

Writing About Queer Love

<i>Course Number</i>	ENC 1145-3337, Fall 2015
<i>Class Periods</i>	T 3:00pm to 4:55pm R 4:05pm to 4:55pm
<i>Location</i>	CBD 212
<i>Instructor</i>	Trevor Weisong Gao
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<i>Office</i>	Turlington 4212
<i>Office Hours</i>	M 2pm-4pm

Course Description

French philosopher Alain Badiou writes that love is a “truth procedure” that opens up possibilities for experiencing the world from the perspective of “two” rather than one. Echoing Badiou, Lauren Berlant argues, “rather than being isolating, love provides an image of an expanded self, the normative version of which is the two-as-one intimacy of the couple form.” Rightly so, when we think about love, we might first and foremost conjure up the romanticized image of the conventional and predominant form of the heterosexual couple. However, is Badiou aiming at anchoring love to such conventional-couple form or is he simply providing a foundational structure of love that allows open-ended interpretations? What sorts of “non-normative versions” of love might Berlant be thinking of when she suggests that the two-as-one couple form is the normative version?

Rather than entirely mapping out the genealogy of love, we will focus exclusively on non-conventional and non-normative love or, rather, “queer love” and its variegated types, including: gay and lesbian love, friendship, object love, masochism, inter-species love, among others. By doing so, we will interrogate the ways in which love is construed through issues and debates of sexuality, kinship, family diversity, and gay and lesbian parenthood. We will read literature that has a thematic focus of those issues, including such texts as: Samuel Delany’s *Times Square Red*, *Times Square Blue*, Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home*, and selections of short stories and poems from Carson McCullers, and Octavia Butler. We will also read related theoretical work; such authors will include Michel Foucault, Judith Stacey, Donna Haraway, and Amber Jamilla Musser.

This course will fulfill the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement. Students will learn to read literature actively and examine theoretical texts critically and analytically. Students will understand the ways in which an argument is constructed and supported and know whether the supporting evidence is fully elaborated and developed. Students will exit the course with expository and argumentative writing skills, as well as a familiarity and engagement with the topic of queer love.

Note: Some of the texts we will read and discuss include frank and explicit descriptions of sexual behavior, unconventional forms of love and ways of expressing love. Our aim is not to endorse or criticize these modes of love but to understand their expressions in literature and art and their significance in a broader historical and cultural context. Students who find such material troubling are invited to seek an alternate course.

Learning Goals

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- Produce essays that have well developed arguments, coherent sentences and paragraphs, and active engagement with the existing repository of scholarship of a particular topic.
- Display the command of formal writing skills, including grammar, mechanics, and MLA format.
- Understand and accurately and effectively utilize related terminology to discuss the issues involving love, sexuality, gay and lesbian literature, and queer studies.

Required Texts

- Samuel Delany. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. New York University Press. ISBN 0814719198
- Alison Bechdel. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Mariner Books. ISBN 0618871713
- Olaf Stapledon. *Sirius*. Secker & Warburg. ISBN NA.
[*Odd John and Sirius*. Dover Publications. ISBN 0486211339]
- Donna Haraway. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press. ISBN 0971757585

Note: These books are listed in the order that they will be read. Additional required readings can be accessed through Canvas.

Course Assignments

Response Questions (300 words; 50 pts)

Once during the semester, you will have to post 2-3 questions regarding readings for the coming Tuesday following. This is due at 11:55pm on your designated Monday on Canvas under “Discussion” section. (You will also need to submit the assignment entry in order to receive a grade). These questions will serve as springboard for our in-class discussions, so instead of simply asking questions, you are expected to reflect on your thoughts in an analytical manner. There are no guidelines as to how you should organize your reflections. Thoughtfulness and reflection takes precedence over style. Although the writing style can be informal, well-considered and insightful ideas as well as grammatically and mechanically error-free writing is expected. All students should read all posts before class Tuesdays. Minimum 300 words per post.

Reflection Papers (600 words and 75 pts each; 300 pts in total)

Throughout the course, you will have to produce, in total, 4 short reflection papers with minimum 600 words per paper. These papers allow you to fully explore ideas, tease out nuances, and possibly connect your thoughts with outside sources. You can use this assignment to explore a particular argument or work out your own original arguments about one or more texts. You may do a comparative analysis of certain aspect of various readings, or you reflect upon your own experience/thoughts related to the topic of the materials. Outstanding papers should be insightful, cogent, and detailed.

Close Reading Paper (1200 words; 150 pts)

In this writing exercise, you will pick one paragraph or one sentence from discussed readings to think about its value and relation to the entire text. In crafting your essay, you might consider questions such as, in what ways is this particular paragraph pivotal to the text, or more specifically, what is unique about the organization, development and language use of this paragraph that is conducive to the author in expressing his or her ideas.

Final Project (presentation 100 pts and final paper 300 pts; minimum 2100 words and 5 academic sources)

Your final paper will be a research paper focused on the theme of queer love. In this paper, you need to draw on seminar readings as well as outside academic sources to develop your original argument about a particular issue raised in our discussions. You are required to schedule a conference with the instructor before November 20th to discuss your potential paper topic. You will also need to do a 10-min presentation on your final paper during the last week of the semester. All topics must be approved by the instructor.

Participation (100 pts)

The success of our seminar is based vastly on student contributions to class discussion. You are expected to be an active participant in class. In order to do so, you need to read and digest the readings before coming to class and prepare some questions to ask your classmates to stimulate discussion. You should also be prepared for occasional quizzes on assigned readings. Unsatisfactory responses to quizzes will lower your participation grade.

Some texts in this course are explicit in their discussion of sex, bodies, violence and issues that are in nature provocative. Together we will create a safe and comfortable space for expressing ideas, asking questions, and engaging in discussion. As such, mutual respect and confidentiality are of utmost importance. Failure to abide by these rules will result in significant deduction in your participation grade.

Assignment Submission Policies

All assignments should reflect your best writing, so you are expected to re-read, revise and edit your work before submitting it. All essays should be written according to Modern Language Association (MLA) format with proper font, font size, and margins. Please submit assignments in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx); assignments uploaded as PDFs will not be accepted. Title files with your last name, first name, and the title of the assignment, for example, GaoTrevorResponsePaper1.docx.

All assignments should be submitted electronically via Canvas. All due dates and times are specified below within the weekly schedule. No late submissions will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Any type of emergencies, including computer or printer failures, Canvas malfunctions, power outage and so on, will not be considered excuses for late submissions.

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Grading Rubrics

For all written assignments, three major aspects of writing will be evaluated: content, paragraph development and mechanics.

The A-range essay, scoring over 90% of its total value, articulates a clear and insightful position, develops the position fully with compelling reasons and/or persuasive examples and sustains a well-organized analysis. It will also demonstrate superior facility with the conventions of standard written English.

The B-range essay, scoring between 80%-89% of the total score, means it needs a significant improvement in one of the three areas. Specific comments will be provided.

The C-range essay, scoring between 70%-79% of the total score, means it needs a significant improvement in two of the three areas. Specific comments will be provided.

The D-range essay, scoring between 60%-69% of the total score, means it needs a significant improvement in all of the areas. Specific comments will be provided.

Course Policies

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class. If you miss more than three periods* during the semester, each additional absence will lower your overall grade by 50 points. If you miss more than six periods, you will fail the course. Exempt from this policy are only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, family emergencies, and health issues for which you must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence. Please do not miss the class period in which you are presenting. If you must do so, please contact me as soon as possible to make other arrangements.

Although class starts at 3pm on Tuesdays and 4:05pm on Thursdays respectively, you are encouraged to come to class five minutes earlier to get settled and ready for class. Arriving more than 5 minutes after the start of class will result in a tardy. After 2 tardies, your overall grade will be lowered by 10 points.

*There are two periods on Tuesdays, so if you miss an entire Tuesday class, it will be recorded as two absences.

Notes on Electronic Devices

Cellphones should be turned off or muted to silence, meaning no sound or vibration, as it is

disruptive to the class. If you are expecting a call, please let me know before class starts.

You can use computers or tablets in classroom as reading devices if you decide not to print out the readings, and you can also keep notes electronically. Please keep in mind that the class is discussion based, so you are advised to fully participate and engage and only use these devices when necessary. The instructor reserves the right to suspend the usage of electronic devices in class if they are being abused or disruptive.

Statement of Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the UF Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing requirement (WR)

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

Schedule and Due Dates

UNIT	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	DUE
Introduction	T(8.25)	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No readings 	
	R(8.27)	On Queer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somerville, Siobhan B. "Queer." <i>Keywords for American Cultural Studies</i>, Second Edition. Eds. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler. New York University Press, 2014, pp. 203-207. 	
	T(9.1)	On Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badiou, Alain. "Introduction," "Love Under Threat," "Philosophers and Love," "The Construction of Love," and "The Truth of Love" from <i>In Praise Of Love</i>, pp. 1-52. <i>A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud</i> by Carson McCullers. 	
Gay and Lesbian Love	R(9.3)	Romance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Spur Piece" from <i>Derricks</i> by James Barr, pp. 89-109. <u>Start</u> reading Part 1 "Times Square Blue" from <i>Times Square Red, Times Square Blue</i> by Samuel Delany, pp.1-108. 	
	T(9.8)	Casual Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1 "Times Square Blue" from <i>Times Square Red, Times Square Blue</i> by Samuel Delany, pp.1-108. 	Reflection #1
	R(9.10)	Writing Workshop #1: Recognizing and Evaluating Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No readings <u>Start</u> reading Part 2 from <i>Times Square Red, Times Square Blue</i> by Samuel Delany, pp.109-199. 	
	T(9.15)	Casual Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 2 "... Three, Two, One, Contact: Times Square Red" from <i>Times Square Red, Times Square Blue</i> by Samuel Delany, pp.109-199. 	
	R(9.17)	Parental Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fun Home</i>, Chapters 1-2 	
	T(9.22)	Parental Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fun Home</i>, Chapters 3-6 	
	R(9.24)	Parental Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Fun Home</i>, Chapters 7 	
	T(9.29)	Struggles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Introduction" from <i>Homophobias: Lust and Loathing across Time and Space</i>. Ed. David Murray. Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 1-15. 	Reflection #2

UNIT	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	DUE
Queer Domesticity	R(10.1)	Coming Out	▪ Weston, Kath. "Kinship and Coherence: Ten Stories." from <i>Families We Choose</i> , pp. 77-102.	
	T(10.6)	Coming Out	▪ Weston, Kath. "Families We Choose." from <i>Families We Choose</i> , pp. 103-136.	
	R(10.8)	Family Diversity	▪ In-class screening and discussion: <i>Modern Family</i> (Ep TBD)	
	T(10.13)	Family Diversity	▪ Judith Stacey, "Gay Parenthood and the End of Paternity as We Knew It" <i>Unhitched: love, marriage, and family values from West Hollywood to western China</i> , pp. 49-88.	
	R(10.15)	Writing Workshop #2: Close Reading	▪ No readings	
	T(10.20)	Family Diversity	▪ Judith Stacey, "Unhitching the Horse from the Carriage: Love without Marriage among the Mosuo" <i>Unhitched: love, marriage, and family values from West Hollywood to western China</i> , pp. 152-187.	Reflection #3
Queering Love	R(10.22)	Masochism	▪ Screening: <i>Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan</i>	
	T(10.27)	Masochism	▪ Amber Musser, "Introduction: Theory, Flesh, Practice." <i>Sensational Flesh: Race, Power and Masochism</i> . pp. 1-12 ▪ Amber Musser, "Performing Pain, Performing the Self: Bob Flanagan and Masochism." <i>Sensational Flesh: Race, Power and Masochism</i> . pp. 120-133.	
	R(10.29)	Inter-Species Love	▪ <i>Bloodchild</i> by Octavia Butler.	Close Reading
	T(11.3)	Inter-Species Love	▪ <i>Sirius</i> , Chapters 1-7	
	R(11.5)		▪ Class Cancelled.	
	T(11.10)	Inter-Species Love	▪ <i>Sirius</i> , Chapters 8-14	
	R(11.12)	Inter-Species Love	▪ <i>Sirius</i> , Chapters 15-17	
	T(11.17)	Inter-Species Love	▪ Donna Haraway. <i>The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness</i> (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).	Reflection #4

UNIT	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	DUE
	R(11.19)	Friendship	▪ Foucault, Michel. "Friendship as a way of life," <i>Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth</i> (New York: The New Press, 1994), pp. 135-141.	
	T(11.24)	Object Love	▪ In-class screening, <i>Her</i> . ▪ Brown, Bill. "How to do things with things (a toy story)." <i>Critical Inquiry</i> (1998), pp. 935-964.	
	R(11.26)	-----	▪ No Class – Thanksgiving Holidays	
Final Presentation	T(12.1)	Final Presentation		
	R(12.3)	Final Presentation		
	T(12.8)	Final Presentation		Final Paper Due Dec. 15th

Event of Interest

Friday, October 30 @ 4:00pm

Atrium, Ustler Hall

Speaker: Katrin Sieg (Georgetown University)

Queering Asylum: Refugees in Recent European Cinema

Many of the refugees reaching European shores now include gay, lesbian, and transgendered people, who seek protection from persecution for belonging to a "specific social group" in their country of origin. The enshrining of gay rights in EU law seemingly signals the victory of glbt rights as human rights. What perverse impulse, then, drives some European filmmakers to call the idea of a cosmopolitan, ethnically diverse and sexually tolerant Europe into question? The talk discusses the films *Unveiled* (dir. Angelina Macaroni, 2005) and *Jaures* (dir. Vincent Dieutre, 2012) to ask how queer European cinema has helped to envision alternatives to the current asylum regime, which would better correspond to the lived realities of glbt people in Europe and outside of it.