

WST 369/CES 309: Queer Identities in Contemporary Cultures
M/W/F 11:10-12:00 PM, CUE 318
Spring 2013

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Each one of us is equipped with the resources to write good poetry – the histories of our lives and the ability to see, think, feel, and hear. When we combine these with a willingness to write, we discover that writing poetry is as natural as walking and talking.

Shelly Tucker, *Writing Poetry*

Find the muse within you. The voice that lies buried under you, dig it up. Do not fake it, try to sell it for a handclap or your name in print.

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Speaking in Tongues*

An Introduction to Queer Identities in Contemporary Cultures

Course Description: Queer Identities is an introduction to Queer Chicana/o and Queer Black resistance literatures, the historical circumstances which gave rise to such literature and the content and form of the literature itself. Students will study socio-political systems in the U.S. and how L/G/B/T identities are constructed within those systems. While the class will address the historical background of dominant socio-political and economic structures, we will emphasize how L/G/B/T Chicanas/os, African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans have used literature challenge structural inequalities within their communities and the dominant U.S. society. By the close of the semester, students will be able to discuss the historical watersheds and liberation movements that gave rise to Queer Black and Queer Chicana/o resistance literatures, founding and formative figures from each genre, and equally important, produce examples of resistance writing from their own subject positions. In addition to weekly synopses and a short-research paper, students will produce a complete volume of their own creative work, focusing on a single issue addressed in class. This course is interdisciplinary, it is designed to challenge you and push you to develop new and creative ways to transform the world around you.

Required Texts:

Chin, Staceyann. The Other Side of Paradise, New York, Scribner, 2009.
de la tierra, tatiana. For the Hard Ones. San Diego, Calaca Press, 2002.
Saints and Other Plays. Albuquerque, West End Press, 1994.

Reader, available at Cougar Copies: Bring to Class Daily
Poetry Packets distributed in class
WSU Databases/Angel

Class Grading and Requirements:

Class Attendance and participation (20 points): Class attendance and participation is mandatory and comprises a portion of your grade for this class. You are allowed up to three absences from the class, after that your grade will be lowered by 5 points for each class missed. In addition, you lose points for any assignments missed during absences; if you have an anticipated absence (athletic event, job interview, etc.) be sure to turn in all assignments before you leave. Approved and *documented* university excuses are acceptable.

As in other WST classes, there is not such thing as a “stupid question.” There are, however, inappropriate questions. If you ask a question which demonstrates to the professor, that you have not read before class, you will be directed to “do the reading.” If you ask a question or make a comment that is racist, sexist, homophobic, or abelist, the professor will put the question or comment on the white board so that we, as a class, can analyze it.

Your class participation grade will be determined by your attendance and your *informed participation* in this class. Do you directly engage the material assigned in the class? Do you encourage your classmates to do so? Do you listen critically? Do you make thoughtful contributions to class discussions? Remember, opinion is very different than informed participation. Informed participation demonstrates a grappling with and understanding of assigned texts. Opinion does *not* aid class participation grades.

Cell Phone and Tardy Penalties: If your cell phone or similar device is out and/or rings during class you will lose 5 points from your grade (bring it to the front of the class, set it on the table). If you are tardy place your student ID on the front table – you will lose 5 points from your grade for each tardy.

Short Assignments (10-20 points each): Throughout the semester students will be assigned mini-research projects, poetry assignments and collective projects each worth 10-20 points each. Because these assignments are critical to understanding and fully participating in the day’s curricular activities, no late short assignments will be accepted.

For ‘Five Questions’ assignments – be sure to *always* respond to questions with complete paragraphs (1-2 per question). All 5Q assignments are due at beginning of class. Three of your 5Q questions will be graded (randomly) throughout the semester, the remainder will be credit/no credit.

Mid-Term Project (100 points): At the beginning of class Friday, Feb. 15 (week six), students must turn in two copies of a 5-6 page research paper. This paper must research and analyze a contemporary issue that directly affects queer communities in the U.S. Topics must be approved by the professor; a full description of the assignment will be distributed during week three.

Exam (100 points): Monday April 1st we will have an in-class, cumulative, written exam covering all material discussed in class and/or covered in required readings. The exam will consist of short answer, poetry IDs, IDs, and essay questions.

Final Project: Poetry/Creative Writing Collection (100 points): Building on the research projects completed for the mid-term, students will produce chapbooks of no less than 10 pages. Full descriptions of the final research project will be distributed to students during week six. These are, in part, collective projects – students should not begin working on projects until they have formed their collectives.

Poetry Reading: (50 points): With their collectives, students will present the work they have produced to their classmates in a formal presentation.

Grading Scale		Points	% of Grade
A	94-100%	Class	
A	90-93%	Part	20 4%
B+	87-89%	Short	
B	84-86%	Assign.	140 27%
B-	80-83%	MidTerm	100 20%
C+	77-79%	Exam	100 20%
C	74-76%	Final	
C-	70-73%	Project	100 20%
D+	67-69%	Grp Pres	50 10%
D	60-66%	Totals	510 100%
F	59% and below		

Course Policies:

Academic Etiquette Policy: Class will begin promptly at 11:10. Arriving late or leaving early is not tolerable. Students are required to treat each other, their texts, the professor and themselves with the utmost respect. Disrespectful behavior in class will result in dismissal for the day (0 for class participation), student will not be permitted to return to class until they meet with the professor and a letter will be sent to Student Conduct.

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with an Access Advisor.

Academic Integrity Policy: Plagiarism or cheating of any kind on any assignment will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and a report to Student Conduct and the American Studies Program Director. (See the WSU handbook, Academic Dishonesty). If you are at any time unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please see me.

Emergency Notification System: WSU has made an **emergency notification system** available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes on RONet. Please refer to the University emergency management website <http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> as well WSU ALERT <http://alert.wsu.edu> for information on WSU's communication resources WSU will use to provide warning and notification for emergencies. The entire WSU safety plan can be found at <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>.

Schedule of Readings, Activities and Assignments

If it becomes necessary to make changes to the syllabus you will be informed of such changes during class time.

Week One: Writing Against the Grain January 7-11

5Q: Due Friday, *Reader*, “Where Will You Be?”; “Poetry is not a Luxury”

M: Introduction to colleagues, professor, TA, syllabus, discussion of plagiarism (handout in Reader).

W: Lecture: Constructing Race, Constructing Gender

F: basic terms (Womanism, Feminism, Queer, Chicana/o, Chicana Materialism); In your Reader, we will look at: “How to Read a Poem,” Lorde’s “Call,” Anzaldúa’s “Borderlands/La Frontera.”

Week Two: Politics of Resistance January 14-18

5Q: (DUE WED) *Reader*, Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” Timeline: African American Resistance to Racist Violence. Natasha Tarpley, “Slow Dance,” *Callaloo* 15 no. 4 (Autumn, 1992) JSTOR.

M: Lecture: Race, Sex, and Civil Rights (Black Resistance Literatures)

W: Discussion + Students brain-storm/write preferred topics on cards, begin *Place of Rage*

F: Film Clip and discussion: (Cont.) *Place of Rage*

Week Three: Poetry and the Importance of Rage January 21-25

5Q: Hughes, *The First Book of Rhythms* (read the first 40 pages):

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/40423298@N08/sets/72157625238539170/>

This week students form collectives and begin to develop themes around which they will organize their research .

M: MLK Day: School Holiday

W: Form collectives and identify research issues + Finding sources, writing bibliographies (workshop in library). Assignment will be distributed in class [10 pt assignment due Friday].

F: Workshop: List Poems

Week Four: Queer Black Resistance January 28-February 1

We have already had a glimpse of Queer Black resistance literature; how did we get here? This week we look at precursors to Queer Black resistance literature. Optional 5pts, e.c. if you know the names of all classmates by the beginning of class on Thursday.

5Q (Reader) “‘Under the Days’: The Buried Life and Poetry of Angelina Weld Grimké,” Govan, “Kindred Spirits and Sympathetic Souls: Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Bennet in the Harlem Renaissance,” Poetry of Langston Hughes (all)

M: Lecture: Legacies of Resistance, 1917 to 1986 (Legacies)

W: Discussion + Collectives Report Back on Issues

F: Poetry Workshop: Haiku

Week Five: In the Life
February 4-8

This week we begin to examine the origins of Queer Black Literatures of Resistance, beginning with “Smoke, Lilies, and Jade” we will examine the ways that African American men have used poetry, prose and film to challenge racialized homophobia.

5Q: (Reader) *Legacies*

M: Lecture: From Nugent to Hemphill, Lorde and Parker, Three Generations of Queer Black Poetry
W: Video: Begin *Looking for Langston*
F: Video: *Looking for Langston*

Week Six: Contemporary QBlack Poets/scripting plays
February 11-15
MID-TERM PROJECTS ARE DUE Friday

5Q: on-line: <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/standards/V5N2/HEMPHILL/essex.html>
Choose one Poem to share in a small group; *Reader* “Recalling Essex Hemphill: Words to Our Now” by Thomas Glave (402-412). Hemphill “For my own Protection”; Begin Reading *This Side of Paradise*

M: Distribution of Final Project materials + Discuss Glave
W: Lecture: Brother and Sister: The Legacies of Lorde and Hemphill (+introduction to Actos)
F: Assignment: Be sure to bring TWO copies of your mid-term project to class today, begin scripting plays: Haiku challenge

Week Seven: Contemporary QBlack Poets Continued
February 18-22

5Q: (Reader) Kowitz, “Lonely as a Leftover Thumb”

M: **President’s Day: No Class**

W: Actos Groups 1-3 + Similes and metaphors
F: Actos Groups: 4-5 + Workshop: Extended Metaphors

Week Eight: Staceyann Chin
Feb. 25-March 1

Assignment (20 pts): “Everything I know about Staceyann Chin.” Using our library resources (hard-copy and electric), the internet, and *This Side of Paradise* write a three-page biography of Staceyann Chin. In your biography, you must cite Chin’s autobiography at least four times and make use of a minimum of two other sources. Be sure to attach a works cited (MLA citations), and to cite sources in-text.

M: : Reading Workshop: Chin

Read: <http://www.staceyannchin.com/v2/poems.html> Make sure to read #4 Flags, #7 Cultural Haiku, #24 Open Letter to CNN, FOX NEWS

W: Work-shopping, writing and revising to “show” not “tell.”

F: Video Clip: Litany of Survival

Week Nine: Queer Chicana/o Foremothers

March 4-8

5Q: Read Moraga: *Heroes and Saints*. Reader: Timeline Chicana/o Resistance to Racist Oppression

M: Lecture: Chicana/o Histories of Resistance

W: *Heroes and Saints*: Act One

F: *Heroes and Saints*: Act Two. Review Guide Distributed

Week Ten: March 11-15

Spring Break

Week Eleven

(National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies)

March 18-22

5Q: *Reader* ““La Chicana,” “Viva la Chicana,” “Feminism,” “I looked up one day”; Chicana Poetry from the 1960s and 1970s: “

M: Video Clip: *Viva la Causa* (complete worksheet)

W: Lecture: Chicana Feminisms (Angel: Post at least one question)

F: Poetry Worksheets “I Looked Up One Day” (meet with poetry team)

Week Twelve

March 25-29

5Q: Reader: Rebolledo, “The Chicana/o Renaissance; Cervantes, “Para un Revolucionario,” “Late Twentieth-Century Poetry,” and Demetria Martínez *all*.

M: Poetry Readings: Lorna Dee Cervantes “Poetry Festival Santa Cruz” and “Lorna Dee Cervantes @ the Librotraficante”: Post poetry worksheets (10pts) (Angel)

Wed: Lecture “Chicana Archetypes” (Bring One Question)

Friday: Review Session

Week Thirteen

April 1-5

M: Cumulative Exam

W: On Writing Poetry

F: Poetry workshop: Writing in/from symbols, Derived Poems

Week Fourteen: Tatiana de la Tierra, A Chicana from Columbia

April 8-12

5Q: *For the Hard Ones*: pp. 15-54; 69-70

M: Micro-lecture De la Tierra + Discussion de la Tierra Pt. I

W: Discussion de la Tierra Pt. II +Collective work with symbols

F: Working in Collectives + Using *Publisher*

Week Fifteen: Old Queers

April 15-19

5Q: *Reader* “sassy b. gonn, or Searching for Black Lesbian Elders” by Lisa C. Moore (413-431).

M: Discussion + *Living with Pride*

W: Finish *Living with Pride*

F: Last day collective work

Week Sixteen: Project Presentations

April 22-26

M: Poetry Readings groups 1-2

W: Poetry Readings groups 3 (+Course evaluations)

F: Poetry Readings groups 4-5

Remember that attendance at presentations is mandatory and that missing any presentations will cause you to forfeit 10 points from your own project grade.

All Final Projects are Due Monday April 29th by 3:00 pm (bring to Wilson 10)