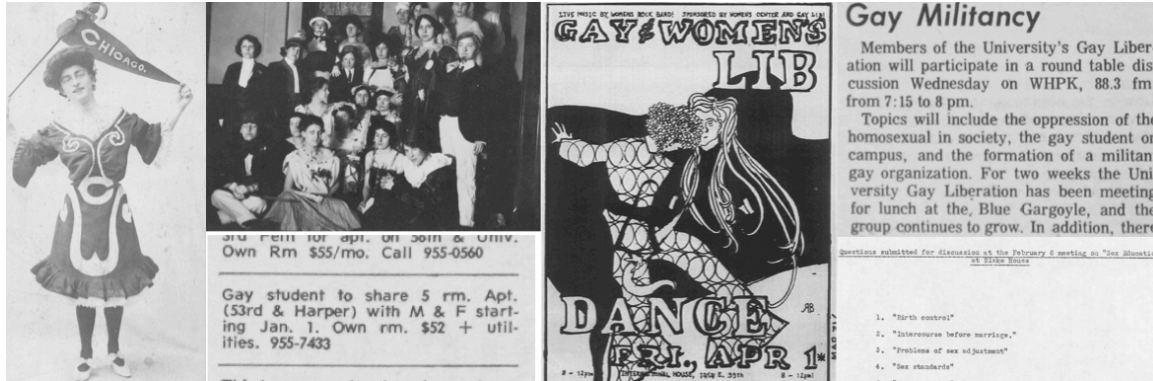


**GNSE 22703 | HIST 28707**  
**Queer on the Quads: LGBTQ Oral History at the University of Chicago**  
**MW 1:30-2:50pm, JRL-133**



Instructor: Monica Mercado  
Office: Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, Room 104  
Email: mmercado@uchicago.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9am-12pm, and by appointment

This course will offer undergraduate students an introduction to the practice, theory, and interpretation of oral history as a primary source in studying the history of gender and sexuality in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. In the process, we will examine issues of meaning, memory, documentary, narrative, identity, and community in conversation with the experiences of LGBTQ individuals and groups from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

**Course Goals:**

During the quarter we will explore transformations in same-sex desire, practice, and identities. Using a wide range of sources, including primary historical documents, secondary historical works, documentary film and performance, and (most importantly) oral history, we will investigate how and why people with same-sex desire and non-normative gender identities navigated issues of identity, formed communities, encountered homophobia and transphobia, struggled with racism and sexism, and organized movements for social and political change.

Course assignments will offer students the opportunity to gain experience in oral history interviewing techniques, primary source research in archives and special collections, and historical writing. In the process, student research will contribute to the building of a new oral history archive documenting the LGBTQ experience at the U of C, to be collected by the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS).

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- *identify and analyze* how and why the social organization and cultural meaning of sexual practices and desires has changed over the course of the twentieth century, as well as the ways that race, class, gender have shaped these changes;
- *understand and question* scholarly texts and arguments about the role of sexuality in American life, including the types of evidence and theories scholars use to develop these arguments;
- *critically assess* the relationships between individual and community memories and the production of history;
- use these analytical skills to *formulate their own arguments* about the role of sexuality at our research site, the University of Chicago, by interpreting primary documents and oral history interviews.

### Requirements:

➤ Class Participation (including attendance, discussion, and blog entries)	20%
➤ Oral History Practice paper (2-3pg, due Week 4)	10%
➤ ACT UP Oral History Project midterm paper (4-5pg, due week 7)	20%
➤ Final Oral History Project, including	
- project proposal paragraph, post to blog (due week 6)	10%
- interview transcript (due week 10)	15%
- final paper (7-9 pgs, due week 11)	25%

### Expectations and Policies:

#### *Preparation and Participation*

Since this seminar is organized as a collaborative research venture, attendance, preparation, and weekly participation is a must. Each member of the class is expected to play an active role in class discussions. Any student with more than 2 unexcused absences will have their grade lowered significantly.

You are expected to complete all assigned readings before the class for which they have been assigned. Please respect all deadlines. Late written work will be subject to grade deductions at the discretion of the instructor.

#### *Assignments*

You are expected to complete all assignments by the stated deadlines. Course assignments include the following:

1. **Blog entries** (1-2 paragraphs, due **Wednesdays by noon** on weeks 2, 3, 8)  
 In order to collect your thoughts for course discussion, on certain Wednesdays I will ask you to contribute short posts to the course blog on Chalk. These informal reactions to assigned materials will constitute part of your participation grade; if you find it difficult to voice your contribute in class, I will also consider your blog posts and comments on classmates' blogs.

2. **Oral History Practice Paper** (2-3pg, due Monday, April 16)  
We will practice doing oral history in class. You will pair up with a member of class and interview one another with the goal of determining how your classmate got to the University of Chicago and to our course. You will need to take careful notes and then write a 1-2 page paper that analyzes the turning point of the interview. *Please bring two copies of your paper to class. You will have the chance to read and comment on your partner's oral history.*
3. **ACT UP Oral History Project midterm** (4-5pgs, due Monday, May 7)  
For this paper, you will select 2 oral histories from the ACT UP Oral History Project and analyze them in light of the course readings.
4. **University Oral History Project final** (7-9pgs, see deadlines below)  
In the early weeks of the quarter, you will select and refine a manageable research topic in consultation with the instructor. On the basis of your interests, you will be guided to a potential oral history narrator. By the end of the quarter, each student will have completed a research paper that analyzes both the content and the method of their oral history research in conversation with course readings. In addition, students will transcribe at least half an hour of their interview recording. We will discuss the stages of this project in-depth in class.

Wednesday, May 2 – Paper proposal due (1-2 paragraphs, post on blog)

Wednesday, May 30 – Interview transcripts due (length varies)

Friday, June 8 – Final paper due (7-9pgs)

\*\* Please note the final paper deadline for graduating seniors is Wednesday, May 30. \*\*

#### **Course Texts:**

The following two books can be purchased at the Seminary Coop:

- + Allan Bérubé, *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, & Labor History*, ed. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman (UNC Press, 2011)
- + Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio Roque Ramírez, eds., *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (Oxford UP, 2012)

Required books are also available on 2-hour reserve at Regenstein Library. All other readings are posted on Chalk.

Students should take notes on and bring copies of all readings to class for discussion.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Readings marked (+) are from the textbooks. Readings and sound recordings marked (-) can be found on Chalk, under "Course Documents."

### Week 1

\* Monday, March 26

#### **Course Introductions | "Queering" the Archives**

- Linda Shopes, "Making Sense of Oral History," from *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web* (February 2002): 1-22
- Chad Heap, "Gays and Lesbians" in *Encyclopedia of Chicago* online ed. (2004)

\* Wednesday, March 28

#### **The History of Identity**

- John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity" in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993): 467-476
- Jennifer Brier and Anne Parsons, "Gender Crossroads: Representations of Gender Transgressions in Chicago's Gay Press, 1850-1920" in *Out in Chicago: LGBT History at the Crossroads* (2011): 23-40
- Donna Penn: "Queer: Theorizing Politics and History," in *Radical History Review* 52 (1995): 24-42

### Week 2

\* Monday, April 2

#### **Defining our Research Site: Studying Gender and Sexuality at the University of Chicago *Special Collections research demo with Julia Gardner, Head of Reader Services, SCRC***

- Monica Mercado and Katherine Turk, *On Equal Terms* (2009) and oral history CD
- Chad Heap, "The City as Sexual Laboratory: The Queer Heritage of the Chicago School," *Qualitative Sociology* 26.4 (Winter 2003): 457-487
- Selections from the Ernest Burgess Papers and Addenda (1930s), SCRC

\* Wednesday, April 4

#### **Researching Pre-Stonewall Communities – A "Desire for History"**

- + John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, "Introduction – Allan Bérubé and the Power of Community History" in *My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, & Labor History* (2011), 1-37
- + Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer" (1981), "Coming Out Under Fire" (1983), "Rediscovering Our Forgotten Past" (1984), and "The Military and Lesbians during the McCarthy Years" co-authored with John D'Emilio (1984), in *My Desire for History*, 85-143

### Week 3

\* Monday, April 9

#### **ORAL HISTORY SESSION #1 – Talking and Listening**

- Marjorie L. DeVault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis" in *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 227-250
- + Ramirez and Boyd, "Introduction: Close Encounters – The Body and Knowledge in Queer Oral History" in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 1-20

\* Wednesday, April 11

#### **Making History, Finding Subjects**

- Elizabeth L. Kennedy, "Telling Tales: Oral History and the Construction of Pre-Stonewall Lesbian History" in *Radical History Review* 62 (1995): 59-79
- Allen Drexel, "Before Paris Burned: Race, Class, and Male Homosexuality on the Chicago South Side, 1935-1960" in Beemyn, ed., *Creating a Place for Ourselves: Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Community Histories* (1997), 119-144

### Week 4

\* Monday, April 16

#### **Toward Liberation**

- "Mattachine Midwest: Standing Up for Gay Rights" and "Gay Power!" in *Out & Proud in Chicago* (2008), 62-71
- "Postwar Pulp" and "Literary Powerhouse: Valerie Taylor" in *Out & Proud in Chicago* (2008), 58-59
- + Marcia M. Gallo, "Dancing with Stella, Los Angeles Daughters of Bilitis Pioneer," in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 205-219

\* Wednesday, April 18

#### **Beyond Stonewall – Documenting Gay Liberation in the Middle**

- Timothy Stewart-Winter, "Raids, Rights, and Rainbow Coalitions: Sexuality and Race in Chicago Politics, 1950-2000," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago (2009): 130-187
- Sam Worley, "Hyde Park & Kenwood Issue: Dance for Your Rights," *Chicago Reader* (March 4, 2010)
- Chicago Gay Liberation Front, "A Leaflet for the American Medical Association" (1970)

### Week 5

\* Monday, April 23

#### **Spaces for Feminism and Transliberation?**

- Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman" (1970)

- Susan Stryker, "The Difficult Decades" in *Transgender History* (2008)
- + Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, "Sharing Queer Authorities: Collaborating for Transgender Latina and Gay Latino Historical Meanings," in *Bodies of Evidence*, 184-201

\* Wednesday, April 25

### **AIDS and American Culture**

- Jennifer Brier, "Affection is Our Best Protection: Early AIDS Activism and the Legacy of Gay Liberation" in *Infectious Ideas: US Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (2009), 11-44
- + Bérubé, "Don't Save Us from Our Sexuality" (1984) and "A History of Gay Bathhouses" (1984) in *My Desire for History*, 62-81
- Selections from the ACT UP Portfolio in *We Are Everywhere* (1997)

## **Week 6**

\* Monday, April 30

### **Out on Campus: What Can We Learn from Studying Academia?**

#### ***Discussion with Lauren Stokes, Project Researcher, CSGS***

- Patrick K. Finnessy, "The Queering of Chicago Campuses" in *Out & Proud in Chicago* (2008), 170-171
- [University of Chicago] *Grey City Journal* articles (1992-93), ACT UP Chicago Records, Box 17, Folder 6, SCRC
- Lauren Stokes, "What is the History of Queer Chalkings on Campus?" *Swarthmore College Daily Gazette* (November 10, 2006)
- Lauren Stokes, "Queer History of Swarthmore," *Swarthmore College Daily Gazette* (March 22, 2007)
- "On the Political Implications of Using the Term 'Queer,' as in 'Queer Politics,' 'Queer Studies,' and 'Queer Pedagogy,'" in *The Radical Teacher* 45 (Winter 1994): 52-57

\* Wednesday, May 2

### **ORAL HISTORY SESSION #2 – Planning your Interview**

- Nan Boyd, "Who is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History," in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17.2 (May 2008): 177-189

### ***Angels in America* class trip**

**We will attend the 2:30pm showing of *Angels in America Part I* at the Court Theatre. Students unable to attend the performance should screen the HBO film, on reserve.**

## **Week 7**

\* Monday, May 7

### **Cultural Conversations – Trauma and Memory**

- James Fisher, "Troubling the Waters: Angels in America A Gay Fantasia on National Themes" in *The Theater of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope* (2001), 54-92

+ Bérubé, "Caught in the Storm: AIDS and the Meaning of Natural Disaster" (1988), in *My Desire for History*, 147-160

\* Wednesday, May 9

**Movement Politics – Talk and Action**

- + Bérubé, "How Gay Stays White and What Kind of White it Stays" (2001), in *My Desire for History*, 202-230
- Mary L. Gray, "Queer Nation is Dead/Long Live Queer Nation': The Politics and Poetics of Social Movement and Media Representation," in *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26.3 (2009): 212-236
- "Rowdy Queers Trash and Glamdalize Human Rights Campaign Gift Shop" (2011)

**Week 8**

\* Monday, May 14

**Queer Families, Queer Neighborhoods**

- Christopher Reed, "We're from Oz: Marking Ethnic and Sexual Identity in Chicago," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (2003): 425-440
- Kath Weston, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, and Kinship* (1991), in *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*, 497-505
- Daniel Rivers, "Queer Family Stories: Learning from Oral Histories with Lesbian Mothers and Gay Fathers," in *Bodies of Evidence*, 57-72

\* Wednesday, May 16

**Activism and Public History: "Out in Chicago"**

**Guest: Jennifer Brier, Associate Professor of History, University of Illinois-Chicago**

- Austin, Brier et.al., "When the Erotic Becomes Illicit: Struggles over Displaying Queer History at a Mainstream Museum," *Radical History Review* (Spring 2012): 187-98
- Images and blog posts from "Out in Chicago" exhibition

**Week 9**

\* Monday, May 23

**ORAL HISTORY SESSION #3 – Let's Talk About Sex**

- + Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Talking About Sex: Cheryl Gonzales and Rikki Streicher Tell Their Stories," in *Bodies of Evidence*, 95-112
- + Jason Ruiz, "Private Lives and Public History: On Excavating the Sexual Past in Queer Oral History Practice," in *Bodies of Evidence*, 113-129
- + Kelly Anderson, "Gender, Desire, and Feminism: A Conversation Between Dorothy Allison and Carmen Vázquez," in *Bodies of Evidence*, 130-145

\* Wednesday, May 25

**ORAL HISTORY SESSION #4 – Analysis & Interpretation**

- + Martin Meeker, “‘You Could Argue that They Control Power’: Politics and Interviewing Across Sexualities,” in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 220-236
- + Steve Estes, “Don’t Ask: Discussing Sexuality in the American Military and the Media,” in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 237-252
- + Eric C. Wat, “Thanks for the Memories: A Narrator Asks an Oral Historian for Validation,” in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 253-267

**Week 10**

\* Monday, May 28

NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY

\* Wednesday, May 30

**Looking Back, Looking Ahead...**

- Chad Heap, *Homosexuality in the City: A Century of Research at the University of Chicago* (2000)
- + John D’Emilio, “Afterword: ‘If I Knew Then...’,” in *Bodies of Evidence* (2012), 269-277