**WMST 208:**

**Introduction to LGBTQ Studies**

Instructor: Dr. David Powers Corwin

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Office Location: Enterprise Hall 441

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:15pm-1:15pm; Thursdays 4:30pm-6:30pm or by appointment on Zoom or in person.

Co-Instructor: Ava Sambriski, MSW

Email: [asambris@gmu.edu](mailto:asambris@gmu.edu)

Office: Johnson Center 240KA

Office hours: Please email me for an appointment.

**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 LGBTQ 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 and discuss 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 through a discussion question assignment.

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’m also thankful to him for teaching the course last year when my schedule did not allow it. 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)
* Janet Mock *What My Twenties Taught Me: Surpassing Certainty* (Any edition)
* You will incur some rental fees for some of the films. The fees should add up to about $20.
* All other readings can be accessed on Blackboard

1. **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 LGBTQ studies. 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. 😊
2. **Communication:** We prefer communication via email at [dcorwin@gmu.edu](mailto:dcorwin@gmu.edu) or [asambris@gmu.edu](mailto:asambris@gmu.edu). Due to university policy, we are required to communicate with you through your Mason outlook email. Please send us emails through this account and check your email regularly (at least once a day) for class notifications. We are also happy to meet with you in person or online during office hours. If those times do not work for you, we can set up a separate appointment. To brainstorm research topics or to discuss grades, we require in-person/Zoom communication. We will not discuss grades via email or without a scheduled appointment. We will respond within 36 hours of receiving an email Monday-Thursdays. Emails sent Friday-Sunday will be responded to by Monday evening as this is the time that we are doing our own work/research/self-care.
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-. You MUST turn in an acceptable final research paper in order to pass the course. **All papers should be submitted as a doc. or docx. Pdfs, pages, or other formats will not be accepted.**
   1. We don’t have a late policy for the course, which means we don’t accept late work without prior approval. However, in most circumstances, we are happy to provide an extension on most assignments when consulted BEFORE the deadline.
   2. 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 we are obligated as instructors 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.
      1. 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.
      2. 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
4. **Online Class Policy:** Due to COVID-19, some students who test positive may choose to join us online for the duration they are contagious. **This is the only additional acceptable reason for joining online as this is a fully in-person course.**
5. **Instructions via email and Blackboard are the same as instructions in the syllabus.**
6. **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 and 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 to.
7. **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. No exceptions to this policy.

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

1. **My expectations for course preparation**: 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. Even online, I expect everyone to have read the texts, watched the films, and come with specific comments and questions for me, but more importantly for your peers. My classes do not operate as a relinquishing of information from me to you. We ALL have to generate class conversation and questions. If you can’t commit to this type of environment, please see me after the first day of class.

* Some specific examples of excellent 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.”
* Note taking is going to be really helpful when watching media texts and reading literature for your in-class participation, but also your assignments.
* 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.
* ANALYZE don’t summarize. We all know what the text says, but we don’t know what YOU have to say about the text.

1. **Class Climate Rules:**

* 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

1. **A Note on When Life Happens….**
   1. As someone that strives for social justice, identifies as a feminist, and whose research is on 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.
   2. 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.
2. **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. ☺
3. **See the attachment in Blackboard for my teaching values and my “when working with me statement.**”

**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. 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.
* Frequent tardiness will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
* Occasionally, I may ask a question in class and ask you to go home and write a few paragraphs in response to that. Also, I may ask for the same in class and build the discussion around your responses. I have some of these scheduled at the end of the semester to encourage continued reading; however, I may give these unannounced. These assignments cannot be made up without a doctor’s note.
* 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: 30% (**15% paper, 15%Educational Component(Learning Outcome 1)

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

**Final Reflective or Creative Essay 20%** (Learning Outcome 3)

**Assignment sheets and rubrics are listed on Blackboard.**

\*In Blackboard, there is a list of events that Women and Gender Studies and LGBTQ+ Resources will put on during the Spring semester. You are eligible for up to 4 extra points on your final grade if you attend the events (2 points per event). I hope you go to many of these events, *but you can only get 4 points maximum*. At the event, you must find a WGST or LGBTQ+ Resources representative and ask them to contact me.

**Safe Zone Training**: You may get 4 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. These points will be in place of event credit.

**Course Schedule**

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

**Tuesday 1/24**

**Introductions**

**What is LGBTQ Studies?**

**Watch**: *Gender Revolution: a Journey with Katie Couric* (Accessible through the library)

<https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/gender-revolution-a-journey-with-katie-couric>

**Thursday 1/26**

LGBTQ+ Issues in the Ancient World

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

Minton “The Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Studies” (Blackboard)

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

**Tuesday 1/31**

Indigenous Constructions of Gender and Sexuality

**Watch**: *Two Spirits* (Available through the library

<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.mutex.gmu.edu/watch/two-spirits-2>

**Thursday 2/2**

Sexology and medical constructions of sexuality

**Read:** *Finding Out* Chapters 2 and 3

Hayfield “A history of bisexual invisibility within sexology and psychology” in *Bisexual and Pansexual Identities* (Available through the Mason Libraries)

<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.mutex.gmu.edu/chapters/mono/10.4324/9780429464362-2/history-bisexual-invisibility-within-sexology-psychology-nikki-hayfield?context=ubx&refId=30002e74-04e7-41a8-9745-284c65d35f26>

**Tuesday 2/7:**

Queer Literature and its Historical Implications

**Read:** *Finding Out* Chapter 9

Cherkovski-“The Beats: Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac”-Blackboard

Listen to “Howl” in class

**Thursday 2/9**

Queer People of Color and Their Contributions to Queer History

**Read:** James Baldwin “The Outing”-Blackboard

Guiterrez “We Must Preserve Our Latina/o LGBT History” 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 2/14**

Trans Lives and Histories; Second Wave Feminist Critiques

**Read:** *Finding Out* Chapter 7

“The Mob and the Gay Rights Movement (Blackboard)

Escoffer- “Generations and Paradigms: Mainstreams in Gay and Lesbian Studies” (Blackboard)

**Thursday 2/16**

Trans Lives and Histories; Second Wave Feminist Critiques

**Watch:** *Disclosure* (Available on Netflix)

*Pay it No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson*  (Available through the library)

<https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/pay-it-no-mind-marsha-p-johnson>

**Tuesday 2/21**

Harvey Milk; Anti-Gay Legislation and Backlash

**Read:** *Finding Out* Chapter 4

**Watch:** *Milk* (Available through the library

<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.mutex.gmu.edu/watch/milk>

**Thursday 2/23**

**No Class**

**Proposal for Queering Our History Project Due by 11:59pm**

**Tuesday 2/28:**

The Lavender Scare; Conversion Camps/Conversion Therapy

**Watch:** *The Lavender Scare* (Available through the library)

<http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?url=https://video.alexanderstreet.com/p/79DxVB5Mj>

*But I’m a Cheerleader* (Amazon Prime or for a small fee)

**Thursday 3/1**

**Read:** Feinberg-*Stone Butch Blues* Chapters 1-8

**Tuesday 3/6**

**Read:** Feinberg-*Stone Butch Blues* Chapters 9-17

**Thursday 3/8**

**Read:** Feinberg-*Stone Butch Blues*-Finish

**Midterm Participation Grades Uploaded After Class**

**Tuesday 3/14; Thursday 3/16 No Class-Spring Break**

**Tuesday 3/21**

HIV/AIDS

**Watch:** *How to Survive a Plague* (Amazon Instant Video for a fee)

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

**Thursday 3/23**

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

**Take Home Essay Due by Friday 3/24 at 11:59pm**

**Tuesday 3/28**

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

**Thursday 3/30**

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

**Tuesday 4/4**

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

**Thursday 4/6**

Challenging Binaries; Intersex Debates

What is Queer Theory?

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

**Watch:** *Private Practice* Season 2 Episode 17 “Wait and See” (Netflix or Hulu)

**Tuesday 4/11**

Nature Versus Nurture Debates

Read: *Finding Out* Chapter 5 (finish)

**Queering Our History Project Due by 11:59pm**

**Thursday 4/13**

Challenging Binaries; What is Queer Theory?

**Read:** Halberstam “An Introduction to Female Masculinity”

**Watch:** *The Same Difference: Gender Roles in the Black Lesbian Community* (GMU Kanopy)

**Tuesday 4/18**

Violence in LGBTQ Communities

***Read :****Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives* (Read Chapters 3 and 4 online through the library)

**Watch:** *Matt Shephard is a Friend of Mine* (Amazon Prime or GMU Kanopy)

**Thursday 4/20**

Violence in LGBTQ Communities

**Watch:** *Boys Don’t Cry*

**Tuesday 4/25**

Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality in the LGBTQ Community

Read: *Finding Out* Chapters 6 and 7

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

-Blackboard

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

**Thursday 4/27**

Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality in the LGBTQ Community

**Watch:** “Marriage Will Never Set Us Free” Video (Blackboard)

**Read:** Shakir’”Black, Gay, and Muslim” (Blackboard)

Lubheid-“Treated neither with Respect nor Dignity: Contextualizing Queer and Trans Migrant ‘Illegalization,’ Detention, and Deportation” (Blackboard)

**Tuesday 5/2**

**Read:** Mock-*Surpassing Certainty* pgs 3-150

**Thursday 5/4**

Diversity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality in the LGBTQ Community

**Read:** *Surpassing Certainty*-finish

**Final Exam Period**

**Tuesday 5/16**

**Class Meets from 1:30pm-4:15pm**

Finish Janet Mock Discussion

Watch: *White Night* 2012 film together in class

**Final Creative Project/Reflection Due Class Time**

\*Attendance is required even during the final exam period. Failure to attend will result in an adverse affect on your participation grade.

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/?_ga=2.94227165.1364438867.1499346356-1286492189.1460059294)(<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 **not** considered confidential resources and are **required** 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**

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](http://ods.gmu.edu/)

**WRITING CENTER**: Johnson Center Room 227E; [(703) 993-1200](tel:%28703%29%20993-1200); [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](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](tel:%28703%29%20993-2380); [http://caps.gmu.edu](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