

LGQ 282/ENG 272 “Space, Place, and the Queer: Introduction to LGBTQ Literature”
Spring 2015
Tuesday/Thursday 11:20-12:50pm
Byrne 552

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office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-5pm and by appointment

Course Description

This course is an introduction to LGBTQ literature. It can count as an elective for the LGBTQ Studies minor at DePaul and is approved in the Arts and Literature domain of the Liberal Studies Program. We will use the word “queer” as it has been deployed in recent academic and activist discourse to talk about people whose sexual and/or gender identity challenges heteronormative thinking. Most of the texts we will read this quarter are interested in various forms of same-sex desire, female-female and male-male, but at the same time we will consider the ways in which sexual identity always implicates gender identity. We will be interested in a number of closely inter-related questions: how can we define “queer literature” and is there a tradition, or history, of queer letters? what are its main characteristics and shared themes? does a writer who identifies as queer automatically produce a queer text? can a straight woman or man write a queer book? how do our primary concerns (sexual/gender identity) intersect with other modes of personal identity such as race and social class?

The texts chosen for the syllabus this quarter include a variety of genres—poetry, drama, short stories, and novels. They are all texts of English and American literature, written mostly in English, from the nineteenth century through the present day (ancient and pre-modern queer literature is the subject of another course). While not a comprehensive list (impossible in ten weeks—impossible in a year!), the texts have been organized mostly in chronological order and do to some extent trace the emergence of a modern lesbian/gay identity in the West. While this is not a course in LGBTQ history or politics, we will make continual reference to both in our lectures and discussions.

The reading list also coheres around a more specific theme: space, place, and the queer. How do the texts we are reading make use of space as a metaphor to represent the experiences of queer individuals? The notion of “the closet” has been central to modern lesbian and gay identity—a figure for the concealment and constriction imposed by society. One way to think about LGBTQ history is as a progressive “coming out,” and the texts we are reading will allow us to pay witness to this increased visibility. Beyond this, many of the works dramatize the queer’s relationship to various kinds of space and place: domestic (the closet, the room, the house), urban (the city and its streets), “natural” (mountains, plains, ocean), and geographic (north and south, national borders). Many of these texts take up the issue of the queer’s problematic relationship to national identity.

Learning Goals

- understand the variety and scope of modern LGBTQ literature

- understand key concepts in lgbtq history and politics through the study of literature
- consider the relationship of sexuality and gender to other identity categories such as race, nationality, and social class
- acquire techniques of close reading and textual analysis in a variety of literary genres
- improve critical writing skills

Course Materials

The following books are available for purchase in the college bookstore; some of these are also available in digital format for Nook readers. You are not required to use these specific editions.

James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Random House)
 Ann Bannon, *Odd Girl Out* (Cleis)
 Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (Mariner/Houghton Mifflin)
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America I: Millenium Approaches* (TCG)
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America II: Perestroika* (TCG)
 Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years: lo que nunca pasó por sus labios* (South End Press)
 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Dover)

Other texts will be posted on D2L, along with links to websites that you may find interesting or useful. I will also ask you to watch the film versions of some of the works we are reading (see syllabus). The following DVDs are on three-hour reserve at the Richardson Library:

-*Angels in America* (dir. Mike Nichols; 2004), 2 discs
 -*The Children's Hour* (dir. William Wyler; 1961)
 -*Brokeback Mountain* (dir. Ang Lee; 2005)

Several good anthologies of lgbtq literature and attempts at queer literary history now exist. You may find some of these interesting or useful to help contextualize the works on our syllabus and fill in some gaps. You will find all of these at Richardson Library:

-Christopher Bram, *Eminent Outlaws: The Gay Writers Who Changed America* (Hachette, 2012).
 -*Chloe Plus Olivia: An Anthology of Lesbian Literature from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, ed. Lillian Faderman (Penguin, 1994).
 -*The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature: Readings from Western Antiquity to the Present Day*, ed. Byrne R. S. Fone (Columbia UP, 1998).
 -Emma Donoghue, *Inseparable: Desire Between Women in Literature* (Knopf, 2010).
 -Jeanette H. Foster, *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (The Naiad Press, 1985).
 -*The Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage : A Reader's Companion to the Writers and their Works, from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Claude J. Summers (H. Holt, 1995)
 -*The Literature of Lesbianism : A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall*, ed. Terry Castle (Columbia UP, 2003).
 -Gregory Woods, *A History of Gay Literature: The Male Tradition* (Yale UP, 1998).

Attendance and participation

Attendance will be taken in the first ten minutes of class and will be considered in determining course grade. Your final attendance and participation average will be a combination of your attendance record average as calculated by the D2L attendance register and my evaluation of the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussion. See below for an approximate numeric guide. Please arrive promptly to avoid disrupting the class. Students are responsible for any announcements or handouts for missed class sessions. Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete all the assigned course readings on schedule, and be prepared for discussion. Please silence your pager or cell phone in the classroom. Thank you!

Superior = 100. No more than one absence and frequent contributions to discussion.

Good = 90. No more than two absences and somewhat frequent contribution to discussion.

Adequate = 80. No more than three absences and irregular contribution to discussion.

Inadequate = 60. Four absences, regardless of contribution to discussion.

Failing = 0. Five or more absences.

I generally don't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. But if you miss class for what you feel is a genuine emergency or for illness, you may have the absence **validated** by the Dean of Student's office (Lincoln Park Student Center, Suite 307). I will take validated absences into account when calculating your final participation average.

Presentation/textual analysis

During the first week of class, you will choose one passage, poem, or scene as the basis for a 15-20 minute presentation to the class. The presentation will consist primarily of an exhaustive textual analysis of the piece of text you have chosen: introduce it to the rest of us by placing it within the larger context of the work; explain key characters, names, terms; how does this passage function within the whole?; how does it relate to larger course themes? You should become an expert on the passage you have chosen and then share your expertise with the rest of us as a teacher. You should also make some effort to engage the rest of the class in discussion of the passage during the last part of your presentation. Think carefully about three or four questions that you think will prompt your fellow students to talk about your text. You may incorporate your work on the oral presentation into one of your written essays.

I will assign you a grade for this based on the following guidelines:

90-100: well-organized and well thought-out beforehand; clearly explained and accurate; made a genuine effort to help the class understand the text; identified key points and included some close reading analysis; made at least a couple clear attempts to engage the class in discussion

80-90: mostly well-organized and thought-out beforehand; mostly accurate and clear but not as thorough as it could have been; included discussion of some key points and some close reading analysis; made some attempt to engage class in discussion

70-80: could have been better prepared; key points not clearly articulated; no real close reading; mostly unsuccessful in stimulating class discussion

60-70: minimal contribution that shows little thought or effort

Quizzes and exams

There will be midterm and final written exams in the class to test your knowledge of the texts and course themes developed in lecture and discussion. Exams will consist mainly of identification and critical discussion of passages from the texts we have read. The best way to prepare for the exams is to attend class regularly and keep up with the reading. I reserve the right to give pop quizzes as well if I feel you are not doing the reading.

Writing assignments

You will be required to turn in two 4-6 page papers, typed and double-spaced with standard margins. You should use the Digital Drop Box on D2L to turn the papers in. I will distribute paper topics in class and post on D2L. Please see syllabus for due dates.

Plagiarism

The DePaul Student Handbook defines plagiarism as follows: "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: (a) The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's; (b) Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement; (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency; (d) The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement." Plagiarism will result in a failure of the assignment or possibly of the course.

Final grade

Attendance and participation	15%
Presentation	15%
2 Papers	30%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%

The LGBTQ Studies Minor at DePaul

Established in 2005, the LGBTQ studies program offers students the opportunity to complete a minor in the developing interdisciplinary field of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer studies. The program of study examines the history, politics, culture and psychologies of LGBTQ individuals and communities. Courses in LGBTQ studies consider sexual identity within and across many traditional fields of study, from literature to political science, religious studies, nursing, philosophy, and women's and gender studies—to name just a few. For more information contact lgbtqstudies@depaul.edu.

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March 31 T	introduction
April 2 Th	Walt Whitman, Calamus poems (1859/1860)
7 T	Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (1890/1891)
9 Th	Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (1890/1891)
14 T	Radclyffe Hall, "Miss Ogilvie Finds Herself" (1926/1934)
16 Th	Richard Bruce Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies and Jade" (1926)
21 T	James Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> (1956)
23 Th	James Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> (1956)
27 M	paper 1 due by 5pm in D2L Dropbox
28 T	Ann Bannon, <i>Odd Girl Out</i> (1957)
30 Th	Ann Bannon, <i>Odd Girl Out</i> (1957)
May 5 T	midterm exam
7 Th	Cherríe Moraga, <i>Loving in the War Years</i> (1983) selection
12 T	Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America I: Millenium Approaches</i> (1992) (hand in optional paper 1 rewrites)
14 Th	Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America I: Millenium Approaches</i> (1992) *view film disc I (dir. Mike Nichols, HBO 2004)
19 T	Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America II: Perestroika</i> (1992)
21 Th	Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America II: Perestroika</i> (1992) *view film disc II (dir. Mike Nichols, HBO 2004)
26 T	Annie Proulx, "Brokeback Mountain" (1997/1999) *view film (dir. Ang Lee, 2005)
28 Th	Ryka Aoki, "To The New World" (2012)
June 1 M	paper 2 due by 5pm in D2L Dropbox
2 T	Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</i> (2006)
4 Th	Alison Bechdel, <i>Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic</i> (2006)
9 T 11:45am-2pm	final exam (hand in optional paper 2 rewrites)