“Queer” is a contested label that shifts across time and social contexts. Our understanding of queerness this semester will similarly shift as we study it in relationship to theories of power and oppression, race and ethnicity, transgender studies, disability studies, and feminist theory. In this advanced, reading-intensive seminar, we will examine theorizations of queerness that encompass gender identities, sexualities, social practices, modes of belonging, and forms of analysis outside of majoritarian, normative groupings. Topics we will tackle as we hone our own queer analytical lens include queer bodies and queer desire; queer politics; queer activism; queer modes of understanding time; queer feeling; the institutionalization of queerness in politics, popular culture, and academia, and the erasures and exclusions performed by queer studies’ conceptualization of bodies, cultures, and sexuality.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance and Participation:** Your active presence in class is essential to your success in this course. Your participation grade will be based not only on your contributions to discussions, but also on your ability to listen, make space for other voices, and thoughtfully respond to ideas that differ from your own. Each absence after your second will reduce your final grade by 5 percentage points.

**Blog posts:** Short response (less than 300 words) posted to our class blog, due every class by midnight the night before. Responses may include your reactions to the readings, questions and concerns you want to address in class, and responses to those who post before you.

**Dialogue paper:** You will pick a single reading or theorist from the course, identify specific points in their work that you disagree with or would like to discuss further, and imagine a discussion with that theorist. Taking on their voice and your own, you will produce a 5-page paper in dialogue form. See handout for details.

**Contemporary issues paper:** You will write a 4-6 page position paper on a contemporary political, social, or cultural issue, drawing on theory from this course to argue your case. See handout for details.

**Final exam:** In our two-hour final exam, you will need to be able to identify the central arguments of the texts covered through the semester, as well as perform a close reading of a previously unseen text using a queer analytical framework.

**Grade Breakdown**

- Attendance and Participation: 20%
- Blog posts: 20%
- Dialogue paper: 20%
- Contemporary issues paper: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

**Course schedule**

**Week 1: Defining queerness**

- Eve Sedgwick, “Queer and Now”
- Judith Butler, “Critically Queer”
Annmarie Jagose, "Introduction" and “Contestations of Queer” in *Queer Theory: An Introduction*
Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex”
Warner and Berlant, "Sex in Public"

**Week 2: Power**
Judith Butler, “Subversive Bodily Acts,” *Gender Trouble*
Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex," and "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," in *Sister Outsider*

**Week 3: Queer identifications: lesbian identities and performance**
Amber Hollibaugh & Cherrie Moraga "What We're Rollin' Around in Bed with: Sexual Silences in Feminism: A Conversation Toward Ending Them" in *The Persistent Desire: A Fem(me)/Butch Reader*
Lisa Duggan and Kathleen McHugh, "A Fem(me)inist Manifesto"
Sherrie Inness and Michele Lloyd "G.I. Joes in Barbie Land: Recontextualizing Butch in Twentieth-Century Lesbian Culture"
Jacquelyn Zita. "Male Lesbians and the Postmodern Body"
Monique Wittig, “The Straight Mind”

**Week 4: Queer identifications: bisexuality and heterosexuality**
Tamara Bower, "Bisexual Women, Feminist Politics" in *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries & Visions*
Calvin Thomas, "Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality"
Eve Sedgwick, "Is the Rectum Straight" and “Epistemology of the Closet”

**Week 5: Disability and queer studies**
Readings will be selected from the following:
Anna Mollow, “Introduction” and “Is Sex Disability? Queer Theory and the Disability Drive” in *Sex and Disability*
Robert McRuer, “Introduction” to *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*
Eli Clare, “Stolen Bodies, Reclaimed Bodies: Disability and Queerness” Public Culture
Kim Q. Hall, *Feminist Disability Studies*, excerpts
Jasbir Puar, “Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility, and Capacity,” *Women and Performance*
Lennard Davis, “Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Disability Studies Reader*
Terry Galloway, *Mean Little Deaf Queer: A Memoir*

**Week 6: Trans queer studies: transgender subjectivity**
Readings will be selected from the following:
Leslie Feinberg, " To be or Not to Be" and *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come,* excerpts.
Jason Cromwell. "Queering the Binaries: Transsituated Identities, Bodies and Sexualities" in Transmen and FTMs
Susan Stryker, “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory’s Evil Twin”
Vi Namaste, “Tragic Misreadings: Queer Theory’s Erasure of Transgender Subjectivity”
Cressida J. Heyes, “Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender”
Emi Koyama, “Whose Feminism is it Anyway?” The Transgender Studies Reader
Julia Serrano, Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity

Week 7: Trans queer studies: transnational queers
Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, “Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality”
Jasbir Puar, "South Asian (Trans)nation(alisms) and Queer Diasporas" in Q&A: Queer in Asian America
Jose Quiroga, "Latino Cultures, Imperial Sexualities" in Tropics of Desire: Interventions from Queer Latino America

Week 8: Queer Citizenship
Readings will be selected from the following:
Lisa Duggan, “Queering the State” Social Text
Jasbir Puar, “Mapping U.S. Homonormativities” in Gender, Place and Culture
Eithne Luibheid, Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality At The Border, excerpts
Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics” in Precarious Life
Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman, “Queer Nationality”
Dean Spade and Craig Willse, "Marriage Will Never Set Us Free"
Cherrie Moraga, "Queer Aztlan: The Reformation of the Chicano Tribe" in The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry

Week 9: Ethnicity and Excess
Juana María Rodríguez, “Introduction” and “Gesture in Mambo Time,” Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings
Anzaldúa, Gloria "To(o) Queer the Writer-Loca, Escritora y Chicano in Inversions: Writings from Dykes, Queers and Lesbians
John Rechy, City of Night

Week 10: Commodity queers
Readings will be selected from the following:
John D’Emilo, “Capitalism and Gay Identity”
Rosemary Hennessy, “Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture”
Dwight McBride, “Ellen’s Coming Out: Media and Public Hype” in Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch
Jose Muñoz, “Pedro’s Real World” in Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics.
Jeff Maskovsky, “Do We All Reek of the Commodity?” Out in Theory
Alan Sears, “Queer Anti-Capitalism: What’s Left of Lesbian and Gay Liberation?”

**Week 11: Queer failures and achievements**
Annemarie Jagose "Counterfeit Pleasures: Fake Orgasm and Queer Agency"
Judith Halberstam, “The Queer Art of Failure”
Mel Chen, "Queer Animacy"
Alison Bechdel, Fun Home

**Week 12: Queer affect**
Lauren Berlant, Cruel Optimism, excerpts
Sara Ahmed, The Promise of Happiness, excerpts
Ann Cvetcovitch, Depression: A Public Feeling, excerpts

**Week 13: Queer temporalities**
Readings will be selected from the following:
Carla Freccero, "Queer Times"
Tavia Nyong'o, "Do You Want Queer Theory (or Do You Want the Truth)?"
Elizabeth Freeman, “Introduction” to Time Binds
Heather Love, “Introduction” to Feeling Backward: Loss and The Politics of Queer History
Judith Halberstam, “Queer Temporalities and Postmodern Geographies” in In a Queer Time and Place
Tom Boellstorff, “When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time” GLQ
Tim Dean, “Bareback Time” in Queer Times, Queer Becomings

**Week 14: Queer futures, queer horizons**
Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?”
Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff” and “No Future”
José Muñoz, “Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of a Gay Pragmatism” in Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity
Michael O'Rourke, "The Afterlives of Queer Theory"