

Instructor: Jade Kai
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Stony Brook University

Introduction to Queer Studies in the Humanities

WST 111.01 – Spring 2023

Please note: This course fulfills 3.0 credit hours, the requirement designation DEC G, and the class attributes CER (Practice & Respect Critical/Ethical Reasoning), DIV (Respect Diversity & Foster Inclusiveness), and HUM (Use Critical Analysis & Methods of Humanities). *The syllabus is subject to change throughout the course of the semester.* Changes will be clearly noted in Brightspace course announcements or through Stony Brook email. It is your responsibility to check these platforms for corrections or updates to the syllabus.

Course Description

This survey course will introduce students to a range of concepts fundamental to Queer Studies in the Humanities in the U.S. We will ground our work in social construction theory to understand the ways in which sex, gender, race, sexuality function under hierarchical systems of power. Using an intersectional feminist lens, we will work to understand the ways state-sanctioned violence and marginalized people's resistance have shaped our contemporary social world. Throughout the course we will discuss themes of body and embodiment, race, sexuality and desire, gender identity and performance, the policing of gender and sexual expression, and queer and trans care. This will help to situate our inquiries concerning how LGBTQIA+ people care for each other's well-being and survival in and outside of institutions.

Stony Brook Bulletin Course Description

A survey of historical representations of sexuality and queerness from the late 19th century to the present. Through examination of art, media, literature, and philosophy, and critical theory,

students develop an interdisciplinary understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer identities and the moral and ethical issues surrounding sexuality. Themes include the social construction of sexuality; theories of sex, desire, bodies, and sexuality; cisheterosexism and other intersecting forms of oppression; and the historical roots of these issues.

Course Objectives

- Apply basic feminist theoretical concepts to a range of texts that reflect concepts foundational to Queer Studies in the Humanities.
- Formulate critical questions that demonstrate your own ability to join in key conversations in the field.
- Demonstrate interpretive skills in reading and visual analysis through course readings, video clips, discussions, and assignments.
- Examine how sex, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed through scientific, medical, legal, moral, political, economic, and cultural discourses and institutions.
- Imagine and employ intersectional feminist frameworks to critically analyze the socio-institutional functions and impacts of U.S. national identity.

Accessibility and the Classroom

This class values that everyone learns differently. Disability is not considered a “special case” and I am committed to working with you to create an optimal learning environment. If you have questions or concerns about the course structure and material, please let me know via email. For general questions peers may be able to answer, as well as any appropriate articles, media, or other content you find beneficial to share with the class, you may visit the Brightspace discussion board forum labeled ‘General.’ This is not required.

Student Accessibility Support Center

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Student Accessibility Support Center at SASC@stonybrook.edu, ECC

(Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Student Accessibility Support Center. For procedures and information go to the following website:

<http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities>.

Attendance and Participation

Participation is based on attentive engagement with the course. Engagement is measured through attending and arriving to class on time and consistently contributing to group discussion in ways that demonstrate you have read and critically thought about the course material. Participation may also include asking questions about the material in-person or over email and meeting with me during office hours. You may use laptops or smartphones for reading course materials and taking notes in class, but must refrain from texting, social media use or internet surfing – it is easily noticeable, distracting, and demonstrates a lack of engagement in our course.

In terms of attendance, you are allowed no more than two unexplained absences throughout the semester. Any more than two absences will severely impact your grade in that for each additional class missed, 10 points will be deducted from your final course average. Please note that I am mindful of various obstacles students face that may prohibit attending class regularly and on time (COVID-related issues, disability, transportation, mental health, etc.) and am willing to make alternative arrangements with you if this is the case. I encourage you to prioritize your health and wellbeing, and to reach out if you need additional support. Please talk to me via email, Zoom, or in person early in the semester if you think you need alternative arrangements. Lastly, If you feel sick or test positive for COVID, please do not come to class and let me know via email that you will be absent until you are no longer contagious or have completed your quarantine period. There will be no penalty for these absences.

Acknowledging COVID-19

In our fourth year of a global pandemic, we are no strangers to the unstable and challenging times brought on by COVID-19. We each have different experiences and concerns about risk of infection as well as disparate access to health and safety resources. I must acknowledge that teaching and learning in-person puts us all at risk, and that we must be mindful of the circumstances of our fellow learners as many of us have had to adjust to living situations that range from difficult to dire. For this reason, masks are encouraged but not required. If you feel sick or test positive for COVID, please do not come to class and let me know via email that you will be absent.

Course Content

To be an accessible space requires ongoing respect for the material presented and our fellow learners. We all come into this classroom with different life experiences, bodies, thoughts, and opinions. While different opinions are encouraged, students are expected to support their ideas with evidence and engage actively with the material with an open mind.

IMPORTANT: This course contains difficult material as we will discuss ideologies that challenge the status-quo. We will not debate the fact that racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist and that we all have misinformation about other people as a consequence. You are expected to approach this material in a serious and mature manner. Please let me know if you have any specific content warning requests via email, but also recognize it would not be possible to warn you before every instance of potentially triggering material. All work is required, so please enroll in this course at your own discretion.

Required Materials

All texts, videos and films will be provided via Brightspace. You are expected to complete the readings prior to the class on which they are assigned.

Lectures

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are my own original expression and are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are not to be saved, reproduced, or recorded in any way.

Communication

Regular announcements will be sent from Brightspace. These will be posted in the course site and may or may not be sent by email. It is your responsibility to check your SBU email account regularly. I am available over email to answer any questions and assist with assignments on weekdays 9 AM – 7 PM. You may send me emails over the weekend or at night, but should not expect a reply until the following weekday. In cases of emergency, please contact emergency services. Course-related questions that peers can answer, as well as resources you find beneficial to share with the class should be posted in the 'General' Forum in the course Discussion board.

Office Hours

I encourage you to make appointments with me during office hours for further clarification on readings, assistance with your writing, guidance with assignments, and anything else of that nature. Office hours will be held in person or virtually after class on Thursdays from 4:30-6:30 PM, and on Fridays from 11 AM – 12 PM on Zoom. Office hours on quiz days will be moved to Fridays from 11 AM – 2 PM on Zoom. If you are interested in meeting with me, please send me an email with your availability during designated office hours. You may request an appointment at a different time if you are unavailable during those hours.

Schedule of Classes

Unit 1: Hierarchies of Power

This unit introduces students to the histories and development of racial, sexual, and gender norms as rooted in hierarchical systems of power. It also clarifies terms and ideologies about

gender, sex, and identity. This will allow us to better understand the ways either/or binary norms govern our social world.

Tuesday, January 24th

Introductions and Syllabus Review

Thursday, January 26th

READ: "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality" by Carole Vance and ["Queer"](#) by Siobhan B. Somerville

Tuesday, January 31st

READ: "Age, Class, Race, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" by Audre Lorde

Thursday, February 2nd

READ: "A Note about Gender, or Why Is This White Guy Writing About Being a Lesbian?" by Eli Clare (xxvii-xxviii) *and* Glossary of Terms

Tuesday, February 7th

READ: "Frequently Asked Questions About Intersex Activism & Intersexuality" (3-5) and "Shifting the Paradigm of Intersex Treatment" (6-9) in *Introduction to Intersex Activism* by Intersex Initiative Portland

Thursday, February 9th

NO CLASS. Quiz # 1 on Brightspace due by 11:59 PM.

Unit 2: Body and Embodiment: Race, Sex, and Desire

This unit covers race, gender, sexuality, disability and desire. We will explore the ways many social and cultural norms are rooted in colonial standards of the normative body by tracing historical conditions to contemporary times - from 19th century 'freak shows' to modern reality television shows.

Tuesday, February 14th

READ: ["On Being Fat, Brown, Femme, Ugly and Unloveable"](#) *and* [The Gender Non-Conformity of My Fatness](#) by Caleb Luna

Thursday, February 16th

READ: “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” by Audre Lorde *and* “Getting Dirty: The Eco-Eroticism of Women in Indigenous Oral Literatures” by Melissa K. Nelson (excerpt)

Tuesday, February 21st

“Making Love and Relation Beyond Settler Sex and Family” by Kim TallBear (excerpt)

Thursday, February 23rd

READ: “Gaping Gawking Staring” by Eli Clare (excerpt)

Tuesday, February 28th

IN-CLASS: Screening of *Little Women: Atlanta* (Lifetime) and Reflection Assessment #1

Thursday, March 2nd

NO CLASS. Quiz # 2 on Brightspace due by 11:59 PM.

Unit 3: Policing Gender and Sexuality

This unit discusses the ways the government, law enforcement, and societal norms police gender expression. This is to provide a historical foundation of how sexual deviancy, queerness, and gender non-conformity are condemned in modern society and uphold national ideologies.

Tuesday, March 7th

READ: “We Other Victorians” by Michel Foucault (excerpt)

Thursday, March 9th

READ: “Fugitive Flesh: Gender Self-Determination, Queer Abolition, and Trans Resistance” by Eric Stanley (excerpt)

Monday, March 13th – Sunday, March 19th

SPRING RECESS: NO CLASS.

Tuesday, March 21st and Thursday March 23rd

ONLINE ASSIGNMENT (Brightspace): NO CLASS.

- 1) READ: Chapters 1 – 3 of *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg (1-37)
READ: “Not Belonging” in *Arresting Dress* by Clare Sears (1-6)

WATCH: [“Why Was Crossdressing Illegal?”](#) by PBS Origins (9 min)

2) TAKE: Quiz # 3 due Thursday, 3/23 by 11:59 PM.

3) COMPLETE: Reflection Assessment # 2 due Sunday, 3/26 by 11:59 PM.

Unit 4: Queer and Trans Care

This unit explores the topic of caring for queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people from inside and outside of LGBTQIA+ communities. We will look at issues concerning queer and transgender health care, mutual aid, solidarity, and survival. Course material will also spark discussions on ‘queer’ forms of care beyond those defined by gender identity and sexual orientation.

Tuesday, March 28th

“Marriage Will Never Set Us Free” by Dean Spade and Craig Willse

Thursday, March 30th

“What’s Wrong with Trans Rights?” by Dean Spade

Tuesday, April 4th

“Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” by Cathy Cohen (437-452 required, entire article recommended)

Thursday, April 6th

READ: “Preface: Writing (With) a Movement From Bed” and “Care Webs: Experiments in Creating Collective Access” by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

Tuesday, April 11th

READ: *Asian American Feminist Antibodies: Care in the Time of Coronavirus* by Asian American Feminist Collective (all)

Thursday, April 13th

READ: “Play Aunties and Dyke Bitches: Gender, Generation, and the Ethics of Black Queer Kinship” by Savannah Shange and “In the Life: On Black Queer Kinship” by Marshall Green

Tuesday, April 18th

IN CLASS: Screening of *Screaming Queens: the Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (2005) directed by Susan Stryker (56 minutes)

Thursday, April 20th

NO CLASS. Quiz # 4 on Brightspace due by 11:59 PM.

Unit 5: Queer Futures - Final Project

See Assignments & Grading section for final project guidelines

Tuesday, April 25th

IN CLASS: Work day

Thursday, April 27th

IN CLASS: Work day

Tuesday, May 2nd

IN CLASS: Final project presentations

Thursday, May 4th

IN CLASS: Final project presentations

Last day of classes!

Assignments and Grading

Assignments should be submitted on Brightspace. All documents should be Word documents (.doc or .docx), double spaced with 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and include page numbers on the bottom right corner if the assignment exceeds one page.

All assignments should be submitted on time. Assignments are due on the days listed on the syllabus. Exceptions are on a case-to-case basis. If you think you need more time on an assignment, reach out to me *ASAP* about granting an extension and we can decide on a fair due date that works best for you!

Grade Scale

A: 100-94 A-: 93-90

B+: 89-85 B: 84-81 B-: 80-78

C+: 77-75 C: 74-71 C-: 70-68

D+: 67-65 D: 64-61 D-: 60-58 F: 57 and below

30% Discussion

You are expected to contribute meaningfully to class discussions. Please be prepared to contribute to discussions at least once per class. These discussions are for students to assert viewpoints of their own, consider the contributions of others, and solidify their understanding of concepts from the readings. We will review the readings by addressing the guiding questions below. You may find it beneficial to prepare your comments before class by using these questions as a guide.

- Can you summarize this week's texts in 1-2 sentences?
- What are the main themes, points, and arguments of the readings for this week?
- Are there any key terms or phrases that seem important to define or discuss?
- Do the ideas in this reading help you understand your own or others experiences in a new/different way? Are there things you do not understand about the reading, or would like to learn more about?
- Can you apply the concepts from the readings to your own life experiences? Reflect on how systems of oppression (racism, sexism, classism, ableism, queerphobia, transphobia, etc.) may impact your experiences and worldviews.
- Do you agree/disagree with the reading? Explain why, support your explanation with evidence.

30% Quizzes

Quiz #	Date
1	February 9 th

2	March 2 nd
3	March 23 rd
4	April 20 th

There will be 4 quizzes throughout the course of the semester worth 7.5 points each. Each quiz will cover major concepts of the unit. There are 6

multiple choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank questions worth 1 point each and one short answer question worth 1.5 points.

Quizzes are scheduled online on Brightspace and you will have the day to complete it.

Each quiz must be turned in by 11:59 PM on the day they are scheduled. These quizzes are open-book, so you are welcome to use your notes and refer to any of the course material to help you with the quiz. There is no class on quiz days.

20% Reflection Assessments

You will turn in 2 reflection assessments throughout the course of the semester. Each reflection is worth 10 points each. I will provide a prompt for each reflection.

- Reflection assessment 1: Due 2/23 (in-class).
- Reflection assessment 2: Due 3/26 on Brightspace by 11:59 PM.

Reflection Assessment Rubric

	Excellent 10 points	Satisfactory 6 – 9 points	Needs Improvement 1 – 5 points	Unsatisfactory 0 points
Completeness	Clearly and completely answers and addresses the assignment prompt.	Almost fully addresses the assignment prompt.	Partially addresses the assignment prompt.	Does not address the assignment prompt.

Thesis statement	Makes a clear and specific statement, claim, or argument regarding the topic at hand.	Makes a somewhat specific statement, claim, or argument.	Makes a statement, claim, or argument that is not clear or specific.	Does not make a statement, claim, or argument that frames the reflection.
Analysis	Analysis of the evidence helps to prove or advance the thesis statement. Applies an intersectional feminist lens to the analysis.	Analysis of the evidence somewhat advances the thesis statement OR Partially applies an intersectional feminist lens.	The evidence is not adequately analyzed using an intersectional feminist lens.	The evidence is not analyzed at all and there is no evidence of an attempt at using an intersectional feminist lens.
Evidence	Presents convincing and descriptive examples from the relevant texts, videos, lived experiences, or other resources. The required amount of references is adhered to.	Presents somewhat convincing and descriptive examples from the relevant texts, videos, experiences, or other resources. The required amount of references are adhered to.	The examples are not presented in a descriptive or convincing way. The required amount of references are nearly adhered to.	Does not present adequate or relevant evidence. The required amount of references are not adhered to.

20% Final Project

The form and topic of this project is open-ended. In groups of 5, you will choose a specific social problem related to issues we discuss in queer studies and develop a creative project responding to these issues. You will present your project to the class, making sure to identify your project’s problem, response, and purpose. Your options are unlimited, but you may wish to create a posterboard, powerpoint, vigil, performance, art show, or activist action. You can also share a video, podcast, storybook, zine, or anything else you can present in the span of 15-20 minutes.

You are also required to include some sort of element that engages the class. This might look like asking questions, inviting volunteers, providing handouts, or creating an immersive experience such as a walkthrough or display. Each student must also include an individually written statement discussing their personal contribution to the project.

You will have 1 and ½ class periods to work on the project leading up to the end of the semester. Grades are based on the rubric, so make sure to refer to it and ensure your project fulfills all the requirements!

Final Project Rubric

	Excellent 20 points	Satisfactory 15 – 10 points	Needs Improvement 10 – 5 points	Unsatisfactory 0 – 5 points
Clarity	The central purpose, problem, and response are very clear. Supporting ideas are focused and details are relevant.	The central purpose, problem, and response are somewhat clear, supporting ideas are nearly focused and details are relevant.	The central purpose, problem, and response are identified and supporting ideas are generally focused.	The central purpose, problem, and response are not clear and supporting ideas are not focused.
Organization	Information and ideas are presented in a sequence that engages the audience and is easy to follow.	Information and ideas are presented in an order the audience can follow without difficulty.	Information and ideas are presented in an order the audience can follow with little difficulty.	Information and ideas are poorly sequenced and the audience has difficulty following.
Audience engagement	The group includes a creative element that engages the class.	The group includes a creative element that somewhat	The group includes an element that barely engages the class.	The group does not include an element that engages the class.

		engages the class.		
Presentation length (time)	The presentation is between 15 – 20 minutes.	The presentation is between 10 - 12 minutes.	The presentation is less than 10 and more than 5 minutes.	The presentation is 5 minutes or less.
References	At least three pieces of course material are referenced and a works cited sheet is submitted in any citation style.	Two pieces of course material are referenced, or three are referenced but there is no works cited sheet.	Only one piece of course material is referenced, or two are referenced but there is no works cited sheet.	No course material is referenced, or one is referenced but there is no works cited sheet.
Individual contribution statement	The student includes a descriptive statement of 1-2 paragraphs that describes how the group produced the project as well as their individual contribution to it.	The student includes a statement of 1-2 paragraphs that somewhat describes how the group produced the project and their individual contribution to it.	The student includes a statement of less than one complete paragraph that touches on the production of the project.	The student drastically does not meet the length requirement OR does not adequately describe the production of the project.

Important Dates

Date	Assignment
Thursday, February 9 th	No class. Quiz # 1 due on Brightspace by 11:59 PM.
Thursday, February 23 rd	Reflection Assessment # 1 (in class)
Thursday, March 2 nd	No class. Quiz # 2 due on Brightspace by 11:59 PM.

Monday, March 13 th – March 20 th	No class. Spring Recess.
Tuesday, March 21 st	No class.
Thursday, March 23 rd	No class. Quiz # 3 due on Brightspace by 11:59 PM.
Sunday, March 26 th	Reflection Assessment # 2 due by 11:59 PM.
Thursday, April 20 th	Quiz # 4 due on Brightspace by 11:59 PM.
Tuesday, April 25 th	Final Project ½ Work Day
Thursday, April 27 th	Final Project Work Day
Tuesday, May 2 nd	Final Project Presentations
Thursday, May 4 th	Final Project Presentations & Last Day of Class

Technical Requirements

This course uses Brightspace for the facilitation of communications between faculty and students, submission of assignments, and posting of grades and feedback. The Brightspace course site can be accessed at <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/brightspace>.

If you are unsure of your NetID, visit <https://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/finding-your-netid-and-password> for more information. You are responsible for having a reliable computer and Internet connection throughout the term. Caution! You will be at a disadvantage if you attempt to complete all coursework on a smart phone or tablet. It may not be possible to submit the files required for your homework assignments.

Students should be able to use email, a word processor and presentation software to complete this course successfully. The following list details a minimum *recommended* computer set-up and the software packages you will need to have access to, and be able to use:

- PC with Windows 10 or higher OR Macintosh with OS 10.11 or higher
- Latest version of Chrome or Firefox (A complete list of supported browsers and operating systems can be found on the My Institution page when you log in to Brightspace)
- High speed internet connection
- Word processing software (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.)
- Headphones/earbuds and a microphone
- Webcam (recommended/optional)
- Printer (optional)
- Ability to download and install free software applications and plug-ins

Technical Assistance

- If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Brightspace you can:
- Phone: 631-632-9800 (client support, Wi-Fi, software and hardware)
- Submit a help request ticket: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>. If you are on campus, visit the Walk-Up Tech Support Station in the Educational Communications Center (ECC) building.

SBU's Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue their academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at www.stonybrook.edu/academicintegrity.

SBU's Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any

disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Student Success Resources

If you are looking for general assistance, a helpful resource is the "For Students" section linked from the Stony Brook homepage: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/for-students> as well as the Division of Undergraduate Education website:

<http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/duel/index.html>

You can find information about the Academic Success and Tutoring Center here:

http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_success/.