WMST 208: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

Date/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30pm-2:45pm (in person)

Room: Horizon Hall 3012

Instructor: Dr. David Powers Corwin

Email: dcorwin@gmu.edu

Office Location: Enterprise Hall 439

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursday 11am-1pm or by appointment on Zoom or in person.

Teaching Assistant: Lindsay Lowry

Email: <u>llowry2@gmu.edu</u>

"As educators one of the best things that we can do for our students is not to force them into holding theories and solid concepts but rather to actually encourage the process, the inquiry involved, and the times of not knowing—with all of the uncertainties that go along with that." (qtd. in bell hooks's Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope)

Women and Gender Studies Commitment to Diversity Statement

Women and Gender Studies seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

Course Description:

Explores major events in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer culture and history in the United States to understand how identities, experiences, and movements have been socially constructed and have changed in different times and places, often as a result of race, class, and gender inequities. May not be repeated for credit.

This course is meant to be an introductory course. We are certainly not even digging into a substantial amount of the scholarship and issues surrounding LGBTQ+ Studies. We will do as much as we can while we are together in class, but this course is meant to begin a conversation that you continue to have in other venues moving forward. If we do not discuss something in class that you want to, you should always feel free to bring it up.

The course will have a strong focus in the following areas:

- 1) The history of LGBTQ studies as a field
- 2) the intersections of identities in the LGBTO community
- 3) literary representations of LGBTQ identities, both foundational and contemporary.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to articulate the following:

- 1) an understanding of the history of the LGBTQ movement and key events in LGBTQ history through a research assignment.
- 2) a working knowledge of foundational texts with LGBTQ studies, key terms, and the importance and emergence of queer theory.
- 3) the importance of synthesizing scholarship in LGBTQ Studies together to discuss the narrative the field tells and how we can move forward in our own activism

This course fulfills the **Mason Core Requirement** for the **Social and Behavioral Sciences** and will meet the following learning objectives:

- 1. Explain how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors;
- 2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs;
- 3. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of significant human issues, past or present.

Shoutout to Professor Ric Chollar who developed this course and taught it in many iterations for over a decade before the pass off to me in Fall 2017. I also extend thanks to Dr. Amena Johson for her contributions to this course in the years prior to my teaching it.

Course Policies

1. Required Texts:

- Meem, D. T., Gibson, M., & Alexander, J. *Finding out: An introduction to LGBTQ studies* (4th ed....has to be the 4th edition).
- Michael Cunningham A Home At the End of the World (Any edition)
- Leslie Fienberg *Stone Butch Blues* (Any edition)--There is a pdf in Blackboard since the book is out of print, but you are welcome to find a print copy at a used bookstore if you like.
- Gabby Rivera *Juliet Takes a Breath* (Any edition)
- All other readings and films can be accessed on Blackboard
- 2. Communication: I prefer communication via email at <a href="decoration-dec

- 3. Paper Policy: All papers are to be written in MLA or APA Style. Papers will be assessed on cohesion of the argument, critical analysis of texts, following the directions of the assignment, syntax and sentence structure, grammar construction, and use of scholarly sources. A half letter grade will be deducted for each page less than the minimum requirement. If the assignment is four pages, and three are turned in, I will begin the grade at an A-. All papers should be submitted as a doc. or docx. Pdfs, pages, or other formats will not be accepted.
 - a. I don't have a late policy for the course, which means I don't accept late work without prior approval. However, in most circumstances, I am happy to provide an extension on most assignments when consulted at least twenty four hours BEFORE the deadline. When you turn in work after the deadline without prior approval, you are assuming I have time to assess and provide feedback on the work at that point. I teach other courses and schedule my time to make sure I am giving the appropriate attention to all assignments. I also feel strongly that everyone knows at least 24 hours in advance if they aren't going to finish an assignment (we also need to be realistic with ourselves as we are all human) and we shouldn't be waiting until the evening of the due date to begin as emergencies may come up.
 - b. See the last page of the syllabus for the University's policy on **academic** integrity. All written assignments for this course must be in MLA or APA format. If you are unsure about a citation, ASK! Plagiarism is much more than submitting a paper you found online. If you do not include a works cited page or fail to follow MLA or APA correctly in your papers, you will not receive a passing grade for the assignment and I am obligated as an instructor to report your case to the Honor Committee. Please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process or visit oai.gmu.edu, the Office of Academic Integrity's website.
 - i. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form.
 - i. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions
 - ii. Chat GPT and AI software is also strictly prohibited in this class. Any suspicions of its use will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.
- **4. A note on the course text choices for class**: I choose the texts I choose based on my expertise and what I feel is important for the canon of this area. I also feel that it is important to discuss the voices at the margins that may not be seen as "canonical," which we will unpack in class. While I am always open to suggestions for things to read on my own time, I have made the choices I have made for this semester for a variety of reasons and do not welcome conversations about making changes to the texts or workload mid semester. The syllabus and all it encompasses stands from Day 1. You don't have to love every text that we read to learn something from it; I certainly have not loved everything I have read for the 25 years I was in school, but I can always say I learned something from

- them particularly when I put them in conversation with other texts. Just because a text may be long and complicated or short and less complicated doesn't mean that one is more valuable than another. (3)
- **5. Online Class Policy:** If I need to move class online due to an emergency, it will be a last resort, but that is the only time we will meet online or that students can join online. We will have asynchronous work one week while I am away at a conference. Otherwise, this is a fully in person course.
- 6. Instructions via email and Blackboard are the same as instructions in the syllabus.
- 7. **Technology policy:** Many of the readings will be on Blackboard and I understand many people take notes electronically. However, I do ask that people keep other distractions on laptops and Ipads to a minimum. I do reserve the right to ask you to close your laptop if I see you engaging in non-course related things. Also, no cell phones are permitted in this course. If you know you will need to make a phone call or answer texts in a particular class, just let me know at the start and go in and out as you need.. Regular cell phone use will result in a reduction in participation grade.
- 8. **Policy on Incompletes:** I rarely give incompletes. The only circumstances that I will give one is a death/illness of a close loved one at the end of the semester or a severe illness or injury where a doctor says that due to these issues you cannot complete the course on time. You have to have at least 75% of the coursework completed as well in order to qualify for an incomplete and be passing the course without the remainder of the work completed.. No exceptions to this policy.

How to Be Successful in This Course (in addition to following directions and meeting course requirements)

1. Class Climate Rules:

- For this class, we are moving through various understandings of gender and sexuality. Yes, some of our texts are more current, but some are up to over one hundred years old. Please do not come to class with your 2023 hats on for discussion. We are certainly going to be critical, but we also have to be able to discuss moments of progress as well as critiques. I'm a firm believer that critical thinking is about celebrating progress just as much as pointing at problematic points in texts, social movements, etc.
- Open, frank discussion without referring to groups in a derogatory manner, that is, the use of terms that are or have been used to describe groups of people in a demeaning way will NOT be used in class.
- Confront ideas, concepts, theories.
- Do NOT confront/attack individuals.
- Emotion is great, but so is cognition.
- To make this course work we'll all need to:
 - Afford each other mutual respect
 - Confidentiality with regard to discussions in class
 - Agree to disagree, agreeably!
 - Examine self/explore
 - Be honest with self and others
 - Show humility and keep an open mind

- Use appropriate humor
- Listen constructively
- Question and participate

2. A Note on When Life Happens....

- a. As someone that strives for social justice, identifies as a feminist, and whose research is within trauma rhetoric, I understand that life gets out of our control more often than not. Since we are discussing emotionally charged issues, there may be discussions or readings that trigger particular past experiences that you or someone else has had. Please consult with me if you find yourself in this situation and we can figure out how to best support you through a reconfiguration of your engagement with that text and/or on campus resources. Any text in this course has the potential to be triggering to some folks.
- b. Many of you have competing responsibilities in addition to school and I want to be supportive of those. While I hold high standards and all work has to be completed in the course, I am happy on a case-by-case basis to make adjustments to due dates when needed. I just ask for at least 24 hours' notice and for a meeting to discuss how to best move forward if you regularly find that you can't meet requirements/due dates in the course. I do not, however, change the workload mid- semester and won't make adjustments after a due date.
- 3. Asking For Help: Asking for help is really hard and most college students struggle with it. We are told that we need to socially "do it all well" with no guidance, so when we struggle, we often become angry with ourselves and others. Please ask for help when you don't understand an assignment, or you are struggling to come up with a topic. Also, please reach out if you receive a grade that doesn't meet your expectations and you want to know how to do better. Most folks who ask for help and integrate feedback achieve so much better in both their academic and professional experiences and most students who get frustrated never asked once for help or even engaged with the instructor once outside of class. It's hard for me to know what to do to help if you don't communicate to me you are struggling. When you don't ask for help, you do set yourself up for frustration. Also, please read all assignment sheets and rubrics before getting started on them. Please let's work on this issue together this semester. I'm here to help. ©
- 4. See the attachment in Blackboard for my teaching values and my "when working with me statement."
- 5. **In Person Community Norms:** Post-2020, we now have the opportunity to learn in a variety of formats (online, synchronous; online, asynchronous; fully in-person; hybrid; and hyperflex). Now that we have these options, I feel it's important to note what an inperson course is and what's expected. An in person course is a commitment just like any other and has the following expectations and opportunities:
 - a. While there are certainly pieces of in person learning that are very individual (grades, readings, assignments, etc), this is a learning community. In person learning is more than just about your own success; your presence and engagement affects everyone's learning experience. Sure, you may have to miss for emergency reasons, but when you miss class, are tardy, or leave early regularly, you are causing the whole group to derail as they aren't benefiting from your ideas and vice versa. Furthermore, the entire class has prepared for everyone to be there through lecture, small group, and large group discussion activities. This

- course is a discussion-based course with some lectures from time to time. I rarely speak for the entire (or even half of) the class. We ALL have to generate class conversation and questions.
- b. Certainly, life happens, and we might very occasionally get behind on the reading, but when you regularly don't do the reading, you aren't engaging in the learning community and are making it difficult for those that do, particularly in small group exercises.
- c. When instructors develop in person courses, they develop readings and exercises with the intent that the in class learning experience will clarify concepts, scaffold important points, and ultimately create better dialogue. Otherwise, there would be no point in having the in-class meetings. This is why you need to do the readings, attend class, and ultimately trust the experience. It's ok if you don't fully understand every single reading all of the time upon a first read. Come with questions; that's what your instructor and peers are here for.:)
- d. Note taking is going to be really helpful for your in-class participation, but also your out of class assignments. Also, take this time to write down contact information for a peer who you can contact for their notes if you need to miss class. All class material is important; however, I can't take the time in office hours to meet individually with people each time they miss class.
- e. Come to class with connections AMONG texts ACROSS THE SEMESTER. Think outside of the day we are in class. You will be asked to make these connections both through in class and outside of class writing assignments. I will also ask you to make connections between our class conversations and what is going on in the world as we speak.
- f. ANALYZE don't summarize. We all know what the text says, but we don't know what YOU have to say about the text and that's what we want to hear during our in class sessions.
- g. Some other specific examples of excellent in-class preparation:
 - You should come to class with specific observations rather than "I found this text interesting."
 - "I don't understand this particular concept, does anyone have anything they can add?" rather than "I don't understand any of this text" or remaining silent.
 - "What can I say in class that would be helpful to me and my peers?" rather than "I don't have anything to say in class or I usually don't participate"
 - "How can my instructor and peers help me with the course load and concepts?" Rather than "This class is too much work."

Grade Breakdown

Participation (reading, watching films, in-class writing, occasional short-out of class writing, discussion, attendance, evidence of having read the text): **30%** (Learning Outcomes 1-3)

- Due to the substantial amount of reading for the class, 30% of your grade is participation and engaging with the texts.
- Participation is NOT just attending class, but it is difficult to participate without attending class. It is engaging with the text through class discussion and showing evidence of having read the text (leadership in large and small group discussion). Also, showing

proof that you are paying attention to your classmates and the instructor contributes to my assessment of participation. There is no specific attendance policy in class (i.e. one class isn't a certain amount of points off), but again, you can't earn points if you aren't present and/or if you are present and don't participate.

- We also do a variety of small group work that involves technology, but also the whiteboards that factor into your participation grade. I look for leadership through organization, report out, and idea brainstorming in these moments.
- Frequent tardiness, leaving early, and cell phone or other non-course related electronic use will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
- If I see that the class as a whole is falling behind in the readings/media texts, I will give reading quizzes. These quizzes will count toward your participation grade. These quizzes cannot be made up without a doctor's excuse.
- I calculate a grade out of 15 points for your participation grade after the midterm and another one at the end of the semester with feedback on your participation.

LGBTQ History Project: 35% (15% paper, 15%; Educational Component; 5% proposal (Learning Outcome 1)

Take Home Essay 20% (Learning Outcomes 2 and 3)

Final Reflective or Creative Essay 15% (Learning Outcome 3)

*Assignment sheets and rubrics are listed on Blackboard.

Safe Zone Training: You may get 4 extra credit points if you attend an all day safe zone training or if you attend an awareness OR gender module AND the ally skills module. Please register for this training at lgbtg.gmu.edu.

Course Schedule

*All texts must be viewed and/or read before each class.

Tuesday 1/16 Introductions What is LGBTO Studies?

Thursday 1/18

What is LGBTQ Studies?

LGBTQ+ Issues in the Ancient World

Watch: *Gender Revolution*: a Journey with Katie Couric (Available Through Mason Libraries) https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC GML/1prj2t5/alma9947203358104105

Read: Finding Out Intro (xix-xiv) and Chapter 1

(For *Finding Out* Chapters, unless otherwise noted, you don't need to read the supplementary readings)

Tuesday 1/23

Indigenous Constructions of Gender and Sexuality

Watch: Two Spirits (Available through Mason Libraries)

http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=https://video.alexanderstreet.com/p/IR8BVJrYV

Thursday 1/25

Sexology and medical constructions of sexuality

Read: Finding Out Chapters 2 and 3

Minton "The Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Studies" (Blackboard)

Tuesday 1/30:

Queer Literature and its Historical Implications

Read: Finding Out Chapter 9 Listen to "Howl" in class

Thursday 2/1

Queer People of Color and Their Contributions to Queer History

Read: James Baldwin "The Outing"-Blackboard

Visal-Ortiz "Introduction" in *Queer Brown Voices* (Available through Mason Libraries)

https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/lib/GMU/detail.action?docID=3443768&pq-

origsite=primo

Tuesday 2/6

Trans Lives and Histories; Second Wave Feminist Critiques

Read: Finding Out Chapter 7

"The Mob and the Gay Rights Movement (Blackboard)

Thursday 2/8

Trans Lives and Histories; Second Wave Feminist Critiques

Watch: Disclosure (Available on Netflix)

Pay it No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson (Available through Mason libraries)

https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC_GML/1prj2t5/alma9947203311104105

Tuesday 2/13

Harvey Milk; Anti-Gay Legislation and Backlash

Read: Finding Out Chapter 4;

Rich- "Got Milk? Gus Van Sant's Encounter with History" (Blackboard)

Watch: *Milk* (Available through Mason libraries) https://lumiere.berkeley.edu/students/items/66507

Thursday 2/15-

The Lavender Scare; Conversion Camps/Conversion Therapy **Watch:** *The Lavender Scare* (Available through the library)

https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC_GML/1prj2t5/alma9947198876204105

But I'm a Cheerleader (Available through Mason libraries) https://lumiere.berkeley.edu/students/items/66508

Tuesday 2/20-Class Meets Asynchronously

Read: Feinberg-Stone Butch Blues Chapters 1-5

Thursday 2/22-Class Meets Asynchronously Read: Feinberg-Stone Butch Blues Chapters 6-11

Queering Our History Project Proposal Due Sunday 2/25 at 11:59pm

Tuesday 2/27-Feinberg-Stone Butch Blues Chapters 12-17

Thursday 2/29 Feinberg-Stone Butch Blues-Finish Midterm Participation Grades Uploaded After Class

Tuesday 3/5; Thursday 3/7 No Class-Spring Break

Tuesday 3/12

HIV/AIDS

Watch: How to Survive a Plague (Available through Mason Libraries)

https://video-alexanderstreet-com.mutex.gmu.edu/watch/how-to-survive-a-plague-with-audio-description

Read: Finding Out Chapter 5 (read 101-106 only)

Take Home Essay Due by 11:59pm

Thursday 3/14

Read: A Home At the End of the World pgs 3-106

Tuesday 3/19

Read: A Home At the End of the World pgs 107-211

Thursday 3/21

Read: A Home At the End of the World pgs 212-255

Tuesday 3/26

Read: A Home At The End of the World-Finish

Thursday 3/28

Marriage Debates

Trans Legislation and Activism

Read: Finding Out Chapter 5 (finish)

Watch: Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria

https://www.kqed.org/trulyca/43/screaming-queens

[&]quot;Marriage Will Never Set Us Free" Video (Blackboard)

Queering Our History Project Due by Friday at 11:59pm

Tuesday 4/2

Challenging Binaries; Intersex Debates

What is Queer Theory?

Read: Butler- *Undoing Gender* Chapters 3 and 4 (Blackboard)

Thursday 4/4

Challenging Binaries; What is Queer Theory?

Read: Halberstam "An Introduction to Female Masculinity"

Watch: The Same Difference: Gender Roles in the Black Lesbian Community (Available through

Mason Libraties)

https://wrlc-gm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01WRLC GML/1giah39/alma9947251283404105

Tuesday 4/9

Violence in LGBTQ Communities

Read: Messiner-*LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence* -Chapters 1 and 3 (Blackboard)

Tuesday 4/11

Violence in LGBTQ Communities

Watch: *Matt Shephard is a Friend of Mine* (Available via Tubi)

https://tubitv.com/movies/519358?utm_source=justwatch-feed&tracking=justwatch-feed

Read: Lubheid-"Treated neither with Respect nor Dignity: Contextualizing Queer and Trans

Migrant 'Illegalization,' Detention, and Deportation' (Blackboard)

Tuesday 4/16

Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality in the LGBTQ Community

Read: Finding Out Chapters 6 and 8

Chen "Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex" Chapter 3

Chen-"Asian American Queer and Trans Activisms"

(Both on Blackboard)

One paragraph Proposal Due for Final Creative Project (if doing creative option) due by 11:59pm via email

Thursday 4/18

Read: Rivera-Juliet Takes a Breath

Tuesday 4/23

Read: Rivera-Juliet Takes a Breath

Thursday 4/25

Read: Rivera-Juliet Takes a Breath

Final Reflective/Creative Project Due by 5/7 at 1:30pm in Blackboard. NO EXCEPTIONS! We don't meet for the Final Exam Period.

Grading Scale

A+: 97-100%

A: 93-96%

A-: 90-92%

B+: 87-89%

B: 83-86%

B-: 80-82%

C+: 77-79%

C: 73-76%

C-: 70-72%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% or below

Campus Policies

Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination, and we are committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/) speaks to the specifics of our process, our resources, and the options available to you.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center (http://ssac.gmu.edu/), Counseling and Psychological Services (http://caps.gmu.edu/), and Student Health Services (http://shs.gmu.edu/).

All other members of the University community (including faculty, except those noted above) are <u>not</u> considered confidential resources and are <u>required</u> to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact the Title IX Coordinator, at http://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix, at 703-993-8730, or in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office in the Aquia Building, Suite 373.

Student and Faculty Names and Pronouns

Having a *name and pronouns statement* helps foster a community of learners of all genders and gender expressions. It promotes gender inclusivity and supports an understanding of a student's name and pronouns that originates with the learner. In addition, it discourages incorrect assumptions and harmful misgendering, encourages dialogue as befits the learner's comfort, demonstrates respect, and fosters an LGBTQIA+ inclusive environment at Mason. This statement also benefits folks who have experienced traumatic pasts or in general go by a name

that is different than the one that is listed in Patriot Web. This name and pronouns statement was co-authored in 2014 by students in TQ Mason (Mason's trans-inclusive student support / action group) and Film and Video Studies faculty (and edited by faculty teams since then). We will take time to introduce our pronouns and names in the course, but if you're more comfortable discussing this with me 1:1, please see the language below and/or set up a time to meet with me.

Name and pronoun use: If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and indicate how best to address you in class and via email. I use they/them for myself and you may address me as "David" "Dr. David" or "Dr. Powers Corwin" in email and verbally. I do prefer to be addressed by my first name, but I know that is hard for some folks until they get to know me a bit more.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES SEP

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474.

All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. http://ods.gmu.edu

WRITING CENTER: Johnson Center Room 227E; (703) 993-

1200; http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

The University Writing Center provides free tutorial sessions for all students needing help with any writing project from freshman essays to scholarly publications. It is best to make an appointment; walk-ins are accepted if there are openings at that time. Assistance is also offered online. You are highly encouraged to take advantage of this free service!

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES "Ask a Librarian" http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-

2380; http://caps.gmu.edu

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES CENTER; JC 240K (703) 993-

2986; http://wmst.gmu.edu/center/

The Women and Gender Studies Center sponsors programs and events that are relevant to this course. It has a library of material that may be checked out. We support several student organizations and provide internship opportunities. We also offer free printing to all of our enrolled students and minors. Hours: Mondays-Thursdays 9-6 and Fridays from 9-5.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ+) Resources Center:

SUB I, Room 2200 703-993-2702 lgbtq.gmu.edu

Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment (CCEE)

SUB I, Room 2400 703-993-2700 ccee.gmu.edu

Student Support and Advocacy Center

SUB I, Room 3200 703-993-3686 ssac.gmu.edu

24 hr Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Crisis Line: 703-380-1434