

**New York University | Department of Media, Culture, and Communication
MCC-UE 1200-002: Senior Seminar: Queer Film and Television, Fall 2014**

Tuesday, 12:30-3:00pm
Location: Silver 507

Instructor: Melanie Kohnen
email: mek8@nyu.edu
Office: East Building, 239 Greene St., Room 723
Office hours: Tuesday, 3:30-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Description:

This class explores how LGBT and queer identities, lives, and communities have become visible in and to mainstream America through the media of film and television. In turn, we will also examine how media representations of LGBT and queer Americans have shaped conversations of what it means to be gay/queer in the United States.

As our class examines key issues related to queer visibility, we will discover that queerness has always been at the heart of the media even in times when LGBTQ stories and characters were supposedly invisible. We will also focus on how being able to discern queerness often relates to "seeing" (or not) race, as the histories of sexuality and race are closely entwined in American culture. We will examine a wide range of texts, including classic Hollywood films, a variety of TV shows, activist documentaries, and online videos. In our discussions, we will pay particular attention to the normalization of LGBTQ identities in and through the media.

Required Media:

1. Samuel Delany. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. NYU Press, 2001.
2. All other readings are available online via links in the reading schedule or as PDFs on NYU Classes.
3. Netflix subscription

Assignments and Requirements:

Case Studies:

Each week, one or two students will present an additional film or TV program that corresponds to the topic of the week. In addition to the in-class presentation, you will curate a clip in the style of [In Media Res](#). That is, you select a scene from a film or TV program and analyze it in 450 words. The clip and analysis will become part of our class archive on our NYU Stream channel. You are welcome to repeat this assignment for extra credit.

Research Project

An original research project on a topic of your choice related to Queer Film and Television. You are welcome to present this project in the form of a traditional academic essay or in the form of a short film, documentary, or in another creative format. You will develop this project in several stages, including a proposal, annotated bibliography, draft, and final version.

Participation:

In-class discussions are an important aspect of this course. Consequently, your participation is crucial to the overall success of the class. You are expected to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared for discussion. This means you should not only have completed the readings, but be ready to discuss and engage the reading's major arguments—the reading responses will help you with accomplishing that. During class discussions, I will frequently ask you to suggest passages that we should examine in more detail; you should be able to identify these passages quickly by either underlining, marking the page, or taking notes in advance of class.

Good participation means contributing thoughtful comments and questions that refer to readings, screenings, and core concepts during our class discussion. The quality of your remarks is at least as important as the quantity of your remarks.

In addition to taking part in class discussions, you can also meaningfully participate in class by sending me links to interesting popular and academic articles relevant to our course and by coming to office hours to discuss assignments or to chat about topics related to our course.

Extra Credit (50 points)

You can earn extra credit by going to the movies! There are number of films with queer themes opening this fall. To earn extra credit, write a post similar to the one for our case studies. Instead of a clip, include the trailer.

Preliminary List:

- *Love is Strange* (in theaters)
- *Lilting* (opens 9/26)
- *Pride* (opens 9/26)
- [Panel on LGBTQ TV](#) (10/11)
- *The Imitation Game* (opens 11/21)

Assignment Schedule

If not specified otherwise, all assignments are due at 11:59PM on the due date.

Extensions are only available in the case of dire personal circumstances, and you must contact me at least 24 hours before the deadline. If you don't contact me 24hrs before the deadline and don't submit an assignment, you will not receive any points.

Late assignments are graded down half a letter grade. I do not accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late.

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Participation	Ongoing	200
Case Study	Ongoing	100
Research Project Proposal	10/10/14	100
Research Project Annotated Bibliography	11/02/14	200
Research Project Draft	11/24/14	200
Research Project Final Version	12/15/14	200
Total		1,000

Grade Breakdown:

1,000 points = 100%

A = 95-100

A- = 90-94

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 65-69

Overall Evaluation Criteria:

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions and readings. Writing is clear, analytical, and organized. Arguments offer innovative insights, specific examples, and concisely evaluate evidence.

Students who earn this grade for participation are consistently prepared for class, synthesize course materials effectively by confidently pointing to passages and arguments from the readings/screenings, and relate them to other sources (e.g. previous course readings, discussions, recommended screenings, etc.). They also keep the in-class analysis focused and respond thoughtfully to other students' comments.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly, but leans toward broad analysis rather than innovative perspectives.

Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful. Students offer questions, interpretations, and analysis of readings (more than just facts) to the class.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague, tangential and/or features significant grammar and spelling mistakes. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis, and feature misunderstandings of key concepts/theories.

Classroom participation is inarticulate, superficial, infrequent and/or distracted (by texting or internet usage unrelated to class during discussions and screenings). Students who earn this grade offer straightforward information (e.g. directly from the reading) without elaboration or interpretation.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments show inattention to detail, misunderstand course material, and overlook significant themes.

Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared, and off-topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments.

Course Policies:

A Note on Laptops and Cell Phone Usage

You are encouraged to bring an internet-enabled device to every class--many of our readings are available in digital formats, after all. It is your responsibility to monitor your use of the internet, texting, etc. in class. You should be mindful of where your attention is during class time (hint: it should be focused on the discussion that's happening among the people in the room). You should feel free to look up information online that is relevant to in-class activities and share this information with the class.

I will ask you to put away your laptops etc. during certain screenings to make sure your entire focus is in on the TV program or film we are watching together.

Please also consult [the Laptop Facts PDF](#). This hand-out was put together by former MCC student Ben Zweig.

Absences

Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester (if your unexcused absences exceed that limit, you put yourself at risk of failing the course). All other absences must be for valid, non-academic reasons, such as medical emergencies (confirmed by a doctor's note) or religious holidays.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up on the work we have done during class. Also note that showing up more than ten minutes late to class automatically

translates into an unexcused absence for that class meeting.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you

- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work.

You plagiarize when, *without proper attribution*, you do any of the following:

- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from others' oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Please consult Steinhardt's policy for more information:

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

Student Resources:

Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#), 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

Reading Schedule

Films marked with * are on reserve at the Avery Fisher Center.

09/02: Introduction

In-class Screening: *The Celluloid Closet*. Story by Rob Epstein, Jeffrey Friedman and Sharon Wood. HBO, 1996.

Recommended screening:

[Before Stonewall](#) (Greta Schiller, 1984)

[After Stonewall](#) (John Scagliotti, 1999)

09/09: Hollywood Cinema and the Production Code

In-class Screening: *The Children's Hour* (William Wyler, 1961)

Presentations: *Rope** (Alfred Hitchcock, 1948); *The Boys in the Band** (William Friedkin, 1970); *Rebel Without A Cause** (Nicholas Ray, 1955)

At-home screening: *Some Like It Hot** (Billy Wilder, 1959) or *All About Eve**, (Netflix) (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950) [FYI: *All About Eve* will also play at the New York Film Festival this year! Info [here](#).]

Readings:

- Doty, Alexander. Introduction to [Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Canon](#). (e-book via Bobcat) New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Sedgwick, Eve. "The Epistemology of the Closet." In: Abelove, Henry, Michele Aina Barale and David Halperin (eds). *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 45-62.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Far From Heaven** (Todd Haynes, 2002)
- *Making the Boys* (Crayton Roby, 2011)
- Russo, Vito. *The Celluloid Closet*. Revised edition. Harper and Row, 1987.
- Somerville, Siobhan B. *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

09/16: AIDS in the 1980s: Contested Territories

In-class Screening: *ACT UP** (James Wentzly, 2002)

Presentations: *Philadelphia** (John Demme, 1993), *And the Band Played On** (Roger Spottiswoode, 1993)

At-home screening: *An Early Frost** (Ron Cowan and David Lipman, 1985)

Readings:

- Kohnen, Melanie. "Toward the 'Gay 90s: Redefining Queer Visibility Through the Lens of AIDS."
- Crimp, Douglas and Adam Rolston. Selections from *AIDS Demographics*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1990.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- Grover, Jan Zita. "AIDS: Keywords." *October* Vol.43: AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter 1987): 17-30.
- Patton, Cindy. *Inventing AIDS*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

09/23 AIDS: Looking Back

In-class Screening: *The Normal Heart* (Ryan Murphy, 2014)

At home screening: *Longtime Companion**(Norman Rene, 1989)

Readings:

Crimp, Douglas. "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic." In: *Melancholia and Moralism: Essays on AIDS and Queer Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002: 43-82.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *How to Survive a Plague* (David France, 2012) (Netflix)
- *We Were Here* (David Weissman, 2011) (Netflix)
- *Dallas Buyers Club* (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2013)

09/30 The Gay 90s

Screenings: *Ellen*, "The Puppy Episode", [The Real World SF](#) (1994), VH1: The Gay 90s

Presentations: *Swoon** (Tom Kalin, 1992); *The Watermelon Woman** (Cheryl Dunye, 1996)

At-home screening: *Velvet Goldmine* (Todd Haynes, 1998) (Netflix)

Readings:

- Becker, Ron. "Gay Material and Prime-Time Network Television in the 1990s." In: [Gay TV and Straight America](#). (e-book via Bobcat) New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006: 136-189.
- "[America Sees Shades of Gay](#)." *Entertainment Weekly*. Number 291. 09/08/1995.(also available as PDF under Resources)
- Rich, B. Ruby. "[New Queer Cinema: Director's Cut](#)." In: *New Queer Cinema: Director's Cut*. Duke University Press, 2013: 16-33. (also available as PDF under Resources)

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *But I'm a Cheerleader** (Jamie Babbit, 1999)
- Joyrich, Lynne. "Epistemology of the Console." In: Davis, Glyn, and Gary Needham. [Queer TV: Theories, Histories, Politics](#). (e-book via Bobcat) New York and London: Routledge, 2009: 15-48.
- McCarthy, Anna. "*Ellen*: Making Queer Television History." *GLQ* 7:4 (2001): 593-620.
- Morrison, James (ed). *The Cinema of Todd Haynes: All That Heaven Allows*. Wallflower Press, 2007.

10/07 Into the Mainstream

In-class Screening: *Glee* (Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk, Ian Brennan, 2009-); [A Glee Vid in Memory of Alex Doty](#) (Louisa Stein, 2012)

Skype Call with Louisa Stein

Presentations: *Modern Family* (Christopher Loyd, Steven Levitan, 2009-)

Readings:

- Duggan, Lisa. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism." In: Castronovo, Russ and Dana D. Nelson (eds). *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002): 175-195.
- Doty, Alexander. [Modern Family, Glee, and the Limits of Television Liberalism](#). Flow, September 2010.
- Excerpts from Stein, Louisa. *Millennial/Fandom: Television Audiences in the Transmedia Age*. Forthcoming from University of Iowa Press.

Recommended Reading:

- Martin, Alfred J. "It's (Not) In His Kiss: Gay Kisses and Camera Angles in Contemporary Television Comedy." *Journal of Popular Communication* 12.3 (2014): 153-265.
- Warner, Michael. "What's Wrong With Normal?" In: *The Trouble with Normal*. Harvard University Press, 2000: 41-80.

10/14 Fall Break

10/21 Marriage + Family

In-class screening: *The Fosters*

Presentations: *Brothers & Sisters* (and another gay/lesbian wedding TV episode) (Netflix); *Any Day Now* (Travis Fine, 2012) (Netflix)

At-home screening: *The Kids Are All Right* (Netflix)

Readings:

- Walters, Suzanna. "Better Put A Ring On It." In: *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions are Sabotaging Gay Equality*. NYU Press, 2014: 173-206.
- Puar, Jasbir. "Intimate Control, Infinite Detention: Rereading the Lawrence Case." In: *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Duke University Press, 2007: 80-114.
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Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Tying the Knot* (Jim Steve, 2004)
- *Bridegroom* (Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, 2013) (Netflix)
- *Love is Strange* (Ira Sachs, 2014) (in theaters)

10/28 Sex

In-class Screening: *Weekend* (Andrew Haigh, 2011)

Presentations: *The L Word** (Ilene Chaiken, 2004-2009) (Netflix)

At home screening: *Queer As Folk**, Episode 1 and 2 (Ron Cowen and Daniel Lipman, 2000-2005). (Netflix)

Readings:

Samuel Delany. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. NYU Press, 2001.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Looking* (Andrew Haigh, 2013-)
- *Blue is the Warmest Color* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2013) (Netflix)
- Beirne, Rebecca Claire. "Embattled Sex: Rise of the Right and Victory of the Queer in *Queer as Folk*." In: James Keller and Leslie Straytner. *The New Queer Aesthetic on Television: Essays on Recent Programming* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006): 43-59.
- Akass, Kim and Janet McCabe. *Reading the L Word: Outing Contemporary Television*. Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006.

11/04 Subtext (What You See is Not What You Get)

In-class Screening: Clips from select TV shows and movies; [History of Bromance parody](#)

Presentations: *Scrubs* (Bill Lawrence, 2001-2010) (Netflix); *Smallville** (Al Gough and Miles Millar, (2001-2011); *Xena: Warrior Princess* (John Schulian, 1995-2001) (Netflix)

At home screening: *The Eagle* (Kevin McDonald, 2011) (Netflix)

Readings:

- Doty, Alexander. "Introduction: What Makes Queerness Most?" In: [Making Things Perfectly Queer](#). University of Minnesota Press, 1993: xi-xix.
- Becker, Ron. "Guy Love: A Queer Straight Masculinity for the Post-Closet Era?" In: Davis, Glyn, and Gary Needham. [Queer TV: Theories, Histories, Politics](#). (e-book via Bobcat) New York and London: Routledge, 2009: 212-141.
- Baker-Whitelaw, Gavia. [No, Hannibal Isn't Queerbaiting--That's Just Gay Subtext](#). *Daily Dot*, 2014.

Recommended readings and screenings:

*Fried Green Tomatoes** (Jon Avnet, 1991)

The Talented Mr. Ripley (Anthony Minghella, 1999) (Netflix)

*Fight Club** (David Fincher, 1999)

*X-Men: First Class** (Matthew Vaughn, 2011)

11/11 Around the World

Field trip to the movies: *The Way He Looks* (Daniel Ribreiro, Brazil, 2014)

Presentations: *Khush** (Pratibha Parmar, 1991)

Readings:

- Subero, Gus. Preface and "On Contemporary Latin American Homosexuality." In: [Queer Masculinities in Latin American Cinema](#). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014: 1-21.
- Gopinath, Gayatri. "Bollywood/Hollywood: Queer Cinematic Representation and the Perils of Translation." In: *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005: 93-131.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Free Fall* (Germany, Stephan Lacant, 2013) (Netflix)
- *Happy Together* (Wong Kar-Wai, Hong Kong, 1997) (Netflix)
- *Please Like Me* (Australia, 2013-present)

11/18 Intersections

In-class Screening: *Saving Face** (Alice Wu, 2004)

Presentations: *Looking for Langston** (Isaac Julien, 1989)

At home screening: *Mosquita y Mari** (Aurora Guerrero, 2012)

Readings:

- [Interview with Aurora Guerrero](#). Popmatters, 2012.
- Danielson, Marivel. "Queering Home". In: [Homecoming Queers: Desire and Difference in Chicana Latina Cultural Production](#) (e-book via Bobcat). Rutgers University Press, 2009: 1-9.
- Mimura, Glen. "Diaspora Sexualities: Asian American Queer Video in the World System." In: [Ghost Life of Third Cinema: Asian American Film and Video](#). (e-book via Bobcat). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009: 121-149.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Shopping for Fangs** (Quentin Lee, 1998)
- *Paris Is Burning* (Jenny Livingston, 1989) (Netflix)
- Mercer, Kobena. "Dark and Lovely, Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film." In: *Queer Looks*, ed. by Martha Gever, John Greyson and Pratibha Parmar. Routledge, 1993: 238-256.
- Tatonetti, Lisa. "Visible Sexualities or Invisible Nations - Forced to Choose in Big Eden," GLQ 16 (2009).

11/25 City versus Country

In-class Screening: *Small Town Gay Bar** (Malcolm Ingram, 2006)

Presentations: *Brokeback Mountain** (Ang Lee, 2005); *Boys Don't Cry* (Kimberly Pierce, 1999) (Netflix)

At home screening: *Geography Club* (Gary Entin, 2013)(Netflix)

Readings:

- Gray, Mary. "Introduction: There Are No Queers Here." In: *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: NYU Press, 2009: 1-35.
- Herring, Scott. "Introduction: I Hate New York." in: *Another Country: Queer Anti-Urbanism*. New York: NYU Press, 2011: 1-31.

Recommended readings and screenings:

- *Pit Stop* (Yen Tan, 2013) (Netflix)
- Johnson, Colin. "[Rural Space: Queer America's Final Frontier.](#)" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52:19 (13 January 2006).
- Manalansan IV, Martin F. "Colonizing Time and Space: Race and Romance in *Brokeback Mountain.*" *GLQ* 13:1 (2006): 97-100.
- McBride, Dwight. "Why I hate that I loved *Brokeback Mountain.*" *GLQ* 13:1 (2006): 95-97.

12/02 Onto the Web

Screening: [The Outs](#) (Adam Goldman, 2012); [Anyone But Me](#) (Tina Cesa Ward, 2008)

Presentations: *Orange is the New Black* (Jenji Kohan, 2013-) (Netflix)

At-home screening: *Husbands*, [Season 1](#) and [Season 2](#); ca. 40min total (Jane Espensen and Brad Bell, 2011-)

Readings:

Kohnen, Melanie. "Television's Queer Future? The Possibilities and Limitations of Web Series, Digital Distribution, and LGBT Representation in *Husbands.*" Forthcoming in: *Future Texts: Subversive Bodies and Feminist Performance*. Ed. by Vicki Callahan and Virginia Kuhn. Parlor Press.

Recommended Readings:

Fink, Marty and Quinn Miller. "Trans Media Moments: Tumblr 2011-2013." *Television and New Media* (April 2014): 1-16.

12/09 Your Choice

Screenings and readings decided by class consensus.

SNL, [The Dudleys](#) (aired 11/15/14).