

## Women and Gender Studies 141: Introduction to Queer Studies



(photos taken by Eliel Cruz)

Professor Brady James Forrest  
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### **Course Description**

Epithet, theoretical analytic, identity, mode of being, sense of time, spatial coding, aesthetic, scholarly field. In recent US history the term queer has taken on many and varied meanings and this course looks to introduce new scholars to the emerged and emerging field through key terms and themes. Students will get a taste of the wide range of approaches, objects, forms, and styles that make up the field. The course begins with key articles, manifestos, and secondary texts and then traverses contemporary scholarship from leading scholars. Alongside these readings, the course looks to both canonical and more recent queer film as common site to work through the ideas and arguments presented in the readings.

Rather than offer policy recommendations or good/bad qualitative evaluations, this course aims to introduce students to a new critical way of understanding and questioning the world around them. Rather than passing judgement, the course pushes students to engage in an analytical approach invested in understanding root causes and the effects of how people, institutions, and systems of power are intentionally interconnected in different configurations. While we are not disinterested in possible answers, this course primarily thinks with and through the form and function of the question.

Students should expect to study (e.g. read, complete assignments, attend events) up to 6 hours per week outside of class.

### **Office hours and Emails**

My office hours will be in the same zoom room as our classes on Tuesday and Thursday from 2pm to 3pm and by appointment. Office hours are a chance for you to get help on assignments or readings; go over materials covered in class; and ask any class related questions. Office hours are generally student directed. I *strongly* encourage you to take advantage of office hours. I tend to not check emails after 8pm or over the weekend. Before emailing please be sure to **double check the syllabus**. I encourage you to ask simple questions over email. If a question requires more than a few sentences response then it is probably best to just come to office hours or use that email to schedule a time to meet with me.

### **Required Texts**

All required reading will be posted and made available through Canvas and the films are on varied streaming services though there may be a need to rent/buy some. My goal is to have this course be as economically accessible as possible.

### **Course Requirements**

Grade Breakdown:

Paper #1	10%
Active Participation	25%
Close reading assignment	25%
Event Presentation	10%
Discussion Posts	20%
Final Response	10%

Course Completion: Failing to complete any one of the course requirements will result in a failing or incomplete grade for the course, incompletes are only given for extenuating circumstances.

Paper #1: The first paper will allow you to look back on the first portion of the semester and argue your answer to the question: What is queer? The paper should be 3-4 pages. (graded)

Attendance: You will not be penalized for your **first two** unexcused absences. Every unexcused absence beyond the second will result in a 1 percentage point drop in your final grade, i.e. from 91% to 90%. Six unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. An absence is considered excused only after you've spoken to me about the cause for your absence and I have excused it. You will never need to produce a doctor's note to excuse an absence. A general rule is that if you alone choose to be somewhere other than class then the absence is not excused, if you do not have a choice or larger outside powers are preventing you from attending then the absence is excused once you've talked with me.

Active Participation: This is a discussion based seminar style class so active participation is expected. In class we will cover and clarify the reading, introduce new material, and have discussions about the materials and assignments so your participation is crucial to your success. Everyone learns differently and has different approaches to a classroom setting and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that everyone can engage with the class not only in ways that are comfortable but in ways that push our comfort zone so we can grow as young scholars. If you must miss a class session, it's our responsibility to ensure you learn what happened in class and to obtain any of the materials distributed that day. Your presence, the frequency of your participation, the quality of your comments and questions, and any in class work all factor into your participation grade. (Graded)

Close reading assignments: You will select one scene from one of the films we have watched thus far to do a 2 page close reading of it. These assignments will offer a crucial opportunity to practice analytical and descriptive writing that will help with the conference paper. (Graded)

Current/Historic Event Presentation: To ensure that the course thinks through queer studies in relation to queer culture and the world outside of the classroom each of you will present on a current or historical event. The presentation should be at least 5 minutes long, introduce the class to your chosen event, and connect the event to the reading for that day or recent reading (a powerpoint is highly encouraged). You may use your discretion to decide what constitutes an event. The current event can be within a month of your presentation day while the historical event must have happened before you were born and you must properly contextualize it. (Completion)

Discussion Posts: You are responsible for uploading 10 short reading/viewing responses to the Discussions tab on Canvas at least 24 hours before the start of class. Your response can be formatted as bullet points, full sentences, whatever, but must include two things: 1. One thing from the reading/viewing that you do not understand/find confusing (this can be framed as a question) and why or a "good question" based on the materials (see: Some Notes On How To Ask A Good Question About Theory That Will Provoke Conversation And Further Discussion From Your Colleagues by Professor Kyla Wazana Tompkins in the files section of Canvas) and 2. A list of at least three words that seem to be central to the materials for the day which you define each term in your own words and offer a brief account of why you think each term is important for the reading. Each response is worth 1% of your grade and you must submit a total of 10 reading responses over the course of the semester for full credit, but when you do so is up to you. I strongly encourage you to check and see what your peers have posted before coming to class. I highly recommend getting into the habit of this early, so that you don't have to play catch up at the very end. (Completion)

Final Response: This short paper will offer you an opportunity to reflect on the course.  
(completion)

Grade Rubric: The following is a general rubric for how I evaluate **all graded** assignments.

- An A—Exquisite work that is nuanced and takes risks. Makes a clear, supported argument that goes beyond the obvious to make unexpected connections. Challenges the reader to see the topic differently. Obviously required great effort and thought on the part of the student. “A” grades are earned, not freely given.
- A B—Well-written and/or argued work that demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and thoughtful analysis. May struggle with one of the following: organization/structure, supporting evidence, and generalizations. Demonstrates potential for growth and significant effort.
- A C—Fulfills the basic requirements of a given assignment, but does not exceed them. Makes an argument, supported by evidence, but not a particularly nuanced one. Writing is adequate but not elegant. Bare minimum of effort.
- A D—Fails to meet the full requirements of the assignment (including page length). Makes an unconvincing and/or unsupported argument. Draws on generalizations and opinions.
- An F—Fails to meet the requirements of the assignment.

Final Grade Rubric

A+ 97-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F <59%
A 93-96%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C-70-72%	D- 60-62%	

**Course Schedule**

Note: This schedule is subject to change over the course of the semester.

Week 1

Monday, July 12, 2021

Queer, Normal, and Performance Keywords, American Cultural Studies

(<https://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/essay/performance/>)

“If Everyone Can Be ‘Queer,’ is Anyone?,” Jenna Wortham

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/magazine/when-everyone-can-be-queer-is-anyone.html>)

“A Black Feminist Statement,” Combahee River Collective

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

“Critically Queer,” Judith Butler

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

“Queer and Now,” Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick

Thursday, July 15, 2021

“(De)Subjugated Knowledges- An Introduction to Transgender Studies,” Susan Stryker  
*Disclosure*, Sam Feder

Week 2

Monday, July 19, 2021

*Paris is Burning*, Julia Livingston

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/147275/a-litany-for-survival>

“Speculating Queer Pasts,” Marcos Gonzalez

(<https://catapult.co/stories/queer-pasts-speculation-history-paris-is-burning-legacy-marcos-santia-go-gonzalez>)

“Ain’t Nothing Like a Butch Queen,” Marlon Bailey (required: pg 36, optional: 33-45)

**Due: Paper 1**

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Race, Sexuality, Gender Keywords, African American Studies

*Moonlight*, Barry Jenkins

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

“‘Quare’ studies, or (almost) everything I know about queer studies I learned from my grandmother,” E. Patrick Johnson

"Genesisissy," Danez Smith ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mfXffmQgp4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mfXffmQgp4))

Thursday, July 22, 2021

“La Prieta,” Gloria E. Anzaldúa

Sexuality and Gender Keywords, Latin@ American Studies

Week 3

Monday, July 26, 2021

“Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/ Disabled Existence,” Robert McRuer

“To the American Psychiatric Association-1973,” Jewelle Gomez

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

*The Way He Looks*, Daniel Ribeiro

Disability Keyword, Disability Studies

“Becoming Disabled,” Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/opinion/sunday/becoming-disabled.html>)

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

“Who is your mother?,” Paula Gunn Allen

(<https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/allenredrootsofwhitefeminism.html>)

“The 2 is Separate: Decolonizing Justice through Two-Spirit Sovereignty,” Nelwat Ishkamewe

([http://efniks.com/the-deep-dive-pages/2018/11/19/the-2-is-separate-decolonizing-justice-through-two-spirit-sovereignty?fbclid=IwAR3EXTBQ6Bh6Z16Y1fjQIS5NUvR9YgDF-2o\\_W-sqA1pypi0WbvpWaWXcRj8](http://efniks.com/the-deep-dive-pages/2018/11/19/the-2-is-separate-decolonizing-justice-through-two-spirit-sovereignty?fbclid=IwAR3EXTBQ6Bh6Z16Y1fjQIS5NUvR9YgDF-2o_W-sqA1pypi0WbvpWaWXcRj8))

Thursday, July 29, 2021

*Watermelon Woman*, Cheryl Dunye

“For Bayard Rustin,” Danez Smith (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqtT0tJhpbA>)

Week 4

Monday, August 2, 2021

Slavery, Prison, Abolition Keywords, American Cultural Studies

“Prisons and Class Warfare: An Interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore,” Clément Petitjean

(<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3954-prisons-and-class-warfare-an-interview-with-ruth-wilson-gilmore>)

Explained: The Racial Wealth Gap (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqrhn8khGLM>)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53918/power-56d233adafef3>

“Poem about Police Violence,” June Jordan

"Don't Let the Fascists Speak," Pat Parker (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuoZXUHqiCM>)

“Warning,” Langston Hughes

(<https://allpoetry.com/poem/14326872-Warning-by-Langston-Hughes>)

**Due: Close Reading**

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

“Capitalism and Gay Identity,” John D'Emilio

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Neoliberalism and Capitalism Keywords, American Cultural Studies

“Getting Close,” Ty Mitchell (<http://cakeboymag.com/posts/cumming-together>)

“Explained: The Stock Market” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCFkWDdmXG8&t=918s>)

“American Wedding,” Essex Hemphill

Thursday, August 5, 2021

“Preface: Fragment from the Sense of Brown Manuscript,” José Esteban Muñoz

“Preface: The Manifesto of a Communist Party” Joshua Chambers-Letson

Week 5

Monday, August 9, 2021

“Nina Simone and the Work of Minoritarian Performance,” Joshua Chambers-Letson

Nina Simone: Freedom (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySYRI4wXUpo>)

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

*How to Survive a Plague*, David France

“Queer Nation Manifesto,” Anonymous

(<https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/queernation.html>)

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

“He Was An Architect,” Ashon Crawley

(<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/22/948963753/little-richard-black-queer-grief-he-was-an-architect>)

“Pulse, and the Beautiful, Sad, Joyful Tradition of Queer Grief,” John Paul Brammer

(<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/commentary-pulse-beautiful-sad-joyful-tradition-queer-grief-n770936>)

“All the Dead Boys Look Like Me,” Christopher Soto

(<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/146840/all-the-dead-boys-look-like-me>)

“Orlando,” Andrea Gibson ft Mary Lambert

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRUI2yfmDkk>)

“Ashes” Andrea Gibson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVwdgUAMB2w>)

Thursday, August 12, 2021

*Flower*, Matt Lambert

“Uses of the Erotic,” Audre Lorde

Monday, August 16, 2021

**Due: Final Response**

**Additional Course Information**

**Classroom Community:** The subjects covered in this class are diverse and may cause a wide range of reactions from you or your peers. As young scholars it is our responsibility to respect people's emotional and intellectual reactions to material, create and maintain a space for rigorous proactive discussion on the material, and learn from one another. We should strive to be curious and generous.

**Academic Integrity:** Not crediting your sources properly is a serious matter. If you plagiarize, you will (at the very least) fail the course. See the Georgetown Honor System website for guidelines about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it:

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. Note that in all matters I expect you to observe the Georgetown honor pledge: *To be honest in every academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.*

**Access:** Everyone learns best differently and our bodily needs are not all the same. You do not need permission to leave the class to ensure your bodily needs are met. If you have any access needs please let me know as soon as possible. I am not able to give trigger/content warnings given the wide breadth of potentially triggering content the class covers. If there is something I should know that would ensure you are able to engage with any given class or topic please let me know within the first two weeks of class. If anything changes during the semester that impacts your ability to engage and learn please let me know if you are comfortable doing so. Some of the texts presented in this course are explicit in their treatment of sex, of bodies, of violence. Students not inclined to work with explicit material are strongly encouraged to find a course that suits them better.

**Accommodations:** If you have a documented disability and need accommodations please let me know as soon as possible so you can receive adequate accommodations. If you have an undocumented disability that you think may impact your ability to fully engage with the course but are unaware of how to get documentation or are wary or opposed to documentation please also let me know. More information can be found at the Academic Resource Center (<https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability>) or (<http://guarc.georgetown.edu/disability/accommodations>).

**Due Dates:** All assignments and readings are due on the date listed in the syllabus. Late discussion posts are not accepted except under extraordinary circumstances but all other assignments have a 3 day grace period after the due date.

**Title IX:** Please know that while I am a faculty member who is committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault, please keep in mind that **I am a mandated reporter** which means that university policy requires me to report



any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct.

These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention

(202) 687-0323

[jls242@georgetown.edu](mailto:jls242@georgetown.edu)

Jennifer Wiggins, MA

Sexual Assault Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(202) 687-8932

[jmw322@georgetown.edu](mailto:jmw322@georgetown.edu)

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at

<http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

Writing Center: Writing can be difficult but approaching it as a process rather than a single event will make it easier and more rewarding. I encourage you to visit the Writing Center (217 Lauinger) and talk with one of the Center's trained tutors. While you will always be solely responsible for class writing you submit in this class and while the Center's tutors won't do your work for you, tutors can talk you through any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming a thesis and organizing your thoughts to revising, editing and proofreading. To set up an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>.

Written work: All written work should be 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and follow Chicago Style Citations. It must bear your name, course number, and date and have a title (no cover page needed).