

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AND FEMINIST RESEARCH  
**Women's Studies 3133G**  
**Lesbian Lives and Cultures Winter 2022**

**Instructor:** Chris Roulston

**Lecture times:** Thursdays 1:30 am-4:30 pm

**Room:**

**Office:** LWH 3253

**Phone:** 519 661-2111 ex. 88931

**Email:** croulsto@uwo.ca

**Office Hour:** Thursdays 12:00-1:00 pm, or by appointment

### Course Description

This course will explore what it means to identify as a lesbian today. With the move away from identity politics, the ascendance of queer as a challenge to identity categories, and the advent of trans theory, it will consider the place of lesbianism in contemporary North American culture and more globally. Attention will be paid to a variety of aspects of lesbian lives and to contemporary forms of lesbian experiences in relation to their historical antecedents. Themes will include intersectionality, activism, sex, literature, art and politics.

### Books to buy (available at the UWO Bookstore)

*WS3133G: Lesbian Lives and Cultures*, Course Package

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)

### Assignments:

Presence and participation	5%
Midterm Test (2 hours)	15%
Short essay (1000 words)	15%
Long essay (2000 words)	25%
Oral presentation (7 mins)	10%
Final examination (3 hours)	30%
Total	100%

Assignment	Percentage value	Date Assigned	Date Due
Short essay (1000 words)	15%	Thursday 20 January	Thursday 3 February
Midterm Test (in-class, 2 hours)	15%	Thursday 10 February	N/A
Long Essay (2000 words)	25%	Thursday 3 March	Thursday 24 March
Oral Presentation (7 mins)	10%	Thursday 31 March	N/A
Presence and Participation	5%	Ongoing	N/A
Final Examination (3 hours)	30%	Between 10-30 April 2022	N/A

## Course Policies

**Prerequisites:** Women's Studies 2273E or Women's Studies 2220E or permission of the department.

**Participation and Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and come prepared to discuss the week's readings. Should a student need to miss class, a courtesy explanatory email is appreciated.

**E-mail Policy:** Emails by the instructor will be responded to within 48 hours.

### Medical Policy:

- a. Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.
- b. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April
- c. Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g. midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course.
- d. Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Self-Reported Absence Form:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic\\_Consideration\\_for\\_absences.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

**Assignment Submission:** All assignments must be submitted in hard copy, to the instructor, in class. Assignments not submitted in class must be delivered to the Women's Studies drop-box, located outside the WSFR main office in Lawson Hall, room 3260. Assignments will NOT be accepted via email or on OWL.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will only be accepted without penalty if a prior agreement with the instructor has been made, or if a valid medical certificate is provided. In the event that a student is unable to meet a deadline, for medical or other reasons, it is the student's responsibility to negotiate an alternate deadline with the instructor, prior to the original assignment deadline. Revised deadlines will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students who submit late assignments without making a prior agreement with the instructor will be penalized 2% for every 24-hour period after the assignment due date. The 2% penalty also applies to students who fail to submit an assignment on the agreed upon alternate date.

**Missed assignments and academic accommodation:**

Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment

**Electronic devices in tests and exams:**

No electronic devices may be used in tests or exams

**Turnitin.com:** All assignments for this course must be submitted to turnitin.com on or before the assignment due date. Submissions can be made via link on the course OWL page. "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 licensing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com. (<http://www.turnitin.com>) (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>)

**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 Web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2009/pg113.html>.

**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.

**This course will:**

- \* provide an understanding of marginalized sexual identities in contemporary culture
- \* help to develop a context for understanding lesbian lives
- \* provide the critical tools to understand how the categories of sexuality, race and class intersect
- \* identify some of the critical challenges these intersections make apparent

**Statement of Recognition**

"Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada."

**WS3133G: Lesbian Lives and Cultures Course Schedule (Winter 2022)**

**ALL COURSE MATERIALS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE INTRODUCTION TO SEXUALITY STUDIES COURSE PACK, AVAILABLE AT THE UWO BOOKSTORE**

**Additional links will be provided on the OWL website when needed**

**Week one: Thursday 6 January**

***Introduction: What's in a Label? Lesbian vs. Queer vs. Trans***

TEXT: Bonnie Zimmerman, "A Lesbian-Feminist Journey Through Queer Nation" (2007) [article, course package]

Rossiter, H. "Butch Lesbian Transwomen in the Lesbian Community," *Journal of Lesbian Studies* (2016) 20.1: 87-96.

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DOCUMENTARY CLIP: *After Stonewall*

**Week two: Thursday 13 January**

***Is There a Lesbian Past?: The Case of Anne Lister***

TEXT: Anne Lister, *Diaries* (1821) [extracts, course package]

TEXT: Anna Clark, "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity" (1996) [essay, course package]

YOUTUBE CLIP: *Gentleman Jack*, dir. Anne Wainwright (2018)

DOCUMENTARY CLIP: *Revealing Anne Lister*

**Week three: Thursday 20 January**

***Feeling Backwards: The 1920s and Early Lesbian Visibility***

TEXT: Heather Love, "Spoiled Identity: Radclyffe Hall's Unwanted Being" [course package]

TEXT: Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) [extracts, course package]

TEXT: Vita Sackville-West, *Diaries* (1920s) [extracts, course package]

***Topics for short essay handed out (1000 words) (15%)***

**Week four: Thursday 27 January**

***Lesbian Utopias: 1970s Separatism and Community Building***

TEXT: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980) [essay, course package]

TEXT: Radicalesbians, "The Woman-Identified-Woman" (1970) [manifesto, course package]

TEXT: Joanna Russ, "When It Changed" [short story, course package]

DOCUMENTARY CLIP: *Forbidden Love* (1992)

**Week five: Thursday 3 February**

***Sex, Porn and Politics: From the 1980s Sex Wars to Toronto's "Pussy Palace"***

TEXT: Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex" (1984) [essay, course package]

TEXT: Nash and Bain, "Reclaiming Raunch? Spatializing Queer Identities at Toronto Women's Bathhouse Events," *Social and Cultural Geography* 8.1 (2007): 47-62. Download available Weldon Journals

**SHORT ESSAY DUE (15%)**

**Week six: Thursday 10 February**

**MIDTERM TEST (2 hours) (15%)**

**Week seven: 21-25 February**

## READING WEEK: NO CLASS

### Week eight: Thursday 3 March

#### *Challenging Whiteness: Lesbians of Colour*

TEXT: Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House", "The Uses of the Erotic" (1984) [essays, course package]

YOUTUBE CLIP: Audre Lorde, "A Litany for Survival" (1992)

TEXT: Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) [essay, course package]

TEXT: Greey, Ali, "Queer inclusion precludes (Black) queer disruption: media analysis of the Black Lives matter Toronto sit-in during Toronto Pride 2016," *Leisure Studies* 37.6 (2018): 662-676.

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**Topics for long essay handed out (2000 words) (25%)**

### Week nine: Thursday 10 March

#### *Kids, Kids, and More Kids: The Turn Toward Lesbian Parenting*

TEXT: Dana Berkowitz, "Theorizing Lesbian and Gay Parenting: Past, Present, and Future Scholarship" (2009) [essay, course package]

VIDEO: *If These Walls Could Talk 2, part 3*

YOUTUBE CLIP: Cameron Esposito (*Late Late Show*, 11 March 2016)

**Instructions for Oral Presentations handed out (10%)**

### Week ten: Thursday 17 March

#### *Lesbian Coming of Age Narratives: Fun Home*

TEXT: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2006)

TEXT: Valerie Rohy, "In the Queer Archive: *Fun Home*," *GLQ: Gay and Lesbian Journal Quarterly* 16.3 (2010): 340-361.

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### Week eleven: Thursday 24 March

#### *Lesbian Comedy and Lesbian Rage: Hannah Gatsby*

VIDEO: Hannah Gatsby, *Nanette*

TEXT: Jilly Boyce Kay, "Introduction: anger, media, and feminism: the gender politics of mediated rage," *Feminist Media Studies* 19.4 (2019): 591-615.

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Krefting, Rebecca. "Hannah Gatsby: On the Limits of Satire." *Studies in American Humor*, vol. 5, no. 1, (2019): 93-102.

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**LONG ESSAY DUE**

### Week twelve: Thursday 31 March

#### *Lesbian Music, Politics and the Counterpublic Sphere*

**Oral Presentations on Lesbian/Queer music**

**Final Examination in April 2022 (3 hours; 30% of final mark)**