Gender Studies 328: Queer Studies
Professor Melissa M. Wilcox
MW 1:00-2:20, Olin 155
Whitman College
Fall 2012

Office: Olin 152  Office hours: M 3:00-4:30, Th 10:30-12:00
Office phone: 527-5247 (If you can’t make these times, see me for an
E-mail: wilcoxmm@whitman.edu appointment)

Course description: Queer studies, in the guise of queer theory, developed in the early 1990s out of the conjunction of feminist theory, sexuality studies, and queer activism. This course introduces students to some of the key authors and texts in queer theory, as well as the next generation of works that brought about the establishment of queer studies as a field. It is recommended that students who take this class have previous college-level exposure to theoretical writing in either the humanities or the social sciences. This course fulfills the Alternative Voices/Cultural Pluralism requirement.

Required texts:

All books will be on reserve in Penrose, and you’re also welcome to share books with a classmate in order to keep your expenses down.

Course requirements:

Final grades in this course will be calculated as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection papers (2 @ 15%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application papers (2 @ 15%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outlines</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Remember to keep all papers I return to you in case there are any discrepancies at the end of the semester. If you keep your papers, you can also track your own grade!
**Reflection papers:** For two of the books we cover this semester (you choose which two), you will need to write a 4- to 5-page reflection paper. In this paper, reflect on and critique (i.e., thoughtfully evaluate) the book, in whole or in part. You may address the overall argument, a chapter, or even a single passage of the book. Please indicate at the top of the paper that you’re writing a reflection paper.

**Application papers:** For two of the books we cover this semester (you choose which two, but they must not be books you’ve addressed in your reflection papers), you will need to write a 4- to 5-page application paper. In this paper, apply the ideas from the book to an analysis of something else: a literary work, film, political agenda or strategy, legal case, performance, art work, organization, or anything else you can think of. As with the reflection papers, you don’t have to try to cover the whole book: you can focus on the overall argument or one specific aspect. Please indicate at the top of the paper that you’re writing an application paper.

**Outlines:** For each reading assignment in this class, beginning with Foucault, you are required to turn in a short outline of the assigned reading. We will go over these at the beginning of class, in order to better comprehend the author’s argument. No discussion or critique is possible without first understanding what the author is saying! Your outlines will count as your preparation and participation grade for this course. They may be typewritten or handwritten (as long as your writing is legible!), and must be turned in during class in hard copy.

**Final paper:** Your final assignment for this class is a 10- to 12-page queer analysis of something. You may draw on any of the books we’ve read in class for theoretical inspiration; you may also use other queer theorists or other books and articles by the authors we’ve read. But the core of your paper should be the queer reading of anything you can think of to look at from a queer perspective. You may want to make this paper an expansion of one of your application papers, or you may want to focus on something else entirely. Come see me in office hours if you need ideas to get you started. Final projects are due in your CLEo inbox by **2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 13.**

**Course policies:**

**Students with disabilities:** If you have a disability and need my help in making this course fully accessible to you, please feel free to contact me, either in person or through the Academic Resources Center (527-5213). I’ll be happy to help in whatever way I can. If you suspect you have a learning difference but have not had your suspicions confirmed, the Academic Resource Center can help you to identify that difference and figure out how to adjust your learning style accordingly. **The only thing wrong with a learning difference is an inflexible education system.**

**Inclusive language:** Inclusive language is the use of accurate and unbiased gender terminology, and it is required in every assignment you complete for this course. There isn’t room in this syllabus to go into the evidence for the importance of inclusive language, but the simple explanation is that language shapes how people think. When religious studies was considered to be the study of the beliefs of man, for instance, people (usually male scholars) tended to study male writers, male believers, male religious leaders, and so on simply because it didn’t occur to them to study women as well. As a result, they had a less accurate understanding of religion than we have today. "Humanity" and "humans" are gender-inclusive terms; "man" and "men" are not.
Non-inclusive language also can be misleading, inaccurate, or vague. Traditional formal English, for example, requires that you use the singular pronoun "he" as a generic pronoun. Thus, you might write: "when a new member is initiated into the secret society, he must undergo several hours of ordeals." People who read that sentence are left wondering whether "he" includes women or whether this secret society is for men only. The solution? When you use singular generic terms (like "one," "anyone," "a person," etc.), use the combined pronoun "she or he." Or, for a less awkward sentence, simply use a plural noun ("people," "initiates," "members," etc.), because English has a non-gendered plural pronoun ("they").

Don’t forget that inclusive language can also include sexuality – by the end of the first month of classes you’ll know the term “heteronormativity” and how to avoid it in your writing.

I am always happy to help you find more inclusive language for what you want to say – see me in office hours if you’d like assistance with this.

*Late fees:* For the essays, five percentage points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late (yes, this includes weekends and holidays). There will be no make-ups for the group project or the final exam unless you make arrangements with me in advance.

*Academic dishonesty:* Honesty is an integral part of academic learning; any form of cheating expresses gross disrespect for the efforts of your teachers, the hard work of your classmates, and your own privilege in having access to a quality education. I will not hesitate to report and pursue incidents of suspected academic dishonesty, including cheating on tests, copying others’ assignments, and plagiarism. The maximum penalty for academic dishonesty is permanent expulsion from Whitman.

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This class is an educational safe zone. It welcomes and respects the viewpoints of students of all sexual orientations and genders as well as all races, ethnicities, religions, and abilities. All members of this learning community are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and to listen especially carefully to the voices of culturally and socially disempowered groups.
Course Schedule

➔ Watch for the arrows! They tell you when an assignment is due.

Part 1: Beginnings and Forerunners

Wednesday, 8/29: Introducing queer theory
  Read: De Lauretis
Monday, 9/3: Camp
  Read: Syllabus; Sontag (on CLEo)
  Film: Paris is Burning (dir. Jennie Livingston, 1990, 77 min.)
Wednesday, 9/5: Drag cultures
  Read: Newton (on CLEo)
Monday, 9/10: The repressive hypothesis
  Read: Foucault Parts 1 and 2
  ➔ First outline due
Wednesday, 9/12: The social construction of sex
  Read: Foucault pp. 53-91
Monday, 9/17: Sex and power
  Read: Foucault pp. 92-131
Wednesday, 9/19: Bio-power
  Read: Foucault Part 5, Butler (on CLEo)

Part 2: Queers of Color: Politics and Performance

Monday, 9/24: Race and Melancholy
  Read: Halperin (on CLEo), Duggan (on CLEo), Muñoz Preface, Introduction
  Film: Looking for Langston (dir. Isaac Julien, 1992, 45 min.)
Wednesday, 9/26: Mourning and anger
  Read: Muñoz Chs. 2 and 4
  Film: The Transformation (dir. Susana Aiken and Carlos Aparicio, 1995, 52 min.)
  ➔ Foucault paper due in CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.
Monday, 10/1: Performance and resistance
  Read: Muñoz Chs. 5 and 6
Wednesday, 10/3: Making new worlds
  Read: Muñoz Chs. 7 and 8

Fall break 10/6-10/9!

Part 3: Genderqueer Performances

Wednesday, 10/10: Low theory, and deconstructing your childhood
  Read: Halberstam Introduction, Ch. 1
Monday, 10/15: Is failure queer?
  Read: Halberstam Chs. 2 and 3
  ➔ Muñoz paper due in CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 10/17: Feminism, fascism, and more deconstructing your childhood
  Read: Halberstam Chs. 4-6
  I will be out of town this day – no class, but please write an outline to turn in on Monday.
Part 4: Queer Theory and Homonationalism

Monday, 10/22: Back – and forward – to biopolitics I (and finish discussing Halberstam)
Read: Puar Preface
Wednesday, 10/24: Biopolitics II
Read: Puar Introduction
Monday, 10/29: Terrorism and sex
Read: Puar Ch. 1
-> Halberstam paper due in CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, 10/31: Sex and torture
Read: Puar Ch. 2
Monday, 11/5: Rethinking Lawrence v. Texas
Read: Puar Ch. 3
Wednesday, 11/7: Terrorist assemblages
Read: Puar Ch. 4, Conclusion

Part 5: Full Circle – Rethinking Foucault

Monday, 11/12: A Return to Madness
Read: Huffer Preface, Introduction
Wednesday, 11/14: Rethinking The History of Sexuality
Read: Huffer Ch. 1 and First Interlude
-> Puar paper due in CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 17-25: THANKSGIVING BREAK!

Monday, 11/26: Madness and morality
Read: Huffer Ch. 2 and Second Interlude
Wednesday, 11/28: Foucault and psychoanalysis
Read: Huffer Ch. 3, Third Interlude
Monday, 12/3: Rameau’s Nephew
Read: Huffer Ch. 4, Fourth Interlude
Wednesday, 12/5: A Foucauldian ethics
Read: Huffer Ch. 5, Postlude

Thursday, December 13: Final projects and Huffer paper due in CLEo drop box by 2:00 p.m.