

**LGBT History in the United States**  
**21:512:204:63 [12412]**  
**Thursday: 6-9 p.m.**  
**Engelhard Hall 209**

**Instructor: Christopher Adam Mitchell**  
**Office: 337 Conklin Hall**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 5:30-6 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. Often labeled “queer” or “deviant” for actions 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.” **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.

### **Approach to teaching and learning**

The course readings are organized thematically and chronologically, and we will focus the ways in which LGBT life has been shaped by three major historical periods: **first**, the creation of new fields of knowledge and techniques of social control that shaped gender and sexual identities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; **secondly**, the experiences of people labeled pathological (“sick”), criminal, or sinful by these new forms of knowledge and social control, and the ways in which they fashioned new forms of identity and community from the early to the middle of the twentieth century; and **third**, the historical context of queer politics, including what historians broadly refer to as the Lesbian-Feminist, Gay, Bi, and Transgender Liberation movement. Throughout this course, we will be attentive to the dynamics dis/ability, race, and class, as well as the various meanings and experiences of “liberation” for queer people of color, working-class queer people, disabled people (and the history of homosexuality and transsexuality as histories of disability), and others who are often overlooked in narratives of gay or queer history. Through a combination of student-facilitated classroom discussion, interactive lectures, and written assignments, students will engage the central components of LGBT/queer history,

the history of sexuality, as well as the broader field of queer, trans, and feminist studies. 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.

### **Learning objectives and outcomes**

Through a combination of short written assignments, in-class discussion, the development of a thesis-centered essay on a narrow topic of the students' choosing, and a comprehensive final exam, students in this course will learn

- how to engage and deploy concepts and issues to the field, including 1) historical approaches to the social construction of sexuality and identity (especially the historical divergence of trans and homosexual identities), 2) theoretical approaches to sexuality as a historically and geographically specific discourse, 3) the ways in which the archives of LGBTQIA history have been created and maintained, and 4) the ways in which race, class, dis/ability, and other cultural differences have been central to the formation of trans and queer community
- how to identify and interpret primary source documents, media, and texts from the queer and trans past
- how to understand the debates central to the historical analysis of the queer and trans past by professional historians and activists

### **Disability Statement**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact Kate Torres at [\(973\)353-5375](tel:9733535375) or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center (<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. Please inform your students that 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.

## Gender Pronouns and Names

This class affirms all forms of gender expression and identity. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct the instructor or any member of the class on your gender pronoun, or if you do not wish to use a gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Classroom policies

*\*Please note that the classroom procedures on attendance (including missed classes), late coursework, and student conduct in the classroom are outlined below. Please read this policy carefully before the first day of classes.*

*Attendance and absences.*

**Attendance in every class is expected.** 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 repeatedly late may be documented, which may result in the penalization of the attendance/participation grade. Students who are more than half an hour late to class will not be marked present. Tardiness will only be excused with proper documentation.

**Stay the entire time.** The instructor will mark as absent 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.

**Document excuses.** The instructor will only excuse absences with proper documentation, and all students who miss classes must 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. Students 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/>. In addition, students 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. Students who simply e-mail the instructor without documentation, or who fail to follow up with documentation will not be excused. Furthermore, University and history department policy stipulates that students will lose half a letter grade (5 percentage points) of their FINAL COURSE GRADE after the third unexcused absence. Students who miss four or more 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, organization, and podcasts.* 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. In the event that the instructor cannot hold a physical class meeting—typically due to inclement weather or conflict with an academic conference—the

instructor will post a podcast and lecture slides. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with podcasts and lecture slides just as they are responsible for attending in-class lecture. Podcasts and lecture slide material may be used for written assignments, quizzes, and exams.

In addition to using Blackboard, students will also use the University libraries website ([libraries.rutgers.edu](http://libraries.rutgers.edu)) in order to download required readings and, when necessary, conduct research.

**Students are responsible for keeping up with and contributing to any on-line components of the class. Please do not contact the instructor if you have a problem with Blackboard access. If students have e-management issues, students should immediately contact the Newark Computing Services Help Desk, located in Hill Hall 109, or call at 973-353-5083.**

*Student conduct.* Please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, and the university setting. Students may 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. Students who become distracted by or who distract others with technology *for any reason* may be asked to sit in the front rows if they wish to continue to use a laptop or tablet. Students who consistently misuse technology will not be allowed to bring laptops or tablets into the classroom.

*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 30-40 pages per class meeting, which is typical for an undergraduate course in history. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 10-20 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 University suggests that students schedule or otherwise dedicate 3-6 class hours per week reading and studying for this course. 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 is generally assessed at a 10% penalty for each 24-hour period an assignment is late.

#### *Statement on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism*

**If you plagiarize, you will at a minimum fail the assignment, and you may possibly fail the course.** 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 (15%).* 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.

*Short Take-home Writing Assignments, Blackboard Discussion Board Assignments, In-class Quizzes (35%).* Students will complete short writing assignments throughout the semester over the readings. All take-home writing assignments will be submitted to Blackboard, and all in-class assignments will take place at the beginning of class time.

*Essay (25%).* Students will write a brief (2,000 word) essay over a topic chosen from a list provided by the instructor. Students will conduct brief outside research using the University libraries and other resources to develop an essay from no fewer than one primary source and no fewer than three peer-reviewed sources that do not appear on the syllabus. The essay must be uploaded to Blackboard no later than 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 22.

*Final exam (25%).* Students will complete a final exam consisting of an in-class portion administered at the time scheduled by the University, as well as a take-home question (or set of questions) to be completed by 11:59 p.m. and uploaded to Turnitin on the date of the final examination, December 17.

### ***Calendar of Readings and Class Meetings***

Please be sure to complete the assigned readings *before* the time of the class meeting. During the first week of class, we will learn how to navigate the University Libraries website in order to download readings from scholarly articles. Readings marked with the symbol † before the author's name are located on Blackboard as PDF files, while those with weblinks will be indicated in brackets. All other readings are available on the University library website (libraries.rutgers.edu), which you must download and read before class time. We will use readings for class discussions, so please note that students who come to class without reading will be asked to leave and return once they have obtained the readings.

Please be attentive to announcements, as there are some days where I may ask the class to excerpt or skip a reading in the service of time.

### ***Unit 1: Experts, Perverts, and Queers in the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries***

#### *Week 1: Introducing our terms*

September 5 † 1) Ramón A. Gutiérrez, "Decolonizing the Body: Kinship and the Nation," *The American Archivist* 57:1 (1994): 86-99; † 2) Jewelle Gomez, "The Event of Becoming;" † 3) Weeks, "The Social Construction of Sexuality" in *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*: 2-9

#### *Week 2: Romance, Friendship, and Pathology "before Homosexuality"*

September 12 1) Rachel Hope Cleves, "Six Ways of Looking at a Trans Man?: The Life of Frank Shimer (1826-1901)," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27:1 (2018); 2) Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body," *Journal of the History of Homosexuality* 5:2 (1994): 243-266; 3) "Jennie June" (Earl Lind/Ralph Werther), "The Boy is Father to the Man" and "Sexual Intermediates in General" from *Riddle of the Underworld* [[link](#)]

#### *Week 4: Social Control: Regulating, Defining, and Instituting Sex and Gender in the Early Twentieth Century*

September 19 1) Estelle B. Freedman, "The Prison Lesbian: Race, Class, and the Construction of the Aggressive Female Homosexual, 1915-1965," *Feminist Studies* 22:2 (1996): 397-423; 2) Kevin Mumford, "Homosex Changes: Race, Cultural Geography, and the Emergence of the Gay," *American Quarterly* 48:3 (1996): 395-414

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

*Week 5: Commerce and Community*

September 26 † 1) John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," from *The Gay and Lesbian Studies Reader*: 467-476; † 2) Jeffrey Escoffier, "The Political Economy of the Closet," *American Homo*: 65-78; † 3) Eric Garber, "A Spectacle in Color," from *Hidden from History*: 318-331; † 4) 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; 5) Patricia Yaeger, "Editor's Note: Bulldagger Sings the Blues," *PMLA* 124:3 (2009): 721-726

*Week 5: Spectacle and Scandal*

October 3 1) Cookie Woolner, "'Woman Slain in Queer Love Brawl': African American Women, Same-Sex Desire, and Violence in the Urban North, 1920-1929," *The Journal of African American History* 100:3 (2015): 406-427; † 2) Richard Bruce Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies, and Jade," from *Gay Rebel of the Harlem Renaissance*: 74-87; 3) † George Chauncey, *Gay New York* [excerpt]: 301-342

*Week 6: Wartime Mobilization*

October 10 † 1) Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, "'I could hardly wait to get back to that bar': Lesbian Bar Culture in the 1930s and 1940s," in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*: 28-66; 2) Leisa D. Meyer, "Creating G.I. Jane: The Regulation of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior in the Women's Army Corps during World War II," *Feminist Studies* 18:3 (1992): 581-601; † 3) Allan Bérubé, "Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II," in *Hidden from History*: 382-394

*Week 7: The Mutability of Gender in the Postwar Era*

October 17 1) Joanne Meyerowitz, "Sex Change and the Popular Press: historical Notes on Transsexuality in the United States, 1930-1955," *GLQ* 4:2 (1998): 159-187; † 2) Christine Jorgensen, *A Personal Autobiography* [excerpt]: 55-75; 3) Bob Davis, "Using Archives to Identify the Trans\* Women of Casa Susanna," *TSQ* 2:4 (2015): 621-634; † 4) Esther Newton, "Role Models" from *Margaret Mead Made Me Gay*: 14-29  
**Film (watch via Kanopy on the Rutgers libraries website):** "Queens at Heart: Trans Women in the '60s" (dir. Jenni Olson)

***Unit 3: Liberation and Conflict from the Homophile Era to the Age of AIDS***

*Week 8: The Politics of the Closet*

October 24 1) 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; 2) 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; 3) Aaron H. Devor and Nicholas Matte, “ONE, Inc. and Reed Erickson, 1964-2003,” *GLQ* 10:2 (2004): 179-209 (read only pp. 183-198)

*Week 9: Suppression and Subversion*

October 31

† 1) Ann Aldrich, *We Walk Alone*: 34-42; †2) Donald Webster Cory, *The Homosexual in America*: 120-128; †3) James Baldwin, “The Preservation of Innocence”: 1-3; † 4) Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp;” † 4) Eliza Brooke, “What is Camp? The Met Seeks to Find Out through Fashion;” 5) Christopher Agee, “Gayola: Police Professionalization and the Politics of San Francisco’s Gay Bars,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15:3 (2006): 462-489

*Week 10: From Subversion to Rebellion*

November 7

1) David K. Johnson, “Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 43:4 (2010): 867-892; 2) Susan Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity,” *RHR* 100 (2008): 144-157  
**Film (watch via Kanopy on the Rutgers libraries website):** “Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria” (dir. Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman)

*Week 11: Contested Legacies of Liberation*

November 14

1) Terrance Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionaries: New York’s Gay Liberation Front, 1969-1971,” *RHR* 62 (1995): 105-134; 2) Jessi Gan, “Still at the Back of the Bus’: Sylvia Rivera’s Struggle,” *CENTRO Journal* XIX: 1 (2007): 124-139; † 3) Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good” from *Out of the Closets*: 31-34; † 4) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary” from *Out of the Closets*: 112-120

*Week 12: Internal Conflicts*

November 21

1) Anne Enke, “Smuggling Sex through the Gates: Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of Space in Second Wave Feminism,” *American Quarterly* 55:4 (2003): 635-667; † 2) Merle Woo, “Letter to Ma,” from *This Bridge Called My Back*: 140-147; † 3) The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”: 1-7; 4) Christina Hanhardt, “Butterflies, Whistles, and Fists: Gay Safe Street Patrols and the New Gay Ghetto, 1976-1981;” † 5) *Off Our Backs* (articles responding to Harvey Milk’s assassination, January 1979); † 6) Charles Nero, “Why are the Gay Ghettos White?” from *Black Queer Studies*: 228-245 (**read only 228-233**)

November 22

**Please upload your final essays to Blackboard no later than 11:59 p.m.**

*Week 13: Death and Survival*

November 26

**\*\*Please note that this class meeting follows a Tuesday schedule.**

**Please make arrangements to be present.**

† 1) Zita Grover, “Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA,” from *Out in Culture*: 354-381; 2) Larry Kramer, “1,112 and Counting,” *New York Native* [[link](#)]; 3) Marlon Riggs, “Black Macho Revisited,” *Black American Literature Forum* 25:2 (1991): 389-394; 4) Keith Boykin, “Sakia Gunn Remembered” [[link](#)]; 5) Darnell Moore, “The Murder of Sakia Gunn” [[link](#)]

**Film (watch via Kanopy on the Rutgers libraries website):** “Tongues Untied” (dir. Marlon Riggs)

*Week 14: New Mobilizations*

December 5

1) Cheryl Chase, “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Activism” *GLQ* 4:2 (1998): 189-211; 2) Amber Hollibaugh and Margot Weiss, “Queer Precarity and the Myth of Gay Affluence,” *New Labor Forum* 24:3 (Fall 2015): 18-27; 3) Robert McRuer, “We were never identified: Feminism, Queer Theory, and a Disabled World,” *Radical History Review* 94 (Winter 2006): 148-154; † 4) Dean Spade, “Mutilating Gender” from *The Transgender Studies Reader*: 315-332

December 17

***Final Examination***