Students with a university-documented disability certified by the Office of Disability Services should discuss with me any special accommodations needed for the course. Please make me aware of your needs as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services, located at 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.

Instructor: Dr. Debra Burrington, Senior Lecturer in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies
Office: University Hall 286D
Email: burrington.6@osu.edu or debraburrington@me.com
Office Hours: By appointment in office or more flexibly via email or phone (310) 592-0854

A Note About Your Instructor: Debra Burrington holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Utah. She was affiliated with the U of Utah’s Gender Studies (formerly Women’s Studies) Program between 1985 and 2002 where she taught courses in feminist theory, feminist methods, gender and social change, gender and politics, race/class/gender/sexuality, women of mystery and women and law. In addition to teaching she held several research and administrative roles there, including serving as the Co-Director of the Gender Studies Program. She has also taught courses in political science, social work and general education. Her research is primarily in social movements, including feminist and LGBTQ organizations and she has been an activist in several feminist, LGBTQ and progressive multi-issue social movement organizations, a lesbian-feminist collective, and a funding organization committed to dispensing financial support to LGBTQ non-profit organizations.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the growing field of queer studies. As an interdisciplinary enterprise, the course draws on work in politics, philosophy, film, sociology, history, and literary studies to examine the ways that a politics of normalization has fed into multiple systems of domination, particularly in the United States. With its point of departure in feminist critiques of sexuality as well as gay and lesbian studies, queer studies has expanded the interrogation of identity to focus on many other culturally salient categories, such as race, class, religion, and nationality. Therefore, this course frames the introduction to queer studies with an emphasis on the intersectionality of differences, particularly of race and class, that problematizes, while still familiarizes students with, important texts in queer theory/queer studies.
Course Objectives

1. To understand the historical and theoretical emergence of the complex concept of “queer” and to examine critiques of this concept from various positionalities (e.g., race, class) and perspectives
2. To understand the challenges that queer studies present to both identity politics and the broader politics of neoliberalism
3. To analyze the norms, particularly those grounded in sexuality, that guide contemporary concepts of the human condition, nature, and reality
4. To explore the expression of contemporary values in various media, including literature, philosophy, and film
5. To enhance awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the diversity of individuals and experiences within society, particularly in the United States
6. To synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to understand the complex ways that race, class, and nationality intersect with sexuality in the contemporary world, especially in the United States
7. To demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors through discussion and analysis
8. To demonstrate effective oral communication skills in presenting ideas about course topics to classmates
9. To conduct research on and write about issues pertaining to sexuality, race, class, and nationality in the contemporary world in collaboration with several classmates.

Course Process

This may end up being the queerest of courses. While learning about the field of queer studies students will experience this course as one based minimally upon lecture-discussion from the instructor and maximally upon collaborative learning that is student-focused and to a certain extent student-driven. Most of what we do in the course will be project based in terms of: (1) collaborative knowledge production on the course topics, and (2) a final project to be completed by groups to which students are assigned. Students intent on sitting back and soaking up what someone ‘in authority’ tells them is important will be disappointed and may want to reconsider whether this is where you want to spend a semester. To be happy and successful here you will need to take charge of your own learning experience. Learning how to learn is an active and at times uncomfortable discipline, and this course, rather than being about the memorization of facts, figures, formulae and theories instead has a great deal to do with exploring new ground. Discovering what you believe is relevant for you about queer studies in our current age and on into the future is the journey we’ll be embarking upon. If any of this sounds interesting and intriguing to you, then welcome to a new and queer experience where education is “the practice of freedom.”
Course Texts

Note that all of the following texts have been ordered from SBX:

Octavia Butler, *Dawn*
Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?*
Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*
Donald E. Hall, Annamarie Jagose, and others, *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*
Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*

Engagement with Course Readings

All students in the course are expected to read three of the assigned texts in their entirety: Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*; Duggan’s *The Twilight of Equality*; and Butler’s *Dawn*. In addition, you will access two other texts ‘creatively’ as we explore together a number of topics that are important to an understanding of the field of queer studies. Thus, a perusal of the syllabus will reveal that beyond Foucault, Duggan and Butler, readings from Sullivan’s *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* and Hall/Jagose (and others) *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader* have been listed for each of the twelve key topic areas around which the course has been built. You will likely want to read more broadly than what has been assigned by bringing outside texts (written, filmic and others) to bear on our collective experience. There are no quizzes or exams in this course (though there will be occasional in-class writing assignments on course topics) and, as they say, “this is college; you’re all adults now.” The following questions should guide you in your decisions about what/if to read from the listed readings and how deeply to study a particular essay: (1) What do I want to know about queer studies? (2) How will ‘essay X’ help me achieve knowledge I desire? (3) How will ‘essay X’ help me (and my group) with our responsibility to lead discussion on our topic area? (4) How will ‘essay X’ help me (and my group) on our oral presentation and group paper assignments? Make decisions that will support your learning goals and your responses to these questions, including decisions to move outside of these suggested readings to other texts.

Assignments and Responsibilities

1. **Participation:** This is a highly collaborative learning environment and all students are expected not only to attend class sessions regularly, but also to be very involved in their own learning, the success of their assigned group, and the edification of their classmates. Two unexcused absences are allowed and after that there is a 10% penalty for each additional absence. (15%)

2. **Facilitation of course topic area:** Members of groups will lead a creative and innovative discussion on their topic based on articles chosen from the Hall/Jagose and Sullivan texts, supplemented by materials and practices such as additional articles, films, music, guest presenters, debates, discussions, role plays, dramatizations, historical re-enactments, etc. Embrace queerness and camp if you dare! (20%)
3. **Discussion forums:** There are two types of discussion forums for this class. (1) All students are expected to participate in three discussion forums related to assignments that are listed for several different weeks and that relate to work we will be doing together in class. These are clearly indicated in the syllabus as required by all class members (i.e., forum on ‘What is Queer,’ make a substantive post no later than 1/10 forum on ‘Queering Popular Culture,’ make a substantive post no later than 2/19; forum on ‘Queering the Future,’ make a substantive post no later than 3/21). (2) A second type of discussion forum has been created for each of twelve topic areas to which groups will be assigned, and group members working together on that topic will be expected to dialogue with one another through this medium about what they are learning on this topic and what they will say about it to the class during their scheduled opportunities. These forums are designated by topic name. (20%)

Note that all students have access to the twelve ‘major topic’ discussion forums and are invited to enter them as voyeurs and/or to dialogue with classmates outside of their group. However, only those assigned to the group responsible for that particular topic area will be graded on those specific discussion forums. So, in summary, each student’s grade for activity related to discussion forums includes: (1) Work you do on these three assignments that will be part of our in-class discussions, and (2) work you do in your group topic area.

4. **Occasional in-class writing on topics chosen by the instructor:** To ensure that all students are reading broadly on the agreed upon course materials and topics the instructor will randomly administer four or five impromptu in-class writing assignments on various readings/topics. (20%)

5. **Group project:** Groups will make a short oral presentation related to their topic as well as prepare a final group paper that they have researched and written together on their topic. Each member is expected to participate in the research and writing of the paper and also take part in the oral presentation in some manner. Oral presentations for each group will be about 10 minutes and the final group paper should be in the vicinity of 12-15 pages. (25%)

**Course Grading**

*Grading*

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Course assignments will be evaluated on the basis of the incisiveness of thought, the depth of analysis, the accuracy of facts, the appropriateness of research materials, and the quality of writing and its organization.

Participation/attendance = 15% (150 points)
Facilitation of course topic area = 20% (200 points)
Discussion forums = 20% (200 points)
Impromptu in-class writing = 20% (200 points)
Group project (presentation + paper) = 25% (250 points)

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

Students are expected to maintain complete academic integrity. Please become familiar with the Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Department’s statement on plagiarism:

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple. You should always cite your sources (I can help you with this if you are unfamiliar with proper styles of documentation). Always ask questions **before** you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism. Always see your TA or professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment. To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!**

**Writing Center**

The Writing Center allows you to make appointments to get assistance from trained writing tutors. To utilize this university-sponsored service, contact the Writing Center at (614) 680-4291 or visit their website at [http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter](http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter). Please also note that the Resources section of the Writing Center website contains a variety of extremely helpful materials on topics such as source citation, drafting and style, editing and grammar.
Course Topic Outline and Basic Reading Schedule

W, January 9: Intro to the Course

Today we will discuss the syllabus and course process. During the semester we will learn from the following list of twelve topics (many of which overlap and merge with others on the list). Begin thinking now about what are the topics in which you are most interested from the following list of twelve topic areas (perhaps rank them #1, #2, and #3 in terms of interest):

- Queer identities/performing queerness
- Queering histories/creating queerness
- Queer bodies/queer subjectivity
- Racing and classing queerness
- Queer representations in popular culture
- Homonormativity or the mainstreaming of queerness
- Progressive queerness/queerness and social justice
- Policing gender and sexuality/border patrol
- Transgressing gender and sexuality/transgender/intersex
- Queer spaces/queer publics/public queers
- Queering the family
- Queer futures

Here is an assignment that is to be completed prior to our next class session on Friday: What is queer? What does this word mean to you and others?

Prior to returning to class on Friday please go to the discussion forum on “What is Queer?” and make a post about what you have learned by engaging in the following exercise:

1. Ask a minimum of two people (e.g., friends, co-workers, family members, roommates, people on the street) to define the word ‘queer’ and what it means to them;
2. Find out how queer is defined via at least two ‘popular’ sources of information on the Web (provide us with the URLs), as well as from published ‘print’ sources (your course texts are fair game, but please introduce all of us to something in addition);
3. Tell how you personally define the word queer; and
4. Tell us why you are taking this class and what you want to know about queerness and queer studies.

Be prepared to discuss your findings in class on Friday (1/11).

Heads up about next week: Before you come to class next Wednesday: Explore your course texts. Skim the table of contents in each one (except for Dawn: read the back cover). Meander over bits and pieces. Take note of what the books are about, what kinds of topics they cover. Be thinking about a primary topic area (plus a couple of backup areas) in which you’re most interested. Jot some notes about what you discover and your topic areas of interest to bring with you to class next Wednesday (1/16).
F, January 11: What is Queer?

What did you learn from the people you spoke with, the Web and printed text info you gathered, your own ideas, and what you learned from your classmates in the “What is Queer?” discussion forum about how to define ‘what is queer’ and what the term means to you?

W, January 16: Picking Topics

Now that you’ve had some time to spend with the syllabus and your assigned texts, what are the topics from the list introduced on the first day of class that most interest you? What are you burning to know most about queerness and queer studies?

Today, related to the topics on that list, each student will have to pick one area in which you are most interested (remember: have two or three back-up areas). When assigned to a group you will be responsible, with your group members, to:

1. Help lead a discussion on this topic;
2. Collaborate in helping to produce collective knowledge in the classroom environment;
3. Participate at some level in a short oral presentation on your group paper for feedback and questions from your colleagues and instructor; and
4. Participate in the production of a group project you will research and co-author with your group members as your final paper for the class.

F, January 18: Group Work as a Venue for Collaboration and Discovery

Today your instructor will lead a short discussion on ideas and tips for working in a group successfully. If you have prior experience from working with others in any type of group setting (e.g., club, work, other classes) please be prepared to contribute what you learned from those experiences about what helps and hinders successful group processes.

Small groups get to know each other today. Group responsibility for facilitating discussion on your chosen topic areas begins on February 6th so begin planning today!

W, January 23: The Construction of Sexuality

[Note: Your two key touchstones for helping to frame this class will be the Foucault and Duggan texts and elements from these are likely to make their way into each of the chosen topics.]

Reading:
Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume 1 (entire)

Please come to class having jotted some notes on key points Foucault makes in each chapter. Groups will be asked to convene to create concise chapter summaries to help us begin our discussion. This discussion will begin today and conclude on Friday.
F, January 25: The Construction of Sexuality (continued)

Foucault. Discussion concludes.

Small group meetings to prepare for leading discussion on their topic (30 minutes)

W, January 30: Neoliberalism and the Relevance of Cultural Politics Related to Sexuality

Reading:
Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?*, Ch 1 & Ch 2

Small group meetings to prepare for leading discussion on their topic (30 minutes)

F, February 1: Neoliberalism (continued)

Reading:
Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?*, Ch 3 & Ch 4.

Small group meetings to prepare for leading discussion on their topic (30 minutes)

W, February 6: Queer Identities/Performing Queerness

Reading:
Sedgwick, “Queer and Now” (Routledge)
Butler, “Critically Queer” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Performance, Performativity, Parody and Politics”

F, February 8: Queering Histories/Creating Queerness

Reading:
Rifkin, “Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education” (Routledge)
Freeman, “Turn the Beat Around: Sadomasochism, Temporality, History” (Routledge)
Halperin, “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Assimilation or Liberation, Sexuality or Gender?”

W, February 13: Queer Bodies/Queer Subjectivities

Reading:
Grosz, “Experimental Desire: Rethinking Queer Subjectivity” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Queer: A Question of Being or a Question of Doing?”

*Heads up about approaching assignment:* On February 20th we will be doing some work on queer representations in popular culture, and to help with that conversation each student is
asked to enter the discussion forum on “Queering Popular Culture” to make at least one post prior to that date. Use the Sullivan chapter of the same title (assigned for 2/10) as your “jumping off point” and consider the following questions: (1) How would you queer popular culture? (2) Based on how we have defined ‘queer’ through our previous discussions, what is a specific example you can share of ‘queerness’ in popular culture? (3) Is the really ‘popular’ queer popular culture ‘queer’ or ‘gay’?

F, February 15: Racing and Classing Queerness

Reading:
Johnson, “‘Quare’ Studies, or ‘(Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother’” (Routledge)
Ferguson, “Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology” (Routledge)
Reid-Pharr, “Dinge” (Routledge)
Hennessy, “The Material of Sex” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Queer Race”

W, February 20: Queer Representations in Popular Culture

Sullivan, “Queering Popular Culture”

Note that in relation to this group’s discussion on the topic today class members are expected to participate by bringing into the picture your own examples of the ‘queering’ of popular culture, including from your own and classmates’ discussion forum posts.

F, February 22: Homonormativity, Or the Mainstreaming of Queerness

Reading:
Revisit Duggan
Puar, “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages” (Routledge)

W, February 27: Progressive Queerness/Queerness and Social Justice

Reading:
Revisit Duggan
Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” (Routledge)
Nyong’o, “Do You Want Queer Theory (Or Do You Want the Truth)? Intersections of Punk and Queer in the 1970s” (Routledge)
Cvetkovich, “AIDS Activism and Pubic Feelings: Documenting ACT UP’s Lesbians” (Routledge)
F, March 1: Policing Gender and Sexuality/Border Patrol

Reading:
Angelides, “The Queer Intervention” (Routledge)
Tomso, “Viral Sex and the Politics of Life” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Queering ‘Straight’ Sex”
Sullivan, “Sadomasochism as Resistance?”
Sullivan, “Fetishism(s) and the Politics of Perversion”

W, March 6: Transgressing Gender and Sexuality/Transgender and Intersex

Reading:
Prosser, “Judith Butler: Queer Feminism, Transgender, and the Transubstantiation of Sex” (Routledge)
Halberstam, “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum” (Routledge)
Morland, “What Can Queer Theory Do for Intersex?” (Routledge)
Sullivan, “Transsexual Empires and Transgender Warriors”

F, March 8: Queer Spaces/Queer Publics/Public Queers

Reading:
Ahmed, “Queer Feelings” (Routledge)
Crawford, “Transgender without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification” (Routledge)
Berlant and Warner, “Sex in Public” (Routledge)

Heads up about approaching assignment: On March 22nd we will begin our final topic on queer futures. To help with that conversation each student is asked to enter the discussion forum on “Queering the Future” to make at least one post prior to that date. What are your thoughts on what the future will be like for the ‘being’ or ‘doing’ of queerness?

SPRING BREAK; NO CLASSES ALL WEEK (Mar 13 & 15)

W, March 20: Queering the Family

Reading:
Eng, “Transnational Adoption and Queer Diasporas” (Routledge)
Rodriguez, “Making Queer Familia” (Routledge)
F, March 22: Queer Futures

Reading:
Sullivan, “Community and its Discontents”

W, March 27: Queer Futures (continued)

Reading:
Butler, *Dawn* (entire)

F, March 29: Queering the Future (Discussion)

What does queerness have to contribute to the kinds of future(s) we will create as a human race? What is the future of queerness? What is the future of its ‘being’ or ‘doing’? Remember to bring into the conversation the dialogue created in the discussion forum on “Queering the Future.”

W, April 3

Group presentations on drafts of final projects

F, April 5

Group presentations on drafts of final projects

W, April 10

Group presentations on drafts of final projects

F, April 12

Group presentations on drafts of final projects

W, April 17

Final paper conversations in small groups

F, April 19

Final paper conversations in small groups

Course wrap-up

April 24, final group papers are due by 5pm in Carmen dropbox and/or via email