings outside the specific ideas discussed in lecture.

Late Policy

Late assignments will be accepted, with a penalty of 5% per 24 hours. No papers will be accepted later than 72 hours past the due date. Extensions may be granted for reasons related to health (mental and physical), crisis, emergency, other obligations, or community/ political commitments; please contact the instructor if you need an extension or other forms of accommodation.

Note that I do not require doctor's notes; I trust students to be honest with me about their situations and do not require evidence of illness. Also note that mental health is as valid as other forms of health, and I am willing to give extensions for significant mental health concerns.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is not mandatory. All discussion sessions are optional chances for students to engage further with material.

Content Warning

Because of the nature of the course, the majority of readings, plays, and films will, in some way or another, deal with homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination, as well as issues related to mental health, suicide, abuse or assault. I will give more specific content warnings for texts that deal with these things in particularly explicit or graphic ways; however, I also want to give a more general content warning that the readings for this class in general deal quite consistently with the above general topics to varying degrees.

Canada has a 24/7, Toll-Free Crisis support line for students who need support for issues related to mental health, suicide, or other crises. The number is **1-833-456-4566**.

McGill also offers free counselling services and other mental health support. Contact the instructor if you need help navigating this system: the core information is available at mcgill.ca/counselling.

Incidents

The classroom is expected to be a respectful, anti-oppressive space, and there will be no tolerance for oppressive or harmful behaviour. If an incident arises and you feel the instructor should be notified, or if you think there is anything the instructor should be doing to respond to certain issues or behaviour, please do not hesitate to email them. There is also an anonymous reporting form for anyone who is uncomfortable having their name attached to a report. The form can be found at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSefp7sOIR7J3zqUDOb5v5s-vI9NZxZ19jMSFo-owU3O0OteDQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

(Schedule on next page)

Reading Schedule

May 2 – Introduction

No Readings

May 3 – History and Axioms

Required Reading

Muñoz, José Esteban. “Ephemera as Evidence.”

Recommended Reading

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. “Introduction: Axiomatic.” From *Epistemology of the Closet*.

May 4 – Homonormativity and Assimilation

Required Reading

Duggan, Lisa. “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism.”

Recommended Reading

Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal*.

Rubin, Gayle. “*Thinking Sex*.”

May 5 – Assimilation or Belonging?

Required Readings

Johnson, E. Patrick. “Quare Studies.”

Driskill, Qwo-Li. “Two-Spirit Critique.”

Recommended Reading

Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications*.

Fobister, Waawaate. *Agokwe*.

Black Queer Studies.

May 9 – Postmodernism, Poststructuralism and the Rise of Theory

Required Readings

Foucault, Michel. From *The History of Sexuality*.

Butler, Judith. From *Gender Trouble*.

May 10 – The Problems With Theory

Required Readings

Christian, Barbara. “The Race for Theory.”

Halperin, David. “The Normalization of Queer Theory.”

Gutierrez, Miguel. “Does Abstraction Belong to White People?”

Recommended Viewing

Miller, Tim. *My Queer Body*.

May 11 – Coming Out

Required Reading

Mock, Janet. From “Redefining Realness.”

Video: Blaque, Kat. “My problem with “Coming Out.”

Recommended Reading

Film: *Disclosure* by Sam Feder.

May 12 – Time

Required Reading

Edelman, Lee. From *No Future*.

Recommended Reading

Bond Stockton, Kathryn. *The Queer Child*.

Muñoz, José Esteban. *From Cruising Utopia*.

May 16 – Disability, Normativity and Temporality

Reading

McRuer, Robert. “Compulsory Able-bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence.”

Recommended Reading

Kafer, Alison. From *Feminist, Queer, Crip*.

May 17 – Pragmatics

Required Reading

Ahmed, Sara. From *Living a Feminist Life*.

Román, David. From *Acts of Intervention*.

Recommended Reading

Walia, Harsha. *Undoing Border Imperialism*.

May 18 – Audre Lorde & The Erotic

Readings

Lorde, Audre. “Uses of the Erotic.”

Musser, Amber Jamilla. “Re-membering Audre.”

May 19 – Sexuality

Readings

Hammonds, Evelyn M. “Towards a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality.”

Morris, Wesley. “Last Taboo.”

May 23 no class

May 24 – Sexuality, Diaspora and Migration

Required Readings

Lee, JeeYeun. "Why Suzie Wong is Not a Lesbian."

Film: Kar-wai Wong, Happy Together.K

May 25 – Monster, Terrorist, Fag

Reading

Puar, Jasbir K. and Armit S. Rai. "Monster, Terrorist, Fag."

May 26 – HIV/ AIDS

Required Reading

Román, David. From *Acts of Intervention*.

Brouwer, Daniel C. and Charles E. Morris III. "Decentering whiteness in AIDS memory."

Song: Jackson, Michael R. "Aids is God's Punishment." (**CW: as the title implies, this song portrays extremely homophobic rhetoric**).

May 27 - Medical Discourses Pt. 1

Required Reading

Stryker, Susan. "Transgender Studies" and "My Words to Victor Frankenstein." (**CW: Very intense transphobic language in "My Words."**)

Spade, Dean. "Mutilating Gender."

May 30 – Medical Discourses Pt. 2

Required Reading

Video: "Vivek Shraya found her identity through exploring her mother's."

Readings from *Critical Intersex*.

Recommended Reading

Transgender Studies Quarterly, Volume 1, Issue 1-2 (Keywords).