

E 314 V/WGS 301
Gay & Lesbian Literature & Culture
Spring 2017



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Course Description

In this course, students will read a variety of texts by gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, and/or queer writers, mostly based in the 20th-century United States. They will explore how these texts navigate questions of LGBTQ identity and queer community as they intersect with race, gender, nationality, and class. Are there qualities that connect these texts in a distinctive literary genre? How do literary texts help us situate our present moment within LGBTQ history?

The primary aim of this course is to help students develop and improve the critical reading, writing, and thinking skills needed for success in upper-division courses in English and other disciplines. They will gain practice in using the Oxford English Dictionary and other online research tools and print resources that support studies in the humanities. Students will learn basic information literacy skills and models for approaching literature with various historical, generic, and cultural contexts in mind.

Major Texts

(Available at the University Co-Op. Other texts will be uploaded to Canvas.)

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

Imogen Binnie, *Nevada*

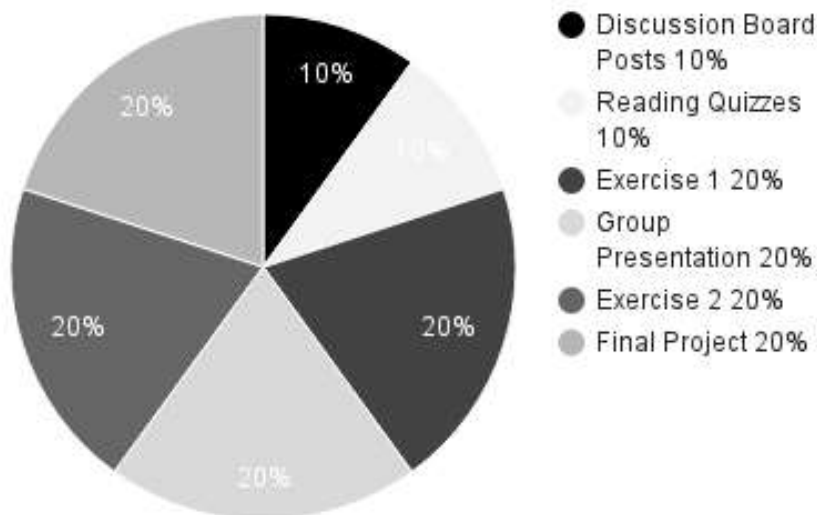
Truman Capote, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*

Nicholas Grider, *Misadventure*

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

Benjamin Alire Saenz, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*

Assignments



General questions we'll consider

- What is the relationship between an author's life/identity and their writing?
- What are the political and/or public effects of language and/or literature?
- What expectations do readers have for LGBTQ literature?
- How do literary authors reveal, demonstrate, explore and argue theories of sexuality and gender and race in their fiction, memoirs, or poetry?
- What do these texts have to say about major questions like:
 - Should queer politics be based on sameness with or difference from straight and/or cis people?
 - How central are sexuality and/or gender to individual identity?
 - What kinds of language & art should we use to talk about sexuality & gender?

Flags

This course carries the flag for **Cultural Diversity in the United States**. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase students' familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. They should therefore expect a substantial portion of final grades to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

This course also carries a **Writing** flag. The writing assignments in this course are arranged procedurally with a focus on invention, development through instructor and peer feedback, and revision; they will comprise a major part of the final grade.

Attendance

Attendance means being **mentally as well as physically present**: being prepared, participating in discussions and activities, and actively listening. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find notes and make up work.

You have the right to up to five absences before it will affect your grade. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. I do not need to know why you are absent, although **religious holy days and jury duty** do not count as absences, so you should let me know if those are coming up.

Safer space

In this classroom, we respect each other's opinions and beliefs. We recognize that our behavior affects each other. We respect each other's identities and backgrounds, and don't assume anyone's gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, immigration status, economic background, survivor status, health, etc.

It's sadly probably not surprising that many of the texts we'll read feature homophobia, sexism, cissexism, and/or racism, or that many of them deal with depression. Several of the texts we'll read feature explicit sex scenes, and other visceral body things (menstruation, illness, abortion, etc.), as well as violence, substance abuse, suicide, self-harm and slurs. When talking about these and other sensitive topics, please be considerate of your classmates. If you need to step outside the classroom for any reason at any time, please do so. We can revise this policy as necessary.

Course Calendar

unit 1: reading/practices	reading due	writing due
Tuesday, January 17	Gertrude Stein, "Miss Furr & Miss Skeene" (in class)	
Thursday, January 19	James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel" + "Here Be Dragons"	
Tuesday, January 24	"Queers Read This" Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger"	
Thursday, January 26	Cherríe Moraga, "La Güera" Jeanette Winterson, "The Semiotics of Sex"	
Tuesday, January 31	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chapters 1-4	
Thursday, February 2	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chapters 5-8	
Tuesday, February 7	<i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Finish	

unit ii: close reading & context	reading due	writing due
Thursday, February 9	Cather, "Paul's Case"	
Monday, February 13		Exercise 1 Due
Tuesday, February 14	<i>Zami</i> Chap. 1-9	
Thursday, February 16	<i>Zami</i> , Chap 10-17	
Tuesday, February 21	<i>Zami</i> , Chap. 18-25	
Thursday, February 23	<i>Zami</i> , Chap. 26-end	
Tuesday, February 28	<i>Appropriate Behavior</i>	
Thursday, March 2	Film Discussion & Group Work Time	
Tuesday, March 7	Group Presentations	
Thursday, March 9	Group Presentations	
	SPRING BREAK	

unit iii: context	reading due	writing due
Tuesday, March 21	<i>Stone Butch Blues</i> Chap. 1-9	
Thursday, March 23	<i>Stone Butch Blues</i> Chap. 10-13	
Tuesday, March 28	<i>Stone Butch Blues</i> Chap. 14-21	
Thursday, March 30	<i>Stone Butch Blues</i> Chap. 22-end	
Tuesday, April 4	<i>Fun Home</i> Chap. 1-5	
Thursday, April 6	Finish <i>Fun Home</i>	
Monday, April 10		Exercise 2 Due

unit iv: putting it all together	reading due	writing due
Tuesday, April 11	<i>Aristotle & Dante</i> "The Different Rules of Summer," "Sparrows Falling from the Sky," & "The End of Summer"	
Thursday, April 13	<i>Aristotle & Dante</i> "Letters on a Page"	
Tuesday, April 18	<i>Aristotle & Dante</i> , finish	
Thursday, April 20	<i>Misadventure</i> , "Millions of Americans Are Strange," "Disappearing Act," & "Happy Ending"	
Tuesday, April 25	<i>Misadventure</i> , Part 2	

Thursday, April 27	<i>Nevada</i> Part 1 : 1-15	
Tuesday, May 2	<i>Nevada</i> Part 1: 16 – Part 2: 9	
Thursday, May 4	Finish <i>Nevada</i>	
Due date negotiable (between Friday May 5 and the official final exam time)		Final Project Due

Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Academic Integrity

Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. When in doubt, cite! We will use MLA citation style in this course.

Documented Disability

Please let me know if you need any accommodations for a disability. If you have or suspect you have a mental or physical disability, having it officially documented can be really helpful. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Rubric

A-level work demonstrates serious, enthusiastic engagement with class reading and discussion; a willingness to ask questions and take risks; intellectual curiosity. A-level written work is clear and creative. A-level writers support their claims with evidence. They confidently engage with their sources and acknowledge them. They learn from criticism and from their own mistakes. They write with readers in mind. They are interested in process.

B-level work demonstrates an above-average engagement with class reading and discussion. B-level writers do not always consider their readers. Their writing is mostly clear and to the

point, usually well-supported, but occasionally vague, general, or formulaic. B-level writers play it safe. They are interested in product.

C-level work meets minimum requirements. It is usually formulaic. Often the prose is overly grandiose and formal or too colloquial. Work is often sloppy. C-level writers make unsupported generalizations and overly broad claims. It is not always clear whether they have engaged seriously with the assigned reading. They are interested in passing.

D-level work does not always meet minimum requirements. They submit some work, but it does not clearly respond to the prompt or fit the parameters of the assignment. They do not demonstrate that they have read or engaged seriously with the assigned texts. Their attendance is sporadic, and even when they are physically present in class, they are not mentally present. They are not interested.

F-level students rarely attend class or turn in work. When they do, it does not clearly respond to the prompt or is incomplete.

Grading Scale (for final grades)

A	100% to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0% to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0% to 87.0%
B	< 87.0% to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0% to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0% to 77.0%
C	< 77.0% to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0% to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0% to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0% to 61.0%
F	< 61.0% to 0.0%