

# Syllabus

## Gender Studies 380

### Queer Studies

### Professor Talbot

**Professor: Chris Talbot**

**Meeting Times: T Th 11:00-12:15, CAND 2055**

**Office: CAND 0140D**

**Office Phone: 351-2629**

**Email: christine.talbot@unco.edu**

**Office Hours: Wednesday, 10-12, Thursday 12:30-1:30, and happily by appointment**

*"The belly's hunger gives no clue as to the complexities of cuisine."  
Gayle Rubin*

**\*\*This syllabus is subject to revision as needed over the course of the semester.\*\***

#### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the histories and theories of homosexuality that have developed out of feminist and LGBTQ political movements.

#### **Required Texts**

Selected materials available on Blackboard.

#### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the semester, each student in the course should be able to

1. Demonstrate understanding of the contexts in which sexualities, sexual and gender identities, and theories about sexuality and gender are formulated and framed.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the issues and questions of concern to a variety of queer thinkers and communities.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the intersections of sexuality with other identity categories such as gender, race, and class.
4. Demonstrate critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. In particular, to accustom students to the rigors of reading, thinking about, and writing about complex theoretical texts.
5. Build a successful learning community, teaching and learning from each other.

#### **A Note on Course Materials:**

You will encounter interesting, challenging, and demanding subjects that you may find personally difficult. Because sexualities and varieties of sexual expression are the central topic of discussion in this course, you will be required to engage adult material of various sorts, with language and content that many people find objectionable. Engagement with this material is *not* optional. Please take a moment to consider your enrollment in this context.

### **The Americans with Disabilities Act:**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (Public Law 101-336), reasonable accommodation must be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Students are invited to meet privately with the instructor to discuss the need for reasonable accommodation for a covered disability. This statement in no way implies that a student identify her- or himself as having a disability; however, a request for reasonable accommodation can only be granted when a student makes his or her disability known. If you have a disability and wish to discuss accommodations with the instructor, please do so within the first two weeks of the semester so that successful accommodations can be made.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. *Attendance and Participation, 20%:* It is vital that you attend every class session and that you be both prepared and willing to discuss the assigned reading material, respond to questions, engage one another in intellectual conversation, and contribute relevant ideas. You are expected to show up to class every day *prepared, with a useable copy of all of the day's readings in hand*. NOTE: Sometimes we may not get to one day's readings on that day. In those instances, you are expected to bring those readings and the next day's readings to class on the next day. You may miss class twice in the semester, for *any* reason, with no penalty to your attendance grade. After that, any unexcused absence will adversely affect your grade. I require written documentation for excused absences and absences will only be excused in cases of real emergencies. If you have a documented absence, please speak with me about making up the absence. Students who attend class every day with no absences will receive extra credit for their stellar attendance. You will be required to write your name on a roll every class period and remain for the entire class. Leaving class early will constitute an absence. At the end of the semester the percentage of rolls upon which your name appears will correspond to the percentage of points earned for attendance. Your attendance will also affect the points earned for participation. If you are absent, you cannot participate, and will miss *both* attendance and participation points for that day.

Class participation is a vital part of your grade and is crucial to your academic development. As such, you may not "opt out." That is, you must do more than show up conscious to class. However, there are no necessarily "right" or "wrong" responses (except in obvious cases) and your participation can take many forms: a question, answer, comment, or response. I expect considerate, thoughtful, and critical discussion; **if your participation in class discussion in any way monopolizes the conversation or silences or excludes your colleagues, be assured that it will work against your participation grade.** (That is to say, if you notice that you are talking disproportionately to the rest of the class, it will *help* your participation grade to talk less so that others must talk more.) It is generally the case that most college classrooms require participation as part of the learning process. You should consider this a relatively safe environment to explore your ideas and your discussion and participation skills without the threat of being negatively evaluated. Given your preparedness, the *content* of your participation has less bearing on your participation grade than your effort, preparedness, attentiveness, and courtesy. You will also want to keep in mind that this class is a public forum; anything you say in this classroom can and probably will be repeated in other contexts.

2. *Quizzes, 15%:* There will be eleven of these throughout the semester, but they will be given at the beginning of eleven class periods selected at random and thus without prior notice. In these exercises, you will be required to respond to a statement or question about readings assigned for that day. No make-up quizzes will be given, but I will drop your lowest quiz score. (That is, you get to miss a quiz for "free.") If you are absent, you are absent. If you are more than one minute late, you will not be allowed to take the quiz. No make-ups will be given *EVEN* in the case of a real emergency; that's what your "free" quiz is for. Please don't ask me "if there is any way" you can make up the quiz. There isn't.

3. *Essay 1 and essay 2, 30% (15% each):* These paper assignments will require you to make your own evaluations of the material we have addressed in class and will probably require 3-4 pp. to make a successful argument. Start early. Late work will not be accepted, except in the case of a real emergency.
4. *Specter Text, 10%:* You will be required to select one of the specter texts, locate it, read it, and give a class presentation on its content. On the date the text is listed, you will take 10 minutes, and ONLY 10 minutes, to present the central thesis of the article, outline its main ideas, and discuss its relevance to the material we have studied in the course. You will also turn in a 2-3 page summary of your specter text on the day of your presentation. Your presentation and written summary will be equally weighted. Late presentations will not be accepted, except in the case of emergency, illness, death of a family member or beloved pet, etc., in which case you'll have to select a different specter text. Specter text presentations and summaries will be considered part of the required material for every student in the course.
5. *Final Essay, 25%:* This paper assignment will be cumulative, and will require you to make your own evaluations of the material we have addressed in class. It will also test your ability to mobilize the writing skills you have learned this semester. Your paper will probably require 7-8 pp. to make a successful argument. Again, start early. Late work will not be accepted, except in the case of a real emergency.

### **Defining "Real Emergencies"**

Real emergencies include but are not limited to: death of a family member or beloved pet; major family emergency (your sister breaking up with her girl- or boyfriend is NOT a major family emergency; your brother being admitted for emergency triple bypass surgery is); hospitalization or severe illness (severe enough that you see a doctor); being on the news because you were trapped in an avalanche or are lost in the wilderness. *Real emergencies DO NOT include:* a cold or a mild flu (get a flu shot!), electronic difficulties, running out of money to print, oversleeping, forgetting to bring your paper to class, getting confused about your due date, troubles in love, job conflicts, "personal problems," etc. While I am deeply sympathetic to all of these problems, the "real" world is less so, and (at least theoretically) this is training for the "real world." What constitutes a real emergency will be at my complete discretion.

### **Grading:**

All grades in this course will be according to the plus/minus system. If you have questions about this system or why I use it, please see me during office hours. Grades break down as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

### **Student Responsibility:**

This course is very student-directed. While I ensure that the grounding concepts you need to succeed in class are a part of our discussion, much of the shape this course takes is up to the collective practices of the classroom. Often, student direction means that a few of the readings on the syllabus may not get discussed as thoroughly as we'd like. However, in relationship to papers, exams and class performance,

*you are still responsible for a basic familiarity with and understanding of those readings.* As such, it is your responsibility as a student in this course to guide discussions so that you can fulfill this responsibility. I work to provide plenty of opportunity for questions, shifts in the direction of discussion, etc., but the ultimate responsibility for the direction of the course is yours. Please take it seriously.

### **Study Skills:**

No matter who you are, it is in both of our interests that we spend significant time talking about advanced college-level study skills, especially reading and writing. If you already know how to read 70 pages of dense theoretical material while at the same time writing and revising a 6 page paper with nuanced and sophisticated arguments, good for you. Consider the "study skills" moments a review and try to make them helpful in whatever way you can. If you don't (or think you do but actually don't), consider this a good opportunity to explore what is expected of you at the upper-division level and good practice at succeeding. I will often use student writing as examples of successful and more problematic work. By enrolling in this class you automatically consent to allow me to use your work as examples of both successful and less successful writing. (It will, of course, be anonymous, and by the time it gets up on the screen I usually forget whose work it is anyway.)

### **Rewriting:**

I have an open rewrite policy in my courses. Until the last day of the semester, you may rewrite any of your written assignments until you are satisfied with your grade. In order to rewrite, you **MUST** meet with me to discuss your paper and you **MUST** turn in another rewrite within 2 weeks of receiving the assignment back from me. In-class work and work turned in the last week of classes cannot be rewritten.

### **Cell Phones and Pagers:**

Cell phones and pagers are not essential learning tools and provide consistent distraction from fully engaging in classroom dynamics. Therefore, unless you are an emergency worker or have a desperately ill family member, significant other, or pet, if your cell phone or pager interrupts my class, you will automatically lose 15 points. If my cell phone or pager interrupts class, everyone in class will be awarded 15 free points.

### **E-mail Policy**

I am most accessible over e-mail, particularly on weekends. You must allow at least one full weekday for me to respond to your message, and from late April through early October I am usually in the wilderness from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon; please plan accordingly. Email is my preferred form of communication and the easiest way for me to respond promptly and effectively. You may email me at [christine.talbot@unco.edu](mailto:christine.talbot@unco.edu).

## **Schedule of Events: Topics, Readings, and Assignments**

*Readings are **DUE** the day they are listed. When you get to the end of a page, look at the top of the next page for additional readings.*

### **January 13: Introduction to the Course**

Liberating Language: talking about sex and sexuality  
SPECTER TEXT ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

### **January 15: Introduction to the Course and Each Other**

Wilchins, "A Certain Kind of Freedom: Power and the Truth of Bodies—Four Essays on Gender" 40.

**January 20: What is Queer/ What is Queer Studies I**

Michael Warner, "Queer and Then: The End of Queer Theory?" about 9  
<http://chronicle.com/article/QueerThen-/130161/>

Susan Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies" 15  
SPECTER TEXT SELECTIONS DUE

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Sharon Marcus, "*Queer Theory for Everyone: A Review Essay*"

**January 22: What is Queer/ What is Queer Studies II**

Duggan, "Making It Perfectly Queer" 18.

Jagose, "Queer Theory" 4

Butler, "Critically Queer" 12

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

Eve Sedgwick, "*Queer and Now*"

Frank Browning, "*Do Gays Exist?*"

**January 27: Theorizing Gender and Sexuality I**

Weeks, "The Social Construction of Sexuality" 8

Wilchins, "Homosexuality: Foucault and the Politics of Self," *Queer Theory, Gender Theory* 10

Wilchins, "Foucault and the Disciplinary Society" *Queer Theory, Gender Theory* 11

*SPECTER TEXT:*

A. Finn Enke, "*The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies*"

**January 29: 7. Theorizing Gender and Sexuality II**

Brady and Schirato, "Subjectivity, Identity, and Desire," 25

Brady and Schirato, "Queer," 32

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Jay Prosser, "*Judith Butler: Queer Feminisms, Transgender, and the Transubstantiation of Sex*"

**February 3: WRITING WORKSHOP 1**

**February 5: Queer Histories/Histories of Queers I**

D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity"

Foucault, "Scientia Sexualis"

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

David Halperin, "*How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality*"

George Chauncey, "*From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Conceptualization of Female 'Deviance'*"

**February 10: Queer Histories/Histories of Queers II**

Stryker, "The Difficult Decades" Transgender History 29

Film in Class: *Screaming Queens*

**FIRST PAPER DUE, ON DAYS 1-8.**

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Tavia Nyong'o, "Do You Want Queer Theory (or Do You Want the Truth)? Intersections of Punk and Queer in the 1970s"

**February 12: Sex Wars I**

Bayer, "AIDS and the Bathhouse Controversy"

"Queers Read This: I Hate Straights," *We Are Everywhere*

Allison, "Her Body, Mine, and His," *Skin*.

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?"

**February 17: Sex Wars II**

Readings from Off Our Backs

Pat Califia, "Feminism and Sadomasochism"

Karen Rian, "Sadomasochism and the Social Construction of Desire"

Jesse Meredith, "A Response to Samois"

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

Teresa Hornsby, "Gender Role Reversal and the Violated Lesbian Body: Toward a Feminist Hermeneutic of Lesbian Sadomasochism"

Mareesha Deckha, "Pain as Culture: A Postcolonial Feminist Approach to Sadomasochism and Women's Agency"

**February 19: Trans\* Wars**

Janice Raymond, "Sappho by Surgery: The Transexually Constructed Lesbian-Feminist"<sup>1</sup>

Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,"

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Bodies in Motion: Lesbian and Transsexual Histories"

**February 24: Strange Bedfellows? Queer Theory and Feminism**

Goodloe, "Lesbian Feminism and Queer Theory," 7

Marinucci, "Notes Toward a Queer Feminism," 7

**PAPER 1 DUE**

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Susan Stryker, "Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question"

**February 26: Queering Race/Racing Queers I: White-ness**

Allan Berube, "How Gay Stays White and What Kind of White it Stays" 26

Koyama, "Whose Feminism Is It Anyway? The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate," 7

---

<sup>1</sup>A heads-up about this reading—lots of people have found and continue to find it pretty offensive to trans\* folks, and in many ways it is. However, it also has arguments and ideas that sparked a huge controversy that I'd like us to take seriously and unpack in class. So, as you read, go ahead and get offended, and try also to think critically about the ideas that Raymond is presenting.

**March 3: Queering Race/Racing Queers II: Latino-ness**

Michael Hames-Garcia, "Queer Theory Revisited," 25.

Perez, "You Can Have My Brown Body and Eat It, Too," 17.

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

Soto, *"Making Familia from Racialized Sexuality: Cherrie Moraga's Memoirs, Manifestos, and Motherhood."*

José Esteban Muñoz, *"Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position"*

**March 5: Queering Race/Racing Queers III: Black-ness**

Ferguson, "Race-ing Homonormativity: Citizenship, Sociology, and Gay Identity" 15

Johnson, "Quare Studies, or (Almost) Everything I know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother,"

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Ferguson, *"Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology"*

**March 10: Queering Race/Racing Queers IV: Indigenous-ness**

Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," 23

*SPECTER TEXT:*

Scott Lauria Morgensen, *"The Biopolitics of Settler Sexuality and Queer Modernities"*

**March 12: Writing Workshop 2**

**SPRING BREAK, MARCH 14-22. HOORAY!!!**

**March 24: The Global Queer/Globalizing Queerness I**

Cruz-Malave and Manalansan, "Dissident Sexualities/Alternative Globalisms" 9

Arondekar, "Border/Line Sex: Queer Postcolonialities, or how Race Matters Outside the United States"

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

Katie King, *"'There Are No Lesbians Here': Lesbianisms, Feminisms, and Global Gay Formations"*

Jon Binnie, *"Queer Postcolonialism"*

**March 26: The Global Queer/Globalizing Queerness II**

Binnie, "The Economics of Queer Globalization" *The Globalization of Sexuality* 17

Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages" *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* 12

*SPECTER TEXTS:*

Jasbir Puar, *"The Sexuality of Terrorism"*

Ann Pellegrini, *"Commodity Capitalism and Transformations in Gay Identity"*

**March 31: The Global Queer/Globalizing Queerness III**

Sandoval, "Dissident Globalizations, Emancipatory Methods, Social-Erotics" *Queer Globalizations* 10

**PAPER 2 DUE**

**April 2: Queer(ing) Bodies I**

Wilchins, "What Does It Cost to Tell the Truth?" 7

Roen, "Transgender Theory and Embodiment: The Risk of Racial Marginalization"

**April 7: Queer(ing) Bodies II**

Morland, "What Can Queer Theory do for Intersex?" 15

Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality," 11

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Lucas Cassidy Crawford, "Transgender without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification"*

**April 9: Queer(ing) Bodies III**

Robert McRuer, "Introduction: Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence"

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Ellen Jean Samuels, "My Body, My Closet: Indivisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse"*

**NOTE: Sometime between now and April 28, you need to procure and view the 2000 film, Boys Don't Cry. One copy is on 4-hour reserve at the library.**

**April 14: Queer Politics I: Rights**

Spade, "What's Wrong with Rights?" 15

Spade and Willse, "Marriage Will Never Set Us Free," 10

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Judith Butler, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" 26*

**April 16: Queer Politics II: Equality**

Lisa Duggan, "Equality, Inc." *The Twilight of Equality?* 24

Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public" *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* 11.

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Janet Jakobsen, "Can Homosexuals End Western Civilization as We Know It?"*

**April 21: Queer Politics III: Pride**

Halperin and Traub, "Beyond Gay Pride"

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Lee Edelman, "The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive"*

**April 23: Queer Politics IV: Community**

Barry D. Adam, "How Might We Create a Collectivity That We Would Want to Belong To?" 10

Spade, Bassichis and Lee, "Building an Abolitionist Trans & Queer Movement with Everything We've Got," 20

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Berlant and Freeman, "Queer Nationality"*

*Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics"*



**April 28: Representing Trans\*: A Critique**

Due: *Boys Don't Cry*

Halberstam, "The Transgender Look," 76-79, 83-92, 96, (13 pages)

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Judith Halberstam, "Unlosing Brandon: Brandon Teena, Billy Tipton, and Transgender Biography"*

*Jordy Jones, "Gender Without Genitals: Hedwig's Six Inches"*

**April 30: A Sort of Conclusion**

Hall, "Afterword: W(h)ither Identity"

*SPECTER TEXT:*

*Frank Browning, "Toward a Generosity of Place"*

**YOUR FINAL PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EXAM PERIOD, WHICH IS TUESDAY, MAY 5, 10:45-1:15. WE WILL BE HAVING CLASS DURING THE FINAL EXAM AND YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO STAY THE ENTIRE DURATION.**

## STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Full name as the University understands it:

Name you prefer to be called:

UNC username (what comes before the @ in your email address):

A phone number at which you can be reached in case of disaster (optional):

Year in school:

Major:

Gender or Women's Studies courses you have taken (if any):

Cultural/feminist/literary theory courses (in any department) you have taken (if any):

Primary reason for taking this class (it will not be held against you):

List three *specific* things you would like to learn in this class:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Anything else you would like me to know about you: