LGBT History: Syllabus
21:512:204

Section 02 (10573): Tuesday/Thursday 2:30-3:50 p.m., Smith Hall 234

Section 03 (10574): Tuesday/Thursday 4-5:20 p.m., Smith Hall 243

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Instructor information

Christopher (Chris) Mitchell
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Office hours

Tuesday: 5:30-6:30 p.m. and by appointment

Required readings

All readings posted to Canvas (canvas.rutgers.edu). You have no materials to purchase for this class.

Statement on the COVID-19 Pandemic

These are unprecedented times. Even with effective vaccines, we are still dealing with the fallout from the pandemic. While some students and faculty may seem resistant to the worse effects of the virus, we are all potentially vulnerable to new variants. Many of us have been directly infected by the virus and may have new mental or physical struggles. Many more of us are grieving the loss of friends, family, and loved ones.

The instructor and the format of the course have centered class members’ health and well-being, including emotional and spiritual well-being, as the highest priority. This means being flexible about the format of the class and making the best use of on-line tools to ensure that we are able to meet and maintain contact in the event, however unlikely, that we cannot meet face to face. When meeting, or using the library or other University resources “in person,” this means adhering to safety and sanitation procedures to the letter, including the use of masks where recommended. This also means the instructor will provide flexibility for students who are struggling, either physically or mentally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the virus has ravaged vulnerable communities—particularly of Black and Indigenous people of color in the United States, people with disabilities, as well as women and gender/sexual minorities—courses like this one are in a unique position to think about the socioeconomic and political preconditions of this moment. As we think through the difficult themes of this course, we will build a classroom community capable of formulating strategies that resist the treatment of human beings as expendable forms of capital and to demand an end to the systemic racism, sexism, and ableism that has made the United States the global epicenter of political ineptitude, contagion, and suffering in the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor directly.

Technology support

Link to “Technology Resources for Students” page:
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. Often labeled “queer” or “deviant” for expressions or behaviors that are considered neutral or even positive in other cultures and historical periods, LGBTQIA people have fostered a community to celebrate sex, love, and the free expression of gender. Even so, same-sex attraction and gender ambiguity have consumed a tremendous amount of political (and financial) resources and provoked many so-called “normal” members of society to discriminate against, attack, and even kill those labeled “queer.” Furthermore, in the context of a society marked by a long history of struggle against white supremacy, colonialism, and economic inequality, homophobia and transphobia are often amplified by race and class oppression. Why?

An examination of LGBTQIA people, communities, and cultures in the history of the United States reveals a case study of the arbitrariness of the boundaries between “queer” and “normal,” as well as the political, cultural, and social currents that have eroded and at times inadvertently reinforced those barriers. This is a history of innovation, survival, and solidarity, but it is also a history of community fragmentation, conflict, and negotiation within and capitulation to systems of sometimes murderous violence. This course examines some of the major figures, events, texts, and images that contributed to this history in the U.S., as well as the historical scholarship and analysis that help us come to terms with the complexity of the queer and trans past. This course focuses on three broad units of study

- First, the ways in which LGBTQIA identities and communities emerged in the context of social and cultural resistance in the context of expert medical knowledge; surveillance by the police, prison systems, and other forms of systemic homophobic/transphobic violence; as well as the urban industrial economy of the twentieth century.
- Secondly, the ways in which LGBTQIA identities and communities fostered networks and cultures of resistance to homophobia and transphobia in Black and bohemian districts during the first half of the twentieth century.
- Third, the ways in which these cultures of resistance transformed into political and social movements shaped by African-American Civil Rights, the Women’s Movement, the Radical Student Movement, and various organizations and expressions of empowerment for indigenous peoples—including Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Chicano people—as well for immigrants.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, class members will be able to

- identify, note, detail, and establish important facts from the LGBTQIA past
- identify, analyze, and interpret primary source documents
- evaluate historical claims by historians and other scholars of the LGBTQIA past
• make historical claims based on their own interpretation of the evidence and engagement with other historians and scholars of the LGBTQIA past

Class members will also acquire some of the following academic skills:
• how to establish objective criteria for defining the historical facts using class discussion boards
• how to engage classmates in critical discussions of historical material in small group and class-wide discussions
• how to develop a multimedia project that analyzes and evaluates an important event, trend, or actor in LGBTQIA history in the US
• how to complicate our understanding of LGBTQIA historical narratives by synthesizing the historical materials presented in class on essay-based comprehensive examination
Accommodation and support statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship
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**For support related to interpersonal violence:** The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

**For Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

**For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being:** The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

**For emergencies**, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

**Name and gender pronoun**

This class affirms all forms of gender expression and identity. If class members prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let the instructor know. Class members should feel safe to correct the instructor or any member of the class on names or gender pronouns, or if class members do not wish to use a gender pronoun. Class members who have any questions or concerns should not hesitate to contact the instructor.

**Libraries and learning centers**

**Rutgers University Libraries**

The most important resource at Rutgers is the University library system, which can be accessed at libraries.rutgers.edu. Many resources from the library may be directly accessed on-line, including most of the University's scholarly journals, books, reference guides, music, visual materials, and films. This class will make extensive use of the library’s resources and students are encouraged to explore the library website. In addition, Rutgers-Newark has a library location at the John Cotton Dana Library on the main campus, which also houses the Institute of Jazz Archives. When the Dana Library is open during regular school hours, class members can contact the front help desk at (973)353-5901.
The Writing Center
The Writing Center ([http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter](http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter)), located in Room 126 of Conklin Hall, offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. The Writing Center is available to them free of charge and encourage them to take advantage of their services to strengthen their reading, writing, and research skills.

The Learning Center
The Learning Center ([https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/learning-center](https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/learning-center)) located in Room 140 of Bradley Hall, provides tutoring services for a range of subjects in either small groups or one-on-one. Our tutors are successful undergraduates who are trained to clarify important concepts with the understanding that everyone can learn and improve given sufficient time, attention, and encouragement. To properly benefit from tutoring, the Learning Center requires students to come prepared to engage in tutoring sessions as an active participant, having attended class, read the required textbook or readings, taken and reviewed their notes, and attempted their assignments. The Learning Center also hosts a series of workshops over the course of the semester on a range of success topics each semester and provides academic coaching sessions where a learning specialist helps students identify areas for improvement and select from a range of possible solutions. Then the specialist provides feedback over time until student performance improves.
Statement on academic honesty and plagiarism

**Plagiarism will not be accepted.** Students will submit all electronic work to Canvas through Turnitin or SafeAssign, and students must sign the University honor pledge when submitting any assignments. Any student who commits plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the Office of Academic Integrity, and may result in further disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments and, of course, cheating on in-class assignments.

Assignments 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.”
Classroom policies

**Attendance**
Class members are expected to attend during class meetings. In addition, class members should log in at least once each weekday to ensure their connection to Canvas discussion boards and other instructions.

**Absences and documented excuses**
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 class members must miss a class meeting, please assume personal responsibility for work missed. Exchange contact information with classmates to help keep up with lectures or discussions missed. **Given the time constraints and other classmates’ needs, class members should not expect the instructor to repeat or summarize a lecture via e-mail or during office hours.**

The instructor can only excuse absences with proper documentation, and all class members who miss classes should email or meet with the instructor briefly before class in order to receive an excuse. Proper documentation should be dated and include a signature. Proper documentation includes physician or medical care provider notes (including for sick children and dependents), court documents, obituaries, and formal requests from administration or faculty. Class members who miss more than a day of classes are strongly encouraged to self-report their absences at the following website: [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/). In addition, class members with extended absences (longer than two weeks) should notify the Dean of Students at Rutgers-Newark. University policy stipulates that work scheduling conflicts and family vacations will not be excused. Class members who simply e-mail the instructor without documentation, or who fail to follow up with documentation will not be excused.

Class members will be required to check in on discussion board and other collaborative assignments where attendance can be noted. Failure to do so may result in an undocumented absence. Department policy maintains that class members are permitted unexcused absences for the equivalent of two weeks of coursework, after which they will begin to lose 5 percentage points of their final grade. Class members with more than the equivalent of four weeks of absences should withdraw from the course.

**E-management and organization**
Class members must participate in all aspects of the course, including Canvas assignments. Class members must also regularly check their email to attend to any class-related business over the course of the session. The digital classroom requires continual electronic communication between instructor and student, and failure to communicate regularly via email will not count as an excuse for missed/late assignments or disorganization. Class members must have a working RUID and password, as well as coordination of email and Canvas. **The instructor is not responsible for registering individual class members for a username or gaining access to**
Canvas, and class members are responsible for any and all material and instructions posted on Canvas regardless.

Student conduct on-line
Please be respectful of other class members, the instructor, the classroom community, and the university setting. The classroom community will not tolerate ad hominem attacks on other class members or the instructor, including attacks couched in racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, discrimination based on ability, and religious intolerance. Class members who are severely disruptive may be asked to leave the forum; such class members will be marked absent for the day and may lose credit in more substantive ways.

Late work and rewrites
Late work will be accepted, so class members should not email the instructor to ask if they can submit work late. However, work submitted late without a documented excuse will be penalized 10% per class day late. Work submitted after five class days will not be penalized more than 50%, and 50% represents the highest amount of credit class members can earn after five days.

In addition, this course allows rewrites of major assignments, or individual assignments worth more than 10% of your grade. Rewrites are only allowed for class members who schedule a 30-minute, intensive session with the instructor. Class members who commit to rewrites can earn up to 10 points on their initial grade, although students cannot earn higher than a 90 on rewritten assignments.

Readings
Class members must complete the readings before each class meeting, prepared to bring questions and comments for class. Class members must purchase or otherwise obtain copies of the required texts. All other texts will be available on the course Canvas page. Class members are required to bring the readings to class in order to reference page numbers and other references to the readings in podcasts. Class members will read an average of 30-60 pages per week. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 15-20 pages of readings.

The University and the instructor suggest that class members schedule or otherwise dedicate 5-10 class hours per week reading and studying for this course. The instructor expects class members to complete all the assigned readings before they contribute to assignments. In addition to the readings listed on the course calendar, class members are responsible for reading all supplemental materials, including the syllabus, the writing guide, and all prompts found on Canvas.
Course work

Class participation (10%). Students will be asked to actively attend and contribute to small group and class-wide discussions.

Discussion Board (40%). Several weeks in the semester, a discussion board assignment will organize and synthesize the readings into a class-wide conversation. The discussion board meets the course’s critical learning outcomes by prompting class members to raise questions and comments about the readings, how they fit together, and how we might use them to think about the historical events and actors described and explained in our readings.

Multimedia Project (20%). Class members will complete a multi-part multimedia project over a topic related to the class. Class members will develop a bibliography using primary sources and peer-reviewed works by historians and other scholars of the past. Multimedia projects can be presented as on-line projects using Instagram, Twitter, or using Word Press or Tumblr to create a blog. Class members may also develop short documentary-style films using video or other presentation technology. The final project will include a media project research report and bibliography, which will be posted to Canvas, or otherwise made available to the instructor no later than 11:59 p.m., Sunday, December 12.

Final examination (30%). All class members will complete and submit a comprehensive, essay-based final examination on Thursday, December 23, no later than 11:59 p.m.

Grade scale (for grades submitted to transcripts):
A: 89.5-100
B+: 85-89.4
B: 79.5-84.9
C+: 75-79.4
C: 69.5-74.9
D: 59.5-69.4
F: 0-59.4
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Calendar of readings and assignments

The calendar is organized into weekly modules.

• Each Sunday during the day or evening your materials for the week will be posted. Your course materials will include: 1) readings on Canvas, 2) library media. Complete the readings on your own time, or as per the instructions for assignments and presentations.

• Each Monday morning you will receive announcements of the week’s assignments and expectations.

• Each Monday and Tuesday assessments of the previous week’s course work will be conducted.

• Class meeting days are outlined below in **bold**.

• *Assignments will be due every Sunday no later than 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise specified on the syllabus or on Canvas.*

Unit 1: Experts, Perverts, and Queers in the Late 19th and Early Twentieth Century

Weeks 1-2: Introducing and Defining our Terms

September 1-12

**September 1**
Canvas readings

Jewelle Gomez, “The Event of Becoming”

**September 7 and 9**
Canvas readings


View at home

Film: “Frameline: Two Spirit People” (link in Canvas)

Assignments

Canvas Discussion Board Assignment: Defining our terms

Week 3: Romance, Friendship, and Pathology “before Homosexuality”

September 13-19

**September 14**

Canvas readings

**September 16**
Canvas readings  

**Week 4: Homosexuality as Spectacle and Scandal**
September 20-26

**September 21**
Canvas readings  

**September 23**
Canvas readings  

**Assignments**
Canvas Discussion Board Assignment: Stigma, Scandal, and Sexuality in the Early 20th Century US

**Unit 2: Identity and Community: Fashioning Queer Selves and Forging Queer Bonds at Mid-Century**

**Week 5: Harlem: Birthplace of a Community**
September 27-October 3

**September 28**
Canvas readings  

**September 30**
Canvas readings  
Joan Nestle, “‘I lift my eyes to the hill’: The Life of Mabel Hampton as Told by a White Woman,” in *A Fragile Union*: 23-48
Weeks 6-7: Technologies of Transformation and the Mutability of Gender in the Postwar Era
October 4-October 17

October 5

October 7
Canvas readings: Christine Jorgensen, *A Personal Autobiography* [excerpt]: 55-75

October 12

October 14
Canvas readings: Esther Newton, “Role Models” from *Margaret Mead Made Me Gay*: 14-29

Assignments
Canvas discussion board assignment: Seeing Trans People and Listening to Trans Voices from the Post-war Era

Week 8: The Politics and Culture of the Closet
October 18-24

October 19

October 21

Unit 3: The Politics of Reform and Liberation from the Homophile Era to the Age of AIDS
Week 9: The Homophile Movement  
October 25-October 31

October 26
Canvas readings  
1) James Baldwin, “The Preservation of Innocence”: 1-3;  

October 28
Canvas readings  

Assignments
Canvas discussion board assignment: LGBT Life in the Era of the Closet

Week 10: From Subversion to Rebellion  
November 1-November 7

November 2
Canvas readings  

November 4
Canvas readings  
Library media  
Kanopy: “Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria” (dir. Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman)

Week 11: Contested Legacies of Liberation  
November 8-November 14

November 9
Canvas readings  
2) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary” from *Out of the Closets*: 112-120;  
November 11
Canvas readings

Assignments
Canvas discussion board assignment: What is “gay liberation,” who fought for it, whom was it for, and whom did it benefit?

Week 12: Internal Conflicts and External Challenges
November 15-November 21

November 16
Canvas readings

November 18
Canvas readings

Week 13: Backlash and Resistance
November 22-28

November 23
Canvas readings
1) Off Our Backs (articles responding to Harvey Milk’s assassination, January 1979); 2) Documents from the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (1979); 3) Larry Kramer, “1,112 and Counting,” New York Native

Week 14: Death and Survival
November 29-December 5

November 30
Canvas readings
December 2
Library media Kanopy: “Tongues Untied” (dir. Marlon Riggs)

Assignments
Canvas discussion board assignment: The Challenges of Racism, AIDS, and Violence

Week 14: New Mobilizations
December 6-December 12

December 7
Canvas readings 1) Cheryle Chase, “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Activism” GLQ 4:2 (1998): 189-211; 2) Dean Spade, “Mutilating Gender” from The Transgender Studies Reader: 315-332

December 9

December 12 Multi-media projects due

December 23 Upload final exam (take-home, essay based)