

**AML 4282**

**QUEER THEORY AND LITERATURE**

**T 8:30-10:25am/TH 9:35-10:25am**

**Matherly 113**

Thomas Conners, Ph.D.

*Office hours TBA and by appointment*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The last fifty years have seen vast changes in gender and sexual politics in the United States: bar windows have been broken, bras burned, homosexuality decriminalized, marriage equality legalized. With many of these topics in the news again, our course queries how queer scholarship has developed alongside this shifting sociopolitical landscape. As such, the central aim of this discussion-based seminar is to examine the key debates, questions, and issues animating queer theory of the last century. We will read more expansively than exhaustively, engaging theoretical texts that are foundational to the study of gender and sexuality (Butler, Crenshaw, Foucault, Freud); relevant scholarship from legal studies, performance studies, feminist theory, disability studies, and critical geography (Cohen, Eng, Hanhardt, Kim, Muñoz); and select literature and poetry (Machado, Monalisa Ojeda, Torres, Veasna So, Washington, and others).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** The work we will do together will be both skill building and knowledge building. By the end of the semester, you will have had the opportunity to:

1. Refine language for academic expression in writing and oral presentation
2. Demonstrate knowledge of major historical events, figures, works, and trends in queer critical and creative production
3. Develop literary and cultural analysis skills paying attention to components like race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course is designed to support your development as a thinker, writer, and speaker. Part of it has been structured to include important texts and building blocks that will support you towards this aim. The other part will be structured over the course of the first four weeks and through a series of scaffolded assignments, resulting in a co-constructed syllabus and course of study.

**Academic policies:** This course complies with all UF policies. Please see this link for the most up-to-date University policies about attendance, accessibility, grading, course evals, honesty policies, in-class recordings, academic resources, and Campus Health and Wellness Resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

**Assignments:** The assignments listed below are opportunities for you to demonstrate you are building knowledge and skills in relation to the central focuses of our course. Your course grade will be determined by the quantity of assignments you complete in connection with these goals, assuming they follow instructions and satisfy Canvas rubrics. *Submitting work for this course, including contributions made in live, in-person discussions, presumes compliance with the University's Honesty Code and Honor Pledge.*

**Exit tickets (10 x 3% = 30%):** in order to demonstrate a growing understanding of historical events, figures, works, and trends in queer critical and creative production, students will complete a brief exit ticket at the end of every Tuesday's class. These will be graded on accuracy and completion, gauging general understanding through a range of prompts, activities, and questions.

**Partner presentations (20%):** in order to facilitate our continued understanding of queer critical and creative production, students will lead 50 minutes of course discussion at least once during the semester. These will take place on Thursdays and should include: an overview of the relevant figures and historical contexts and a series of scaffolded, discussion-generating questions that advance our collective understanding of and ability to put critical theory in conversation with cultural production. Early preparation and consultation with the professor in advance of the presentation is recommended.

**Event reports (2 x 10% = 20%):** in order to work towards mastery of course objectives while invigorating the Gainesville intellectual community, students will identify and attend two events related (broadly) to the central themes and questions of this course. These can be on- or off-campus. It is the student's responsibility to identify related events; Tommy will circulate those that he learns about. After attending, students must write an email with at least three components: first, a summary of the event that paints a picture for someone who wasn't there; second, an analytical, opinionated engagement with the themes or topics discussed; and three, a question (or series of questions) the event inspired. These emails should be sent to Tommy (tconners@ufl); the first by 3/13 and the second by 4/24.

**Oral exam (30%):** in order demonstrate knowledge of queer theories and cultures, refined academic expression, and developed analysis skills, students will sit for an oral exam during the final weeks of class (schedule to be determined and posted to Canvas). The exam will consist of three components: context, analysis, and application. Tommy will select at random a theoretical text and a literary text from our coursework. The student will need to provide 1) relevant background, context, and/or summary of both texts; 2) an analytical engagement with the major concepts of the theoretical texts (strong points, blind spots, anachronisms, contradictions, etc.); and 3) how the literary and critical texts reframe and are reframed by each other. Please see Canvas for more details.

**In-class activities:** adapting to the uneven length of our course meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays (100 minutes and 50 minutes, respectively), Tuesdays will focus on building understanding—digesting secondary, critical texts, while Thursdays will focus on application—putting critical theories and frameworks into dialogue with works of literary production.

**Required reading:** all readings will be uploaded to Canvas, except those prohibited by copyright law. Students will need to purchase these or consult the library reserves. These include:

- Henry Hoke, *Open Throat* (2023)
- Justin Torres, *Blackouts* (2023)

If you purchase these texts, choose the cheapest (used) version available. No need for specific editions or hardcovers.

**COURSE CALENDAR:** Please see Canvas for the most up-to-date schedule of readings.

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