

WMST 300—004: QUEER CINEMA

Fall 2013
MW 10:30—11:45am
Research Hall 201

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Women and Gender Studies Program
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Course Description

This course will provide an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of queer cinema studies, with a particular emphasis on contemporary and transnational queer cinemas. We will focus on several key genres, directors, and themes pertaining to queer cinema. The course will be organized around five main areas: (1) New Queer Cinema (2) Lesbian Independent Cinema (3) Black Queer Cinema (4) Transgender and Intersex Representation and (5) Transnational Queer Cinema. Topics will include the following: gay and lesbian representation in classic Hollywood cinema, AIDS and New Queer Cinema, black queer cinema, the popular lesbian romance film, transgender and intersex representation, queer kinship in U.S. popular culture, queerness and disability, Israel/Palestine and the erotics of occupation, and queer migration and asylum. We will employ a case-study approach to each theme, and look at visual and theoretical texts, as well as related historical, cultural, legal, and sociological interpretations. In doing so, our primary goal will be to explore the various points of intersection, or slippage, between visibility politics (as in LGBTQ rights) and the politics of visual representation (as in film and popular culture). Other course goals include the following:

- (1) To consider the ways in which race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability are linked and how such intersections have been articulated in queer cinema
- (2) To look for connections between U.S., European, and transnational queer cinemas, while also keeping in mind that differences matter
- (3) To explore some of the ways in which queer media both interacts with and helps to bring about social change
- (4) To think more about our own self-positioning in relation to queer cultural representation

Required Texts

- Michele Aaron, ed. *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

- B. Ruby Rich, *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013).
- Additional readings will be available online through Blackboard

The required texts are available for purchase through the campus bookstore. Alternatively, you may purchase the course texts through any other bookstore or online retailer.

Course Requirements

- Class attendance and participation: 25% (includes reading responses and study questions)
- One in-class group presentation on the assigned readings: 15%
- Two 4-5 page papers based on the assigned readings: 15% each (30% total)
- A final research paper (8-10 pages) on any issue relating to queer cinema, due on December 10th at 4:00pm in 240K Johnson Center: 30%

For Graduate Credit: please see me for additional course requirements

NOTE: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Any papers submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty.

Incompletes will not be awarded, except in cases of severe illness.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance: your daily presence is critical to the success of the class. I take attendance daily, using a sign-in sheet (if you are late for class, make sure that you sign the sheet after class). An excused absence requires proper documentation (i.e. a doctor's note or written proof of participation in a University or work-related event). If you are more than 20 minutes late for class, your lateness will be considered ½ an absence. You are responsible for making up missed work and obtaining any materials that are handed out during the missed class. Be aware that repeated unexcused absences will impact your participation grade.

Participation: participation means coming to class ready and prepared to make an active contribution to our discussions. In-class participation consists of all in-class work (i.e. participation, class discussions, informal presentations, group work, writing, and quizzes). Please print off a copy of all the assigned readings for each day and bring them with you to class. It is absolutely vital for your participation in this course that you bring hard copies of the readings with you to class each day; repeated failure to bring the appropriate materials with you to class will affect your participation grade.

Presentation

You will do the in-class presentation in groups of two or three on a topic to be assigned early in the semester. Each presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length. The project will require strong collaboration on the parts of all group members in order to achieve a good grade. In

addition to participating in the in-class presentation, each member of the group should submit a one-page description of their contribution to the project.

Papers

You will write two 4-5 page papers—each of which will respond to an essay prompt and/or series of questions related to the assigned readings—and one final research-based paper. Essay prompts for the five-page papers will be distributed two weeks before the due date for each of the papers. These prompts will include more detailed instructions and grading criteria. Additional research is not required for either of these papers, although it could prove useful for your argument. The final paper must utilize at least two of the course readings and five outside sources, using MLA citation style. An assignment sheet for the final paper will be distributed later in the semester.

The Writing Center on campus can also help you with your written assignments. For more information see: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

Late or Missing Work

Assignments are due as indicated above and/or as announced in class. You must complete all the assignments listed above to pass this class. Late assignments will be penalized by 20% for each day that they are late.

Instructor-Student Interaction

Please take advantage of my office hours or schedule alternative times to see me if those hours don't work for you, especially when you are writing papers. I am happy to speak with students about any aspect of the course. You may also e-mail me with any questions and comments about the course. Don't, however, use e-mail as a substitute for coming to office hours. If you have substantive questions or comments, please come and see me.

George Mason University Honor System and Code Honor Code

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Plagiarism (statements from Mason Web Site)

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit.

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism>

Please familiarize yourself with the Honor System and Code, as stated in the George Mason University *Undergraduate Catalog*. When you are given an assignment as an individual, the work must be your own. Some of your work may be collaborative; source material for group projects and work of individual group members must be carefully documented for individual contributions.

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Office of Disability Resources. Faculty cannot provide accommodations to students on their own (e.g. allowing a student extra time to complete an exam because the student reports having a disability).

George Mason University: Diversity Statement

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

Women and Gender Studies Commitment to Diversity Statement

The Women and Gender Studies program 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.

Women and Gender Studies at George Mason

The Women and Gender Studies Program offers an interdisciplinary minor to undergraduate students. This is a 21-credit minor that works well with most majors and can be structured to fit your interests. Feminist scholarship has influenced many disciplines and the minor provides students with the tools necessary to engage with issues of gender, race, sexuality and class in various texts and contexts.

The Women and Gender Studies Center is located in the Johnson Center, Room 240K. The Women and Gender Studies Center organizes a variety of lectures, workshops, and activities relevant to campus life throughout the academic year. They also have a collection of over 1000 books relevant to Gender Studies, which students may check out with their George Mason ID card.

You can learn about the Women and Gender Studies Minor and the Women's Center at: <http://www.gmu.edu/acadexcel/findex.html>

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Syllabus—Subject to Change

UNIT I: NEW QUEER CINEMA

Week 1: Introduction: Key Terms and Concepts

M Aug. 26th	Introductions, course overview Amy Villarejo, “Glossary” from <i>Film Studies: The Basics</i> (Blackboard) In class screening: <i>The Celluloid Closet</i> (Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Freidman, 1995)
W Aug. 28th	Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin (2004), “Introduction” to <i>Queer Cinema, The Film Reader</i> , 1-15 (Blackboard) B. Ruby Rich, “Introduction” to <i>New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut</i> (Rich, xv-xxx)

Week 2: AIDS and New Queer Cinema

M Sept. 2nd	LABOR DAY—NO CLASS
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W Sept. 4th Film Discussion: *The Living End* (Gregg Araki, 1992) [**VHS on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing; YouTube**]

Michele Aaron, "New Queer Cinema: An Introduction" (Aaron, 3-14)

Monica B. Pearl, "AIDS and New Queer Cinema" (Aaron, 23-35)

Week 3: New Black Queer Cinema

M Sept. 9th Film Discussion: *Tongues Untied* (Marlon Riggs, 1989) [**DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; also available online at http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xe80ww_tvxs-gr-tongues-untied_people**]

B. Ruby Rich, "Before the Beginning: Lineages and Preconceptions" and "The New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut" (Rich, 3-32)

W Sept. 11th Phillip Brian Harper (1995), "Walk on Parts and Speaking Subjects: Screen Representations of Black Gay Men" (**Blackboard**)

Louise Wallenberg, "New Black Queer Cinema" (Aaron, 128-143)

Week 4: New Queer Cinema Meets Hollywood

M Sept. 16th Film Discussion: *Brokeback Mountain* (Ang Lee, 2005) [**DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Youtube; Amazon Instant Viewing; Netflix Instant Viewing**]

B. Ruby Rich, "Ang Lee's Lonesome Cowboys" (Rich, 185-201)

Rob White, "Introduction" to *Film Quarterly*. Special Dossier on *Brokeback Mountain* (**Blackboard**)

W Sept. 18th D. A. Miller (2007), "On the Universality of Brokeback" (**Blackboard**)

Chris Berry (2007), "The Chinese Side of the Mountain" (**Blackboard**)

Scott Herring, ed. "*Brokeback Mountain* Dossier: Introduction", Dwight McBride, "Why I Hate That I Loved *Brokeback Mountain*," Martin Manalansan, "Colonizing Time and Space: Race and Romance in *Brokeback Mountain*," John Howard, "Of Closets and Other Rural Voids," Michael Cobb, "God Hates Cowboys" (Kind Of)," Corey K. Creekmur, "*Brokeback*: The Parody," Dana Luciano, "Love's Measures" (**Blackboard**)

UNIT II: INTERSECTIONS OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND DISABILITY IN QUEER CINEMA

Week 5: Lesbian Independent Cinema

- M Sept. 24th Film Discussion: *Desert Hearts* (Donna Deitch, 1985) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing; Hulu]**
- Jackie Stacey (1995), “If You Don’t Play, You Can’t Win: *Desert Hearts* and the Lesbian Romance Film” **(Blackboard)**
- W Sept. 26th Chris Holmlund (1991), “When Is a Lesbian Not a Lesbian? The Lesbian Continuum and the Mainstream Lesbian Femme Film” **(Blackboard)**
- Karen Hollinger (1998), “Theorizing Mainstream Female Spectatorship: The Case of the Popular Lesbian Film” **(Blackboard)**

Week 6: Black Lesbian Cinema

- M Sept. 30th Film Discussion: *The Watermelon Woman* (Cheryl Dunye, 1996) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing]**
- B. Ruby Rich, “Historical Fictions, Modern Desires: *The Watermelon Woman*” (Rich, 66-71)
- Anat Pick, “New Queer Cinema and Lesbian Films” (Aron, 103-110, 114-115)
- W Oct. 2nd Laura Sullivan (2000), “Chasing Fae: *The Watermelon Woman* and Black Lesbian Possibility” **(Blackboard)**
- Kara Keeling (2005), “Joining the Lesbians”: Cinematic Regimes of Black Lesbian Visibility” **(Blackboard)**

PAPER ONE DUE

Week 7: New Trans Cinema

- M Oct. 7th Film Discussion: *Boys Don’t Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing]**
- B. Ruby Rich, “A Queer and Present Danger: The Death of New Queer Cinema?” (Rich, 130-137)

B. Ruby Rich, "The New Trans Cinema" (Rich, 271-278)

W Oct. 9th

Judith Halberstam (2006), excerpt from *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* **(Blackboard)**

Judith Butler, excerpt from *Undoing Gender* **(Blackboard)**

Lisa Henderson (2001), "The Class Character of *Boys Don't Cry*" **(Blackboard)**

Week 8: Queer Cinema and Homonormativity

T Oct. 15th

Film Discussion: *The Kids Are All Right* (Lisa Chodolenko, 2010) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing]**

B. Ruby Rich, "Conclusion" (Rich, 261-265)

Jack Halberstam (2010), "The Kids Aren't AlRight!" **(Blackboard)**

Lisa Duggan (2010), "ONLY The Kids Are All Right" **(Blackboard)**

Jasbir Puar and Karen Tongson (2012), "The Ugly Truth About Why the Kids are All Right" **(Blackboard)**

W Oct. 16th

Suzanna Danuta Walters (2012), "The Kids Are All Right But the Lesbians Aren't: Queer Kinship in US Culture" **(Blackboard)**

Kristina Gupta (2013), "Picturing Space for Lesbian Nonsexualities: Rethinking Sex-Normative Commitments through *The Kids Are All Right* (2010)" **(Blackboard)**

Week 9: Disability and Queerness

M Oct. 21st

Film Discussion: *Morgan* (Michael Akers, 2012) **[Netflix Instant Viewing; Hulu]**

Robert McRuer and Abby L. Wilkerson (2003), "Desiring Disability: Queer Theory Meets Disability Studies" **(Blackboard)**

W Oct. 23rd

Shoshana Magnet, "Erasing Queerness/Constraining Disability: Filmic Representations of Queers with Disabilities in *Frida* and *Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun*" **(Blackboard)**

Ellen Samuels (2003), "My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse" **(Blackboard)**

UNIT III: TRANSNATIONAL QUEER CINEMA

Week 10: New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema

- M Oct. 28th Film Discussion: *Happy Together* (Wong Kar-Wai, 1997) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing; Netflix Instant Viewing]**
- Helen Hok-Sze Leung, “New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema” (Aaron, 155-167)
- Chris Berry (2000), “Happy Alone?” **(Blackboard)**
- W Oct. 30th David Eng (2010), “The Structure of Kinship: The Art of Waiting in *The Book of Salt* and *Happy Together*,” 58-61, 76-85, 89-92 **(Blackboard)**
- Audrey Yue (2000), “What’s so Queer About *Happy Together*? A.k.a. Queer(N)Asian: Interface, Community, Belonging” **(Blackboard)**

Week 11: Queer Israeli Cinema and the Erotics of Occupation

- M Nov. 4th Film Discussion: *The Bubble* (Eytan Fox, 2006) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library; Amazon Instant Viewing]**
- Raz Yosef (2002), “Homoland: Interracial Sex and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Israeli Cinema” **(Blackboard)**
- W Nov. 6th Gill Z. Hochberg (2010), “Introduction: Israelis, Palestinians, Queers: Points of Departure,” 493-504 **(Blackboard)**
- Rebecca L. Stein (2010), “Explosive: Scenes from Israel’s Gay Occupation” **(Blackboard)**
- Amal Amireh (2010), “Afterword,” 636-641 **(Blackboard)**

Week 12: Queer Cinema in Latin America

- M Nov. 11th Film Discussion: *XXY* (Lucia Puenzo, 2007) **[Hulu—Closed Captions On]**
- B. Ruby Rich, “Preface to a History” and “Queering a Continent” (141-143, 167-168, 176-186)

Tamsin Whitehead (2009), "Intersex and Intersections: Gender, Sex and Sexuality in Lucia Puenzo's *XXY*" **(Blackboard)**

W Nov. 13th Deborah Martin (2013), "Growing Sideways in Argentine Cinema: Lucia Puenzo's *XXY* and Julia Solomonoff's *El ultimo verano de la boyita*" **(Blackboard)**

Margaret Frohlich (2011), "What of Unnatural Bodies? The Discourse of Nature in Lucia Puenzo's *XXY* and *The Fish Child*" **(Blackboard)**

PAPER TWO DUE

Week 13: Towards a Transnational Lesbian Cinema

M Nov. 18th Film Discussion: *Unveiled* (Angelina Maccarone, 2005) **[DVD on Reserve in the Johnson Center Library]**

Rachel Lewis (2012), "Towards a Transnational Lesbian Cinema", 273-282, 286-290 **(Blackboard)**

Jack Halberstam (2012), "Global Female Masculinities", 348-352 **(Blackboard)**

W Nov. 20th Rachel Lewis (2010), "The Cultural Politics of Lesbian Asylum: Angelina Maccarone's *Unveiled* (2005) and the Case of the Lesbian Asylum Seeker" **(Blackboard)**

Michele Aaron (2012), "Passing Through: Queer Lesbian Film and *Fremde Haut*" **(Blackboard)**

Week 14: New Directions in Queer Cinema

M Nov. 25th Film Discussion: *Concussion* (Stacie Passon, 2013)

READINGS TBA

THANKSGIVING BREAK: Wednesday, November 27th to Sunday, December 1st

Week 15: Final Paper Presentations

M Dec. 2nd Final Presentations

W Dec. 4th Final Presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 10 AT 4:00PM IN 240K JOHNSON CENTER

