

English 288

Dennis Allen, ENGL 288, Spring 2003, Sexual Diversity in Literature and Film

English 288:

Cultural Representations of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals

<http://www.as.wvu.edu/~dallen/288.htm>

Dennis Allen

Office: 439 Stansbury

Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 T/Th and by appointment

Phone: Office: 293-3107, Ext. 440

E-mail: dallen@wvu.edu

Texts:

Leslie Feinberg, **Stone Butch Blues**

Annamarie Jagose, **Queer Theory**

In this course we will examine the construction since the middle of the nineteenth century of modern conceptions of lesbian, gay, and bisexual "identity." Topics to be addressed will include: the essentialism/constructionism controversy in relation to gender and to sexual preference, changing historical definitions of sexual minorities, and contemporary stereotypes and cultural representations of lesbians and gays, including: the relation of sexual orientation to modern notions of gender (drag, butch/femme, "drag kings"); metaphoric links between homosexuality and disease, specifically AIDS; and current "political" controversies about civil rights, changing ideas of the family, gay marriage, and the "origins" of sexual orientation.

Course Requirements: Course grades will be based on a midterm (25%), a final exam (25%), and five two page response papers (50%).

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. ~ ~exceptionally difficult, your response paper on that essay

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

Note: All films will be shown in class.

Assignments:

Tues August 20: Introduction

Thurs. August 22: Definitions:

Jagose, Chapter 2, pp 7-21

Tues, Aug. 27: Identity (Essentialism vs Constructionism):

Jagose, Chapter 7, pp 72-83

Thurs Aug 29: Performativity:

Jagose, Chapter 7, pp 83-100

Denton Welch, "When I Was Thirteen" (Handout)

Response #1 Due

Tues. Sept. 3: Gender and Sexual Identity:

Judith Halberstam, "F2M...." (Handout)

Thurs. Sept. 5: Gender and Sexual Identity:

Mark Simpson, excerpt from **Male Impersonators** (Handout)

Response #2 Due

Tues. Sept. 10: History:

Jagose, Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 22-43

Before Stonewall (film)

Thurs. Sept. 12: History:

Jagose, Chapter 5, pp. 44-57

Before Stonewall (film)

Tues. Sept. 17: Leslie Feinberg, **Stone Butch Blues**, pp. 5-80

Thurs. Sept. 19: Feinberg, pp. 81-153

Response #3 Due

Tues. Sept. 24: Feinberg, pp. 155-226

Thurs.: Sept. 26: Feinberg, pp. 227-301

Tues. October 1: More History:

Martin Duberman, excerpt from **Stonewall** (Handout)

Tennessee Williams, "Two On a Party" (Handout)

Thurs. Oct. 3: Midterm

Tues. Oct. 8: Bisexuality:

Marjorie Garber, "Introduction" to **Vice Versa** (Handout)

Thurs. Oct. 10: Bisexuality:

Garber continued

Tues. Oct. 15: Assimilation:

Daniel Harris, "Glad-to-Be Gay Propaganda" (Handout)

Armistead Maupin, "Suddenly Home" (Handout)

Thurs. Oct. 17: Assimilation: Gay Marriage

Andrew Sullivan, excerpt from *Virtually Normal*

Response #4 Due

Tues. Oct. 22:

Assimilation: Gay Marriage

Michael Warner, excerpt from *The Trouble with Normal*

Thurs. Oct. 24: Sexual Orientation and Race:

Gregory Conerly, "Are You Black First or Are You Queer?" (Handout)

Tues. Oct. 29: Sexual Orientation and Race:

Bell Hooks, "Homophobia in Black Communities" (Handout)

James Baldwin, "Just Above My Head" (Handout)

Thursday Oct. 31: **The Celluloid Closet** (film)

Tues.: Nov. 5: **The Celluloid Closet**

Thurs. Nov. 7: Television Representations:

Suzanna Walters, "All Gay, All the Time?" (Handout)

Response #5 Due

Tues. Nov. 12: Film Representations of Lesbians: film to be determined

Thurs. Nov. 14: Discussion

Tues. Nov. 19: Film Representations of Gay Men: film to be determined

Thurs. Nov. 21: Discussion

Break

Tuesday, Dec. 3: Review Day

Thurs., Dec. 5: Review Day

Final: Weds., Dec. 11, 8-10 AM

Last Updated: August 16, 2002