

Women and Gender Studies 237: Gender and Performance

Professor Brady James Forrest
Email: bf459@georgetown.edu
Second Main Session, June 5-July 7
Monday-Thursday, 10:50-12:45
Intercultural Center 204

Course Description

What do the 2001 action romcom movie *Miss Congeniality*, the Academy Award winning film *Moonlight*, and the groundbreaking documentary *Paris is Burning* have in common? In each performances of gender take center stage.

Central to queer theories and gender studies is Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity. This class takes this concept as its starting point to interrogate the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, and disability to explore how performativity and performance inform our understandings of ourselves, difference, and our social world. Over our five weeks together We will read critical scholarship including E Patrick Johnson, Robert Mcruer, and Juana María Rodríguez to help us critically engage with a wide range of film and visual culture to see how gender is performed everywhere we look in culture.

Learning Goals

Students will:

1. Be able to identify the larger fields of women and gender studies, queer theory, critical race theory, and disability studies that inform and constitute feminist disability studies.
2. Improve critical reading skills across different genres and forms.
3. Improve writing skills by writing different types of papers ranging from responses to a medium length academic paper while giving and receiving peer feedback.
4. Learn about and better understand minoritized communities while engaging in critical discussions with peers.

Office hours and Emails

My office hours are in ICC 456 on _____ at ___:___pm 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 sentence response then it is probably best to just come to office hours or use that email to schedule a time to meet with me.

Course Requirements

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.

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 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 your responsibility to 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.

In Class Presentation: Once during the semester each student will give a brief five minute presentation on the material for that day that includes a summary of main concepts and guiding questions to help direct that day's discussion. You will create a handout to accompany it.

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.

Response Paper: You will write a 3 page response paper due Friday each week that summarizes and attends to the content for the week. The response is your time to identify tensions within the materials to offer a reading of primary source material using the secondary source materials.

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—Unacceptable, incoherent, or otherwise incomplete.

Grading

Discussion Post	10%
In Class Presentation	15%
Response Paper	50%
Participation	25%

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%	
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Required Texts

All readings will be provided and while many of the films for the course are on streaming services you may need to rent or buy them.

Course Schedule

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

Week 1-Gender and Performance

June 5

Syllabus Day

June 6

Miss Congeniality, Donald Petrie

Performance Keyword, Susan Manning

[\(https://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/essay/performance/\)](https://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/essay/performance/)

June 7

“Critically Queer,” Judith Butler

Gender Keyword, Jules Gill-Peterson

June 8

Miss Congeniality, Donald Petrie

Performativity Keyword, Tavia Nyong’o

Week 2-A Black critique/An of color critique

June 12

“Quare Studies,” E Patrick Johnson

June 13

Moonlight, Barry Jenkins

Queer Keyword, Chandan Reddy

June 14

Cis Keyword, Finn Enke

Race Keyword, Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective

June 15

Moonlight, Barry Jenkins

Week 3-Theatrics

June 19

“Latina/o Queer Performance: A Critical Travelogue” from *Performing Queer Latinidad*, Ramón H. Rivera-Servera

June 20

Paris is Burning, Jennie Livingston

June 21

“Latina/o Queer Performance: A Critical Travelogue” from *Performing Queer Latinidad*, Ramón H. Rivera-Servera

June 22

Paris is Burning, Jennie Livingston

Week 4-A Crip Intertext

June 26

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

June 27

The Way He Looks, Daniel Ribeiro

June 28

“Sex Education,” Patrick White

June 29

The Way He Looks, Daniel Ribeiro

Week 5-Latinx

July 3

“Gesture in Mambo Time” from *Sexual Futures*, Juana María Rodríguez

July 4

Zoot Suit, Luis Valdez (We are watching the film which can be found on Netflix)

July 5

“Gesture in Mambo Time” from *Sexual Futures*, Juana María Rodríguez

July 6
Review

Additional Course Information

Classroom Community: The subjects covered in this class are diverse and may cause a wide range of reactions from your 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. Normally an assignment's grade will be lowered by a third of a grade (C+ to C, A- to B+) for every calendar day it is late. Late Discussion posts or Instaquer posts are not accepted except under extraordinary circumstances.

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

Jennifer Wiggins, MA

Sexual Assault Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(202) 687-8932

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).