Women’s Studies/English 211: Sex Matters: Introduction to Queer Culture and Literature  
(H, 3 Credits) Tues/Thurs 9:10-10:25  
Fall 2015 Thompson Hall 119

Professor Heidenreich Zuñiga  
Office Hours: 4:10-5:10 Tues/Thurs. and by appt.  
Office: Wilson Hall 10F  
Phone: 355-6883

If you have a question, ask it in class or come to my office. I will not bite.

Course Introduction and Description:
Women’s Studies/English 211 is an introduction to queer cultural production in the US. Its emphasis, this semester, is on paperback literatures. Queer cultural production does not occur in vacuum or emerge from unmarked cultural communities. Instead it emerges from specific cultural communities, shaped by the specific histories and socio-economic realities. Thus, this course will focus on the resistance work produced by three distinct queer communities: Black, Chicana/o, and Euro-American queer communities. It begins in the 1600s, with a Mexican nun writing feminist poetry and love letters to other women, spends some time in the 1950s with the production of early pulp fiction, and it ends with the backlash of the late twentieth century when conservatives reacted to a new flourishing of LGBT human rights and cultural production. By examining texts from different cultural communities throughout U.S. history, the course provides students with a basis for evaluating relationships between popular culture and social change, and for mapping uses of cultural production/fiction to further specific community struggles for a more just society.

Students read queer-authored twentieth-century novels and children’s stories as well as theory essays and primary historical documents. They create a 500-1000-word children’s book addressing a critical theme addressed in course readings/lecture/discussions. Throughout the semester students also complete Written Discussion Question worksheets to aid them in responding to critical/structural questions about texts; and three exams to reinforce key concepts, historical watersheds, and specific examples of change over time. In short, the course is a combination of work, fun, and more work. The goal is the creation of a critical, creative tool-box.

Course Objectives:
Improve your ability to analyze information, think critically about sources, and to express your conclusions, arguing from sources, in writing. In the context of queer cultural production, this means you will learn to:

1. Analyze and discuss the historical circumstances that gave rise to the phenomenon of queer fiction from specific cultural communities.
2. Recognize the tools used by queerwriters in constructing counter-narratives.
3. Identify political arguments put forward in texts from dominant cultures as well as minority cultures.
4. In a written format, apply and explain basic critical concepts (gender, race, social disruption) to specific texts.
5. Queer the world “in a lot of different ways.”

Required Texts (available at Crimson and Gray and at the Bookie – and Amazon.com and HPB.com):
1. Bergman, Bear S., Butch is a Noun  
2. Gomez, Jewelle, The Gilda Stories (Chapters 1-2, 5-8)  
3. Parker, Vin, Spring Fire  
4. Sánchez, Alex, The God Box  
5. W ST 211 Reader: Available at Cougar Copies
Extra Credit Text:
1. Baldwin, James, *Giovanni’s Room*

Course Requirements:

**Mid-Term Exams (100 points each for a total of 200 points/40% of grade):** There will be two mid-term exams, one during week six and one at week eleven. Mid-term exams are framed to encourage students to review material from lectures, films, discussions and readings. They consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short essay (analytical ID) responses. If you miss a mid-term exam the only time to make-up the exam is at the final. No Exceptions.

**Children’s Story (100 points/20% of grade):** On December 3rd, at the beginning of class, you will be required to turn in a Children’s Story of approximately 500-1000 words, with an analysis of your text that makes connections between your story and themes and topics addressed in class. For this assignment you will be required to do the following:
   a. Create a queer Children’s Story with a plot, conflict and resolution.
   b. Explain your characters, what you hope to teach with the story, how you hope to keep children engaged with your text, and how the story is queer.
   c. Directly apply the work of one of the course readings (Lorber, Baldwin, Lorde, etc.) in your analysis of your text.

*Full assignment will be distributed during week six.*

**Written Discussion Question Worksheets (20 points each for a total of 100 points/20% of grade):** Five times during the semester you will be required to complete discussion question worksheets prior to class. This is a credit/no credit assignment. In class, we will review and discuss all worksheet topics in large and/or small groups.

Each worksheet consists of a crossword puzzle and one or two discussion questions. Examples of discussion questions include: “If you could add one character to this novel, who would it be? How would they relate to the protagonist?” “Is this text queer? If so, how so? If not, why not?” “Which characters challenge social norms?” You will also be encouraged to formulate your own questions.

All due dates are specified by a “WDQ” in the syllabus.

**Text Discussions:** We will discuss key texts in class. If, during the course of class discussion, it becomes obvious that you have not read the assigned text, you may be asked to leave.

**Final Exam (100 points/20% of grade):** The final exam is cumulative and tests your knowledge of readings, lectures, videos and class discussions. It will cover all material from week 10 through week 16 as well as any information included on midterm examinations.

**Class attendance is mandatory for this class.** You are allowed up to three absences from class, after that your grade will be lowered by 5 points for each class missed. In addition, you will lose points for any assignments missed during that time. Six or more absences results in an F in the class for the semester. Approved and documented university excuses are acceptable (this means forms from the Athletic Department, MSS, or similar unit handed in *before* the absence). It is the responsibility of the student to turn in all paperwork and to retrieve all assignments *prior to the WSU event* (assignments must be turned in upon return to campus). Class participation is also an
important part of this class, meaningful contributions to class discussions and cooperation with fellow scholars and is used to determine final grade (+/- 1-2%).

If you miss a class do NOT ask the professor what you “missed.” Borrow notes from a classmate, read over them, and then come to office hours and ask the professor specific questions about the material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exams</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text Analysis</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDQ</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Total Point Possible**  500

**Grading Scale:**

- 94-100%  A  74-76%  C
- 90-93%   A- 70-73%  C-
- 87-89%   B+ 67-69%  D+
- 84-86%   B  60-66%  D
- 80-83%   B- Below 60%  F
- 77-79%   C+  

**Course Policies:**

**Academic Etiquette Policy:** Class will begin promptly at 12 noon. Arriving late or leaving early will lower your course grade by 5 points. If you arrive late you must leave your ID at the table by the door when you arrive so that I may document it. After turning in your ID take a seat in the nearest seat available. Toleration for diverse opinions is critical to the success of this class, and I expect all students to treat each other respectfully. Name-calling and other forms of verbal harassment will result in dismissal from the class, a mandatory meeting with the professor, and a letter to Student Conduct.

**Use of cell phones and laptops** is not permitted during class. If your cell phone is out or rings during class you will lose 5 points from your grade. While laptops do allow students to take more notes during lectures, our most recent studies show that students retain less information than when they take hard-copy notes– so consider taking hard-copy notes in your other classes as well.

**Poaching:** If you get caught poaching, you may be asked to leave the classroom.

**Assignments:** After the first five minutes research/creative papers are considered “same day late” and lose five points. They continue to lose five points each day thereafter. Assignments must be turned in as “hard copy.” Electronic submissions are not acceptable. Readings are due on the day they appear in the syllabus; *late Written Discussion Question Worksheets will not be accepted.*
Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

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 Office Student Standards and Accountability. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions.

Campus safety plan/emergency information: Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (http://oem.wsu.edu/) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.

Fall Schedule of Readings and Assignments

NOTE: Though I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus, I reserve the right to make changes. These will be announced in advance in class.

Week One: Introductions
Tuesday, Aug. 25  Introductions, Syllabus, Handout #1 (Plagiarism). Reading Children’s Storybooks
Thursday, Aug. 27  “It’s All about Race?” Introduction to race and ethnicity and their function in queer cultural production.

Reader  “Ranking Humankind,” “Science and Prejudice,” “Science, Skulls, and Mustard Seeds (43-54)
Online Read  http://writeforkids.org/2014/05/start-here-writing-for-children-step-one/
Begin Reading  Spring Fire

Week Two: Race and Gender in the Americas: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz
Tuesday, Sept. 1  Race, Class and Sex in the Americas
Online  http://www.aaronshep.com/kidwriter/Tips.html
Continue Reading  Spring Fire

Thursday, Sept. 3  Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz
Reader  “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, overview; “From the 1600s”; “The Social Construction of Gender,” Judith Lorber
### Week Three: Challenging Gender Roles, Challenging Patriarchy

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Sept. 8</td>
<td>Social Systems: Patriarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>“Patriarchy, the System,” Allan G. Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td><em>Yo la Peor de Todas</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>WDQ</td>
<td>“Patriarchy, the System”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Sept. 10</td>
<td>Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Challenging Patriarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td><em>Yo la peor de todas</em></td>
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<td>Begin Discussion</td>
<td>Spring Fire</td>
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### Week Four: From Fire! to Pulp Fiction

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Sept. 15</td>
<td>“The Golden Age of Lesbian Pulp Fiction”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>“Smoke, Lilies, and Jade”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finish Reading</td>
<td>Spring Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Sept. 17</td>
<td>“Before Stonewall”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Guides Distributed</td>
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### Week Five: Before Stonewall (cont.)

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Sept. 22</td>
<td>Discussion of Spring Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Clip:</td>
<td><em>Before Stonewall</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Sept. 24</td>
<td>Gilda Stories (<em>Chptr. 1: Louisiana: 1850</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>Jewelle Gomez, overview</td>
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<td>Reader</td>
<td>James Baldwin, overview: “Freaks and the American Ideal of Manhood”</td>
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### Week Six: Exam Week

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Sept. 29</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Oct. 1</td>
<td>Exam</td>
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<td>Paper Assignment Distributed</td>
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### Week Seven: Race and Sex, Beyond Binaries

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Oct. 6</td>
<td>Gilda Stories (<em>Chapter 5</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video Clip</td>
<td><em>Watermelon Woman</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, Oct. 8</td>
<td>Searching for Antepasadas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finish Reading</td>
<td>Gilda Stories (<em>Chapter 6-end</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDQ</td>
<td>Gilda Stories</td>
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### Week Eight: Twentieth-Century Black Lesbian Writings: Sign up for Consultations

**Tuesday, Oct. 13**  
**Reader**  
Audre Lorde, overview; “Coal,” “Who Said it was So Simple,” “The Master’s Tools”

**Nuts and Bolts:**  
MLA Citations, working a paragraph, sources not to use.

**Exams Returned**

**Thursday, Oct. 15**  
**Video Clip**  
Litany of Survival  
**Reader**  
Lorde; *Zami* (excerpt)

### Week Nine: The Homo-Sexual Speaks Back

**Tuesday, Oct. 20**  
Before there was Butch…the birth of the homo-sexual  
Sign-ups *(rough drafts required for all consultations)* for Nov. 5th

**Thursday, Oct. 22**  
**Reader**  
*Well of Loneliness* (excerpt), Radclyffe Hall  
**WDQ**  
*Well of Loneliness*, Due in Class on Tuesday

### Week Ten: Emergence of Transgender Lit.

**Tuesday, Oct. 27**  
From Masculine Women, to Real Men?  
**Begin Reading**  
*Butch is a Noun*

**Thursday, Oct. 29**  
**Review**

### Week Eleven: Exam/Disrupting Gender

**Tuesday, Nov. 3**  
**Exam Two**

**Thursday, Nov. 5**  
Consultations (no class today). A sign-up sheet will be distributed Thursday the 20th.

**Continue Reading**  
*Butch is a Noun*

### Week Twelve: Butch is…

**Tuesday, Nov. 10**  
**Finish Discussion**

**Finish Reading**  
*Butch is a Noun*

**Thursday, Nov. 12**  
**Exams Returned**

**Read**  
*The God Box, through page 134 (Chapter 27)*  
**WDQ**  
*The God Box*
Week Thirteen: From Flourishing to Culture Wars
Tuesday, Nov. 17  From Flourishing to Backlash
Finish Reading  *The God Box*
WDQ  *The God Box*

Thursday, Nov. 19  From Cures to Fetal Patches: The Art of Homophobic Cultural Production
Film Clip  *For the Bible Tells Me So*
Extra Credit Slides and Drafts due to Professor

Week Fourteen: Autumn Break Nov. 23-27

Week Fifteen: New Battles
Tuesday, Dec. 1  Backlash
Reader  For a “Christian America” (chapters 7-9); “Suspect Science”
Video  *But I’m a Cheerleader*

Thursday, Dec. 3  Sign up for Extra Credit Presentations
Video  *But I’m a Cheerleader*

Papers Due Today

Week Sixteen: Bringing it all home
Tuesday, Dec. 8  Extra Credit Presentations

Thursday, Dec. 10  Review Session

Final Exam is Wednesday Dec. 16th, 10:10am-12:10pm