Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research

WS9586A
Queer and Transgender Studies

September – December 2015

Instructor:
Dr. Wayne Martino

Course Description
This course examines the work of significant queer and trans theorists/activists. Students will be invited to examine the significance of various queer and trans theoretical perspectives and accounts in light of reflecting on both their own ‘personal’ experiences and representations of gender and sexuality in the popular culture. Attention will be given to the political significance and destabilization of certain sexual, genderqueer and transgender identities, with some focus on the significance of embodiment. Central to the course is engaging with debates about the political efficacy of queer theory and the questions of gender democratization raised by key transsexual theorists and activists. Various tensions are examined, but the overall focus of the course is on encouraging students to generate their own explanations of the queer and trans theories to which they are introduced, and to reflect on both their significance and application in everyday life and in specific clinical and educational settings.

Contact Information
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By appointment
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ext. 88593

Class times:
Tuesdays
1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Location:
LWH 2205
Aims, Goals, Objectives, Outcomes

The main objective of the course is to build knowledge and understanding of the significance and relevance of queer and transgender theories in the everyday world. The aim is to encourage students to reflect on theory, research and narrative accounts produced by queer and transgender subjects in light of their own experiences, identities and developing understandings of queering gender, sexuality and the politics of gender embodiment and variance. In particular, this course will help students to:

- Develop an understanding of foundational work of key philosophers and theorists at the heart of queer and transgender studies;
- Apply queer and trans theoretical perspectives to personal reflections on sexuality and gender expression/embodiment in the everyday world;
- Learn about the political significance and relevance of queer pedagogical approaches and interventions;
- Develop an awareness of the continuing pathologization of gender and sexual minorities and the need for critical interrogation of restrictive social systems governing thought regarding gendered and sexual regulatory norms;
- Conceptualize performativity and its relevance for understanding both queer and trans analytic perspectives on the politics of gender embodiment and expression;
- Reflect on the tensions and debates in the field of queer and transgender studies and their significance for understanding the politics of gender democratization;
- Engage productively with and to learn from transsexual and transgender scholars by providing access to their voices, accounts and perspectives on the politics of gender identity, gender expression and gender embodiment.

Course Structure and Participation
The course is structured and built on a commitment to facilitating active student participation and engagement with the course content/readings. The first part of each weekly seminar will involve active discussion on key content related to the topic for that particular week and will be facilitated by the course instructor (70 minutes). The second half of the seminar will be assigned for student directed discussion (90 minutes). All students will be required to choose one weekly topic and will be responsible for facilitating class discussion and engagement with the set readings designated under the Student Directed Discussion section for that particular week. Students are encouraged to draw on other relevant and important sources, which may include film excerpts, YouTube videos and other internet and media resources to stimulate class discussion in response to the set readings and topic for that week. The focus is on facilitating engagement with the content, perspectives and issues raised in the readings. As all students are expected to read the set readings every week, the focus is not on presenting the content and hence using a power point presentation to explain or cover the content of the set readings. Rather, the focus is on facilitating active engagement and discussion with key issues and perspectives that are offered in the set readings with the view to building shared knowledge and understanding of queer/trans informed frameworks and their relevance and significance.

Course Content, Topic Outlines, and Required Readings

Week 1: Introduction – September 8
Introduction to the main topics of the course and discussion of the course requirements and evaluation.

Week 2: The roots of Queer Theory – September 15

Student Directed Discussion

Week 3: The trouble with ‘normal’ – September 22

Student Directed Discussion
Week 4: Performativity – September 29


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 5: Queer(ing) femininities – October 6


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 6: Queer(ing) masculinities – October 13


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 7: Queer Pedagogy – October 20

Student Directed Discussion


Week 8: Transgender Studies – October 27


Student Directed Discussion


Reflective Response Paper 1 (Queer Focus) Due: October 27, 2015

Week 9: Pathologization of Gender – November 3


Student Directed Discussion

Week 10: Gender Expression and the politics of embodiment – November 10


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 11: Trans-masculinities and FTM perspectives – November 17


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 12: Trans-femininities and MTF perspectives – November 24


**Student Directed Discussion**


Week 13: Transnarrative – December 1


**Reflective Response Paper 2 (Trans* Focus) Due: December 9, 2015**
Course Assignments

Seminar Participation (35%)

You are required to complete all of the assigned readings and to be prepared to discuss their responses, questions, and thoughts with the class. Hence, class attendance is considered to be an important and necessary component of assessment. Should you miss a class a courtesy email is appreciated. The weighting for class participation acknowledges the amount of time and work that is required in terms of reading the set readings and class preparation.

Individual Facilitation of Discussion (15%)

You will be required to choose one or two of the weekly topics and to facilitate a class discussion and engagement with the readings listed under the Student Directed Discussion section for that week. The objective is not to explain the content of these readings. They are chosen explicitly to incite class discussion. You might choose other relevant multi-media and internet sources as a basis or stimulus for provoking discussing and raising questions in response to the set readings. An outline or mini-lesson plan for the class facilitation should be emailed to the course instructor in advance so that feedback can be provided. While it may be important to comment on specific content of the readings and to provide an overview, for example, you should remember that the aim is to ensure that space is created and provided to facilitate class discussion and engagement with the readings that are set for discussion.

Queer and Trans Focused Reflective Response Papers (50% - Two papers each 2500-3000 words)

You are required to submit two (2) response papers – one that deals with an engagement with and reading of the queer literature that has been included as part of the course and another which focuses on your engagement with the second part of the course on trans perspectives. Each of these papers provides you with the opportunity to explore the significance and relevance of the course for your own personal understandings, and/or permits a more sustained reflection and engagement with particular readings or topics that are of particular interest to you or your potential research. The aim or objective is to provide you with a space for further and sustained critical reflection on a particular topic, issue or question that has arisen in response to the course readings, questions raised in class, or a particular reading which has provoked or stimulated a degree of reflection and insight for you. The sort of engagement which enables you to reflect on the significance of theory and your course reading in light of your own life and experience is a powerful and meaningful form of learning which highlights the relevance of course reading for enhancing and deepening self-understanding and the politics of gender and sexuality in our everyday lives.
Policies and Procedures

Grading Information:
- A+ 90-100% outstanding work which can hardly be bettered
- A 80-89% superior work which is clearly above average
- B 70-79% good work, meeting all the requirements, and eminently satisfactory
- C 60-69% competent work but not of the standard normally expected in the Faculty
- D 50-59% inferior work which is clearly deficient but minimally acceptable
- F Below 50% assigned when course is dropped with academic penalty

Participation and Preparation for Class:
You are required to complete all weekly readings for each class to ensure full participation. You are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to each class period and to be prepared to participate in class discussion. Tutorial participation also includes attending regularly and contributing to discussion in a positive and constructive way.

Submitting Assignments:
Both electronic and hard copies of written assignments must be submitted. Hard copies not submitted in class must be handed to the instructor or deposited in the WS essay drop box, located next to the main office doors, Lawson Hall 3260. You cannot submit assignments in WS 9586A that were prepared for other courses.

Turnitin:
“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under licence to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licencing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).” (http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/crsout.pdf).

Late & Missed Assignments:
It is the expectation that students in Women’s Studies classes will submit assignments by, and sit tests and/or examinations on, the assigned dates; in the event that this expectation cannot be met, students are advised that the Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research follows the policies and practices of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Science. As Western Senate requires, “Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.” For Western Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf. Academic accommodation must be applied for no more than 28 days from the date of a missed assignment or exam.
Policies and Procedures (continued)
Extensions:
Extensions will not be awarded except in extenuating circumstances. Extension requests must be made at least 24 hours prior to the due date and must be submitted in writing by email from your Western student account with the subject header “WS9586A extension request.”

Late Paper Policy:
Late papers may be penalized at the rate of 2% per day, including weekends. If an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, students must contact the professor as soon as possible and provide supporting documentation to the Office of the Dean of the appropriate faculty. Once the free extension has been used, no further extensions will be granted without compelling and documented reasons.

Scholastic Offences:
“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf”; http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf

Plagiarism:
“Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see the ‘Scholastic Offense Policy’ in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.” -- U.W.O. Senate statement on plagiarism

Support Services:
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
Other Useful References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janoff, D.</td>
<td><em>Pink blood: Homophobic violence in Canada</em></td>
<td>Toronto: University of Toronto Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sycamore, M. B., &amp; Sycamore, M. B.</td>
<td><em>Nobody passes: Rejecting the rules of gender and conformity</em></td>
<td>Emeryville: Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walton, G.</td>
<td><em>The gay agenda: Claiming space, identity and justice</em></td>
<td>New York: Peter Lang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winters, K.</td>
<td><em>Gender madness in American Psychiatry: Essays from the struggle for dignity</em></td>
<td>Colorado: GID Reform Advocates</td>
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</tbody>
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### Internet Sources

*Being seen: Video diaries of transgender youth:*

*Bronies: The extremely unexpected adult fans of My Little Pony* (2012). Retrieved from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohnuyqJyEW0

*The Brony chronicles: A documentary on My Little Pony and Bronies* (2013). Retrieved from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2EOfhvvURY

*Bronies: The controversy* (2012). Retrieved from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVH1Hp6AXHI

*My princess boy* (2010). Retrieved from:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGdx8yPybGI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgH404pesxw
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SPaNhiQZK8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zkWwiE2eck
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNCXoBroI_M
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAgb5LrukWU