

Fall 2019
Film and Feminist, Queer, and Trans Theory
(ENG 6138—13403 Studies in the Movies)

Professor Barbara Mennel

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm and by appointment

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Course Objectives:

This graduate seminar has two key objectives: one, to think through the relationship of feminist, queer, and trans theories to each other, and two, to engage with the productivity of these three related bodies of theoretical works in regard to cinema. The range of films will include silent cinema and contemporary global cinema. Screenings will include New Queer Cinema and queer and trans films of the twenty-first century. Readings will also cover the gamut from classics of the respective subfields, such as works by Lauren Berlant, Eve Sedgwick, Rosi Braidotti, and José Esteban Muñoz, to those by contemporary scholars, such as Sara Ahmed, as well as key queer film studies texts by Laura Horak, Patricia White, Rosalind Galt, and Karl Schoonover. Written requirements include weekly response papers, an abstract for the final paper, and a final paper.

Required Reading:

Sara Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*.

Sara Ahmed. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*.

Aren Z. Aizura. *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignments*.

Lauren Berlant. *Cruel Optimism*.

Rosi Braidotti. *The Posthuman*.

Jose Esteban Munoz. *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*.

Rosalind Galt and Karl Schoonover. *Queer Cinema in the World*.

Reina Gossett. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*.

Laura Horak. *Girls will be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934*.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Tendencies*.

Patricia White. *Women's Cinema, World Cinema: Projecting Contemporary Feminisms*.

Participants must have the texts in front of them during discussion in some format (ebook, kindle, paper copy, interlibrary loan, scanned, etc).

Grading:

Oral participation, attendance, and leading discussion	20%
Five response papers (due Tuesday by 7:00pm)	20%
Five responses to a fellow student's paper (due Wednesday by 2:00pm)	10%
Abstract for final paper	10%
Final paper	40%

ASSIGNMENTS:**Oral Participation, Attendance, and Leading Discussion**

Contributions should reflect preparation of the material and advance the scholarly conversation. I call on graduate students who do not volunteer in seminar discussion.

You need to attend all class meetings and submit all assignments on time. You are required to provide documentation for absences or late submissions because of sickness or extenuating circumstances, which will not affect your grade negatively. In such cases, you should try to reach me before class meeting and communicate with the student with whom you are collaborating. Being out of town for professional reasons, e.g. attending conferences, does not excuse you from completing the assignment. You need to complete the assignment while being away for the due date or prior to your departure. Only reasons permissible according to UF guidelines enable me to allow for extensions to submit work (see below).

Each member of the class will be responsible for leading discussion for the first half of the seminar (4:00-5:15pm) once during the semester. The facilitation should emphasize the theoretical text and secondarily the film. Ideally, the period would cover both and relate reading and film to each other. Each member of the course may use PowerPoint, offer a mini-lecture, rely on clips, writing exercises, group work, and/or other strategies to generate interactive engagement with the material. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves thoroughly with the text and the film in order to provide definitions and contexts.

Students will receive letter grades for participation and leading discussion. Unexcused absences, lateness, early departure or inappropriate behavior will affect the final grade in this category negatively. Requirements for class attendance and extension for assignments in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Please note that I accept a late final paper only with a doctor's note or documentation of extenuating circumstances. If you are sick or have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your final paper in time for me to grade it in order to submit final grades on time, the university requires that we meet and complete an "incomplete form" in person with signatures and documentation.

Response Papers (Tuesdays by 7:00pm):

Every graduate student must submit a response paper to the reading by Tuesday at 7:00pm of the week in which it is due. There are five assigned response papers throughout the semester for ten exchanges. These response papers may address

questions and concerns, such as: What is the argument and thesis? What is the methodology? How does the text relate to other texts we have read in class? What is significant, original, innovative, insightful? What do you disagree with? What is unclear? How does it relate to or illuminate your own research questions? What questions do you have? You may also comment on the writing: do you find the style clear or difficult? The paper must be 12pt. font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margin. The minimum is one page and the absolute maximum is two pages. The response paper will be submitted to me and one other student. You will receive a letter grade. I will provide you with a hand-out on the scheduled exchanges, which will also be archived on Canvas.

Responses to fellow students' papers (due Wednesday by 2:00pm)

Respond to your fellow student's response to the reading. There will be five responses due in ten exchanges. You may summarize the insight of your colleague and share what you learned from your fellow student. You may add your own understanding to a question. You may point out further implications or expansions of ideas. And finally, you may add other references and resources. It should go without saying that you should be supportive and collegial using a professional and respectful tone. The paper must be 12pt. font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margin. The minimum is one paragraph (ca. 150 words) and the absolute maximum is one page. The response paper will be submitted to me and to the other student. You will receive a letter grade. I will provide you with a hand-out on the scheduled exchanges, which will also be archived on Canvas.

Abstract:

You will submit an abstract for your final paper. The word limit is 250 words. Abstracts are single-spaced. They should include a tentative title and a brief description of the topic, including research question(s), methodology, theoretical engagement, and film title.

Final Paper:

Your final paper will make use of one or more theoretical approaches that we have covered in the course for an analysis of one film, which we have not discussed in class. The paper is therefore not a research paper in the conventional sense. You do not have to establish a new topic or a research question beyond the course. The only research that is required concerns the film. You want to make sure that you refer to published context of the film you chose. The goal for the final paper is working through and applying the theoretical approach(es) covered in the course. The response papers throughout the semester should help you prepare for your final paper and you should feel free to rely on the work that you have completed during the semester. The paper must be 10-12 pages, excluding the bibliography, double spaced with one-inch margins.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of the intellectual works of others, including web sources, friends' papers, published and unpublished work. I prosecute plagiarism and cheating to the fullest extent possible at UF. If I find that you plagiarized,

you will fail this class and I will submit your name, an account of the incident, and documentation to the graduate coordinator.

Disability Accommodation:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Student Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.afl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.afl.edu/public-results/>.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1

Wednesday, August 21

Introduction: No reading

In-class screening: Sidney Drew. *A Florida Enchantment* (1914)

Week 2

Tuesday, August 27

Rouben Mamoulian. *Queen Christina* (1933)

Wednesday, August 28

Laura Horak. *Girls will be Boys: Cross-dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016.

Week 3 – **Leading discussion 1**

Tuesday, September 3

Deepa Metha. *Fire* (1996)

Response paper to reading 1

Wednesday, September 4

Gayatri Gopinath. *Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 1

Week 4 Class cancelled: Barbara Mennel will be at a conference in Germany

Week 5 – **Leading discussion 2**

Tuesday, September 17

Deepa Mehta. *Water* (2005)

Response paper to reading 2

Wednesday, September 18

Patricia White. *Women's Cinema, World Cinema: Projecting Contemporary Feminisms*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 2

Week 6 – **Leading discussion 3**

Tuesday, September 24

Sara Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Response paper to reading 3

Wednesday, September 25—Class canceled because Dr. Mennel is out of town

Week 7 – **Leading discussion 4**

Tuesday, October 1

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. *Two Days, One Night* (2014)

Response paper to reading 4

Wednesday, October 2

Lauren Berlant. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 4

Week 8 – **Leading discussion 5**

Tuesday, October 8

Alain Berliner. *Ma Vie en Rose* (1997)

Response paper to reading 5

Wednesday, October 9

Sara Ahmed. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 5

Week 9 – Leading discussion 6

Tuesday, October 15

John Waters. *Pink Flamingos* (1972)

Response paper to reading 6

Wednesday, October 16

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 6

Week 10 – Leading discussion 7

Tuesday, October 22

Isaac Julien. *Looking for Langston* (1989)

Response paper to reading 7

Wednesday, October 23

José Esteban Muñoz. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 7

Week 11 – Leading discussion 8

Tuesday, October 29

Apichatpong Weerasethakul. *Tropical Malady* (2004)

Response paper to reading 8

Wednesday, October 30

Karl Schoonover and Rosalind Galt. *Queer Cinema in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 8

Week 12 – Leading discussion 9

Tuesday, November 5

Kutlug Ataman. *Lola and Billy the Kid* (1999)

Response paper to reading 9

Wednesday, November 6

Aren Z. Aisura. *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignments*.
Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 9

Week 13 -- **Leading discussion 10**

Tuesday, November 12

Sean Baker. *Tangerine* (2015)

Response paper to reading 10

Wednesday, November 13

Raina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, Johanna Burton, eds. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 10

Friday, November 15 @ 5:00pm: Abstract due for final paper

Week 14 -- **Leading discussion 11**

Tuesday, November 19

Mark Romanek. *Never Let Me Go* (2010)

Response paper to reading 11

Wednesday, November 20

Rosi Braidotti. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

Response paper to fellow student's response paper 11

Week 15 Cancelled Thanksgiving

Week 16

Tuesday, December 3: No screening

Wednesday, December 4: Final discussion

Week 17

Due: Final papers on Monday, December 9 @ 5:00pm