

Winter 2016

**Women's Studies 3173G: Queer Theory**

***Course Information***

Lectures and seminar: Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30; TBA

Instructor: Prof. Wendy Gay Pearson

Office: Lawson Hall 3233

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Office hours: TBA

***Course Description***

What is queer theory, where did it come from, how is it changing? Examining key foundational texts in queer theory, the contexts for its emergence, and debates over its contemporary usefulness and direction, students in this course will trace the development of queer theory from Foucault to the present day.

***Learning Objectives***

This course will enable students to

- understand concepts in queer theory and their historical emergence and more recent development
- understand the context for the invention and development of queer theory, particularly the importance of both feminist and postmodern theory
- identify historical and cultural factors which have shaped contemporary issues in sexuality and which can be addressed using the tools of queer theory
- consider the ways in which queer theory addresses questions of intersectionality
- apply queer theoretical perspectives in a variety of different contexts and media

The course will also facilitate the student's development in

- critical and analytical thinking skills by requiring them to engage with the topic of sexuality using different epistemological, methodological and theoretical frameworks
- oral and written communications skills
- research and analytical skills (including close reading of both primary and secondary texts)

***Textbooks***

Riki Wilchins, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*. Available from UWO bookstore.

Tamsin Spargo. *Foucault and Queer Theory*. Available from UWO bookstore.

Course pack.

***Evaluation***

**Participation:** participation is an important aspect of this approach to learning. Students will be expected to participate actively and in a variety of ways. 20%.

**Critical reflection paper:** Short critical reflection on a specific aspect of queer theory. Students will choose from a list of recommended primary readings. Due date: February 10. 20%.

**Research essay:** Students should choose a topic that allows them to demonstrate their ability to apply queer theoretical tools to understand specific aspects of sexuality and/or intersectionality. This assignment includes three components – a **thesis statement and annotated bibliography** (due March 2 and worth 15%) and a **mini conference paper** of 5-10 minutes (due March 16, also worth 10%). Essay due date: March 30. 35%.

## **Course Policies**

**Attendance Requirement:** Please see the “Information for Students” sheet distributed by the Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research. Circumstances requiring academic accommodation should be addressed with the Academic Counselor in the student’s faculty of registration.

**Participation:** Upper year courses depend on student participation in order to provide a great learning experience. It is important that you do the readings on time and come to class prepared to participate in classroom discussion. This involves not only having something to say about the topic, but also listening carefully and respectfully to others in the class. Good discussion involves acknowledging that there may be other perspectives on the topic and acknowledging that the experiences of others may be different from your own. The classroom should be a space in which students are free to experiment with ideas and even to make mistakes, change their minds, and re-think. Debate should be lively, but also courteous.

**Late Policy:** Students will be permitted **one free extension**, of no more than **five** working days, on any written assignment; the extension request must be made at least **24 hours in advance** of the deadline **by email** to the instructor. Other than that, late assignments will be penalized unless there is a valid medical or other reason and documentation has been filed with the Office of the Dean of the student’s faculty. This extension may only be used once per term.

**Women’s Studies Essay Drop Box:** Assignments not submitted in class must be deposited in the essay drop box, located beside from the Main Office doors, Lawson Hall 3260.

Please note the drop box protocol: papers received between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday will be stamped with the current days date; 4:00 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. Monday to Friday will be stamped with the previous days date; before 3:30 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. Monday will be stamped with Fridays date. No essays will be stamped with the previous days date after 8:30 a.m.

**Use of Electronic Resources:** Mobile phones are not permitted in class at any time. Laptop computers may be used solely for course purposes; other uses of a laptop will result in the student being banned from laptop use within the classroom.

**Prerequisite:** Women's Studies 2273E or permission of the department. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites and that they have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If the student is not eligible for a course, she may be removed from it at any time and will receive no fee adjustment. These decisions cannot be appealed. See also 2015-16 UWO Calendar on-line.

**Email:** Email is my preferred method of contact. Please allow 48 hours for response; after that, you may wish to query (politely) whether your email has been received. To ensure reception, please use your UWO email account and include the course number in the subject line. Emails from addresses like sexykitten69@gmail.com tend to be re-directed by the university’s spam filter. Please note that your emails will likely not be answered on weekends.

**Etiquette:** When addressing professors you don’t know, it is always most courteous to address that person as “Professor [Last Name].” Once your instructors get to know you, they may invite you to address them by a first name – or they may not. No-one who has put years of effort into obtaining a doctorate wishes to be addressed as “Miss” or “Mr.” This is not high school. “Hey Prof” is also not an advisable mode of address if you wish to be taken seriously.

**Turnitin:** “All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license 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/courseoutlines.pdf>)

## **Academic 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 Web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf> <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>”

**Note for students with disabilities:** Please contact [ws-ugrad@uwo.ca](mailto:ws-ugrad@uwo.ca) if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.

## **Schedule**

TBA

This course outline may be change with sufficient notice.