

LGBT History
21:512:204
Monday/Wednesday: 4-5:20 p.m.
Conklin Hall 424

Instructor: Christopher Adam Mitchell
Office hours: Wednesday, 2:30-3:30 p.m. and by appointment
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Course description

Few aspects of contemporary life have produced as much anxiety, controversy, and debate as the cultural significance, socioeconomic position(s), and political legitimacy of intersex, transgender, and transsexual people; bisexuals; lesbians; and gay men. In addition to the LGBT/queer rights movement and the historically recent emergence and visibility of distinctively hetero/homosexual and cis/transgender identities, scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which categories of gender identity and sexuality are used to found and police the boundaries between the “queer” and the “normal” in everyday life. This course explores these and other problems and issues in the study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (or “Queer”) History. We will explore LGBT/queer history through literature, culture, and social life by reading and discussing classic and contemporary writings in the field as well as artistic and visual images, literary texts, memoirs, and fiction and documentary film. In this course, students will have the opportunity to learn some of the key concepts, terms, and debates that have animated the scholarly inquiry of LGBT studies, queer theory, and feminist theories of sexuality in order to explore the changing definitions of the “queer” and the “normal.”

Approach to teaching and learning

The course readings are organized thematically, and we will focus the ways in which LGBT life has been shaped by two major historical periods: first, the experiences of stigmatization (being labeled sick, criminal, etc.) and the culture, social life, and history of the closet from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century; and secondly, the culture and politics of “coming out” from the Gay, Lesbian-Feminist, and Trans* Liberation Era to the present. Throughout this course, we will be attentive to the dynamics of race and class, as well as the various meanings and experiences of “liberation” for queer people of color, working-class queer people, and other people who are often overlooked in narratives of gay or queer history.

Learning objectives

Through a combination of student-facilitated classroom discussion, interactive lectures, and written assignments, students will encounter some of the basic concepts in LGBT/queer history and the history of sexuality. While the readings will focus primarily on the United States, in-class lectures will also contextualize the readings in a larger comparative and transnational framework. Students will learn to define and discuss critical issues from this historical field through in-class discussion, by maintaining a regular schedule of short writings both in class and on Blackboard, and by writing both a

thesis-centered essay as well as a take-home written examination. In addition to the themes and concepts relating to LGBT/queer history and the history of sexuality, students will also learn how to distinguish between primary and secondary source evidence as well as how to evaluate the primary and secondary arguments presented by historians and other scholars of LGBT/queer life.

Classroom policies

Attendance and absences. **Attendance is mandatory.** The instructor will use lecture time to contextualize and explain readings. Many lectures will introduce students to film clips, images, music, and other primary source media that cannot be obtained outside of class. Occasional illness (including illness of a child, parent, or other dependent), serious injury, transportation delays, and bereavement are inevitable. **However, it is not the instructor's responsibility to "catch you up." If you must miss a class meeting, please assume personal responsibility for work missed. Exchange contact information with a classmate to help you keep up with your lectures.** Given the time constraints and other classmates' needs, students should not expect the instructor to repeat or summarize a lecture via e-mail or during office hours.

Be on time. Students who are late will be documented. **Students will receive an unexcused absence for every four documented instances of tardiness.** Students who are more than half an hour late to class will be marked absent. Tardiness will only be excused with proper documentation.

Stay the entire time. The instructor will mark as absent all students who leave the class and do not return before its conclusion. Students who do so may only be excused in case of a medical emergency or with proper documentation.

The instructor will only excuse absences with proper documentation, and all students who miss classes must meet with the instructor during office hours in order to receive an excuse regardless of documentation. Students who simply e-mail the instructor or provide no documentation will not be excused. Furthermore, students will lose half a letter grade (5 percentage points) of their FINAL COURSE GRADE after the fourth unexcused absence. Students who miss more than eight classes through any combination of excused or unexcused absences will not earn credit for the course. Such students should withdraw from the course.

E-management and organization. Students must participate in all aspects of the course, including Blackboard assignments. Students must have a working Rutgers username and password, as well as the coordination of e-mail and Blackboard usage. The instructor will frequently send e-mail reminders and assign material on Blackboard. **Students are responsible for keeping up with and contributing to any on-line components of the class. If students have e-management issues, students should immediately contact the Newark Computing Services Help Desk, located in Hill Hall 109 at 973-353-5083. In order to ensure a prompt response from the instructor, please familiarize yourself with the document, *FAQs about E-mails and Instructor Availability*, located on the Syllabus and Course Information Page.**

Student conduct. Please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, and the university setting. Students will be asked to leave the class for the following reasons: cell phone use and texting during class (except for students with children and/or other dependents), using laptops to surf social media and other irrelevant websites, sleeping in class, persistently talking or whispering

while the instructor or other students are speaking, blatant disruptions, and ad hominem attacks on other students or the instructor, including attacks couched in racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, discrimination based on ability, and religious intolerance. Such students will be marked absent for the day and will not be allowed to return until they have visited with the instructor during office hours. **Students who wish to use their laptops in class must sit in the first three rows of class.**

Course readings. Students must complete the readings before each class meeting, prepared to bring questions and comments for class. Students must purchase or otherwise obtain copies of the required texts. All other texts will be available on the course blackboard page. **Students are required to bring the readings to class in order to reference page numbers and other references to the readings in lectures.** Students will read an average of 40-45 pages per class meeting. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 15-20 pages of readings. Some students may find the amount of reading difficult, and such students should make plans to dedicate extra hours in order to successfully complete the course readings. **The instructor suggests that students schedule or otherwise dedicate 3-6 class hours per week reading and studying for this course. The instructor expects students to complete all the assigned readings before the date they appear on the calendar, and students should expect the instructor to call on them and ask questions about the readings at any time. In addition to the readings listed on the course calendar, students are responsible for reading all supplemental materials, including the syllabus, the writing guide, and all prompts.**

Late policy. Late work submitted without documentation will be accepted only at the discretion of the instructor. Late work submitted without a documented excuse will be assessed up to a **50-point penalty.**

Statement on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

If you plagiarize, you will at a minimum fail this class. Students will submit all written work to Turnitin, and students must sign the University honor pledge when submitting any in-class assignments. Any student who commits plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will be asked to withdraw from the course. Violations will be reported to the appropriate university authorities and may result in further disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments and, of course, cheating on in-class assignments.

All work electronic work must be submitted to the Turnitin module on the course Blackboard page. All in-class and electronic work must include the following pledge: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment.”

**From the University’s Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students:

“Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in

a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member."

Course requirements

Participation (10%). One of the most critical aspects of this course is in-class participation. **Students should come to class each day with the assigned readings, prepared to discuss specific questions and issues raised by the readings.** Students who refuse to discuss the reading materials, repeatedly take the class discussion off-topic or engage in other disruptions, or who fail to bring the readings into class risk harming their participation grade. **THIS IS A DISCUSSION-BASED COURSE, AND STUDENTS WHO DO NOT OR WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY OF THE CLASSROOM WITH REGULAR VERBAL PARTICIPATION ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO DROP THIS COURSE.**

Reading notes/journals (10%). Reading notes are a relatively easy but essential part of your coursework. Each day, students will bring in a brief set of reading notes (no more than half a page), the format of which is currently available on Blackboard. Students will use reading notes as an aid in classroom discussion, and we will be using them to set the discussion agenda and to explore points of intersection, contradiction, and correlation among the different texts of the course. Reading notes will be checked randomly throughout the semester, especially in the event that students are unable to formulate a discussion agenda, explore the readings in adequate depth, or stay on topic on discussion-centered class meeting days.

Short Take-home Writing Assignments (30%). Students will complete writing assignments throughout the semester over the readings. On several days throughout the semester, students will view films over which students will also be asked to write a brief (350-700 word) essay. With the exception of "The Watermelon Woman," "The Times of Harvey Milk," and "How to Survive a Plague," these films are brief (5-25 minutes) and will only be screened at the *beginning* of class, so make sure to arrive to class on time.

Essay (25%). Students will write a thesis-centered essay analyzing no fewer than three sources introduced in the course readings. Students are encouraged to use their reading journals to take notes on the readings in order to complete this assignment. The essay should be no fewer than 1,200 words and will be submitted to the Course Blackboard page.

Final exam (25%). Students will complete a final exam consisting of a take-home question (or set of questions) as well as an in-class, discussion-based seminar during the scheduled final examination for the class.

Calendar

PREFACE: Homophobia, Trans*phobia, and the Social Construction of Queer Identities

- September 2 *** (please complete all of the reading by Jewelle Gomez; students are encouraged to read the entire article by Rubin, but we will only discuss the first ten pages on the first day of class)* 1) Jewelle Gomez, "The Event of Becoming," 2) Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex"
- September 8 CLASSES FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE
1) Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex" (please bring in from previous class); 2) D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity"
- September 9 Weeks, "Movements of Affirmation: Sexual Meanings and Homosexual Identities," *Radical History Review* 20 (1979): 164-179

UNIT 1: From the Underworld to the Closet: Stigma, Silence, and Cultural Resistance

- September 14 1) Martha Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong': The Historical Roots of Modern Lesbian Identity;" 2) Earl Lind, "The Riddle of the Underworld" [outhistory.org/exhibits/show/earl-lind]
- September 16 1) Eric Garber, "A Spectacle in Color;" 2) Richard Bruce Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies, Jade;" 3) Excerpts from *Sex Variants*, ed. George W. Henry (1941, 1948)
- September 21 1) Hazel Carby, "'It Jus' Be's Dat Way Sometime;" 2) Joan Nestle, "'I lift my eyes to the hill': The Life of Mabel Hampton as Told by a White Woman;" 3) Excerpts from *Sex Variants*, ed. George W. Henry (1941, 1948)
- September 23 Film: "Watermelon Woman" (dir. Cheryl Dunye)
- September 28 1) Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community in Buffalo, New York, 1940-1960;" 2) Excerpts from *Sex Variants*, ed. George W. Henry (1941, 1948)

- September 30 Allan Bérubé, “Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II”; 2) Excerpts from *Sex Variants*, ed. George W. Henry (1941, 1948)
- October 5 1) Donald Webster Cory, *The Homosexual in America* (excerpt); 2) James Baldwin, from “Preservation of Innocence;” 3) Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp”
Film: “Fireworks” (dir. Kenneth Anger)
- October 7 Ann Aldrich, *We, Too, Must Love and We Walk Alone*
- October 12 1) Harry Benjamin, from *The Transsexual Phenomenon*; 2) Christine Jorgenson, from *A Personal Autobiography*; 3) Gayle Rubin, “Of Catamites and Kings”
- October 14 Esther Newton, “Role Models”

UNIT 2: The Politics of the Homophile Movement and Gay, Lesbian-Feminist, and Trans* Liberation

- October 19 Martin Meeker, “Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10:1 (2001): 78-116
- October 21 Lauren Jae Gutterman, “‘The House on the Borderland’: Lesbian Desire, Marriage, and the Household, 1950-1979,” *Journal of Social History* 46:1 (2012): 1-22
- October 26 Susan Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity,” *RHR: 100* (2008): 144-157
Film: “Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria” (dir. Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman”)
- October 28 1) Terrance Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971,” *RHR* 62 (1995): 105-134; 2) Donn Deal, *The Gay Militants* (excerpt); 3) Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good” from *Out of the Closets*
- November 2 1) Jessi Gan, “Still at the Back of the Bus’: Sylvia Rivera’s Struggle,” *CENTRO Journal* XIX: 1 (2007): 124-139; 2) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary” from *Out of the Closets*
- November 4 1) Anne Enke, *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism* (excerpt); 2) Barbara and Beverly Smith, “Across the Kitchen Table;” 3) Merle Woo, “Letter to Ma;” 4) The Combahee River Collective Statement
- November 9 Christina Hanhardt, “Butterflies, Whistles, and Fists: Gay Safe Street Patrols and the New Gay Ghetto, 1976-1981,” *RHR* 100 (2008): 60-85
Film: “The Times of Harvey Milk” (dir. Rob Epstein)

- November 11 1) Allan Bérubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses;” 2) Zita Grover, “Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA;” 3) The Denver Principles
- November 16 Essex Hemphill, *Ceremonies* (excerpt)
Film: “Non, je ne regrette rien” (dir. Marlon Riggs)
- November 18 Amber Hollibaugh, “Lesbian Leadership and Lesbian Denial in the AIDS Epidemic”
Film: “How to Survive a Plague” (dir. David France)
- November 23 1) David Valentine, “I went to bed with my own kind once;” 2) Lou Sullivan, “A Transvestite Answers a Feminist”
Film: “Max” (dir. Monika Treut)
- November 25 NO CLASSES (UNIVERSITY FOLLOWS FRIDAY SCHEDULE)
- November 30 1) Charles Nero, “Why are the Gay Ghettos White?”; 2) Darnell Moore, Beryl Satter, Timothy Stewart-Winter, and Whit Strub, “A Community’s Response to the Problem of Invisibility: The Queer Newark Oral History Project;” 3) Keith Boykin, “Remembering Sakia Gunn”
- December 2 1) Justin Chin, “Monster;” 2) Pauline Park, “My Life as a Transgender Korean Adoptee;” 3) JeeYeun Lee, “Toward a Queer Korean American Diasporic History”
- December 7 Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” *Social Text* (2002): 117-148
- December 9 Jason Jacobs, “Raising Gays: On *Glee*, Queer Kids, and the Limits of the Family”
- December 16 FINAL EXAMINATION: 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.**