Feminist Studies 107: Queer History of the United States

Course Description

This upper-division course looks at the history of sexuality in the United States through the vantage point of queer communities. The term “queer” encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex identities. Special attention will be paid to issues of class, gender, race, ethnicity, repression, and resistance. While the primary focus of this course is twentieth century U.S. queer history, on occasion we will dip into the nineteenth in order to draw the connection between sexual and gender identities before and after the turn of the century.

Required Texts

• Other readings at queerhistory.wordpress.com

Course Requirements

• Class Participation/Attendance: 30% (see below for more information)
• Reaction Papers: 30%
  o Reaction Paper #2: Due *July 7, 2011*
    ▪ Worth 30% of your grade, this paper should be 3-4 pages. Like your first reaction paper, this essay must be structured like an essay; it should include an argument, focused paragraphs, and citations. You must use at least 2 of the readings from weeks 1-3 of the class.
• Two-Part Final Exam: 40%
  o In-Class Identification: 20%, *July 21, 2011*
    ▪ This in-class test will last one hour. It’ll be comprehensive, consisting of material from lectures, films, and readings. You will be able to choose 5 out of 10 identifications. The identifications are significant events, people, or concepts in US Queer History.
  o Final Exam Take-Home Essay: 20%, prompt handed out *July 19th*, Due *July 21* – this essay prompt will test your comprehensive knowledge of all course materials. The essay should be 4-6 pages long.
Attendance/Participation
Attendance at lectures is a significant part (30%) of your final grade. Each class session will consist of a lecture/film and time for discussion, so it is imperative that you come to class having finished the reading due that day and otherwise be prepared to participate in discussion. Once during the course each student will work with two other classmates to develop 5-7 discussion questions based on the reading. Students will help to facilitate one class discussion using their questions.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Queer History; Early Queer History

June 21, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: Introduction to course; Early Queer History
- Film: Before Stonewall (1984) (87 minutes)
- Song: Prove It On Me Blues, by Ma Rainey

June 23, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: Theorizing Gender/Sexuality; Early Queer History, Continued.
- Start Leila Rupp, A Desired Past, chapters one through four (pp.1-100)
- Film: Two Spirits (2009) (65 minutes)

Week 2: World War II; Cold War

June 28, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1940s -1950s Queer History
- Finish Leila Rupp, A Desired Past, chapters six through conclusion (pp.101-199)
- Film: Coming Out Under Fire (1994) (72 minutes)

June 30, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1940s-1950s Queer History, continued.
- Nan Alamilla Boyd, Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965, chapter 3 (pp.102-148)
- Film: My Life in Pink (1997) (88 minutes)
Week 3: Gay and Transgender Liberation

**July 5, 2011:** Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1960s-1970s Queer History
- Start Susan Stryker, *Transgender History*, chapters 1-3 (pp.1-90)
- Film: *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (2005) (57 minutes)

**July 7, 2011:** Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1960s-1970s Queer History, continued.
- Finish Stryker, *Transgender History*, chapters 4-5 (pp.91-153)
- *The Combahee River Collective Statement* (6 pages)
- Film: *Outrage ’69*
- Reaction Paper Due In Class

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Week 4: Prisons, The Rise of the Right, AIDS

**July 12, 2011:** Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1970s-1990s Queer History
- Film: Film: *Paris is Burning* (1990)

**July 14, 2011:** 1970s-1990s, Queer History, Continued.
• Film: ACT UP (75 minutes)

Week 5: Contemporary Gay/Lesbian and Queer Rights/Movements

July 19, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1990s-2000s Contemporary Queer Moment – Guest Lecturer Likely
  • TAKE-HOME FINAL ESSAY PROMPT DISTRIBUTED
  • “Becoming a Black Man,” by Daisy Hernández, Colorlines, January/February 2008 (5 pages)
  • Film: After Stonewall (1999) (88 minutes)

July 21, 2011: Lecture/Discussion/Film: 1990s-2000s Contemporary Queer Politics
  • TAKE-HOME FINALESSAY DUE
  • IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM: IDENTIFICATIONS (1 hour)