LGBT History: Syllabus

21:512:204
Section 01 (02851)
Section 02 (02852)

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Spring 2021: On-line (blackboard.rutgers.edu)

Instructor information

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Office hours

Monday/Wednesday: 3-5 p.m. and by appointment

Required readings

All readings posted to Blackboard. You have no materials to purchase for this class.

Statement on the COVID-19 Pandemic

These are unprecedented times. With a pandemic raging out of control and no end in sight, colleges and universities in the United States are now entering their second semester dealing with the effects of the virus. While some students and faculty may seem resistant to the worse effects of the virus, we are all potentially vulnerable. 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 can achieve the same learning goals as we would in an ordinary “face to face” classroom. If meeting or using library or other resources “in person,” this means adhering to safety and sanitation procedures to the letter. 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:  
https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/technology-resources-for-students/
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 LGBTQIA cultures of resistance fostered 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 Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)

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 a collaborative Wiki
- how to engage classmates in critical discussions of historical material in a digital environment using Blackboard features like Discussion Board and VoiceThread
- 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

**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), 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) 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 Blackboard 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 should log in at least twice each week to ensure their connection to Blackboard discussion boards and other collaborative assignments. Participation in wiki, discussion board, and other collaborative activities may be used to account for attendance in on-line courses. Class members should do this even though the course is asynchronous, or organized with no set time.

**Absences and documented excuses**
Occasional illness (including illness of a child, parent, or other dependent), serious injury, transportation delays, and bereavement are inevitable, especially during these times. Although we will not have official attendance records, please feel free to provide documentation for late work. 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.

Class members who miss more than a week 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.

**E-management and organization**
Class members must participate in all aspects of the course, including Blackboard 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 Blackboard. *The instructor is not responsible for registering individual class members for a username or gaining access to Blackboard, and class members are responsible for any and all material and instructions posted on Blackboard 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**
Late work will be accepted, so class members should not email the instructor to ask if they can submit work late. Submission links will remain open, and students are encouraged to simply upload late work. Late work will be accepted at a 10% penalty for each day late and will be penalized at no more than 30%.

**Readings**
Class members must complete the readings in the time frame of each week listed on the calendar. Class members must download the required texts on Blackboard, but there are no books or outside materials to purchase. Class members will read an average of 30-60 pages per week, although we may exceed or fall short of that on some weeks. Please note that the instructor may shorten or omit readings entirely, but will not add to the calendar of readings listed below.

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 Blackboard.
Course work

Class wiki (30%). The class wiki is a collaborative project that class members will contribute to two to four times within each unit according to the course calendar. The class Wiki meets our knowledge-based learning goals by providing class members with the opportunity to collaboratively note important people, events, and key terms by providing references to readings and verified external sources. For example, you might write or contribute to an entry on an idea, like the role of capitalism or medical knowledge in shaping LGBTQIA identity; an event, like the Compton Cafeteria Riots; an important historical actor, like Sylvia Rivera; or an organization, like the Combahee River Collective or ACT UP.

Discussion Board (40%). Several weeks in the semester, a discussion board assignment will organize and synthesize the readings within a unit 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.

Final examination (30%). Class members will complete and submit a comprehensive, essay-based final examination on Thursday, December 17, 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 Blackboard, 2) presentations (podcasts, lectures, and other media), and 3) 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.
- **Assignments will typically be due Sunday of the week assigned, no later than 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise specified on the syllabus or on Blackboard.**

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

Week 1: Introducing and Defining our Terms
January 19-24
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

Primary source: Jewelle Gomez, “The Event of Becoming”

Assignments
NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Weeks 2: Gender, Romance, and Community Formation
January 25-31
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

Presentation
Introducing the Class and Weeks 1-3 Readings
Assignments

Wiki

Contribute to the wiki two times in reference to Weeks 1-2 readings

Weeks 3: Pathology and Identity
February 1-7

Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings


Assignments

NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Week 4: Homosexuality as Spectacle and Scandal
February 8-14

Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings


Assignments

Wiki

Contribute to the wiki two times in reference to Weeks 3-4 readings

Discussion board

Discussion board 1 due no later than Feb. 8

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

Week 5: Harlem: Birthplace of a Community
February 15-21

Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

Primary source: 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

Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Weeks 6-7: The Mutability of Gender in the Postwar Era
February 22-28
Course readings and materials
Blackboard readings

Primary sources: 1) Christine Jorgensen, A Personal Autobiography [excerpt]: 55-75; 2) Esther Newton, “Role Models” from Margaret Mead Made Me Gay: 14-29

Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
Discussion board
Discussion board 2 due no later than 11:59 pm on March 7

Week 8: The Politics and Culture of the Closet
March 8-14
Course readings and materials
Blackboard readings


Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

SPRING RECESS
Unit 3: The Politics of Reform and Liberation from the Homophile Era to the Age of AIDS

Week 9: The Homophile Movement
March 22-28
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
Wiki
Contribute to the wiki four times in response to Weeks 5-9

Week 10: From Subversion to Rebellion
March 29-April 4
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

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

Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB): November 3

Assignments
Discussion Board
Discussion Board 3 due no later than 11:59 pm on April 4

Week 11: Contested Legacies of Liberation
April 5-11
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings
Primary sources: 1) Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good” from *Out of the Closets* 31-34; 2) Marsha P. Johnson, “Rapping with a Street Transvestite Action Revolutionary” from *Out of the Closets* 112-120

Presentation
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Week 12: Internal Conflicts and External Challenges
April 12-18
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings


Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments
NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Week 13: Death and Survival
April 19-25
Course readings and materials

Blackboard readings

Library media
Kanopy: “Tongues Untied” (dir. Marlon Riggs)

Presentations
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

Assignments

Wiki
Contribute to the Wiki three times in reference to Weeks 10-13
Week 14: New Mobilizations
April 26-May 3
Course readings and materials

**Blackboard readings**
2) Dean Spade, “Mutilating Gender” from *The Transgender Studies Reader*: 315-332

**Primary source:** Cheryl Chase, “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Activism” *GLQ* 4:2 (1998): 189-211

**Presentations**
Live Zoom Session (Recorded and Posted to BB)

**Assignments**
**Discussion Board**
Discussion Board 4 due no later than 11:59 pm on May 3

**Final Exam**
Upload final exam (take-home, essay based) OR media project report no later than 11:59 p.m. May 10