

WGSS 3370: Sexualities & Citizenship

Central Classrooms 222

W/F 2:20pm – 3:40 pm

Spring 2013

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Office Hours: Fridays 12:30pm-2:20pm

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

We all have varying abilities. Students who have verification from Disability Services are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. The Office for Disability Services verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies. Please let me know early on in the quarter what we can do to maximize your learning potential, participation, and general access in this course.

The Office for Disability Services is located at 150 Pomerene Hall
1760 Neil Ave, (614) 292-3307, TDD (614) 292-0901.
<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>

Course Description

This course will examine the construction of the lesbian and the development of "lesbian" identities, cultures, and communities over the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. We will explore the diversity of lesbian, dyke, and queer cultures in the US through a close examination of lesbian/feminist/queer theory, autobiography, music, art, literature, film, television, and pornography. The goal of the course is to give you a rich and nuanced understanding of how sexual identity shapes one's political, economic, and social belonging in the United States; we will do so by tracing one group's (in this case, lesbian's) diverse experiences of, and responses to, political, economic, and social marginalization. Investigating the ways sexual identity intersects with gender identity, class position, disability, racial/ethnic identity, and nationality will form the foundation of our discussions and textual analyses.

Texts

- Faderman, Lillian. Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in 20th Century America. New York: Penguin, 1992.
- Additional articles available electronically on Carmen. To access Carmen, log on at <http://carmen.osu.edu> and select this course from the list of Spring 2013 classes.

Course Requirements & Grading

Students will complete the following:

- Reading Quizzes (6) 15%
- Midterm Paper 20%
- Participation 20%
- Book or film review 20%
- Final Project 25%

Participation – 20%

There are 2 components to your participation grade:

1. **Attendance:** Attendance will be taken every day. You are permitted 2 unexcused absences, no questions asked. After 2 absences, your absences **will** have an adverse effect on your grade – after all, if you are not in class, you are **not** participating. If at all possible, please contact me *in advance* if you need to miss class. **Please note: More than 10 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course.**
2. **Class Discussion:** Class discussion is designed to help you become engaged with, and think critically about, the materials presented in the essays, films, and lectures we encounter. *It is mandatory that you complete all of the reading in order to participate meaningfully in class discussion.* You must come to class everyday prepared to discuss. I ask that you be open to exploring issues of gender, sex, and sexuality through a feminist lens. Our critical thinking will be deployed to analyze ideas and arguments - personal attacks are not permitted.

Reading Quizzes – 15%

Seven (7) times over the course of the semester I will ask you to respond in class to a written question/query about the readings assigned for that day. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. If you are absent on the day a quiz is given it can be taken at a later time only if your absence was excused. It is YOUR responsibility to find out if there was a quiz in your absence, and to make arrangements with me to re-take the quiz during my office hours.

Midterm Paper – 20%

Instead of a midterm exam, you are asked to write a 5-6 page (typed, double-spaced) essay. A prompt will be passed out closer to the due date. You can have fun with this paper, but be sure it demonstrates your best writing, including careful organization and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A works cited page is required (in whatever style you're comfortable with: MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). At *minimum* you should be using 3 sources from class to write this paper. **DUE: 2/20 in class.**

Book or Film Review – 20%

This is a review of a written or visual text whose main characters are lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer. **DUE: 3/20 in class.** *I would prefer that you choose a text written or directed by someone who also identifies as lesbian, bisexual, queer, or transgender.* The review should include a description of the storyline (250 words), some brief information about the author of the text (1 paragraph), and your analysis of the text itself (500-750 words). Some questions to consider in your analysis:

- How does this text connect to the concepts and histories we are learning about in this class? Does this text clarify some of those concepts/histories? Which ones and how? Is there anything about this book/film that might be problematic? What?
- Does this text seem to be speaking to a mainstream audience, or to an audience we might say is “in the know?” How might this text contribute to the formation of an alternative culture or community? Who might you recommend this film to, and why?

Final Project – 25%

Your final is either a creative project OR an academic research paper related to “lesbian cultures.” Whatever you choose, be sure to be thoughtful and creative. What topic related to lesbian cultures do you think deserves further research and thought? What topic motivates you either personally or politically (or both)? How can you use your own passion to generate a successful final project? Do not choose something that is uninteresting or boring to you. The most exciting creative and intellectual work is motivated by personal investments. Take the time to brainstorm and journal about potential ideas.

Every student will be required to meet with me before he or she begins work on this project. Project proposals (~ one page) are **due 2/13 in-class**. After I receive your proposal, I will give you feedback during a required face-to-face meeting to help you further refine your focus. Please do the necessary work to make sure this project or paper is feasible. Once you turn in your proposal I ask you to stick to that project. Your focus may get tweaked, or you may end up choosing one specific part of your proposal to explore in greater detail—this kind of change is expected and encouraged! But if you spend the first 14 weeks of the quarter thinking you’re going to write a paper about lesbians in sports, and then panic during the last week of the quarter because you have procrastinated doing your research, you cannot decide to then start working on a documentary video. **DUE: April 24th at 2pm**

Research Paper Option: 10-12 pages (typed, double-space, 12-point font) research paper on a topic of your choice. This option requires library research and the use of outside sources. I especially encourage this option if you’re interested in learning more about a topic related to lesbian cultures that was not covered in class (or not covered in detail).

Creative Project Option: This could be a website that you design and produce, a photo exhibit that you curate, a print ‘zine that you create, a short film that you make, etc. Note: subject release forms may be required if you photograph, film, or interview people for your projects. We can talk about this during your one-on-one meeting.

Late/Make-Up Work

Assignments are due in class on the day listed on the syllabus. I will only accept late work or work submitted by email with verifiable proof of an emergency, extenuating circumstances, or illness. Quizzes can only be made up if you have an EXCUSED absence. It is your responsibility to find out if you have missed a quiz and arrange a time to take it. If at all possible, you should consult with me **prior** to the due date and should call or e-mail as soon as a problem crops up. *Do not assume that you will be granted an extension for anything until you have spoken with me.*

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

As defined in University Rule #3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or their ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report ALL cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the course to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own; plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple.

- Always cite your sources (your TA or instructor can help you with this)
- Always ask questions before you turn in your assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism
- Always see your TA or instructor if you are having difficulty with an assignment

To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!**

CLASS SCHEDULE

***: find essay on CARMEN

Faderman: *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* text

Week 1

- W 1/9: **Introduction to the course**
- F 1/11: **Citizenship, Gender, and Sexuality**
 - Richardson, Diane. “Sexuality and Citizenship” ***
 - “Heterosexism” ***

Week 2

- W 1/16: **Before the Lesbian**
 - Bryant, William Cullen. “To the Evening Post” ***
 - Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. “Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America” ***
- F 1/18: **Inventing the Lesbian**
 - Faderman. Chapters 1 & 2

Week 3

- W 1/23: **Early Gay and Lesbian Formations**
 - Faderman. Chapters 3 & 4
- F 1/25: **Early Gay and Lesbian Formations**
 - Faderman. Chapter 5
 - *Film: Before Stonewall*

Week 4

- W 1/30: **Butches & Femmes**
 - Faderman. Chapters 6 & 7
 - Laporte, Rita. "The Butch-Femme Question." ***
- F 2/1: **Lesbian Feminism**
 - Faderman. Chapter 8

Week 5

- W 2/6: **Lesbian Feminism**
 - Radicalesbians. "Woman-Identified-Woman" <http://www.feminist-reprise.org/docs/radicalesbians.htm>
 - Clarke, Cheryl. "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance" ***
- F 2/8: **Lesbian Separatism**
 - Faderman. Chapter 9
 - Bunch, Charlotte. "Learning from Lesbian Separatism" ***

Week 6

- W 2/13: **Womyn-Only Spaces -- Problems & Possibilities**
 - **Project proposal due, in class**
 - Browse Michigan Womyn's Music Fest website ***
 - "How the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival's Topless Women Changed my Lesbian Life Forever" ***
 - Browne, Kath. "Womyn's separatist spaces: rethinking spaces of difference and exclusion" ***
- F 2/15: **The Sex Wars**
 - Faderman. Chapter 10
 - Califia, Pat. "Feminism & Sodomasochism" ***
 - Allison, Dorothy. "Public Silence, Private Terror" ***

Week 7

- W 2/20: **Activism After Stonewall**
 - **Midterm paper due, in class**
 - *Film: After Stonewall*
- F 2/22: **Activism After Stonewall**
 - Faderman. Chapter 11
 - Browse the Lesbian Avengers website, including the Lesbian Avenger Handbook ***

Week 8

- W 2/27: **The Rise of the Queer**
 - Anonymous queers. "Queers Read This: I Hate Straights" ***
 - Selections from Jagose and Sullivan TBD

- F 3/1: **Queer Genders**
 - Bergman, S. Bear. Selections from *Butch is a Noun* and *The Nearest Exit May Be Behind You* (2006, 2009) ***
 - Maltry, Melanie, and Kristin Tucker. “Female Fem(me)inities: New Articulations in Queer Gender Identities and Subversion” (2002) ***
 - Moore, Mignon. “Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of gender presentation in black lesbian communities” (2006) ***

Week 9

- W 3/6: **Are Lesbians Women?**
 - Wittig, Monique. Excerpts from *The Straight Mind*. ***
 - Hale, Jacob. “Are Lesbians Women?”
- F 3/8: **The Marriage Debate**
 - New York Times. “High Cost of Being Gay” (2009) ***
 - Stoddard, Thomas B. “Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry” (1989) ***
 - Ettelbrick, Paula L. “Since When Is Marriage a Path to Liberation?” (1989) ***
 - Beyond Marriage Statement (2006) ***

Week 10

- W 3/13: **SPRING BREAK**
- F 3/15: **SPRING BREAK**

Week 11

- W 3/20: **Family & Kinship**
 - **Book or Film Review due, in-class**
 - “Parenting by gays more common in the south” (2011) ***
 - Commentary on gay parenting in the south (2011) ***
 - Drexler, Peggy. “Lesbian mothers making men.” (2002) ***
 - “Our genderqueer family has a lesbian dad” (2011) ***
 - “Children of lesbians do better” (2010) ***
 - Browse the “Biological Clock” project (2011) ***
 - Browse the “It’s Conceivable” website ***
- F 3/22: **Family & Kinship II**
 - Guest Speaker: “The Law and LGBTQ Parents”

Week 12

- W 3/27: **Lesbian/Queer Sexual Cultures**
 - Hammers, Corie. “Space, Agency, and the Transfiguring of Lesbian/Queer Desire” (2009) ***
 - Wheeler, Sarah. “Superfreaky: Queerness, Feminism, and Aesthetics in Queer Pornography” (2009) ***

- F 3/29: **Health**
 - O’Hanlan et al. “Advocacy for Women’s Health Should Include Lesbian Health” ***
 - Ryan and Bradford. “Conducting the National Lesbian Health Care Survey: First of Its Kind” ***
 - Kaminski, Elizabeth. “Lesbian Health” ***

Week 13

- W 4/3: **Lesbian Communities & Issues of Inclusion/Exclusion**
 - Moraga, Cherrie. “La Guera” ***
 - Barnes, Shaba A. “My Life in a Lesbian Community: the Joys and the Pain” ***
 - Ross, Paula. “What’s Race Got to Do With It?” ***
 - Malik, Suzy and Zoe Whittall. “Fat is a Femme-inine Issue” ***
- F 4/5: **Representing Lesbians**
 - Episode: *The L Word*
 - Read 2 of the following essays:
 - Wolfe, Susan J. And Lee Ann Roripaugh. “The (in)visible Lesbian: Anxieties of Representation in The L Word” ***
 - Chambers, Samuel A. “Heteronormativity and the L Word: From a Politics of Representation to a Politics of Norms” ***
 - Wheeler, Lorna and Lara Raven. “Straight-up Sex in the L Word” ***
 - Johnson, Merri Lisa. “L is for Long-term: Compulsory Monogamy on the L Word” ***
 - Moore, Candace and Kristen Schilt. “Is She Man Enough? Female Masculinities on the L Word” ***

Week 14

- W 4/10: **Lesbian Visual Cultures**
 - Webisode and readings TBD.
- F 4/12: **Drag & Performance Cultures**
 - Guest Speakers

Week 15

- W 4/17: **Rethinking Citizenship**
 - Richardson, Diane. “Constructing Sexual Citizenship: Theorizing Sexual Rights” (2000) ***
 - Phelan, Shane. Excerpts from *Sexual Strangers* (2001) ***
- F 4/19: **Course Wrap-Up – Sharing of Final Projects**

Week 16

- 4/24th – 2pm: **FINAL PROJECTS DUE**