

**ENGL/WMST 140: Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Literature and Culture**

**Section 002**

**Spring 2017**

**Instructor: Ben Bolling, Ph.D.**

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**Classroom: Greenlaw 222**

**Office: Dey 336**

**Office Hours: M, W 2:00 PM- 3:30 PM**

**T 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM and by appointment**

**Engaging LGBTQ Literature and Culture**

**Course Description:** This section of Gay and Lesbian Literature and Culture engages three areas of cultural production. In the first unit, we will ground our discussions in a study of seminal scholars and texts in the field of critical theory broadly defined as queer theory. For the second unit, we will turn our attention to prose literature that depicts LGBTQ perspectives and experiences around the world. The third unit will challenge you to apply analytic tools developed throughout the course as we engage representations of LGBTQ experience in popular American media including music and superhero narratives.

Central questions that will guide our inquiry this semester include:

- How do we approach a history of LGBTQ identities? Do these identities constitute a unifiable, coherent topic across cultures, time, and place? If so, how might we produce a history of *queerness*?
- Do we need to employ different approaches in order to understand varied experiences of gender? The differences between sexual orientations and gender identities? The differences between gender expression and gender identity?
- What makes an author or a text *queer*?

**Course Objectives:** In Engaging LGBTQ Literature and Culture, you will learn to:

- Identify significant developments in the field of queer theory;
- Understand how historical and cultural context inflect a text's meaning;
- Conduct primary and secondary research using a variety of academic resources;
- Compose clear and concise written and oral arguments;
- Consider the role of genre, medium, and form in shaping a text;
- Critically engage cultural narratives of LGBTQ experiences

### **Required Materials:**

Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*

Luis Negrón's *Mundo Cruel* (translated by Suzanne Jill Levine)

Etel Adnan's *Sea and Fog*

Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*

David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

Thani Al-Suwaidi's *The Diesel* (translated by William Hutchins)

Hasan Namir's *God in Pink*

Please note that copies of all required films will be placed on reserve in the UNC-CH Media Resource Center (<http://library.unc.edu/house/mrc/>) on the lower level of the Undergraduate Library. Many of the films are also available for streaming, rental, or purchase via services like Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, and HBO Go. You will be provided links to YouTube playlists for songs, music videos, and other popular media in Unit 3. Required reading in critical theory will be provided via Sakai.

**All other required texts will be provided via Sakai.**

**Sakai:** Sakai is a web-based instructional environment that will serve as our digital home for this semester. Here, you will find the course syllabus, assignments, reading materials, resources, and important announcements/reminders. To sign into Sakai, go to: <https://sakai.unc.edu/welcome/>. Your username and password are your university Onyen and password. Please make sure that you are comfortable with Sakai's setup and functionality. Don't be afraid to ask for help with any Sakai-related issues. Discomfort/confusion are not valid excuses for failure to complete an assignment on time.

**Professionalism:** Professionalism for ENGL/WMST 140 has five components – Community, Responsibility, Respect, Communication, and Collegiality— explained broadly below:

- ***Academic Etiquette:*** Group discussion is integral to our learning objectives in this class. Respect for diverse opinions voiced in class and online is essential. In order for us to learn from one another, we have to allow each other to make mistakes, and/or to offer unpopular positions for debate. I encourage you to be mindful of *empathy* as a key value for constructive classroom discourse.
- ***Cell Phones:*** Before class begins, please turn your cell phones **OFF**. If your phone draws attention to itself during class, I will make every possible effort to embarrass you.
- ***E-mail:*** E-mail is the easiest and most professional way to contact your colleagues and me. My e-mail address is listed on the front of the syllabus. If you e-mail me during my office hours, I will usually respond immediately, unless I am with a student. **Otherwise, I will respond within 24 hours during the school week (M-F). Please do not e-mail a question about an assignment due in fewer than 24 hours. In all other cases, if you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the school week, please re-send the message.**

- **Attendance:** Your attendance, preparedness, and active participation are integral to our success. **Attendance is mandatory. Each absence beyond three (3) will result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third (1/3) letter grade** (e.g. a B becomes a B-, a B- becomes a C+, etc.). Seven or more absences will result in automatic failure of the class in accordance with UNC-CH policy. **I do not give Incompletes.**
- **Preparedness:** Tardiness disrupts the classroom environment and is disrespectful of your colleagues and me. Repeated or excessive tardiness may be counted as an absence, so please arrive on time. You are always expected to have completed the day's assignments when you arrive for class. Please note that **I do not accept late work.**
- **Conferences:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. Please see me during my regularly scheduled office hours if you have any questions, if you are struggling with an assignment, or if you would like to chat. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know and we will arrange another mutually convenient time to meet.

### **Evaluation:**

Your grade in this course will be assigned based on your performance in the following areas:

|                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Participation</b>                                                            | 25% |
| <b><i>Unit 1: Engaging Queer Theory</i></b>                                     |     |
| Assignment 1: Wednesday, February 1st                                           | 5%  |
| Assignment 2: Wednesday, February 8th                                           | 5%  |
| Assignment 3: Wednesday, February 15th                                          | 5%  |
| <b><i>Unit 2: Engaging Global LGBTQ Literature</i></b>                          |     |
| Close Reading Paper: Monday, April 3rd                                          | 20% |
| <b><i>Unit 3: Engaging LGBTQ Popular Culture</i></b>                            |     |
| LGBTQ Representation in the<br>Superhero Genre Presentation: Monday, April 10th | 10% |
| A Queer Playlist Project: Monday, April 24th                                    | 10% |
| <b>Final Exam</b>                                                               | 20% |

Each of these assessments is detailed in an assignment description available on Sakai.

**A note on participation:** Participation includes, but is not limited to: constructive contributions to class discussions and activities, attendance, engagement with daily readings, and timely completion of assignments.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:** Plagiarism is a very serious Honor Code violation as it is a breach of the academic community's trust. Every piece of work you produce in this class (oral, written, or multimedia) must be your own. You are bound by the Honor Code in all that you do

at this University, and so am I. I take that responsibility very seriously. I am required to report any work I believe may be plagiarized. Handing in work that is not your own not only violates the Honor Code, it also ruins the trust between us. If I find you have plagiarized in my course, I will fail you on the assignment – no exceptions – and I will seek additional penalties from the Honor Court. If you are struggling with an assignment, please speak to me. If you are struggling with your time management, please speak to me.

Please speak to me if you have any questions. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for breaching the Honor Code. And please remember: this policy applies to drafts as well as final products.

### Honor Code

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

Under the Honor Code provisions, you have four general responsibilities:

- Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code.
- Refrain from lying, cheating or stealing.
- Conduct yourself so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.
- Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-administered honor system and judicial system for over 100 years. The system is the responsibility of students and is regulated and governed by them, but faculty share the responsibility. If you have questions about your responsibility under the honor code, please bring them to your instructor or consult with the office of the Dean of Students or the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. This document, adopted by the Chancellor, the Faculty Council, and the Student Congress, contains all policies and procedures pertaining to the student honor system. Your full participation and observance of the honor code is expected.

Please submit all written work with the following signed pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.”

**Non-Discrimination:** This university does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all differences.

**Accessibility:** The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with disabilities are eligible to receive “reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities” (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/faculty>). If you anticipate such accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Additionally, you may seek out student support services at the Department of Accessibility Resources and Service (<https://accessibility.unc.edu/>) or through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

**The Writing Center:** The UNC Writing Center is an excellent resource if you would like to pursue additional help with your writing outside of class. In either face-to-face or online sessions, tutors will help you at any stage in your composition process. Tutors will not revise, edit, or proofread your papers for you. However, they will help you organize your paper, think through your ideas, and improve your arguments. For more information about the writing center or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/> .

**My pledge to you:**

I will be available for you as much as possible. I will strive to make this class engaging and intellectually stimulating, and your feedback will always be welcomed. Additionally, please communicate to me any extenuating circumstances and I will do my best to accommodate your needs. This classroom should be a welcoming environment that provides everyone with an equal opportunity for learning. I want you to let me know what I can do to ensure that it is, in fact, such a place. My ultimate goal for every course I teach is to provide you with skills necessary to confidently assert yourselves as the next generation of scholars and professionals representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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**Your pledge to me:**

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understood the above requirements. I agree to abide by these requirements.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Engaging LGBTQ Literature and Culture**  
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On the course calendar below, I've listed our class schedule and important due dates for assignments. Be advised, however, that homework, additional reading, and other assignments may be added or adjusted throughout the term. Be sure to check Sakai announcements often and to see a classmate for updates if you are absent. Also, listen carefully in class for announced changes and check the calendar for updates.

**Week 1**

W 1/11 Course Introduction

**UNIT 1: ENGAGING QUEER THEORY**

**Week 2**

M 1/16 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: University Holiday**  
**NO CLASSES HELD**

W 1/18 READ: David M. Halperin, "Is There a History of Sexuality?" (1989)  
FILM: *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001)

**Week 3**

M 1/23 READ: Michel Foucault, "The Carceral" from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977)

W 1/25 READ: Michel Foucault, "The Incitement to Discourse" from *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1, An Introduction* (1978)  
FILM: *Pariah* (2011)

**Week 4**

M 1/30 READ: Judith Butler, selections from *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990)

W 2/1 READ: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, selections from *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) and *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990)  
FILM: *Paris is Burning* (1991)  
UNIT 1 ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

**Week 5**

M 2/6 READ: Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public" (2002)

W 2/8 FILM: *Angels in America* (Parts I and II) (2003)  
UNIT 1 ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE

**Week 6**

M 2/13 READ: J. Halberstam, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Men, Women, and Masculinity" (2002)

W 2/15 READ: Madhavi Menon, "Introduction" to *Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism*  
FILM: *But I'm a Cheerleader* (1999)  
UNIT 1 ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE

**UNIT 2: ENGAGING GLOBAL LGBTQ LITERATURE****Week 7**

M 2/20 READ: Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (through pg. 100)

W 2/22 READ: Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (finish novel)

**Week 8**

M 2/27 READ: Luis Negrón's *Mundo Cruel* (translated by Suzanne Jill Levine)

W 3/1 READ: Etel Adnan's *Sea and Fog*

**Week 9**

M 3/6 READ: Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (Ch.1-4)

W 3/8 READ: Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (Ch. 5-7)

3/10-3/19 **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES HELD**

**Week 10**

M 3/20 READ: David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

W 3/22 READ: Thani Al-Suwaidi's *The Diesel* (translated by William Hutchins)

**Week 11**

M 3/27 READ: Hasan Namir's *God in Pink* (through pg. 120)

W 3/29 READ: Hasan Namir's *God in Pink* (finish novel)

**UNIT 3: ENGAGING LGBTQ POPULAR CULTURE**

**Week 12**

M 4/3 UNIT 2 CLOSE READING PAPER DUE  
Queer Superheroes and Serial Identities

W 4/5 LGBTQ Superheroes Research

**Week 13**

M 4/10 UNIT 3 PRESENTATION: LGBTQ Representation in the Superhero  
Genre

W 4/12 READ: Rachel Lewis, "What's Queer about Musicology Now?"  
PLAYLIST 1: Bessie Smith, Little Richard, Elton John, David Bowie,  
Queen, kd lang, George Michael, Pet Shop Boys, Indigo Girls, Melissa  
Ethridge

**Week 14**

M 4/17 READ: Susan Sontag, "Notes on Camp"  
PLAYLIST 2: Judy Garland, Cher, Liza Minelli, Dolly Parton, Donna  
Summer, Barbara Streisand, Cyndi Lauper, Madonna, Kylie Minogue,  
Janet Jackson, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga

W 4/19 PLAYLIST 3: The Gossip, Scissor Sisters, Le Tigre, Rufus Wainwright,  
RuPaul, Antony, Tegan and Sara, Le1f, Frank Ocean

**Week 15**

M 4/24 UNIT 3 PROJECT: A Queer Playlist

W 4/26 Course Evaluations and Final Thoughts

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 9th at 4:00 P.M.**