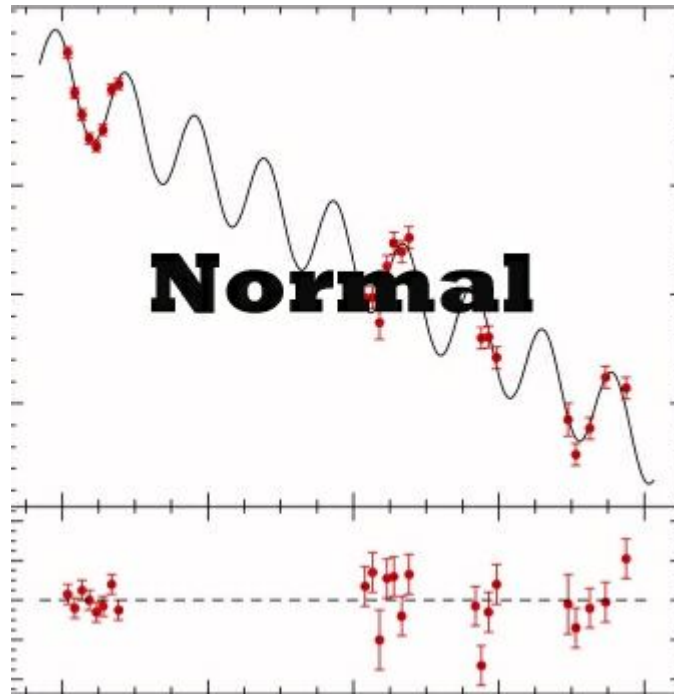


## English 388--Topics in Gay and Lesbian Studies: Assimilation



Instructor: Dennis Allen

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Although Queer Theory continues to focus on the instability of identity, gay and lesbian culture itself has moved on to other issues: the right to marry, full citizenship in the body politic, and assimilation to the heterosexual mainstream. The course will examine this “drive toward the normal” in everyday gay and lesbian life. Theoretical readings for the course will be paired with lesbian, gay, and queer films. In addition to the marriage debate and the issue of assimilation, topics to be addressed will include: neoliberalism and changing ideas of the citizen, the commodification of lesbian and gay culture, and the decline of independent queer film in favor of gay/lesbian Hollywood romantic comedies.

The Response Papers: Should consist of a two page typed analysis of an essay from the course reading assignments. These should not summarize the reading but should engage it intellectually. In other words, a response to a particular essay should do one or more of the following: critique the essay, apply it to a literary or cultural text, or relate it to previous reading in the course. Also, if an essay proves exceptionally difficult, your response paper on that essay could present some focused, specific questions on points that you did not understand.

Attendance: You are allowed three absences. If you miss class a fourth time, you will fail the course.

Course Requirements: Course grades will be based on a midterm (30%), a final exam (30%), and four two page response papers (40%).

Assignments:

Tues., January 10: Course Introduction  
Thursday, Jan. 12: Lecture: Basic Issues

### Homophobia: The 1950's

Tues., Jan. 17: Alan Sinfield, "Un-American Activities"  
Thurs., Jan. 19: Leslie Feinberg, "1950:Lavender Scare!"  
"Homosexuals in Government: 1950" (*Congressional Record*, Volume 96)

**Response 1 Due**

Tues., Jan. 24: *The Children's Hour* (Film, 1961)  
Thurs., Jan. 26: *The Children's Hour*

### Gay Liberation: The 1970s:

Tues., Jan. 31: Laud Humphries, "Exodus and Identity: The Emerging Gay Culture" (1979)  
Thurs., Feb. 2: Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love, excerpt from *Sappho Was A Right-On Woman* (1972)

### The Queer 90's:

Tues., Feb. 7: Lisa Duggan, "Making It Perfectly Queer" (1991)  
Thurs., Feb. 9: Queer Nation, "Queers Read This: I Hate Straights" (1990)

**Response 2 Due**

Tues., Feb. 14: *Go Fish* (Film, 1994)  
Thurs., Feb. 16: *Go Fish*

Assimilation:

Tues., Feb. 21: Lisa Duggan, "Downsizing Democracy"

Thurs., Feb. 23: Shane Phelan, "Negotiating Strangeness," pp. 82-97

Tues., Feb. 28: Shane Phelan, "Negotiating Strangeness," pp. 97-114

Thurs., March 2: Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public"

Tues., March 7: Review Day

Thurs., March 9: **Midterm**

**Spring Break**

**The Marriage Debate:**

Tues., March 21: Andrew Sullivan, excerpt from *Virtually Normal*

Thurs., March 23: Michael Warner, excerpt from *The Trouble With Normal*

**Response 3 Due**

Tues., March 28: Amy Brandzel, "Queering Citizenship?: Same-Sex Marriage and the State," pp. 171-187

Thurs. March 30: Amy Brandzel, "Queering Citizenship?," pp. 187-204

Tues., April 4: *Latter Days* (Film, 2004)

Thurs. April 6: *Latter Days*

**Commodification:**

Tues., April 11: Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism"

Thurs., April 13: Mark Simpson, "Metrosexuals: Male Vanity Steps Out of the Closet" and "Gayspirations; Selling Gay-ness"

**Response 4 Due**

Tues., April 18: Film (to be determined)

Thurs., April 20: Film

Tues., April 25: Course Summary

Thurs., April 27: Review Day

**Final:** Friday, May 5, 8-10 AM