LGBT/Queer Literature, Culture, and Criticism Since 1970

English 3790: spring 2018 — MW 1:00-2:15 LA 107
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Office Hours: M 10:30-12:00 and by appointment

English 3790 is an interdisciplinary introduction to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer literature and culture. Beginning with the Stonewall riots in 1969, when the gay liberation movement in the United States gained widespread recognition, and working toward the present, we trace aesthetic and cultural developments in LGBT/queer communities. During the semester, we’ll read and discuss novels, plays, films, and criticism from the early 1970s to the present, in order to understand the range and complexity of expression by LGBT/queer people.

Over the semester, you will have the opportunity to:
1. engage with a set of literary works (consisting of novel, short story, poetry, drama, and film) focusing on LGBT/queer issues;
2. be introduced to some basic approaches to LGBT/queer criticism in order to build an intellectual apparatus for the study of literary works and LGBT/Queer culture;
3. make a formal (individual or small group) presentation to the class;
4. produce a research-intensive term paper to culminate the course.

Required Texts—to be purchased


Required Texts—to be printed from electronic reserve (uvu.edu/library)

Rita Mae Brown, “Take a Lesbian to Lunch,” *Out of the Closets* (185-95)
Susan Stryker, “Militant Foreshadowings,” *Smash the Church, Smash the State...* (3-10).
bell hooks. “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance,” *Black Looks* (9-20)
Reserve readings (cont.)
Sarah Schulman, Selections from *Ties that Bind* (19-28, 43-60).

Prerequisite Skills

Using reading skills and strategies of argument learned in courses such as Engl. 2600 (Critical Intro to Literature) and 2010 (Research Writing), students are expected, from the opening of the course, to be prepared to actively, critically read literary texts, and to respond orally and through writing. This course will add to those skills and strategies through lecture, class discussion, and engagement with current critical approaches of responding to literature.

Response Paper Guidelines

2-3 page response papers are due periodically, beginning January 27. While this paper is, primarily, an expression of your opinion, you should nonetheless develop a cogent, well-written argument. The best responses take on a specific topic from lecture, class discussions, presentations (or, of course, from your own reading alone), which is then worked out in some critical/analytic detail. Avoid trying to fit an entire week’s reading—an entire novel or other extended text—into your response, since this leaves you with such a broad scope that any detailed examination is rather difficult.

Avoid summarizing the text and, instead, argue for a particular position, for a particular “reading.” Your treatment of whatever topic you choose will be enhanced not only by a strong thesis, but also by your incorporation of specific material from the texts (both literary and critical); that is, present details, such as dialogue or other citations. This is in keeping with that old adage of “showing” rather than “telling” as you work out your argument/position.

Consider also addressing questions you have about the reading—perhaps centered on a scene, event, character, etc. How do specific questions or parts of the novel/essay/play inform the significance of the whole? You may also think about developing connections between works—how do formal characteristics, topics, characters, etc. resonate across our focus period, across gender and/or ethnic boundaries? How are those characteristics treated differently and why?

Plan to put your growing critical apparatus into practice. Develop the research and response strategies which will be required for success on your term project. Articulate your agreement or dissention with critical responses we read, or pursue critical readings on your own which will allow you to enter into an informed conversation on literary, cultural, and theoretical concepts.

The final response paper, a narrative self-and-course evaluation, is due with the final project.
Term Project Guidelines

The term project is essentially a research argument—typically a paper of 10-12 pages—on any topic within the scope of the course (LGBT/Q American art and culture, 1969 or so to the present). You may use any of the course texts/authors or develop a project on texts, authors, music, films, art, and so on of personal interest with one caveat: ensure in making your choice that your subject matter merits close examination, and that you can develop a research question and a critical apparatus to explore it. Successful students tend to settle on at least a broad subject and begin the research and writing process in the last four or so weeks of class. A term project proposal is due on or before Wednesday March 28.

Presentation Guidelines

Presentations can be made either by individuals or pairs. Consider taking about 10-15 minutes per person for presentation of materials, and be prepared to field questions and/or lead discussion for part of the day following the presentation.

Your presentation is open topic, but must:

1. Relate in some way to the day’s assigned reading.
2. Provide new material (not already on the course syllabus) to the class.
3. Connect historical issues/ideas to the present.

Your presentation purpose may be (among other possibilities) to:

- introduce course texts and/or authors in detail
- add contextual material to course texts/authors
- provide information on a period (like a decade), a place (like Los Angeles), or a group (like Filipino-Hawaiians), relevant to a course text
- relate your areas of interest/research to course texts and themes

Presenters will prepare new reading material (such as a short story, an excerpt from an essay, a book chapter, etc.), which must be available at least one class period before the presentation date.

For instance, if you wanted to present on Kramer, consider bringing a piece from his collected essays, Reports from the Holocaust, where he documents the emergence and development of AIDS activism in the 1980s and 1990s. In your presentation you could introduce issues such as:

- How are Kramer’s concerns about AIDS different from or similar to his work in Faggots?
- How does Kramer connect his cultural/ethnic Judaism to issues of concern to gay people, particularly when it comes to government/cultural/familial responses to AIDS? Are these connections similar to or different than those in Faggots?
- How does Kramer’s AIDS activism affect his literary work in the 1980s and 1990s (plays such as The Normal Heart in 1985)?
- How does Kramer’s AIDS activism affect his relationship to LGBT/queer communities in the last decade, perhaps as illustrated in his published speech, The Tragedy of Today’s Gays (2005)?

Handouts—including, for instance, a bulleted list of presentation points—can help your audience prepare questions, especially if you provide advance guidance in the class period before the presentation.
In order to jumpstart discussion following your presentation, you might anticipate possible questions and/or prompts. Think about including these on your handout, or write questions on the board either before starting or while presenting.

Presenters don’t have to turn in notes or other materials for a grade, but consider using your presentation materials to write a response paper or in preparation for a more extended/fully researched term project on or related to the presentation topic.

**Grade Distribution/Policies**

Response papers: 30%
Presentation: 20%
Term Project: 20%
Attendance/Participation: 30%

- Course materials are determined by standards of academic inquiry and a commitment to the exchange of ideas; materials will not be “rated G” or censored in any way.
- If you have any disability that may impair your successfully completing this course, “Students who need accommodations because of a disability may contact the UVU Accessibility Services Department (ASD), located on the Orem Campus in LC 312. To schedule an appointment or to speak with a counselor, call the ASD office at 801-863-8747. Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals, email nicole.hemmingsen@uvu.edu or text 385-208-2677.” Appropriate Academic Accommodations are granted for all students who have qualified documented disabilities.
- Plagiarism will result in failure of the course and the possibility of administrative action.
- Attendance is required. You should plan to attend and be prepared for each class meeting. Because we will take a discussion/workshop approach to the course, attendance and participation will weigh significantly in your grade. In order to facilitate class participation, laptop computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices may not be used during class time.
- All written work will follow MLA style guidelines; late work will not be accepted.
- Per UVU policies: “Each student is expected to take an active role in the learning process by meeting course requirements as specified in written syllabi” (VII.A). Thus, the course syllabus comprises a contract between instructor and students, who will be held to its terms and expectations, for “The right to receive academic credit and/or academic degrees when all specified requirements and course work have been satisfied” (V.I). In other words, the student has the right to receive credit for work that meets or exceeds satisfactory performance; however, the student also has the right to fail based on those same conditions of performance.
- It is not only your right, but also your responsibility to ask questions, to raise challenges, to discuss readings, and to otherwise participate in the class as it unfolds over the semester.
- Students will activate their UVU email accounts, which can be forwarded to alternate email addresses.
- The course website (http://research.uvu.edu/goshert/uvu379c.pdf) will direct students toward additional resources for research, documentation, and bibliographic conventions. Sample student papers will also be archived, as available, throughout the semester.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS
Additional readings may be assigned as appropriate

January
M 8    Course Introduction
       Begin Before Stonewall
W 10   Complete Before Stonewall
       Lehring (handout)
M 15   No Class
W 17   *Rubyfruit Jungle* 1-54
       Brown (reserve)
M 22   *Rubyfruit* 55-131
W 24   *Rubyfruit* 132-206
M 29   Complete *Rubyfruit*
       Suleiman (reserve)
W 31   *Faggots* 1-101
       Bram (reserve)

       Response paper #1 due

February
M 5    *Faggots* 102-97
W 7    *Faggots* 198-284
M 12   Complete *Faggots*
       Rechy (reserve)
W 14   Stryker (reserve)
       Berlant and Warner (reserve)

       Response paper #2 due

M 19   No Class
W 21   Hooks (reserve)
       *Zami* 1-80
M 26   *Zami* 81-160
W 28   Complete *Zami* 143-220
       Keating (reserve)

March
M 5    *Angels* 1-64 (through Millenium II.4)
       Roof (reserve)

       Response paper #3 due
W 7    *Angels* 65-125 (complete Millenium)
April
M 2  Cool for You 1-64
  Response paper #4 due
W 4  Cool 65-155

M 9  complete Cool for You
    Chasin (reserve)
W 11  Manion (reserve)

M 16  The Child 1-64
    Schulman (reserve)
    Levy (reserve)
W 18  Child 65-128

M 23  Child 129-194
W 25  complete The Child
    Warner (reserve)
  Response paper #5 due

M 30  Exam Week

May
W 2  Final Project due
  Response paper #6 due

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i Addresses interrelated issues of gender, ethnicity, geography, and social class. Surveys literary, historical, critical, and cultural texts that reflect the diversity inherent among sexually marginal communities in the United States. Includes, but is not limited to works of fiction (primarily novels and short stories), drama, poetry, film and visual art.

ii Demonstrate knowledge of course content through written and oral production; Participate responsibly, reflectively, and respectfully in class discussions; Identify themes and issues in LGBT/queer literature and culture and connect them to course texts; Identify connections between course texts and current cultural concerns; Examine the range and complexity of expression by LGBT/queer people.