

English 288

Jeanne Hamming, ENGL 288, Spring 2002, Sexual Diversity in Literature and Film

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English 288: Sexual Diversity in Literature and Film

Spring, 2002

TTH 4:00-5:15

342 Brooks

Office: 125 Stansbury Hall

Office Hours: TTH 5:20-6:00 or by appointment

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Course Description:

In this course we will examine the construction 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 lesbigays, 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.

Required Texts:

Leslie Feinberg. **Stone Butch Blues**

Ursula K LeGuin. **The Left Hand of Darkness**

Annamarie Jagose. **Queer Theory**

Tony Kushner. **Angels in America, 1 and 2**

There will also be selected films shown in class.

Evaluation:

Course grades will be based on:

Either: 4 Response Papers (2-3 pp each) or Midterm essay (6-8 pp): 40%

Final Exam: 40%

Class Discussion and Focusing Questions: 20%

Attendance:

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

Course Schedule:

T 1/15 Introduction to Course Policies and Procedures

Video: Intersexuality

TH 1/17 Introduction to Queer Theory

Reading: Jagose, All (except introduction and afterward)

T 1/22 The Origins of Sexual Orientation

Reading: Burr, "Homosexuality and Biology" (handout)

TH 1/24 The Origins of Sexual Orientation

Reading: Ford, "No Splashing in the Gene Pool" (handout)

T 1/29 Gender-bending?

LeGuin, 1-161

TH 1/31 Gender-bending?

LeGuin, 162-301

T 2/5 Essentialism vs. Constructionism

Reading: Stone, "Cross-Dressing Psychiatrist," Vance, "Social Construction Theory and Sexuality" (handouts)

Response Paper Due

TH 2/7 Essentialism vs. Constructionism

Reading: Judith Halberstam, "F2M..." (handout)

T 2/12 Film: You Don't Know Dick

TH 2/14 Film: You Don't Know Dick

Discussion: You Don't Know Dick

T 2/19 History

Film: Before Stonewall

TH 2/21 History

Film: Before Stonewall

T 2/26 More History

Feinberg, 5-80 See Feinberg's website at www.transgenderwarrior.org

TH 2/28 More History

Feinberg, 81-153

T 3/5 More History

Feinberg, 155-226

TH 3/7 More History

Feinberg, 227-301

Optional Midterm Essay Due

Response Paper Due

T 3/12 Coming Out

Reading: Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet" (handout), Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (handout)

TH 3/14 Coming Out

Reading: Creet, "Anxieties of Identity: Coming Out and Coming Undone" (handout)

T 3/19 Film: Better Than Chocolate

TH 3/21 Film: Better Than Chocolate

Discussion: Better Than Chocolate

3/25-3/29 Spring Break

T 4/2 AIDS

Reading: Sontag, "AIDS and its Metaphors" (handout)

Response Paper Due

TH 4/4 AIDS

Meyer, "Rock Hudson's Body" (handout)

T 4/9 AIDS

Kushner, "Millennium Approaches"

TH 4/11 AIDS

Kushner, "Perestroika"

T 4/16 "Real Men"

Simpson, "Male Impersonators," excerpt (handout)

Response Paper Due

TH 4/18 "Real Men"

Reading: Webb, "Junk Male" (handout)

T 4/23 Film: My Own Private Idaho

TH 4/25 Film: My Own Private Idaho

Discussion: My Own Private Idaho

T 4/30 Capitalism and Gay Identity

Reading: Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism" (handout) See also: Hamming, "Whatever Turns You On..." at www.genders.org issue 34

TH 5/2 Capitalism and Gay Identity

Reading: Allen, "Lesbian and Gay Studies..." (handout)

Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 7, 8:00-10:00 Ê