

Queer Studies: Sociological Approaches

Lehman College in the City University of New York
SOC 257

When: DAYS/TIMES

Where: LOCATION

Instructor: SAMPLE INSTRUCTOR

email: sample.instructor@lehman.cuny.edu

office hours: sample time

Course Catalogue Description: 3 credits, 3 hours

This course explores the intersections of gender and sexualities with a special focus on political, social, cultural, and historical discourses of queerness at the individual level and the structural level. Special attention will be given to race, class, gender, and disability and the social construction of sexuality.

This course also fulfills the Individual & Society flexible core requirement. As such this course includes: Systematic study of individuals, their impact on society and society's impact on them: introduction to typical modes of inquiry and systematic ways of thinking about the topic.

Course Objectives

- (1) Provide students with a foundation to individually and structurally contextualize, contemplate, and consider queerness at the intersections of race, class, gender, nation, and (dis)ability.
- (2) Understand sociological approaches to queerness.
- (3) Apply concepts about sexualities and queerness to current events both domestically and internationally.

Learning Outcomes (*Pathways Flexible Core Individual & Society Course*)

- (1) Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- (2) Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
- (3) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
- (4) Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of sociology exploring the relationship between the individual and society.
- (5) Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.
- (6) Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.

Required Texts and Readings

- (1) Our required readings will mostly be open-access articles that are available online.
- (2) Readings that are not available online will be flagged with a "BB" in parenthesis on the course schedule below and will be uploaded to our course site on Blackboard. You'll be able to locate those readings in the course materials folder.

(3) There is one required book for this course. This book is available for purchase on Amazon, as well as bookstores like Bluestockings and The Nonbinarian Bookstore. You can also purchase an e-book, audiobook, or rent a copy from your local library.

Required book: H, Lamy. (2023). *Hijab Butch Blues*. The Dial Press. ISBN-10 0593448766
List Price: \$16.86 (paperback)

Grading Policy

Discussion Facilitation (20%): In groups, you will facilitate a class discussion that corresponds to one of our weekly topics. The group will be responsible for covering all of the readings in that unit, and will be responsible for identifying the linkages and distinctions between the readings. This is not a traditional presentation; rather, your goal is to engage your peers as intellectual collaborators and have a dialogue.

Online Content Creation (20%): In this assignment, you will delve into the world of online content creation to contribute to the exploration and understanding of queer identities, histories, and issues. Drawing inspiration from the material we explored in class; you will choose a specific topic related to queer studies and create an engaging and informative piece of online content.

Bearing (Ethnographic) Witness: Gender & Sexuality in Public Space (20%): For this five-page paper, you're going to look for patterns of gender and sexuality in public space at the nexus of race, class, and gender to understand how gender and sexuality organize public space, how norms around gender and sexuality are (re)created, and what role humans as social beings play in this reenactment or defiance.

Personal Testimony (20%): The guiding question for this project will be: *How did I come into and develop my gender and sexuality?* You will write a three–four-page personal testimony to disentangle what is inherently you—and what parts or bits of you are socially constructed all while picking and pulling at the seams in between.

Attendance & Participation (20%): There will be a weekly discussion board on the Padlet platform where I will post a prompt that you must respond to in order to receive attendance and participation credit for the week.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions & Syllabus Overview

No readings due.

Week 2: The Social Construction of Sexuality

- ◇ “The History of Sexuality: An Introduction.” 1976. Michel Foucault. pp. 1-80.
- ◇ “Introduction to Refusing Compulsory Sexuality: A Black Asexual Lens on Our Sex-Obsessed Culture.” Sherronda J. Brown. 2022. pp. 1-16. (BB)
- ◇ "A record number of U.S. adults identify as LGBTQ. Gen Z is driving the increase." 2022. *Washington Post*.

Week 3: Queer Theory and Theorizing: Queer Subjectivities

- ◇ "Critically Queer." 1993. Judith Butler. pp. 1-16.

- ◇ "The Homosexual Role." 1968. Mary McIntosh. pp. 1-12.
- ◇ Performing Disidentifications. 1999. José Esteban Muñoz. Chapter from *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. pp. 1-31. (BB)

Week 4: Sexual Liberation & The Stonewall Riots

- ◇ "Activists Install Marsha P. Johnson Monument in Christopher Park." 2021. *Gotham*.
- ◇ "Queer People of Color Led the L.G.B.T.Q. Charge, but Were Denied the Rewards." 2019. *The New York Times*.
- ◇ "Sex Workers Are an Important Part of the Stonewall Story, But Their Role Has Been Forgotten." 2019. *TIME*.
- ◇ "How The Activism of Stonewall Transformed into The Fight Against AIDS." *NPR*. 2019.

Week 5: NYC LGBTQ+ Culture in the 1980's

- ◇ "Gay Pride and Survival in the Eighties." *On Christopher Street: Life, Death, and Sex After Stonewall*. 2023. pp. 1-3. (BB)
- ◇ "The Ballroom Scene Has Long Offered Radical Freedoms for Black and Brown Queer People. Today, That Matters More Than Ever." 2021. *TIME*.
- ◇ "werk." *And The Category Is... Inside New York's Vogue, House, & Ballroom Community*. 2021. Ricky Tucker. pp. 1-30. (BB)

In Class-Film: *Paris is Burning* (running time: 71 minutes)

Week 6: BIPOC Queer Sexualities

- ◇ "Black Gay (Raw) Sex." 2016. Marlon Bailey. *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings on Queer Black Studies*. pp. 239-261. (BB)
- ◇ "Your Mother Is a Whore: On Sex Work & Motherhood." 2018. Jessica Sage. *Essays on Sex Work & Survival*. pp. 32-47. (BB)
- ◇ "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." 1978. Audre Lorde. pp. 1-5.

In-Class Film: *How to Survive a Plague* (running time: 110 minutes)

Week 7: Queer(ing) Media Representation: Mainstreaming the Culture

- ◇ How "RuPaul's Drag Race" changed the way we speak. 2019. *The Quartz*.
- ◇ "Drag exploded in popularity. Then came the protests and attacks." 2022. *The Washington Post*.
- ◇ "Pose(r): Ryan Murphy, Trans and Queer of Color Labor, and the Politics of Representation." 2018. *LAReview of books*.
- ◇ "Black, Queer and Neurodivergent: Janelle Monáe's 'The Age of Pleasure' Dives into Play, Joy and Creativity." 2023. *Ms. Magazine*.

Week 8: White Patriarchal Queer Culture & Discourse: The Invisibility of Queer Women at the Intersections

- ◇ "A Black Feminist Statement." Combahee River Collective. pp. 210-219.

- ◇ "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." Audre Lorde. pp. 1-7.
- ◇ "White Gay Men Are Hindering Our Progress as a Queer Community." 2017. Gabriel Arana. *them*.

Week 9: *White Patriarchal Queer Culture & Discourse: The Invisibility of Queer Women at the Intersections*

In-Class Film: *Tangerine* (running time: 88 minutes)

Week 10: *Racial Neoliberalism & The Commodification and Consumption of Social Justice*

- ◇ "Rainbow capitalism is dying – will we miss it when it's gone?" 2023. *Dazed*.
- ◇ "Target Pride backlash exposes 'rainbow capitalism' problem, designer says." 2023. Helen Reid. *Reuters*.
- ◇ Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology." *Toward a Queer of Color Critique: Aberrations in Black*. 2004. Roderick A. Ferguson. pp. 1-29. (BB)

Week 11: *Dating & Intimate Relationships: Queering Love & Connection*

- ◇ "Us Two Against the World." 2023. Sophie K Rosa. *Radical Intimacy*. pp. 41-81. (BB)
- ◇ "We didn't queer the institution of marriage. It straightened us." 2014. Hugh Ryan. *The Guardian*.
- ◇ "How Grindr Changed Gay Life Forever." 2019. *Frieze*. Evan Moffitt.
- ◇ "How The Lesbian Community is Reinventing Dating." RHIANNON PICTON-JAMES. *British Vogue*.
- ◇ "The colorful, sticky history of gay bathhouses: From 15th century scandal to modern staple." 2022. Patrick Kelleher.

Week 12: *The Family and Mothering*

- ◇ "Private Households" & "Family Terrors." *Family Abolition: Capitalism and the Communizing of Care*. 2022. M.E. O' Brien. pp. 1-46. (BB)
- ◇ "Turning The Beat Around: Lesbian Parenting." 1986. Audre Lorde. pp. 30-39.

Week 13: *Lived Experiences*

- ◇ *Hijab Butch Blues*. 2023. Lamya H

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS KEYED TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

Discussion Facilitation: In groups, students will facilitate a class discussion once this semester. Each student will take a turn leading the discussion on one text within that week's topic, and each student will be assessed on their facilitation corresponding their selected text. Each student will be responsible for facilitating a discussion that ties together the week's readings exploring their connections and distinctions. The purpose of the facilitation is to develop skills in guiding a productive and engaging discussion. By leading the group through thoughtful conversation and analysis, students will enhance their ability to critically engage with literature and foster meaningful interactions among peers.

Learning Outcomes: 1) Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view; (2) Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically; (3) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

Online Content Creation: In this assignment, you will delve into the world of online content creation to contribute to the exploration and understanding of queer identities, histories, and issues. You will choose a specific topic related to queer studies and create an engaging and informative piece of online content. Choose a specific topic within the field of queer studies that interests you. It could be related to queer history (such as the Stonewall Riots), LGBTQIA+ rights (i.e. gay marriage), intersectionality, representation in media, challenges faced by queer folks, or any other relevant area. Next, you're going to choose from one of the following formats for your online content: (1) blog post; (2) video presentation; (3) infographic; (4) social media campaign; (5) Wikipedia. Conduct thorough background research on your selected topic using scholarly sources, academic articles, books, and reliable online platforms. You should incorporate at least three sources from class into your online content. Once you've gathered your background research, begin creating your content based on your chosen format.

Learning Outcomes: (1) Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view; (2) Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically; (3) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions; (4) Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of sociology exploring the relationship between the individual and society.

Bearing (Ethnographic) Witness: Gender & Sexuality in Public Space: For this five-page paper, you're going to look for patterns of gender and sexuality in public space at the nexus of race, class, and gender. More specifically, you will be looking to see how norms around gender and sexuality are being (re)created and what role humans as social beings play in this reenactment or defiance. You will select two sites in public space to visually explore how gender and sexuality both discretely and together organize public space. Some integral questions that will guide your analysis: *What gender patterns do you immediately notice? What is causing them? How are the patterns you witnessed an example of "doing gender"?* When you think about whether the site was gender segregated, what contributes to the existence of (or resistance to) gender segregation at your selected site? *Are there any disruptions to gender patterns that you witnessed? How does this mirror—or not mirror—gender norms in your own life?*

Learning Outcomes: (4) Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of sociology exploring the relationship between the individual and society; (5) Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices; (6) Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.

Personal Testimony: You will write a three-to-four-page paper. The guiding question for this paper is: *How did I come into and develop my gender and sexuality?* You will think about how both institutions (structures and systems) and ideologies (attitudes and ways of thinking) indelibly impacted the creation and development of your gender and sexuality. Consider the role of public space, media, schools, family, friends, romantic relationships, culture, politics,

economics, and/or religion in your response. Feel free to zoom out as much as you want—or zoom in as much as you need to. This could look like selecting one institution (schools) and reflecting on your memories on the role schools played in co-creating your identity when it comes to gender and sexuality. You can think about both the interconnections/overlaps or the distinctions between gender and sexuality when writing. If you want to connect schools to religion and link these two institutions and identify their mutual role in informing your identity, go for it. Just be sure to talk about both the self and the institution/ideology!

Learning Outcomes: (3) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions; (4) Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of sociology exploring the relationship between the individual and society; (5) Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices; (6) Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.