

Spring 2015

LGBT 303

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Speaking Its Name: Queer Identities & Global Discourses

Queerness is now global. Whether in advertising, film, performance art, the Internet, or the political discourses of human rights in emerging democracies, images of queer sexualities and cultures now circulate around the globe.

- Arnaldo Cruz- Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV
Queer Globalizations, 2002

Course description | Queer identities are — and have long been — enmeshed within large-scale circuits of exchange engendered by the movement of people, ideologies, markets, and capital. This course considers transnational conceptualizations and circulations associated with gender or sexual nonconformity. In doing so, it emphasizes ways of interrogating queer citizenship that purposefully attend to dynamics exemplifying complex interactions on global and local scales.

In the wake of Foucault's groundbreaking work on the history of sexuality in the 1970s, scholars have considered 'colonialism' and 'nationalism' as intellectually robust frameworks for examining the emergence of queer identities as we understand them today. Much of their work draws attention to persistent – if sometimes counter-intuitively positioned – regimes of power, complicity, and resistance that can have far-reaching applicability. Although not entirely unrelated, worldwide responses to the AIDs crisis and terrorism have framed recent episodes of exchange, each shaded by its own particular global concerns. Finally, the ongoing expansion of markets and modes of communication contribute to processes associated with universalizing queer identities, often by facilitating progressive and liberating rhetoric that broadly embraces personal desires.

Despite the significance of such global dynamics, cultural realities specific to particular locales – or sites within networks of exchange – cannot be ignored when examining the global circulations associated with queer identities. Indeed, as some of the most recent scholarship points out, these often serve to mediate – and sometimes effectively disrupt – globalizing discourses on queer citizenship, especially those framed in terms of identity politics. Consequently, rather than simply assuming any particular narrative, we are necessarily reminded that queer identities are variously constructed and contested.

Global Engagements | This course has been approved to carry the Global Engagements designation based on its consideration of the ways by which – as well as the extent to which – queer identities are constructed by, contested within, and disruptive of transnational discourses and dynamics.

Office hours | Office hours will be confirmed on the course Moodle site by Week 2.

Objectives | In this course, students will

- Develop their familiarity with the vocabulary and the intellectual principles of LGBTQ studies
- Critically examine interdisciplinary scholarship in the area of queer studies that considers LGBTQ identities in the context of global or transnational circulations
- Interrogate conceptual frameworks that are assumed and employed in contemporary discourses associated with queer agency and citizenship

Required texts

Cruz-Malavé, Arnaldo and Martin F. Manalansan IV, eds. *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction (Vol. 1)*. New York: Vintage-Random, 1990.

Hawley, John C., ed. *Post-Colonial Queer: Theoretical Intersections*. Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2001.

Luibhéid, Eithne and Lionel Cantu, eds. *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Puar, Jasbir. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

Course requirements, exams, and grading | Specific information regarding required coursework will be provided in class and concurrently posted to the course Moodle website. The following provides a breakdown of contributions to the course grade.

Contributions to the course (including session activities and work as peer-reviewers)	15%
Analytic essay (take-home midterm exam)	20%
Major assignment (see the breakdown and overview below)	50%
Focus essay: 10%	
Introduction and outline: 10%	
Full draft: 15%	
Final submission: 15%	
Final exam	15%

An overview of the major assignment | The major assignment asks you to bring an analytic framework based on global circulations – a critical perspective that will be emphasized throughout the course – to bear on the negotiation of queer identities. The final product will be a paper of approximately 5,000 words.

To complete the assignment, you will be required to pick a specific locale for considering the negotiation of queer identities. The site, which should reflect an appropriate degree of specificity, can exist in either the past or the present. The main criteria for selection should be the richness of possibilities the locale represents in terms of global circulations that can be used to analyze queer identities particular to it. The paper will need to incorporate analysis reflecting at least one identifiable global circulation.

For any locale, analyzing the negotiation of queer identities in the context of global circulations is an essential aspect of the assignment. The negotiations considered may take various forms; however, they should explicitly highlight boundaries being transgressed, blurred, or interrogated.

The assignment will be undertaken in stages, each of which will be explicitly described on the course Moodle site. The first is a focus essay that reports on your selection of a locale and records your preliminary consideration of the site in relation to the assignment requirements.

Subsequently, you will be asked to prepare an introduction and outline for the essay in advance of a full draft. Work on the introduction, outline, and full draft will be shared and discussed in peer review sessions. The assignment culminates with the submission of the paper's final version.

Topic outline | Specific reading assignments and complete bibliographic information are maintained on the course Moodle website. The following provides a provisional overview of course considerations.

Weeks 1 – 3: Conceptualizing queer

Primary text: Foucault

Weeks 4 – 8: (De)constructing queer identities and theorizations in global contexts

Primary texts: Cruz-Malavé & Manalansan, Hawley

Week 9: Spring Break

Weeks 10 – 14: Interrogating queer agency and citizenship

Primary texts: Luibhéid & Cantu, Puar

Week 15: Conclusions and consequences

An important note regarding course discussions | Readings and discussions related to this course will doubtlessly involve subjects and language that some might find challenging, controversial, or problematic. However, as a course that explores queer desires, representations, and sexualities, it would be futile to try to avoid such. At the same time, I want to encourage everyone to contribute to our conversations, regardless of individual sensitivities or intellectual positions. We have much to learn from one another.

Mindful of these realities, I expect us all to establish and maintain appropriate levels of mutual respect in all exchanges.

Aspects of respectful discussions are highlighted on the course Moodle website in the area dedicated to General Information and Useful Links.

Academic support | If you feel you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. If you have not already done so, I suggest you also contact Lynn Waldman at the Office of Academic Support and Disability Services in the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research.

Administrative dates

Last day to add or drop a course: Wednesday, 28 January

Last day to withdraw without a W: Wednesday, 25 March