

Critical Identity Studies 304: Thinking Queerly

Fall 2021

M/W 1:45-3:35pm

Classroom: Morse-Ingersoll Room 11

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Herold (she/her)

Office Location: Morse-Ingersoll Hall room 218

Email: HeroldL@beloit.edu

Office Hours:

- In my office: Monday 4-5pm
- On Zoom: Tues 10-11am
- Or by appointment

Course Description:

This advanced-level course surveys a number of conversations in the academic discipline known as queer theory. We will ask: what does it mean to *be* queer, to *queer* something, or to *think things queerly*? We will explore the development of queer theory as a discipline and critiques of queer theory within and outside of academia. Through our readings, we will examine utopic aspirations of thinking outside of normative genders, sexualities, and bodies along with the ways in which those same aspirations are embedded in dominant power relations that may thwart subversive intents and desires. The goal of this course is to explore both the potentials and limitations of thinking queerly or “queering” as it has been articulated through academic writing and in social movements.

Learning Objectives:

- To explore how various normative categories of sex, sexuality, race, nationality, and ability are historically structured, reproduced, and experienced in everyday life
- To reflect on how queerness—as experience, embodiment, intellectual orientation, and method of resistance—contributes to our ways of understanding the world
- To understand the complexities of various queer frameworks, strategies, and intellectual analytics used to intervene in the social world

Assignments & Grading:

There are 100 possible points available in the course, allocated as follows:

Assignment	Possible Points	Due Dates
Opening Reflection	5	Monday, 8/30
Class Facilitation	20	--
Moodle Responses	14	One per week
Closing Reflection	6	Monday, 11/29
Final Project	30	Friday, 12/3
Attendance	10	--
In class Participation	15	--

Opening & Closing Reflections: These assignments will invite you to reflect on what it might mean to think queerly. Ideally, the opening reflection will serve as a record of your thinking when you begin this course, and the closing reflection will allow you to consider how the course impacting your ways of thinking. I will provide a handout with a number of questions for each assignment and will instruct you to answer them in roughly 5-8 sentences each (about a paragraph). **The opening reflection is due Monday, 8/30 at the beginning of class and the closing reflection is due Monday, 11/29.**

Moodle Responses: On Moodle, you will be asked to respond to the required readings and respond to your classmates' responses to the readings once per week. The idea is to analyze some aspect of the reading in a way that evokes a conversation and builds intellectual community among you and your classmates. At the same time, we're all starting different places, have different experiences, and have different things to contribute, all of which can be valuable. Thus it's not about being the "smartest" or "most clever" as much as it is about offering a *genuine* account of your reaction to the reading, one that engages the ideas of the author(s) and sparks the curiosity of your classmates. (Genuine reactions can include intrigue, confusion, enlightenment, boredom, understanding, anxiety, affirmation, hostility, desire, etc.) Please be open, be curious, and be kind. Responses should be about 150 words of informal writing (but if you're on a roll, go for it!). **Initial posts are DUE at 11:59pm the day before class and you can post as many times as you want after that. You will have 14 opportunities to post over the course of the semester and will receive one point per post.**

Class Facilitation: This assignment will allow you the opportunity to take a leadership role in the classroom by helping others analyze the readings and/or by applying the ideas in the readings to some outside material(s). You will sign up for a facilitation in the second week. Once you know when you will facilitate the class, you can get together with the classmate(s) who also signed up for that day and decide on a time when you can meet together to make a class plan. I will provide more detailed instructions about class facilitation on Moodle. Your facilitation should be 30-45 minutes long.

Final Project:

The goal of the final project is to put your queer thinking into practice in a specific community (your dorm, Beloit College, an online/social media group, your hometown, Rock County/Wisconsin, etc.). Consider what passions drive your thinking about the ideas we've covered, OR feel free to expand your interests to other forms of queer thinking that have not been covered in the course. Then, consider what project might impact your community of choice and how thinking queerly might shape it. Formats for this assignment include: podcast, zine, website, video, think piece, grant proposal for campus-based project, action plan for political campaign, comic strip/graphic, training manual for campus-based workshop, unit for this course, etc.). Several preparatory assignments will be due in second half of the semester. We will also set aside some class time during the second half of the semester for project time. Student projects will be presented over the last two day of classes. In addition to turning in the project to me, you will write a 3-5 page explanation of your project connecting it to the themes of the class to be turned in on **Friday, 12/3 by 11:59pm.**

Participation: Our class time will be based around conversation, so participation is an essential component of class. Participation includes verbal contributions *as well as* active and courteous listening. This does not mean you have to respond to every question or comment in class; however, the class will be most valuable to everyone if we take risks in front of each other. You are expected to read the assigned articles and to consider them carefully prior to the beginning of class. It is helpful to take notes on readings as well as to formulate questions that can contribute to the class discussion. Please note that this is meant to be a respectful space where we engage one another's thoughts: abusive and/or aggressive language and behavior are not welcome here and will not be tolerated.

Attendance: Attendance is essential for a robust and thoughtful class discussion and learning environment. For contact tracing purposes, I will be taking attendance every time we meet. With that said, illnesses and emergencies happen, and many of us celebrate religious holidays during the year that require us to be absent. **Please do not come to class if you feel sick!** Additionally, please let me know in advance if you foresee any upcoming absences for whatever reason. If you miss more than three (3) days of class, I will reach out to you to check in. Finally, please be courteous to your classmates and arrive to class on time. If you have a scheduling situation that makes it difficult to arrive on time, come speak to me about it.

Grading Scale:

Point Total:	Letter Grade Equivalent:
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
< 63	F

Class Policies:

Required Readings: All required readings, unless otherwise noted, can be found on our course Moodle site. You are required to complete the readings prior to the course meeting for which they are assigned and should come to class prepared to discuss their content. Please let me know if you have any issues accessing the readings.

Communication with instructor: If you have any questions, problems, or difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or during office hours. Contacting me as early as possible will allow me time to assist you more effectively, so don't wait until the last minute to ask for

help. I will do my best to respond to any questions within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Technology: This classroom is technology-friendly. You may use laptops or tablets in class if these technologies aid their learning. All technology should be silenced in order to minimize classroom distractions. Please put away your cell phones, unless you are using them to access course material.

Late assignments: Late assignments will be excused only in the case of a health or family emergency. If you discuss any special circumstances for a late paper with me at least 48 hours in advance, I will be happy to grant you an extension. If you turn in a late paper without having talked to me first, your grade for the assignment will drop ½ letter grade for every day that it is late (e.g., an A paper become as A- one day late, then a B+ two days late).

About Names and Pronouns: Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. I will refer to all students according to the names and pronouns you prefer to be called and will support classmates in doing so as well.

Terminology: Please note that some readings may use terminology now considered outdated when referring to LGBTQ people. This terminology has evolved over time; in most cases, these words had particular meaning and were not considered offensive or incorrect at the time of writing. In class, I encourage you to use current terms (“transgender” instead of “transgendered”, “intersex” instead of “hermaphrodite”) rather than those used in older readings, except when quoting directly from the text. You can find a glossary of terms on Moodle for your reference. If you have any questions about terminology, I am happy to help.

Statement about “Unprecedented Times,” Mental Health, and Basic Needs:

It has been an incredibly challenging past 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing and intersecting crises of racial injustice, police brutality, and white supremacy. I am aware that some of you may have lost loved ones or may yourself have had/still be recovering from Covid-19, and also aware that these times have often exacerbated physical and mental health concerns. Others of you may have lost jobs or have family members who have lost jobs and may be struggling financially as a result. Still others of you may be dealing with other challenges I haven’t listed here, but that still affect your daily life. These issues have increased barriers to education and classroom learning. If you find yourself struggling, I hope that you will feel comfortable letting me know so that I can support you. Counseling on campus is FREE for Beloit College students. You can call the Health and Wellness center at 608-363-2331 or visit the office on the second floor of the Powerhouse to make an appointment.

Course Schedule:

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
M 8/23	Introduction to the Course	
Unit 1: Foundations of Queer Theory		
W 8/25	Lesbian Feminisms	Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic” Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”
M 8/30	Reimagining Gender & Womanhood	Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman,” “The Straight Mind” Radicalesbians, “The Woman-Identified Woman” Due: Opening Reflection
W 9/1	The Sex Wars	Amber Hollibaugh and Cherríe Moraga, “What We’re Rollin’ Around in Bed With” Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex”
M 9/6	Intersectional Approaches	Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” Gloria Anzaldúa, “La Prieta”
Unit 2: Creating & Contesting LGBTQ Histories		
W 9/8	Writing Gay History	George Chauncey, “Building Gay Neighborhoods and Enclaves: The Village and Harlem” John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity”
M 9/13	Lesbian Subcultural Communities	Lillian Faderman, “Butches, Femmes, and Kikis: Creating Lesbian Subcultures in the 1950s and ‘60s” E. Patrick Johnson, “G.R.I.T.S” and “A Taste of Honey: Sex Among Women who Love Women”
W 9/15	Exploring Trans Histories	“One from the Vaults” podcast – pick any episode to listen to Susan Stryker, “Prologue” and “Trans Liberation”

		Jules Gill-Peterson, “Transgender Childhood is Not a ‘Trend’”
M 9/20	Theorizing Sex and Power	Michel Foucault, “The Repressive Hypothesis” and “Right of Death and Power over Life”
Unit 3: From Queer Activism to Queer Theory		
W 9/22	Death and Mourning	Screen at home: <i>How to Survive a Plague</i> (2012) Douglas Crimp, “Mourning and Militancy”
M 9/27	Acting Up	Ann Cvetkovich, “AIDS Activism and Public Feelings: Documenting ACT UP’s Lesbians” Queer Nation, “Queers Read This: I Hate Straights”
W 9/29	Is Gender Performative?	Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” and “Critically Queer”
M 10/4	Theorizing Drag	Jack Halberstam, “Drag Kings” José Muñoz, “The White to be Angry: Vaginal Davis’s Terrorist Drag”
W 10/6	Sex & Community	Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, “Sex in Public” Samuel Delaney, “Times Square Blue”
Midterm Break – No Class		
Unit 4: Queer Theory, Applied and Critiqued		
M 10/18	Temporality & Futurity	Jack Halberstam, “Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies” José Muñoz, “Introduction: Feeling Utopia” and “Queerness as Horizon”
W 10/20	Queer of Color Critique, pt 1	Screen at home: <i>Tongues Untied</i> (1989) Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” E. Patrick Johnson. “‘Quare’, or (Almost) Everything I Know about Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother”

M 10/25	Queer of Color Critique, pt 2	Siobhan B. Somerville. “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body” Qwo-Li Driskill, “Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies”
W 10/27	Embodiment	Alison Kafer, “Compulsory Bodies: Reflections on Heterosexuality and Able-bodiedness” Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen, “Has the Queer Ever Been Human?”
M 11/1	Feeling & Emotion	Sara Ahmed, “Feminist Killjoys” Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archive of Lesbian Feelings”
W 11/3	No class: Beloit & Beyond Conference	
M 11/8	Nightlife – Guest Lecture from Dr. Khubchandani	Juana María Rodríguez, “Gesture in Mambo Time” Kareem Khubchandani, “Snakes on the Dance Floor: Bollywood, Gesture, and Gender”
W 11/10	Against Liberalism	Lisa Duggan, “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism” Dean Spade, “What’s Wrong with Rights?”
M 11/15	Against the State	S. Lamble, “Transforming Carceral Logistics: 10 Reasons to Dismantle the Prison Industrial Complex Using a Queer/Trans Analysis” Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, “Bathroom Battlegrounds and Penis Panics”
W 11/17	T4T Politics	Hil Malatino, “Surviving Trans Antagonism” Dean Spade, “Crisis Conditions Require Bold Tactics,” “What is Mutual Aid?”, and “Three Key Elements of Mutual Aid”
M 11/22	Trans of Color Critique	C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritawoen, “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife”

		Treva Ellison, Kai M Green, Matt Richardson, and C. Riley Snorton, “We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies”
W 11/24	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
M 11/29	Academia	Cael Keegan, “Getting Disciplined: What’s Trans* About Queer Studies Now?” Final Project Presentations Due: Closing Reflection
W 12/1	Wrapping Up	Matt Brim, “Introduction: Queer Dinners” Final Project Presentations

University Policies & Statements:

Alert Slips: Alert slips are electronic forms emailed by faculty to students (and cc'd to advisors and coaches) to indicate concerns about academic performance, changes in behavior, and/or attendance. In addition to helping students improve performance before it's too late, alert slips regarding absences can help ensure students do not lose their financial aid and can stay enrolled, so to keep the college in compliance with federal regulations, I will promptly send an alert slip if and when a student has missed the equivalent of a week of class. If you receive an alert slip, read it carefully and seek assistance.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will be handled according to the College's policy. Such dishonesty includes cheating, deliberately interfering with the work of another student, or plagiarizing. Plagiarizing means representing the work of someone else (such as another student, an author of a book or article, a site on the internet, etc.) as your own. If you use the words or ideas of someone else, you must cite the source of the information. When an act of academic dishonesty appears to have occurred within the academic process, I will discuss the apparent violation with you as soon as possible and shall give you an opportunity to explain the action.

Accessibility and Support Services: You have the *right* to an education in a way that works for you. If you have a disability (or just suspect that you have one) and need some sort of accommodation, contact Learning Enrichment and Disability Services (LEADS) located on 2nd floor Pearsons (north side), [608-363-2572](tel:608-363-2572), learning@beloit.edu or through olesena@beloit.edu. For accommodations in my class, please bring me an Access Letter from the Director of LEADS and then we will discuss how to implement the accommodations. Contact that office promptly; accommodations are not retroactive.

Free peer tutoring is available for most classes. For a tutor, apply by going to your Portal, to the Student Life tab, and then apply using the Tutoring Forms (on left) and Request a Tutor. If you have any questions, contact LEADS. If you want support from an Organizational Tutor, they are available in the Learning Lab (Blaisdell 103B) Sundays through Thursdays from 6-8 pm. You also can request an organizational tutor on the portal.

For support with writing, including one on one consultations at any stage of the writing process, visit the Writing Center: <https://www.beloit.edu/offices/writing-center/>.

Land Acknowledgement: Beloit College is located on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, and we want to respectfully acknowledge the Potawatomi, Peoria, Miami, Meskwaki, and Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) people who have stewarded this land throughout countless generations. As we gather here in the weeks to come, please consider the legacies of violence, displacement, and settlement that they have faced. We are always on Indigenous land, and here on the campus we have a constant reminder in the form of the mounds. To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude to those on whose territory we reside--a way of honoring Indigenous people. Land acknowledgments do not exist in a past tense, or outside historical context: colonialism is an ongoing process, and we need to be mindful about our present participation. *(Adapted from Bill Quackenbush, Tribal Preservation Office, Ho-Chunk Nation)*