

WGS 104: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies: Sample Syllabus

Fall 2020

Wednesdays: 1:40-4:30

Kiely 271

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Studies. This course reflects LGBTQ Studies as an evolving interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand and challenge inequalities related to sexuality and gender identity. Our studies will investigate the historical, philosophical, literary, and cultural emergence of LGBTQ Studies. You will learn to use the norms and concepts of LGBTQ Studies as tools for understanding US history, power formations, social justice, culture, and art.

The course addresses the diversity of the LGBTQ experience in the US through units that utilize a variety of disciplinary modes including legal, historical, cultural/media studies, and literary analysis. The course engages with key issues in LGBTQ history and policy including privacy, HIV/AIDS, gay marriage, and trans rights. The course takes an *intersectional* approach that incorporates race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nation as analytical categories alongside sexuality and gender identity in relation to US institutions and social and cultural formations.

CUNY Common Core

(do not modify the below statement – this statement must be included on all QC IS courses)

All Flexible CORE Courses must meet the following *three* learning outcomes:

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| FC 1: Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view |
| FC2: Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically |
| FC3: Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions |

In addition, all IS courses must satisfy at least *three* of the following learning outcomes:

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| IS 1: Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society; including but not limited to anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion and sociology. |
| IS 2: Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices. |
| IS 3: Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises. |
| IS 4: Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions. |
| IS 5: Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on the individual or collective decision-making. |

This course will meet the following IS learning outcomes:

- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society; including but not limited to anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.
- Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.
- Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.

In the process of achieving these outcomes students will:

- Be introduced to the relationship between LGBTQ civil rights history, culture, community, society, and the individual.
- Think deeply, comparatively, and ethically about an individual's place within the group, the larger society, and "the state," and how one's subject positions affect their experiences, values, and choices, specifically at the level of human rights.
- Analyze established norms and unexamined assumptions that bear upon individual and collective rights.
- Understand how the fight for rights is carried out domestically, locally, nationally, and /or globally

| <i>Flexible Core</i> | <i>Measurement</i> |
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| Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view. | This SLO is assessed through an expository essay that focuses on an LGBTQ archive. Students will write a comparative essay on an archival resource and a contemporary media source on the same topic, historical figure, or event. |
| Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically. | This SLO is assessed by an analytical take-home mid-term essay that asks students to demonstrate their comprehension of the role that the early research of the field of sexology plays in contemporary understandings of LGBTQ identity and experience. |
| Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions. | This SLO is assessed through Discussion Boards. Students will submit weekly 250-word summaries of assigned readings and engage in class discussion. |
| <i>Individual and Society</i> | <i>Measurement</i> |
| Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communication, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology. | This SLO is assessed through a Final Research Project in the form of a 750-1000-word expository essay assignment. |
| Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices. | This SLO is assessed through Discussion Board Posts. |

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| Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises. | This SLO is assessed through a Discussion Leadership assignment and through Discussion Board Posts. |
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Course Requirements:

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| Weekly Discussion Board Posts | 20% |
| Essay #1 LGBTQ Archive Project | 20% |
| Essay #2 History of Sexuality Assignment (mid-term essay) | 15% |
| Discussion Leadership | 15% |
| Special Discussion Board Post: LGBTQ In Workplace | 15% |
| Final Research Project | 15% |

Weekly Discussion Posts:

Each week you are required to respond in 250 (unless otherwise specified) words to questions over the required readings. The prompts and posts will relate to the week’s topic. The posts will motivate you to assess and critically examine particular features of each week’s topic and the required readings and or screenings. We may also refer to them during class discussion. The goal is to encourage conversation and discussion of the week’s topic and readings. Explain the key arguments, ethical views/implications, and the underlying premises of each assigned reading. (FC3; IS2; IS3)

Essay #1 LGBTQ Archive Project:

This essay assignment asks you to critically examine an event or historical figure through a comparison of an LGBTQ archival with that of a contemporary media source. You will select an event or historical figure related to LGBTQ history or culture. You will explain how the archive tells the story of that event or that historical figure and how that story may differ from a mainstream media source. Write a 750-word expository essay that accounts for these differences and or similarities. (FC1; IS3)

Essay #2 History of Sexuality Assignment:

This essay is your mid-term exam. It is a take-home exam on the field of sexology. Select one key sexologist from the late-19th to the early-20th century. Select one of the chosen sexologist’s key writings. Explain how their particular understanding of “homosexuality” or “inversion” or whatever other term they use may be seen in contemporary discourse about LGBTQ individuals or communities. (500-600 words). (FC 2; IS3)

Special Discussion Post: LGBTQ In the Workplace:

Write a report that assesses advances that LGBTQ individuals have achieved in the workplace. You may focus on your workplace and or select a workplace where you aspire to work. Explain how a particular workplace policy or law has impacted LGBTQ individuals in that particular job. (FC3; IS2)

Discussion Leadership:

Review the semester’s weekly topics. Select a week for which you would like to lead and prompt discussion. You will be the key speaker for that week’s required readings. In addition to synthesizing the main arguments of the assigned readings, ask the class two discussion leadership prompt questions. The goal is to encourage conversation and discussion of the week’s topic and readings. Explain the key arguments, ethical views/implications, and the underlying premises of each assigned reading. (IS3)

Final Research Project:

Write a 750-100-word expository research essay in which you focus on one key social issue that affects contemporary LGBTQ individuals or communities in the US. Explain the connections between specific social justice movements or civil rights struggles and their role in facilitating social change. Anchor your argument in a specific LGBTQ social justice movement and one specific example of social change (law, housing, adoption, marriage, etc.). For example, you may focus on how LGBTQ healthcare advocates have engaged with US medical schools to enhance the curriculum for LGBTQ patient care and access.
(IS1)

Required Texts

- Jonathan Alexander, Deborah T. Meem, and Michelle A. Gibson, *Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBTQ Studies*, 3rd Edition only
ISBN: 9781506337401

Please note: while some films will be screened in class, many must be screened on your own. Some required screening material may be accessible only through Amazon Prime or Netflix.

All other required readings are available as PDFs on Blackboard or on the Internet. You are expected to download and print, if possible, all readings that are posted on Blackboard.

Calendar & Assignments (subject to revision):

| We ek | Readings & Assignments | Topic | Criteria Met |
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| 1 | Introduction | Syllabus | |
| 2 | History of LGBTQ Studies Assesment: Discussion Board Post Screenings: <i>Before Stonewall; I Want a Dyke for President;</i> Readings: Introduction to textbook; Eve Sedgwick; Michael Warner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is LGBTQ Studies? Key Concepts <i>Before Stonewall</i> – histories of LGBTQ civil rights movement What is heterosexual privilege? | FC1; IS1; LO 1,3,4 |
| 3 | Histories of Sexuality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before LGBTQ identity | FC2; IS 1,2; LO 1,2,3 |

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| | <p>Primary & Creative Texts: ancient poetry, art</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient expressions of same-sex desire • The ethics of comparative histories | |
| 4 | <p>Histories of Sexuality 2:</p> <p>Focus: Weimar Germany & Sexology</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post (500-word)</p> <p>Readings: John D'Emilio; Magnus Hirschfeld; Kurt Hiller</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anders als die Andern</i> (1919) • Sexology and the emergence of "the homosexual" • Medicalization of identity | FC2,3; IS 1,3; LO2,6 |
| 5 | <p>Sexuality, Science, Medicine, and Identity</p> <p>Focus: The Biology of Gender</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RadioLab</i> "Gonads: X&Y" • Epigenetics • <i>Boy Erased</i> (film) | FC2; IS 1,2; LO5 |
| 6 | <p>Activism: Toward Liberation</p> <p>Focus: Radicalesbians; Combahee River Collective</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blues Women and Wimmin's Music • Assign various musicians • Michigan Women's Music Festival | FC2; IS 1,2; LO5 |

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| 7 | <p>ACT UP & the AIDS Crisis</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post (extended)</p> <p>Focus: NYPL Gran Fury Collection</p> <p>Pass Out Take-Home Midterm exam</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIDS activist video and select documentaries • <i>Tongues Untied</i> • Defining Expert Knowledge • Community-based Education • Archival Knowledge & History • Lesbians and AIDS Activism | FC2; IS 2,3; LO 3,5,6 |
| 8 Midterm Essay Exam | Take-Home Exam | | FC1, 2, 3; IS 1,2,3 |
| 9 | <p>LGBTQ Diversities</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: Class, Disability, and Connections between Disability Studies and LGBTQ Studies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normativity • Disability and LGBTQ Activists • <i>The Performance of Drowning and Pose</i> (S1, E3) | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3 LO 3 |
| 10 | <p>LGBTQ Intersectionalities</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: Intersectional identities; Two-spirit people; Race & Sexuality</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affinity/Alliance • Power • <i>The Watermelon Woman</i> (Cheryl Dunye, 1996) | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |
| 11 | <p>Queer Literatures</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular V. Elite Literary Forms | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |

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| | Focus: Is there a Queer Canon? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulp Novels and Lesbian Desire • Space and Narrative • Belonging • <i>Forbidden Love and I am Not Your Negro</i> | |
| 12 | <p>Queer Visual/Performing Arts</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: Queer Art and Censorship</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEA Four • Art and Queer Desire • Public Funding and Mapplethorpe Controversy • <i>Mapplethorpe: Look at the Pictures; Tom of Finland</i> | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |
| 13 | <p>Queer Screens</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: New Queer Cinema as Intervention</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIDS and New Queer Cinema • Queer Cinema: Art vs. Commodification • Representation & Difference • <i>Poison; Go Fish</i> | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |
| 14 | <p>Trans and Nonbinary Identities</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: Breaking the Binary</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keywords • What "Trans" Does • Trans History and LG Liberation • Trans Women of Color and LGBTQ History • Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson • <i>Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria</i> | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |

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| 15 | <p>Representations of Trans Identities</p> <p>Assessment: Discussion Post & Group Oral Presentations</p> <p>Focus: Representation and Trans Casting/Production</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Trans on the Screen • Passing • <i>Disclosure; Transparent</i> | FC 1,2,3; IS 1,2,3; LO 3 |
| 16 | Review for Final Projects and Course Wrap | | FC2,3; IS 1,2; LO1,2,3,4 |

