

WGS 202: Introduction to GLBT Studies

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"Same-sex love is a phenomenon common to almost every culture, one occurring throughout recorded history. The ways in which people have understood this attraction, however, have varied widely" (Blasius & Phelan, 1997, *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics*, p. 2).

Course Description

WGS 202 is an interdisciplinary introduction to the field of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Studies. This course emphasizes the core Miami Plan values of thinking critically, understanding contexts, engaging with other learners, and reflecting and acting. While it is impossible to be exhaustive in one semester, the course aims to give students a solid intellectual foundation for the further study of the social, historical, and cultural forces that shape the experiences, expression, and representation of non-normative genders and sexualities. Our inquiries will reflect the importance of thinking intersectionally—acknowledging that cultural categories such as race, class, nation, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation operate in complex and interlocking ways within diverse social and economic networks of power.

Course Texts

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Blasius, M. & Phelan, S. (Eds.). (1997). *We are everywhere: A historical sourcebook of gay and lesbian politics*. (WE)
2. Scholinski, D. & Adams, J. M. (1997). *The last time I wore a dress*.
3. Additional readings are available on Niihka. (Nii)

FILMS

1. *Before Stonewall*
2. *Brother Outsider*
3. *Paris is Burning*
4. *Is it a Boy or a Girl?*

All films are digitized and are on reserve at the library

OPTIONAL TEXT

1. Stryker, S. (2008). *Transgender History*.

Miami Plan Principles Addressed in this Course

- **Critical Thinking:** We will develop skills for analyzing the social, legal and cultural forces that shape experiences, expressions, and representations of genders and sexualities. This semester we will focus particularly on the historical, cultural, political, and scientific forces that influence the construction of sexual and gendered identities, social movements, and communities.
- **Understanding contexts:** This course emphasizes thinking intersectionally – acknowledging that cultural categories such as race, class, nation, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation operate in complex and interlocking ways within diverse social and economic networks of power. As an introductory class, WGS 202 will focus especially on the historical and cultural contexts of LGBTQ identity, thought, and civic participation.
- **Engaging with other learners:** Throughout the semester, discussions and small group exercises will be important tools for examining cultural texts and contexts. We will work together to understand the course materials and to complicate and contextualize them in a manner that becomes applicable to your scholarly and everyday lives.

The course is organized as a seminar, where each student will engage in discussions at the small group level, contribute questions, and engage in whole-class discussions.

- Reflecting and acting: Since every day we are subjected to a proliferation of messages about the meaning of gender, sex, and sexuality, this course aims to give us the skills to engage with these messages more thoughtfully and with informed reflection about how the cultural meanings given to gender, sex, and sexuality impact our own lives.

Miami Plan Thematic Sequence WGS2

This course is part of the thematic sequence in Scholarly Studies of Gender and Sexuality. This sequence provides an opportunity for investigating and analyzing the historical, social, legal, and cultural forces that shape experiences, expressions, and representations of non-normative genders and sexualities including, but not necessarily limited to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Queer individuals and communities. Students will receive a broad, interdisciplinary introduction to scholarship in GLBTIQ studies in the foundation course, then focus more specifically on a disciplinary or topical perspective in tier two, ultimately engaging with the philosophical and theoretical aspects of investigating sexuality and gender as meaning-making cultural and social systems. Students completing the sequence will ideally achieve the following learning outcomes for the as part of their Miami Plan education:

(1) Critical Thinking Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to...

- Identify norms that shape expectations for legible genders and sexualities in U.S. and a variety of non-U.S. cultures.
- Describe how social institutions impact people with non-normative genders and sexualities.
- Interpret historical, psychological, and social evidence pertaining to non-normative genders and sexualities.
- Discuss the impact of social institutions, historical formations, cultural practices, and normative expectations on the everyday experience of being a gendered and sexed being.
- Analyze and evaluate the social, political, and psychological effects of representations that naturalize normative understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality

(2) Understanding Contexts Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to...

- Distinguish and employ intersectional approaches to knowledge production and dissemination.
- Acknowledge and examine how cultural categories such as race, class, nation, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation operate in complex and interlocking ways within diverse social and economic networks of power.
- Recognize and describe how sexuality and gender function within a variety of historical, cultural and aesthetic traditions.

(3) Engaging with Other Learners Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to...

- Discuss a variety of gender and sexuality related cultural texts and contexts in seminar settings.
- Collaborate on focused group projects and presentations that interrogate the meanings of gender, sexuality, normative or non-normative behavior, and the ethics and politics of sex.

(4) Reflecting and Acting Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to...

- Identify and respond to the messages about the meaning of gender, sex, and sexuality, that proliferate in contemporary popular culture.
- Reflect on about discourses about gender, sex, and sexuality impact their own lives.
- Recognize and critique unjust, damaging, or inaccurate representations of gender and sexuality in everyday life

Course Policies and Expectations

- Classroom Expectations: The classroom is a place for all of us to learn more about the assigned readings and the cultural/historical/theoretical contexts that inform our interpretations of them. You are not required, nor encouraged, to make final pronouncements about the readings, but rather to use class as a forum for asking questions and developing deeper understandings of readings and issues through the process of discussion.

Dissent within discussion is part of the learning process—and it is especially important in a civil society for us to develop the skills necessary to speak across our differences in ways that foster understanding, justice, and dignity. You will be expected to engage with the course materials and with each other in a respectful and intellectually serious manner – but there is no expectation that we will all agree with each other perfectly by the end of the day, or for that matter, at the end of the semester. Please note that the quality of your contributions is much more important than the quantity of your words. Listening attentively and responding thoughtfully to your peers is an important part of your contribution to the class.

- **Attendance:** Attendance and active participation in class are mandatory. Although there may be exceptions for documented emergencies, your grade will drop 1/3 of a letter grade for every absence after your second. If extenuating circumstances and/or emergencies do arise, it is your responsibility for notifying me before your absence in class or, if that is not possible, as soon thereafter along with an explanation of why you missed class. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the assignments and notes from a classmate.
- **Late Assignments:** This syllabus acts as a contract for our class and our learning community. Due to this, you are expected to follow all deadlines and turn in assignments on time. If, for some reason, you are unable to do this, you must meet with me to discuss why you did not turn in the assignment within a week of the original deadline. Because every assignment is an important aspect of your learning in this class, we will discuss when you will turn in the assignment as well as decide upon an acceptable consequence for your turning it in late. Please note that turning in late assignments will have a negative impact on not only your learning, but also our learning community and your overall grade for the course.
- **Academic Misconduct:** Please read part 1, chapter 5 of the Student Handbook (http://www.miami.muohio.edu/documents_and_policies/handbook/academic_regulations/acadregspv.cfm) which outlines Miami University Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct. If you have any questions about how to cite sources properly to avoid plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask them during class or in office hours.
- **Accommodations for persons with disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability that necessitates special accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible, so that we can make the necessary arrangements in a timely fashion.

Assignments

Assignment 1 – Reflective Essay (Due by 11:15am 27 August 2012)	75 points
Assignment 2 – Historical Considerations Paper (Due by 11:15am 17 September 2012)	125 points
Assignment 3 – Media Analysis Paper (Due by 11:15am 26 November 2012)	125 points
Assignment 4 – Connections Project (Presentations on 28 Nov., 3 Dec., and 5 Dec.)	125 points
Assignment 5 – Final Portfolio (Due by 12:00noon 10 December 2012)	350 points
Class Participation (i.e., in-class writings, discussion, and group work)	100 points
Weekly Discussion Prompts (Due by 9:00am on assigned Wednesdays via the Niikha blog)	100 points

For details on each individual assignment, refer to the Resources tab on the WGS 202 Niikha site

Grading Scale

940-1000 points = A	840-869 points = B	740-769 points = C	640-669 points = D
900-939 points = A-	800-839 points = B-	700-739 points = C-	600-639 points = D-
870-899 points = B+	770-799 points = C+	670-699 points = D+	0-599 points = F

Course Schedule

Introduction: Privilege, Power, and Critical Thinking

Learning outcomes for this unit are to...

- Begin to understand the complexities of privilege, oppression as they relate to your experiences as individuals,
- Explore how critical thinking and reflection enhances your ability to understand your world and how you operate in it, and
- Locate yourself in this discourse by reflecting on who you are and how you relate to others.

Assignments for this unit are...

- Assignment 1: Reflective Essay (due 27 August)
- Weekly discussion prompt (weekly)

20 August

Class topics: Introductions; course and syllabus review; what makes a positive learning community?

Readings: Introduction: Teaching to Transgress (pp. 3-9) (In class reading)

22 August

Class topics: Questions about the syllabus and/or assignments; power, privilege, and difference; personal identity; critical thinking and reflection

Readings: The Complexity of Identity: "Who Am I?" (Nii)
Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who Are My People?" (Nii)
Five Faces of Oppression (Nii)
What is Critical Thinking? (Nii)

Assignments: Weekly discussion prompt 1
Read through course syllabus and assignments and come prepared to ask any questions you have

Unit I: Historical Considerations

Learning outcomes for this unit are to...

- Explore the LGBTQI identities and communities from an historical perspective, and
- Discuss the changing nature of how identities and communities have shifted through time and location.

Assignments for this unit are...

- Assignment 2: Historical Considerations Paper (due 17 September)
- Writing prompts (weekly)

27 August

Class topic: Film: Before Stonewall

Readings: Context (WE pp. 239-240)
US Senate Report (WE pp. 241-251)
ACLU (WE pp. 274-275)

Assignment: Assignment 1: Reflective Essay

29 August

Class topics: Film: Before Stonewall; extending history backward

Reading: Symposium (Nii)
Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 2

3 September NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

5 September

Class topic: Transgender history

Readings: A Hundred Years of Transgender History (Nii)
 Gender Dysphoria in Adolescents and Adults
<http://www.dsm5.org/ProposedRevision/Pages/proposedrevision.aspx?rid=482> – read the proposed revision for the DSM-V, the rationale, severity, and the DSM-IV definition
 Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come (Nii)

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 3

10 September

Class topic: (Inter)national contexts

Readings: Part II C: Britain and France (WE pp. 179-196)
 Part II E: Subculture, Censorship, and Civil Rights in the United States (WE pp. 217-236)

12 September

Class topics: The Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis

Readings: Part III B: The Mattachine Society (WE pp. 283-308) – read introduction and 4 essays (your choice)
 Part III D: Daughters of Bilitis (WE pp. 327-376) – read introduction and 4 essays (your choice)

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 4

17 September

Class topic: Issues of faith and gay identities

Readings: Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian era to the Fourteenth Century (Nii)

Assignment: Assignment 2: Historical Considerations Paper

19 September

Class topic: Film: Brother Outsider

Readings: Celebrating African-American Lesbian and Gay History (WE pp. 787-792)
 After Stonewall (Nii)

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 5

Unit II: LGBTQI Identities and Communities

Learning outcomes for this unit are to...

- Explore the increasing diversity of LGBTQI identities and communities,
- Engage in discussion on how identities and communities intersect with one another, and
- Critically analyze how identities and communities are displayed through media.

Assignments for this unit are...

- Writing prompts (weekly)

24 September

Class topics: Questioning normal; challenging categorizations

Readings: What's Wrong with Normal? (Nii)
 The Trouble with Harry Thaw (Nii)
 Finish watching the remainder of Brother Outsider

26 September

Class topic(s): Intersectionality; Dis/ability and Queer Identities

Readings: Am I a Black Woman or a Woman Who is Black? A Few Thoughts on the Meaning of Intersectionality (pp. 254-257) (Nii)
 Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence (Nii)
 Gawking, Gaping, Staring (Nii)

Assignment: Crippling Masculinity (Nii) – optional
Weekly discussion prompt 6

1 October

Class topic: Rural queerness
Readings: From Wal-Mart to Websites: Out in Public (Nii)
Taking New Directions: How Rural Queerness Provides Unique Insights into Place, Class, and Visibility (Nii)

3 October

Class topic: Intersex identities
Readings: Intersex Society of North America Statement (Nii)
Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual (Nii)
Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism (Nii)
Film: Is it a Boy or a Girl?
Selections from Middlesex (Nii) – optional
Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 7

8 October

Class topic: Transgender identities
Readings: An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts (Nii)
Fire the Copyeditor, or Possibly the Author: A Few Notes on Pronouns (Nii)
"I Know What I Am": Gender, Sexuality, and Identity

10 October

Class topics: Language and the butch/trans border wars
Readings: How to Tame a Wild Tongue (Nii)
Of Catamites and Kings: Reflections of Butch, Gender, and Boundaries (Nii)
F2M: The Making of Female Masculinity (Nii)
Transgender butch: Butch/FTM border wars and the masculine continuum (Nii)
Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 8

15 October

Class topic: The Last Time I Wore a Dress
Reading: The Last Time I Wore a Dress (up to chapter 8)

17 October

Class topic: The Last Time I Wore a Dress
Reading: The Last Time I Wore a Dress (up to chapter 13)
Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 9

22 October

Class topic: The Last Time I Wore a Dress
Reading: The Last Time I Wore a Dress (finish)

24 October

Class topic: Gender policing and resistance
Readings: Mutilating Gender (Nii)
Undermining Gender Regulation (Nii)
Passing Last Summer (Nii)
Gender Terror, Gender Rage (Nii)

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 10

Unit III: Contemporary Considerations and Recognizing Human Dignity

Learning outcomes for this unit are to...

- Engage in a critical analysis of contemporary LGBTQI movements and advocacy,
- Contemplate the potential for shared liberation across disparate identities and communities, and
- Articulate the importance of allies in recognizing the human dignity of LGBTQI individuals and communities.

Assignments for this unit are...

- Assignment 3: Media Analysis Paper (due 19 November)
- Writing prompts (weekly)

29 October

Class topic: Media literacy

Readings: "It's Just Entertainment": Perspective by Incongruity as Strategy for Media Literacy (Nii)
Reel to Real: Race, Class, and Sex at the Movies (Nii)
The Transgender Look (Nii)

31 October

Class topic: Critical Trans Politics; connection project workday

Reading: What's Wrong with Rights? (Nii)
"This Is a Protest, Not a Parade!" (Nii)

Assignments: Weekly discussion prompt 11
Be prepared to discuss what you would like to focus on for your connections project

5 November

Class topic: Cultural intelligibility

Readings: Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire (Nii)
My Dangerous Desires (Nii) – optional

7 November

Class topics: Gay Marriage; It Gets Better Campaign

Readings: Beyond Gay Marriage (Nii)
It Gets Better Project (<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>)
In the Wake of It Gets Better (Nii)

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 12

12 November

Class topic: Gays in the military

Readings: Homosexuals in the Military: The Evolution of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy
Strange Bedfellows: War and Minority Rights (Nii)
Documenting Courage: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Veterans Speak Out (Nii) – optional

14 November

Class topics: Bullying

Readings: Sexual Orientation Microaggressions: "Death by a Thousand Cuts" for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth (Nii)
Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/ntds) – review the Executive Summary as well

as the detailed summaries on Black Respondents, Latino/a Respondents, and Asian American Respondents
 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals Executive Summary

(<http://www.campuspride.org/Campus%20Pride%202010%20LGBT%20Report%20Summary.pdf>)

Wearing Pink as a Stand Against Bullying: Why We Need to Say More (Nii) – optional

Assignment: Weekly discussion prompt 13

19 November

Class topic: Film: Paris is Burning

Reading: Watch Paris is Burning and be ready to discuss
 Welcome to Your Gender Workbook (Nii)

21 November NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

26 November

Class topic: HIV/AIDS

Readings: Invisible to the Centers for Disease Control (Nii)
 AIDS and the Gay Men's Health Crisis of New York (WE pp. 587-593)
 The Denver Principles (WE pp. 593-594)
 Silence = Death (WE pp. 635-636)
 Manifesto (WE pp. 636-637)
 ACT UP at a Crossroads (WE pp. 644-650)
 Seven Days and Five Nights in Kuala Lumpur (WE pp. 666-668)
 Lesbian Leadership and Lesbian Denial in the AIDS Epidemic (WE pp. 669-677)
 Above All, Life (WE pp. 700-703)
 The Burdens of History: Gender and Representation in AIDS Discourse, 1981 - 1988 (Nii) – optional

Assignment: Media Analysis Paper

Closing: Connections Project Presentations

Learning outcomes for this unit are to...

- Make connections between readings, assignments, and current issues related to GLBTQI identities and communities,
- Engage in the iterative process of learning and skill development through revision and the production of a final portfolio

Assignments for this unit are...

- Assignment 4: Connections Project Presentation
- Assignment 5: Final Portfolio

28 November

Class topic: Connections Project presentations

3 December

Class topic: Connections Project presentations

5 December

Class topic: Connections Project presentations

Don't forget: Final Portfolio are due by 12:00noon on 10 December!