

Introduction to LGBT Studies
WSt/SOC 484, 3 credits, UCORE: DIVR
Spring 2017, MWF 10:10a – 11a; WLSH 6

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Office Location: Wilson-Short 10K
Office Hours: MW 11a-1p

Required Materials:

- Gibson, Michelle A. et al. *Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBT Studies*. Second Edition. Sage (2014). ISBN: 978-1-4522-3528-8

Other materials and activities may be handed out in class or provided via Blackboard (learn.wsu.edu).

Course Description & Objectives

This course serves as an introduction to the field of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) studies. These labels and conceptions – and, by extension, the terms “straight” and “cisgender” – have a complicated relationship with nature and society, one that needs to be interrogated beyond simple, dichotomous phrases such as “born this way” versus “socially constructed.” Further, our understanding of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression will be taken beyond the personal and individual; we explore these concepts as influenced by history, culture, and the various social, economic, and political institutions that impact our lives. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to the field, using a variety of methods (historical, sociological, poetic, ethnographic, visual, and others) in order to negotiate the public and political manifestations of sex, sexuality, and gender identity/expression. Our approach will also be intersectional and comparative in navigating the ways in which queer identities and queer lives are impacted based on differences in race and ethnicity, social class, physical and mental dis/ability, national identity, and others.

Performance-Based Learner Outcomes:

- Understand and employ key concepts in the field, including social construction of the categories of gender and sexuality, intersectionality, heteronormativity, cissexual privilege, and sexual citizenship, among others.
- Recognize the construction of sexuality in its historical context as well as in the way it continually evolves under the influence of culture, nation, and other factors.
- Analyze the concepts of heteronormativity and homophobia and examine the ways privilege and oppression operate at both the institutional and individual levels.
- Consider the possibilities and limitations of labeling sexual and gender identities.
- Conceptualize sexuality and gender identity/expression beyond Western discourses of categorization.
- Identify, analyze, and propose alternatives to heteronormative and transphobic systems of inequality in order to move toward queer social justice.
- Informally and formally write and speak to communicate LGBT studies concepts, arguments, and beliefs coherently and concisely.

Note: Since WST/SOC 484 is an upper division course, you must have fulfilled the required prerequisites. Additionally, your enrollment implies (and assumes) both your willingness to abide by the conditions set forth in this document *and* your commitment to scholarly inquiry that is not homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist, classist, ableist, xenophobic, etc.

Course Assignments

Readings: Bring your textbook to class every day. The style of the reading is no excuse for lack of engagement. Be an active reader! Write questions in the margins, make note of key terms, look up unfamiliar words, etc. Determine what is most significant about the reading, and go beyond emotional responses. Work to make connections to other readings and concepts. Allow yourself time to do the readings justice.

Reading Responses: You will write brief responses of 400-500 words for selected readings during the semester (see course calendar). These responses should include the main argument/s of the essay as well as at least one question or comment about the reading that considers meaning, function, or potential consequences (questions that ask “why,” “how,” or “so what”). **Engage with your own question or comment! Answer, speculate, consider. Show yourself thinking critically about the text!** Reading responses should be typed, conform to MLA format, and are due on the day we discuss that reading. **These responses cannot be made up.** If you are absent when a reading response is due (meaning you missed the corresponding discussion of that reading), **you cannot turn in the response via email.** I reserve the right to make exceptions based on extreme circumstances such as extended illness, though such exceptions are not guaranteed.

Participation: The participation grade will be determined by your level of *informed participation*. Sharing personal experiences that demonstrate a lack of engagement with course materials is *not* considered informed participation. You must engage with the reading under consideration whether you “like” a reading or not. Ultimately, participation in this class prizes **quality over quantity**. While I reserve the right to call on you and ask for your response to the reading or discussion, I recognize that not everyone is comfortable speaking in front of a group. You can make up for this in several ways. Feel free to discuss with me any issues you may have.

The rubric for participation is as follows:

- 80-100%: Excellent participation, including active and insightful contributions. Significantly enhances the classroom dynamic with questions, comments, and responses to others. Obvious close engagement with the reading on a consistent basis.
- 60-79%: Regular participation with adequate insight into the text. Contributions are sometimes superficial or basic (they do not further the conversation).
- 40-59%: Rare participation, generally superficial observations, but is attentive in class and not disruptive in any way.
- 20-39%: Physically present in class but often “checked out.” No significant contributions to class discussion.
- 0-19%: Disruptive in one or more ways. This may include sleeping, texting or other use of cell phone, making comments with the intent to derail the class, being overtly rude or hostile to the instructor or other students, etc.

In-class Midterm: The take-home midterm will consist of responding to one or two short essay prompts. You will receive the prompts one week before the midterm is due (see course calendar).

Final Project and Presentation: You will have a choice between a research essay (10-12 pages) on an *approved* topic of your choice or a *collaborative* creative option of equivalent length/effort (must also be approved beforehand). More information will be provided about each option as a separate handout. In either case, you will present your project to the rest of the class at the end of the semester.

Grades	
<u>Assignments</u>	500 pts (100%)
Participation	100 pts (20%)
Reading Responses (20pts each x 5 responses)	100 pts (20%)
Midterm	100 pts (20%)
Final Project and Presentation	200 pts (40%)

Grade Breakdown:

A: 468-500 A-: 448-467 B+: 433-447 B: 418-432 B-: 398-417 C+: 383-397
C: 368-382 C-: 348-367 D+: 333-347 D: 298-332

Assignment Rubric: Consider assignment grades as something akin to the Ordinary Wizarding Levels (OWLs) of *Harry Potter*. All scores earned fall within the following general rubric:

A = Outstanding [O]: Hermione Granger is the obvious example here. Not only have you demonstrated a superior, nuanced understanding of the assignment and the concepts involved, but you have executed the assignment with much creativity and style. You have not only worked hard, but that effort shows in your superior organization and your “swish and flick” technique. In short, you made me say “Wow!”

B = Exceeds Expectations [E]: Harry Potter. You have demonstrated not only a basic understanding of the assignment and concepts, but you seem to have grasped things on a more nuanced level (it took Cedric Diggory *ages* to figure out his egg clue). You have executed the assignment showing some level of style and creativity as well as demonstrating your more nuanced understanding in more than one area. Look at that Patronus!

C = Acceptable [A]: Ron Weasley. You have demonstrated a basic understanding of the assignment and the concepts involved, and you have executed the assignment in a way that demonstrates just enough effort to get by.

D = Poor [P]: Neville Longbottom in his earlier years (except in Herbology). Whatever level of effort you may have put into understanding the assignment and the concepts involved, more work is needed in order to demonstrate that you have a basic understanding (beyond the very superficial) of what we are learning in this class. You’ll need to put in some extra effort and communicate with the instructor to get that Expelliarmus spell down.

F = Dreadful [D] / Troll [T]: Here are most likely Draco Malfoy’s goons, Crabbe and Goyle. You have failed to demonstrate a basic understanding of class concepts or assignment instructions. This may be due to several reasons, including lack of attendance, lack of engagement with the readings, not communicating with the instructor in times of need, bullying people in the House of Gryffindor, etc.

**OWL denominations based on the ideas of J.K. Rowling.*

Course Policies

Attendance: We are a community of thinking readers and writers and, therefore, we need one another's presence in order to succeed in this course. Missing *any* class time affects both your ability to contribute meaningfully to the class as well as your peers' understanding of the course topics. Should you have to be absent, it is your responsibility to get notes, assignments, or announcements from your peers. You are allowed three (3) absences without any effect on your grade. After that, your grade will be reduced by one-third per absence (so, an A becomes an A-, and so on) at my discretion. **Please note: I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, with the exception of extreme/extended emergencies or official, *documented* school absences. Your three "freebies" should be reserved for genuine emergencies.** **Tardiness:** Class time is according to the class watch, not your own. Coming to class late and/or leaving early are both considered "tardy." Tardiness is disruptive and detrimental to both you and the rest of the class. Therefore, **coming to class after we have officially started or leaving early without telling me ahead of time counts as one-third of an absence.**

Please note also that I will screen media throughout the semester. As some of this media is not easily available elsewhere, you are expected to be present for screenings and to treat the media as another reading. **Be prepared to take notes.**

Assignment Policies and Late Work: I do not accept late work except in extreme situations, such as a family emergency or extended health issue. If you know in advance that you will not be in class when an assignment is due, **turn it in early. This includes official school absences such as sports events.** If you have an emergency, discuss your situation with me as soon as possible.

I will only accept hard copies of assignments for grading purposes. If for some reason you are unable to provide a hard copy on the day an assignment is due (such as a printing issue), you are allowed to email me your assignment so that it counts as on time, but you must still provide me with a hard copy at the next class meeting. **Technology problems or other minor mishaps cannot be used as an excuse to give yourself extra time on an assignment. Be responsible and plan ahead.**

Example issues that may arise, and their answers:

- Q) I left my assignment at home, can I give it to you next class? A) No.
- Q) I left my assignment at home, can I go get it? A) No.
- Q) My printer suddenly ran out of ink. Can I... A) Printers don't "suddenly" run out of ink, so no.
- Q) I tried to print out my assignment on campus, but my CougarCard wouldn't work/I didn't have funds. Can I... A) No.
- Q) It's Mercury Retrograde. Can I... A) No.

Classroom Etiquette: Use of electronic devices (laptops, cell phones, audio devices) in the classroom is not allowed except by special permission. Please make sure that all such devices are turned off prior to the beginning of class (**remove your headphones and earbuds!**). Disruption of class such as talking/whispering during lectures or films, sleeping, making inappropriate comments that distract from the task at hand, making rude or overtly hostile comments, TEXTING, etc. may result in you being asked to leave the classroom and/or being given a full absence for that period, whether you remain in the classroom or not.

This classroom is to be considered a "safe" space. We cover topics in this class and engage in discussion that may be sensitive and/or challenge your personal beliefs or opinions. This is normal. It is critical that we learn to value different opinions and engage them in a manner that is not hostile to your peers or the instructor. Maintain an atmosphere of respect at all times. Hostility in various forms (sarcasm, personal attacks, use of hate speech, etc.) is not only unproductive but also can make people

feel uncomfortable and even unsafe. If you are unable to maintain a respectful environment, you will be asked to leave. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or find class material to be too “triggering,” please talk to me. **Diversity Statement:** We are a college community enriched by the diversity of our students and staff. Each individual and group has the potential to contribute to our learning environment. Each has dignity. To diminish the dignity of one is to diminish the dignity of us all.

A Note about Communication: Email is the most convenient way to communicate with me, and I attempt to answer all inquiries within 24 hours. However, I have to set a limit on certain forms of communication. In particular, the following types of emails will **not** be answered:

- The answer to your email can be found within the syllabus.
- The email does not contain a respectful form of greeting (I do not respond to “Hey”).
- You are asking me to cover an entire class’s materials via email. (If you are having difficulty with a concept in the class, you are encouraged to make an appointment to talk to me in person.)
- You are asking for a grade on an assignment.
- You are attempting to argue for a better grade via email. (If you have questions about a grade you have received, you are encouraged to make an appointment to talk to me in person.)
- You are writing to figure out your number of absences. (You are expected to keep track of those on your own.)
- You are emailing me about the same subject and 24 hours has not passed.
- The tone of the email is rude/disrespectful/demanding.
- The email is written such that I cannot understand what you are saying (sentence skill issues).

Academic Honesty Statement: Academic honesty is an indispensable value as students acquire knowledge and develop skills in college. Students at Washington State University are expected to practice academic honesty by not cheating, plagiarizing, or misrepresenting their coursework in any way. Students are ultimately responsible for understanding and avoiding academic dishonesty whether such incidences are intentional or unintentional. Plagiarism, collusion, and other forms of misrepresentation hurt the student and run counter to the goals of education. If at any time you are not sure about the legitimacy of your work in this course, ask me for clarification. **Plagiarism Policy:** The consequences of plagiarism depend on the nature of the offense and may range from a zero grade on an assignment (which is worse than a grade of F) to failure of the class. Students who violate WSU’s Standards of Conduct for Students will also be reported to the Office of 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, available here: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338>

Special Accommodations Statement: 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.

Safety Statement: Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety Plan, <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>. It is highly recommended that you visit this website as well as the University emergency management website at <http://oem.wsu.edu/> to become familiar with the information provided.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

****This schedule is subject to change with notice.
++ Readings marked in BOLD require a reading response.**

Week One (1/9 – 1/13)

M: Syllabus and course overview; introduction to the course

W: “Introduction: To the Reader” pp. xx-xxvii

F: “Bamboo Clappers Strike the Hateful Number” (pp. 21-23)

Week Two (1/16 – 1/20)

M: **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY – NO CLASS**

W: Chapter 1 pp. 2-16 and “Ancient Egyptian Binding Spell” (pp. 25-26)

F: Chapter 2 pp. 29-34

Week Three (1/23 – 1/27)

M: Chapter 2 pp. 35-48

W: Chapter 3 pp. 49-61

F: Chapter 3 pp. 62-67

Week Four (1/30 – 2/3)

M: Chapter 4 pp. 70-82

W: *Paris Is Burning*

F: *Paris Is Burning*

Week Five (2/6 – 2/10)

M: Chapter 5 pp. 102-116

W: Chapter 5 pp. 120-124

F: Chapter 5 pp. 125-128

Week Six (2/13 – 2/17)

M: Chapter 6 pp. 130-142

W: *God Loves Uganda*

F: *God Loves Uganda*; **Midterm handed out**

Week Seven (2/20 – 2/24)

M: **PRESIDENTS DAY – NO CLASS**

W: *Be Like Others*

F: *Be Like Others*; **Midterm due**

Week Eight (2/27 – 3/3)

M: Chapter 7 pp. 153-166

W: Supp: Bisexuality

F: Supp: Asexuality; **Final Project Abstract due**

Week Nine (3/6 – 3/10)

M: Chapter 7 pp. 172-176

W: Supp: Transwomen Detained

F: Chapter 7 pp. 169-172

Week Ten (3/13 – 3/17)

SPRING BREAK – BE SAFE!

Week Eleven (3/20 – 3/24)

M: Chapter 8 pp. 177-188

W: *Out In the Night*

F: *Out In the Night*

Week Twelve (3/27 – 3/31)

M: Chapter 11 pp. 257-268

W: Chapter 11 pp. 270-273

F: Chapter 11 pp. 273-277

Week Thirteen (4/3 – 4/7)

M: Final Project Conferences

W: Final Project Conferences

F: Final Project Conferences

Week Fourteen (4/10 – 4/14)

M: Chapter 13 pp. 302-314

W: *Sense8*

F: *Sense8*

Week Fifteen (4/17 – 4/21)

Presentations

Week Sixteen (4/24 – 4/28)

Presentations

Finals Week (5/1 – 5/5)

Final Project due Monday, May 1, by 1pm!!