

AL 891 Cultural Rhetorics: Queer Rhetorics

Fall 2012 EBH 300

M 6:30-9:30 pm

Instructor: Dr. Trixie G. Smith

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Office Hours: M 4-6 and by appointment

Required Texts

Ahmed, Sarah. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke UP, 2006.

Frank, Judith. *Crybaby Butch*. Firebrand Books, 2004.

Hall, Donald, et al, eds. *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*. 2012

Jagose, Annamarie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. NYUP, 1996.

Parker, Andrew, ed. *After Sex?: On Writing Since Queer Theory*. Duke UP, 2011.

Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and Ethics of Queer Life*. Harvard UP, 1999.

Other readings will be posted on Angel as pdf files.

Literature Circle 1 Texts

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Boderlands/La Frontera*

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*

Plummer, Kenneth. *Telling Sexual Stories*

SeGWick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*

Course Description

This Studies in Rhetoric course will examine the history of queer theory and its roots in LGBT and gender studies and then move to the application of queer theory in a number of arenas. Specifically, we will examine how queer ways of writing, speaking, performing, being have been affected by and influenced by queer theory and queer activists, as well as their precursors, such as LGBT movements, feminism, post-modernism, etc. Likewise, in this course we will examine the rhetoric of LGBTQ movements and organizations in the 20th and 21st centuries by looking at policies, PR materials, internal/external communications, first-person narratives, fiction/poetry, and other such rhetorical locations. Throughout we will be examining research, and the methods of such research, in a variety of fields that has sought to examine definitions, language, community, identity, and other such social constructs in connection to queers, queerness, and queering.

Assignments

You must submit all assignments to receive credit for the course.

Weekly Reading Responses (20%)—These responses will serve several purposes: (1) to record your reactions/responses/questions about the assigned readings, (2) to list the issues from the readings that we should discuss in class, (3) to begin dialogue about the readings and then continue discussions from class, (4) to relate readings to your individual projects. **Due weekly by 3:00 pm (email).**

Class Participation (10%)—This is a seminar class, so you will be expected to be present, prepared, and engaged each day. Class discussion will focus on the readings and the issues you bring to class each week, as well as your ongoing projects. We will also have a number of presentations/facilitations throughout the semester; when you miss someone's presentation/facilitation, you miss important information and interaction that cannot be duplicated so you will lose a point every time you miss a presentation. This will include being a weekly discussion leader (see explanation below). If you are not in class, you cannot participate; therefore, tardies and more than three absences will reduce your final grade. If you must be absent, please let me know beforehand and check with your classmates to get missed notes.

Weekly Discussion Leaders—Each person will be asked to facilitate the class's discussion of one or more related articles each week (after we finish with our foundational texts presentations). You will sign up for these in advance. How you approach this task is up to you, but remember to have the class **involved** and to let them know ahead of time if they need to do anything or bring anything to be prepared for class on your day. You will typically have 20-30 minutes for your portion of the class.

Literature Circles 1 (15%)—In small groups, you will read a foundational text that helped lay the groundwork for what has come to be known as queer theory. In a formal oral presentation/facilitation—with a handout—you will summarize the text for the rest of the class and explain what it has to offer to the idea of queer rhetorics. What can we learn from this text, as theorists, researchers, educators, activists, etc? You will assign (and provide through Angel) an excerpt from this text, an explication of this text, or a published response to this text for the class to read in order to aid class discussion the night of your presentation. Due _____. See the schedule for the due date of your chosen text. Groups of 2-3 must sign up for their books the first night of class.

Literature Circles 2 (15%)—In small groups, you will read and report on a relatively new text in the field (published within the last 5 years). This is a chance for you to pursue a topic of interest to you, a topic that we may not be able to cover in class otherwise. It's also a chance for you to introduce this topic to the rest of the class. You should plan to write a review of the book that you will share with the class as you give them an overview of the text and its main argument(s), as well as its approach to and usefulness in queer rhetorical studies. Due _____. Please sign up for your book and group by October 1.

Self-designed Final Project (40%) — (Conference Paper /Journal Article/Course Syllabus/Practice Exam Question/Website/Other) Project ideas should be discussed with me early in the semester; written proposals are due by the end of October. Final projects are due at the end of the term and will be shared with the class in lieu of a final exam.

Academic Honesty

The university has firm policies regarding academic honesty and you will be held to these policies. You may not present another person's work or ideas as your own—including pictures and other images, you may not allow another person to write an assignment for you, and you must properly acknowledge source materials. Be sure to save all notes and drafts that lead up to a finished piece, so you can avoid problems and correct errors if they exist. If in doubt about how

to document source materials or about the originality of your work, please feel free to discuss it with me.

Please Note: Students with disabilities that may require assistance or who have questions related to any accommodation for testing, note takers, readers, etc., must inform the instructor and provide certification from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), 120 Bessey Hall, 517/353-9642 or TTY 517/355-1293.

This syllabus serves as a contract between you, the student, and me, the professor, and should serve as your guideline for the semester. By staying in this class, you are agreeing to follow all the guidelines given above and to be responsible for your own actions.