

Fall 2015

WGS 224: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

Meeting Time: MW 4:30-5:45

Location: 2119 AuSable Hall

Professor: Dr. Cael Keegan

Email: keeganc@gvsu.edu

Office: 212 Lake Ontario Hall

Office hours: MW 9:00-noon and by appointment

Course Overview:

Description:

This interdisciplinary LGBTQ studies course introduces students to LGBTQ histories, cultures, and theoretical perspectives in the context of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, religion, ability, and nationalism. Topics include literary and artistic expression, health care, policy, politics, community, and other issues relevant to studying gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer life.

Through the intensive reading and focused class discussion in this course, you will improve your ability to read, write, and ask questions about LGBTQ history, politics, and identity. In addition, a critical goal in this course is for you to become aware of your own attitudes and beliefs and how those affect others. You should be able to communicate with others who have different beliefs thoughtfully. You should leave this course conscious of the complexity of LGBTQ issues and aware of how homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism, and gender policing have shaped U.S. history and culture.

This course is the required introductory course for the LGBTQ Minor.

Objectives:

As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key points in LGBTQ histories and cultures.
- Analyze the impact of race, class, religion, ability, and nation on LGBTQ bodies and communities.
- Evaluate disciplinary explanations, representations, and interpretations of sexualities and genders.
- Identify and explain major terms and concepts in LGBTQ Studies.

Required Texts:

All required texts are available at the GVSU bookstore. There is a hard copy of each of these main texts on course reserve at the Mary Idema Pew Library. There are also readings assigned via electronic reserve on Blackboard, indicated as **BB**.

1. Ryan Conrad, ed. *Against Equality: Queer Revolution, Not Mere Inclusion*. AK Press, 2014.
2. Milton Merle. *On Being Different: What it Means to be a Homosexual*. Penguin Classics, 2012.
3. Sarah Schulman. *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination*. UC Press, 2012.
4. Susan Stryker. *Transgender History*. Seal Press, 2005.

Required Films:

Films are on course reserve for viewing at the Mary Idema Pew Library. Some films are also available to stream through the GVSU library (where noted). Films will be watched outside of class, unless otherwise noted.

1. *Tea and Sympathy*
2. *Brother Outsider*
3. *Screaming Queens*
4. *Outrage 69*
5. *The Times of Harvey Milk*
6. *United in Anger*

Other Required Materials:

Paper and pen/pencil for in-class writing
Printed, marked-up copies of the readings posted on Blackboard
Access to your GVSU email (you are required to check this daily)

Notes on Course Materials:

1. This is a course on LGBTQ identities and sexuality/gender in general. As participants in the course, we might identify as LGBTTTQQIAAP+, or we might not. Who you are does not make you a more or less important contributor to this course, nor does it indicate a greater or lesser degree of familiarity with course materials.
2. Some materials in this course are sexually explicit; other materials represent violence/death/disease and may be disturbing. If you are concerned about engaging intellectually with explicit and/or violent materials, please familiarize yourself with the course content and let me know in advance via email or by discussing your concerns with me during my office hours. Please also seek support by accessing available resources on campus:

Counseling Center: <https://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>
LGBT Resource Center: <http://www.gvsu.edu/lgbtrc/>
Office of Inclusion and Equity: <http://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/>
Women's Center: http://gvsu.edu/women_cen/
Multicultural Affairs: <http://gvsu.edu/oma/>
Report a Bias Incident: http://www.gvsu.edu/inclusion/bias_incidents.htm
Veterans Network: <http://www.gvsu.edu/veterans/>

3. This course is an attempt to represent some of the experiences and cultures of LGBTQ people over the past five centuries of U.S. history. It is an interdisciplinary introduction to a wide academic field and is not intended to be comprehensive.

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is required, and academic dishonesty will be penalized. Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his/her/their own.

Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an “F” grade. All instances of plagiarism will be reported, and may result in course failure or even dismissal from GVSU. To see GVSU’s official policy on plagiarism, please see the Student Code, section 223.00 (<https://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>). If you are unsure of how to properly cite material and fear that you might unintentionally plagiarize sources, please see me or contact the Writing Center (<http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>) for help.

Diversity Statement:

GVSU is committed to an inclusive environment free from discrimination and conducive of open inquiry, a multiplicity of ideas, a liberal education, and a healthy community. Diversity is not only respected in our classrooms: It is supported.

GVSU’s Non-Discrimination Statement:

Every aspect of University life should be free from discrimination because of age, color, disability, familial status, height, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, or weight. Student housing, organizations, athletics, classes and University community facilities should be open to all who desire to participate.

Classroom Conduct:

Cell phones and tablets/laptops may not be used in class unless there is a documented need. Please plan on staying in class for the whole class period unless it is urgent for you to leave or you have made arrangements with me ahead of time.

I ask you to help ensure this class is a respectful and civil space. You are expected to respect others’ identities and to use others’ preferred names and gender pronouns. Rigorous intellectual discussion and debate is welcome; personal attacks, disruptive behavior, slurs, and stereotyping are not. Students who engage in disrespectful behaviors will be warned and may be asked to leave the classroom or to drop the course.

Gender Expression and Identity:

If your official name (in Banner) does not match your preferred name, it can be updated in Blackboard. Please contact Christy Mayo in the registrar's office. She will take your request and contact the Blackboard administrator to make the change. She also contacts professors to inform them that your name in Banner will not match the name in Blackboard.

Disability Accommodations:

If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you should contact Disability Support Services (616-331-2490) and then have a private discussion with me. Please also see me if you have concerns about evacuating the building during an emergency so we can develop a plan to assist you.

Emergency:

In the case of a fire, immediately proceed to the nearest exit during a fire alarm. Do not use elevators. More information is available on the University's Emergency website located at <http://www.gvsu.edu/emergency>.

WGS Attendance and Participation Policy:

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies faculty are convinced by experience and by research that attending class is a basic necessity for student learning and intellectual growth. In addition to lecture materials presented by faculty, in-class discussion and activities provide opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking about sometimes difficult topics. At the same time, we realize that "life happens" and that there are times when you cannot make it to class.

You are permitted 2 free absences from class (a full week). There is no difference between an "excused" and an "unexcused absence": Either you are in class, or you are not. Each additional absence after 2 lowers the final course grade by 1/2 a letter grade (5% per class missed). If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the material. There are no make-ups for missed in-class work.

This is a discussion-based course: participation is highly valued and students are expected to:

1. Contribute significantly to discussion each week by reading/viewing the assigned texts before class and speaking during class in ways that demonstrate your comprehension of the texts.
2. Be on time and engaged. If you expect to have trouble getting to class on time or attending regularly, please see me right away.

Course Assignments and Requirements:

In-class Journal	27% (1 point each class)
Reflection Essays (3)	36% (12 points each)
Final Exam (seated essay)	20% (20 points)
Experiential Learning Analyses (3-5)	10% (10 points total)
Participation	7% (7 points)

Requirements for Assignments:

In-class and out-of-class work will be assigned throughout the course. All assignments are due in class on the day indicated. No late work without an official excuse is accepted. No emailed assignments will be accepted without prior authorization. Assignments that are turned in under length will be returned to the student and considered incomplete until they are rewritten to meet requirements.

If you know you are going to miss a class, you may turn work in early with the professor's permission. Printing difficulties are not acceptable excuses for late work: plan ahead! It is not okay to submit work for this class that has been submitted to another class for academic credit.

Grading Scale:

Percent	Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
60-66	D
< 60	F

Grade Explanations:

A: Represents work of exceptional quality. Indicates evidence of engagement with important information and ideas in course materials, lectures, and other sources, thoroughness, careful thinking, integration of materials across topics, sound logical reasoning, and precise and artful writing/speaking.

B: Signifies levels of solid accomplishment and above-average work in comparison to peers and in relation to assignment expectations.

C: Denotes works that fulfill the assignment requirements, but only adequately.

D: Represents work that does not fulfill assignment requirements, but that is deserving of partial credit due to effort.

F: Indicates work that does not deserve credit.

Assignments:

1. Journal (in class):

At the beginning of each class, I will give you some time to write informally about the day's material. You should spend this time reflecting on what you think the most valuable concepts/ideas in the material were, and then asking related questions. What would you like to talk about in class, and how did the material bring up these questions for you? This should take under 10 minutes, so come to class with some ideas about what you will write. You will be evaluated on your accuracy and your critical thinking.

2. Reflection Essays (submitted online):

In these 3 essays, you will reflect on your personal experience in relation to the material we have explored so far. In essay 1, you will respond to units 1-2 of the syllabus. In essay 2, you will respond to units 3-4. In essay 3, you will respond to units 5-6.

These essays should (rubric):

Be 4 full, double-spaced pages

Be in Times New Roman font

Be written using clear, correct, and appropriate grammar

Use and cite materials from the syllabus units (in-text citations only: no bibliography or external research is necessary)

Demonstrate an understanding of the assigned reading

Engage critically with major themes of the course

Some questions you might explore in these essays (if you're stuck):

Theme 1: How has this class challenged or changed your thinking about LGBTQ issues? Your assumptions? How and why? Give examples from the syllabus.

Theme 2: How has the class helped you to develop new target and agent skills? Describe how and then give examples of you using these skills.

Theme 3: What did you not know coming into this course? Give examples. Then analyze why you didn't know what you didn't know.

3. Experiential Learning Analyses (submitted online):

As part of this class, each student will complete at least 5 hours of outside, hands-on, co-curricular learning. This can consist of volunteering or attending approved activities and workshops. We will have an informational session with the LGBT Resource Center to learn about your options. You may also visit the GVSU calendar to explore other offerings. You will write analyses of your selected experiential activities, consisting of at least one double-spaced page per hour for a total of 5 hours (2 points per page). You must turn in a total of five pages of writing, covering your five hours, to get full credit. You must attend/turn in AT LEAST 3 of your 5 hours/pages of analyses by November 23rd.

Your analyses should include (rubric):

Date, location, and name of activity

Analysis of how this activity relates to our class

A description of your personal experience

Analysis of new knowledge/skills gained using Neito's target/agent model

4. Final Exam (in class)

At our final exam period, you will write a seated essay in response to a prompt I create. I will make the prompt and essay rubric available several days before the exam. Please bring a blue/green book and a reliable writing instrument to the exam session. No notes are permitted.

Class Schedule:

8.31 Introduction to class, field, and learning community
Shared vocabulary exercise
Intro to agent and target roles

1. Skill Building and Self-Assessment

9.02 **What is Allyship?**
Read: Leticia Nieto, "Understanding Oppression," "Target Skills" and "Agent Skills." **BB.**
Target and agent skills self-assessment

9.07 No class—Labor Day

9.09 **Understanding Systems of Power and Privilege**
Read: "Heterosexual Privilege Checklist." **BB.**
Read: Evin Taylor, "Cisgender Privilege: On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender." **BB.**

2. An Introduction to Queer Politics: How to Think Queerly

9.14 **Queer Critiques of Marriage**
Read: Yasmin Nair, "Against Equality, Against Marriage: An Introduction." *Against Equality*. 15-21.
Read: Kate Bornstein, "An Open Letter to LGBT Activists Who Have Been Pushing Marriage Equality." *Against Equality*. 23-26.
Read: Eric Stanley, "Marriage is Murder." *Against Equality*. 27-30.
Read: Dean Spade and Craig Wilse, "I Still Think Marriage is the Wrong Goal." *Against Equality* 31-2.
Read: MJ Kaufman and Kate Miles, "Queer Kids of Queer Parents Against Gay Marriage!" *Against Equality*. 75-86.

- 9.16 **Queer Critiques of Militarism**
Read: Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, "Community Spirit." *Against Equality*. 99-105.
Read: Kenyon Farrow, "A Military Job Is Not Economic Justice." *Against Equality*. 107-08.
Read: Cecilia Cissell Lucas: "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Serve." *Against Equality*. 109-12.
Read: Erica Meiners and Therese Quinn: "Queer Eyes on What Prize?" *Against Equality*. 121-3.
Read: Larry Goldsmith, "Bradley Manning, Rich Man's War, Poor (Gay) Man's Fight." *Against Equality*. 135-9.
Read: Jamal Rashad Jones, "Why I Won't be Celebrating the Repeal of DADT." *Against Equality*. 141-3.

- 9.21 **Queer Critiques of Criminalization and Incarceration**
Read: Dean Spade, "Their Laws Will Never Make Us Safer." *Against Equality*. 165-75.
Read: Jason Lydon, "A Compilation of Critiques on Hate Crime Legislation." *Against Equality*. 177-180.
Read: Lilita Segura, "Do Hate Crime Laws Do Any Good?" *Against Equality*. 185-192.
Read: Sebastian Barraud, "First Coffins, Now Prison?" *Against Equality*. 211-15.
Read: Erica P. Meiners, et al, "Worst of the Worst? Queer Investments in Challenging Sex Offender Registries." *Against Equality*. 231-49.

3. Before the Movement: 1500-1960

- 9.23 **The Roots of LGBTQ Oppression**
Read: Michael Bronski, "The Persecuting Society." **BB.**
Reflection Essay 1 due
- 9.28 Read: Anne Fausto-Sterling, "That Sexe Which Prevaieth." **BB**
9.30 Read: Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*. 31-57.
- 10.05 **Gender and Eugenics**
Read: Don Romesburg, "The Tightrope of Normalcy." **BB.**
- 10.07 **The WWII Era**
Read: John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. Ch. 2. **BB.**
Watch: *Tea and Sympathy* (on reserve in library)
- 10.12 **The Limits of Community**
Read: Rochella Thorpe, "A House Where Queers Go: African-American Lesbian Nightlife in Detroit, 1940-1975. **BB.**
Read: Excerpt from Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. **BB.**

- 10.14 **1952: Backlash**
Read: John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. Ch. 3. **BB**.
Watch: *Brother Outsider* (on reserve at library or here: <http://bit.ly/1NuVTDf>)

4. Queer Liberation Politics: 1960-1980

- 10.19 **The New Militancy**
Read: John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*. Ch.12. **BB**.
- 10.21 **A Shared Political Identity**
Read: Milton Merle, *On Being Different: What it Means to Be a Homosexual*. 1-56.
- 10.26 **1966: The Tipping Point**
Read: Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*. 59-89.
Watch in class: *Screaming Queens*
(on reserve at library or here: <http://bit.ly/179s0t0>)
- 10.28 Read: Sylvia Rivera, “Portrait.” **BB**.
Watch: *Outrage 69* here: <http://bit.ly/1yJGDhL>
- 11.02 **End of an Era**
Watch: *The Times of Harvey Milk* (on reserve in library)
- 11.04 Read: Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*. 91-120.
Read: Max Wolf Valerio, excerpt from *The Testosterone Files*. **BB**.

5. The Plague Years: 1980-1996

- 11.09 **Queer AIDS Activism**
Read: Larry Kramer, “1,112 and Counting” here: <http://bit.ly/1IKdN45>
Reflection Essay 2 due
- 11.11 Watch: *United in Anger* (on reserve in library)
- 11.16 **The Forgetting of AIDS**
Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 1-20.
- 11.18 Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 22-52.
- 11.23 **Realizing the Loss**
Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 53-77.
3 hours/pages of Experiential Learning must be complete
- 11.25 No Class—Thanksgiving
- 11.30 **The New Transgender Politics**
Read: Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*, 121-54.

6. Queer and Now: 1996-present

- 12.02 **The Gentrification of Our Art**
Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 80-110 and 133-53.
- 12.07 **The Gentrification of Our Politics**
Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 111-32.
- 12.09 **The Pleasure of Being Uncomfortable**
Read: Sarah Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 154-79.
Reflection Essay 3 due
5 hours/pages of Experiential Learning must be complete
- 12.16 Final Exam Session (4:00-5:50 in our classroom)