

## English 388: Topics in Lesbian and Gay Studies

### Queer Theory



This course will provide an overview of the basic concepts and issues in contemporary Queer Theory. The course will begin by reviewing the central premises that helped define the field, such as social constructionism, performativity, and the critique of identity politics, and will proceed to examine recent issues in the field, including the impact of capitalism on sexual orientation, the relation between sexual identity and citizenship, and current debates about the desirability of assimilation into straight culture.

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#### 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.

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

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#### Assignments:

##### [Basic Definitions \(Essentialism and Constructionism\)](#)

Tues Aug. 21: Introduction to the Course

Thurs. Aug. 23: Michel Foucault, "The History of Sexuality"

Tues. Aug. 28: David Halperin, "Is There a History of Sexuality?" **First Response Due**

Thurs. Aug. 30: Application Day

## Identity Politics and Performativity

Tues. Sept. 4: Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination"

Thurs. Sept. 6: Mark Simpson, "Blue For You: Adult Comedians"

Tues. Sept. 11: Elizabeth Meese and Sandy Huss, "Staging the Erotic" **Response 2 Due**

Thurs. Sept. 13: Application Day

## Gender and Sexual Identity

Tues. Sept. 18: Marjorie Garber, "Spare Parts: The Surgical Construction of Gender"

Thurs. Sept. 20: Judith Halberstam, "Oh Behave! Austin Powers and the Drag Kings"

Tues. Sept. 25: Colleen Lamos, "Taking on the Phallus"

Thurs. Sept. 27: Application Day

## Sexual Orientation and Racial Identity

Tues. Oct. 2: Richard Fung, "The Trouble With 'Asians'"

Thurs. Oct. 4: Joseph Boone, "Rubbing Aladdin's Lamp"

Tues. Oct. 9: Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "Expanding the Categories of Race and Sexuality..." **Response 3 Due**

Thurs. Oct 11: Application Day

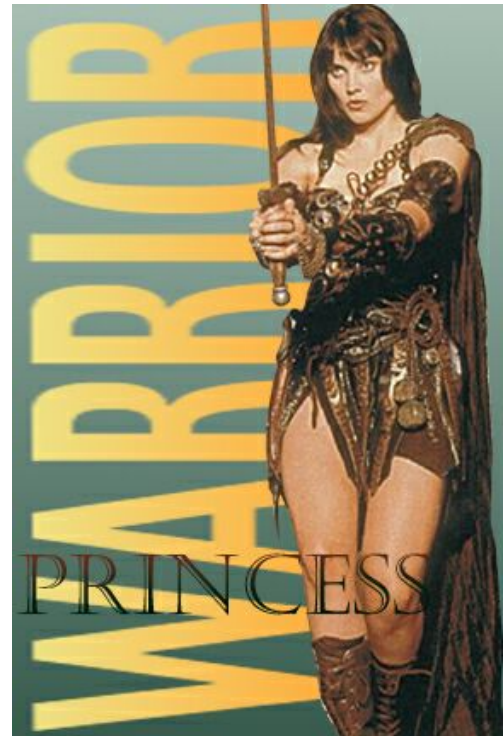
## Reactions

Tues. Oct. 16: Anna Marie Smith, "The Regulation of Lesbian Sexuality Through Erasure"

Thurs. Oct. 18: No class

Tues. Oct. 23: Lee Edelman, "Tearooms and Sympathy"

Thurs. Oct. 25: Midterm



## Money

Tues. Oct. 30: John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity"

Thurs. Nov. 1: Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism" **Response 4 Due**

Tues. Nov. 6: Rosemary Hennessey, "Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture"

Thurs. Nov. 8: Application Day

## Assimilation

Tues. Nov. 13: Andrew Sullivan, excerpt from *Virtually Normal*

Thurs. Nov. 15: Warner, excerpt from *The Trouble With Normal* **Response 5 Due**

## Break

## Public/Private

Tues. Nov. 27: Lauren Berlant, excerpt from *The Queen of America*

Thurs. Nov. 29: Eric Clarke, excerpt from *Virtuous Vice*

Tues. Dec. 4: Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public"

Thurs. Dec. 6: Application Day

## Final Exam

Last Updated: August 19, 2001