

**LGBT History
21:512:204
Bradley Hall 410
Instructor: Christopher Adam Mitchell
Monday/Wednesday: 10:00 a.m.-11:20 a.m.
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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 three common experiences: experiences of stigmatization (being labeled sick, criminal, etc.) and the culture, social life, and history of the closet; the culture and politics of “coming out” in the Gay Liberation Era; and LGBTQIA cultures and politics defined by race, class, gender, sexual, and embodied diversity.

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. All late work submitted without a documented excuse will be assessed 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 (20%). 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 Writing Assignments and Quizzes (30%). Throughout the semester, students will complete short writing assignments both in class and at home. In addition, students may be asked to complete several short, unannounced reading quizzes throughout the semester.

Essay (20%). Students will write a thesis-centered essay analyzing no fewer than three sources introduced in the course readings and no fewer than three sources researched by the student in independent study. Students will be given a more detailed prompt over the course of the semester. The essay should be no fewer than 1,800 words and will be submitted to the Course Blackboard page on March 13.

Final exam (30%). Students will complete a final exam consisting of a take-home question (or set of questions) as well as an in-class written exam during the scheduled final examination for the class.

Calendar of Readings and Course Meetings (please complete readings *before* the beginning of class on the day the reading is listed)

Week 1: Introduction: Confronting Homophobia, Transphobia, and the “Conspiracy of Silence”

January 21 *** (please complete before first day of class)* 1) Barbara Smith, “Homophobia: Why Bring It Up?;” 2) Jacob Hale, “Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, or Trans____;” and 3) Jewelle Gomez, “The Event of Becoming;” 3) David M. Halperin, “Is There a History of Sexuality?”

Unit 1: From Silence to Stigmatization and Perseverance: From the Underworld to the Closet

Week 2: Knowledge, Sexuality, and Before the Closet

- January 26 Earl Lind, “The Riddle of the Underworld”
[outhistory.org/exhibits/show/earl-lind]
- January 28 Martha Vicinus, “‘They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong’: The Historical Roots of Modern Lesbian Identity”

Week 3: “Anything Goes”: Race, Class, and Jazz Age Sexualities, a Case Study of Queer Harlem

- February 2 1) Eric Garber, “A Spectacle in Color” and 2) Richard Bruce Nugent, “Smoke, Lilies, Jade”
- February 4 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”

Week 4: Struggles for Sympathy and the Making of the Closet

- February 9 Jeffrey Escoffier, “The Political Economy of the Closet” and “Homosexuality and the Sociological Imagination”
- February 11 1) Donald Webster Cory, *The Homosexual in America* (excerpt); and 2) Ann Aldrich, *We, Too, Must Love* (excerpt)

Week 5: The Politics and Culture of Visibility in the Era of the Closet

- February 16 1) Harry Benjamin, from *The Transsexual Phenomenon* and 2) Christine Jorgensen, from *A Personal Autobiography*
- February 18 1) Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp” and 2) Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, “I could hardly wait to get back to that bar”

Week 6: Self-loathing and Self-loving

- February 23 Film: “The Boys in the Band” (dir. Friedkin)
- February 25 Arthur Bell, “Let the Boys in the Band Die;” Tony Kushner, Preface to the Fortieth Anniversary edition of *The Boys in the Band*

Unit 2: The Politics and Culture of “Coming Out”

Week 7: Signaling Resistance

- March 2 1) Esther Newton, “Role Models; 2) Gayle Rubin, “Of Catamites and Kings”
- March 4 1) Susan Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity;” 2) Harvey Milk, “The Hope Speech”

Week 8: “Out of the closets and into the streets”: A Case Study of the Stonewall Riots and Gay Liberation in New York City

- March 9 1) Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants* (excerpt); 2) Terrance Kissack, “Freaking Fag Revolutionaries”
- March 11 1) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary;” 2) Jessi Gan, “Still at the Back of the Bus;” 3) Christina Hanhardt, “Butterflies, Whistles, and Fists”
- March 13 *Essay Due*

Spring Recess

Week 9: Triumph, Conflict, and Struggle in the Lesbian-Feminist and Gay Liberation Movement

- March 23 1) Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt;" 2) Elandria V. Henderson, "The Black Lesbian;" 3) Barbara and Beverly Smith, "Across the Kitchen Table;" 4) Merle Woo, "Letter to Ma;" 5) The Combahee River Collective Statement
- March 25 1) Allan Bérubé, "The History of Gay Bathhouses;" 2) "Lesbian Leadership and Lesbian Denial in the AIDS Epidemic"

Unit 3: Community, Identity, and Difference

Week 10: Sexual Communities and Sexual Differences

- March 30 Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex"
- April 31 1) Cheryl Chase, "Hermaphrodites with Attitude;" 2) David Valentine, "I went to bed with my own kind once;" 3) Lou Sullivan, "A Transvestite Answers a Feminist"

Week 11: Queer In/visibility among Asians and Asian Americans

- April 6 1) Richard Fung, "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Porn;" 2) Justin Chin, "Monster;" 3) Pauline Park, "My Life as a Transgender Korean Adoptee"
- April 8 1) Nayan Shah, "Sexuality, Identity, and the Uses of History;" 2) Patti Duncan, "history of disease"

Week 12: Queer Disabilities and the Politics of Belonging

- April 13 Nancy J. Hirschmann "Queer/Fear: Disability, Sexuality, and The Other"
- April 15 1) Zita Grover, "Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA;" 2) The Denver Principles

Week 13: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in Contemporary Gay Geographies

- April 20 1) Essex Hemphill, *Ceremonies* (excerpt); 2) Marlon Riggs, "Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen"
Film: "Brother to Brother"
- April 22 1) Charles Nero, "Why are the Gay Ghettos White?;" 2) Queers for Economic Justice and the Welfare Warriors, "A Fabulous Attitude: Low Income LGBTGNC People Surviving and Thriving on Love, Shelter, & Knowledge"

Week 14: Diasporic Genders and Sexualities

- April 27 Evan B. Towle and Lynn Morgan, "Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the 'Third Gender' Concept"
- April 29 Jasbir Puar, "Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas"

Week 15: The Queer Politics of Family and Marriage

May 4 David L. Eng, "Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas"