

SST 604: Sexuality Studies

Spring 2026

Arizona State University

Dr. Mellissa Linton

mlinton3@asu.edu

Course Description

This doctoral-level seminar offers an in-depth exploration of the historical, theoretical, and cultural dimensions of sexuality studies. Anchored in critical frameworks such as poststructuralism, feminist theory, queer theory, and queer of color critique, the course examines how sexuality intersects with race, gender, politics, and space. Through rigorous engagement with foundational texts and contemporary scholarship, students will critically analyze the construction of sexual and gender identities, the politics of queer spaces, and the global and transnational dimensions of queer lives. This course aims to foster advanced analytical skills and contribute to the development of innovative research in sexuality studies.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically analyze the historical development of sexuality studies, including key theoretical contributions from Foucault, Butler, Sedgwick, and other foundational scholars.
- Examine the ways in which sexuality intersects with race, gender, and space, utilizing frameworks such as queer temporality, localities, and enclaves to understand diverse sexual and gendered experiences.
- Engage with contemporary debates around neoliberalism, nation-states, and the co-optation of LGBTQ+ bodies, applying these concepts to analyze political and cultural phenomena.
- Critically assess queer of color critique, diaspora, migration, and transnational frameworks to understand the global dimensions of queer identities and communities.
- Develop original research questions and methodological approaches that contribute to scholarly conversations in sexuality studies, emphasizing intersectionality and social justice.

Required Texts: All course readings will be provided as free .PDFs and will be available at least two weeks in advance in the “modules” tab on Canvas.

Accommodations: If you require any specific accommodations regarding mental and/or physical health, childcare, please contact me as soon as possible.

****Disclaimer**** Syllabus subject to change with ample notice by Dr. Linton.

Course Guidelines

Participation - 30%

Weekly Responses - 50%

Student Presentations - 20%

Total = 100%

Participation and Attendance (30%)

Participation is worth 15% and attendance is worth 15%.

As with any graduate seminar, active participation in class discussions is essential. Do master the weekly readings and arrive prepared to discuss them in detail. The reading workload is heavy: use the power of prioritization, communal note taking and time management to handle this.

Seminar attendance is mandatory; if you must miss a meeting due to illness or personal obligations, please briefly inform me in advance. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a 0 for participation.

We start class promptly. Tardiness is strongly discouraged as it is disruptive to our discussion. Additionally, important announcements are made upon class start time. If you are late more than twice to the seminar, I will open a discussion with you.

Weekly Responses (50%)

For 8 weeks, you will craft a 1,000 word-long response to the assigned readings. These critical commentaries will serve to organize seminar discussion and debate (see guidelines below). Please include at least two discussion questions that clarify how the conceptual framework developed by a given theorist informs our understanding of the co-constitutive relationship between sexuality, race, and place.

In the following weeks, you will have your response due. See "Assignments" Tab for Scheduling Details.

Week Three

Week Four

Week Five

Week Seven

Week Eight

Week Ten

Student Presentations (20%)

For 5 weeks, two-three students will be responsible for leading our weekly meeting. Student presentations are an important part of lecture training. One group might have an uneven number depending on enrollment.

Guidelines for Seminar Presentations and Response Papers

- In your presentations and response papers, do not merely summarize the content of the readings. Rather, reflect critically on the author(s)'s intellectual project, using the following questions:
- What is/are the central question(s) that each text aims to address?
- How is the text structured: what are its theoretical frameworks; methodological approach(es); and disciplinary conventions?
- What kinds of evidence are used to support the text's central arguments, and is this evidence persuasive?
- What are the theoretical and practical implications of the work?
- How do the central formulations of the text relate to issues raised in previous discussions?
- Taken together, what conversation(s) can you trace between the assigned texts? How do these conversations disrupt, challenge, or extend formulations outlined in prior readings?

Grading

Canvas assignments are hard deadlines; if an assignment is due at 11:59pm, 12:00am is considered late. Canvas automatically flags late assignments. Late Policy: You will lose a letter grade each day an assignment is late, up to a 50% grade markdown.

If you are having trouble completing your assignments or have extenuating circumstances, please communicate with me in office hours.

ASU Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS)

If you are registered with SAILS and need specific accommodations for this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

SAILS is the university's main resource for students with disabilities, focusing on access and inclusion in education. To receive accommodations, students must fill out a registration form.

After submitting this form, you will get a confirmation email, and an Accessibility Consultant will reach out to you via your ASU email to set up an initial appointment. This appointment is crucial for determining your eligibility and accommodations.

For any questions before connecting with your consultant, you can reach the SAILS office at (480) 965-1234 or student.accessibility@asu.edu.

ASU Writing and Tutoring Center

The ASU Writing and Tutoring Center provides free tutoring support for enrolled students, both in person and online. Services include subject tutoring for math, business, science, statistics, and engineering; writing assistance at any stage of the writing process; collaborative Supplemental Instruction (SI) study groups for selected courses; specialized graduate tutoring in writing and statistics; and academic skills tutoring covering critical reading, study skills, and note-taking. Additionally, students can access online resources via the center's YouTube channel, Zoom recordings, and handouts. For more information, schedules, or to book an appointment, visit tutoring.asu.edu or call (480) 965-9072.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, cheating on exams, or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students who engage in academic dishonesty should expect to receive a grade of XE.

ASU defines plagiarism as “using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” You can find the student code of conduct at <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct>.

It is considered plagiarism to:

- Self-plagiarize or use entire paragraphs and pages of your own previous papers you have submitted for ASU courses.
- Use distinctive phrases from another source, unless you use quotation marks, identify your source, and give page numbers.
- Use multiple sentences in the same order as another source, even if you identify your source, change words here and there, or move phrases around.

Reading Schedule

UNIT ONE: The History of Sexuality Studies

January 14th: Week One—Introduction to Sexuality Studies

- Introductions, syllabus review, and course overview

January 21st: Week Two—Foundations: Poststructuralism and Feminist Theory

- **Michel Foucault**, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Vintage Books, 1976.
 - We "Other Victorians"
 - The Repressive Hypothesis
 - Chapter 1: The Incitement to Discourse
- **Judith Butler**, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*,
 - Chapter 1: Subjects of Gender, Sex, Desire
 - Chapter 3: Subversive Bodily Activities

January 28th: Week Three— Establishing Queer Temporality

- **Jack Halberstam**, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, New York University Press, 2005.
 - Chapter 1: Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies
 - Chapter 2: The Brandon Archive
 - Chapter 4: The Transgender Look
- **Kathryn Bond Stockton**, *The Queer Child or Growing Sideways in the 20th Century* Duke University Press, 2009.
 - Introduction: Growing Sideways, or Why Children Appear to Get Queerer in the Twentieth Century
 - Chapter 1: The Smart Child is the Masochistic Child
 - Chapter 2: Why the Lesbian Child Requires an Interval of Animal

February 4th: Week Four— Queer Locales and Enclaves

- **Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick**, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, 1990.
 - Introduction: Axiomatic
 - Chapter 1: Epistemology of the Closet
- **Samuel R. Delaney**, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, United States: New York University Press, 1999.
 - Introduction
- **Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis**, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*,
 - To Cover Up the Truth Would Be a Waste of Time
 - “Maybe ‘Cause Things Were Harder, You Had to be More Friendly: Race and Class in the Lesbian Community of the 1950s

UNIT TWO: Neoliberalism and Imperial Co-optation of LGBTQ+ Bodies

February 11th: Week Five—The Body as a Political Geography

- **Janet R. Jakobsen**, “Perverse Justice” in the *Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies (GLQ)* Volume 18 (1): 19–45, 2012.

- **Scott E. Branton and Cristin A. Compton.** “There’s No Such Thing as a Gay Bar: Co-Sexuality and the Neoliberal Branding of Queer Spaces.” *Management communication quarterly* 35, no. 1, 69–95, 2021.
- **Scott Herring,** “Out of the Closets, Into the Woods: RFD, Country Women, and the Post-Stonewall Emergence of Queer Anti-urbanism” in *American Quarterly* Volume 59, Number 2, pp. 341-372, 2007.

February 18th: Week Six—Nation-states and Homonormativity

- **Jasbir Puar,** “Mapping U.S. Homonormativities” in *Gender, Culture, and Place*, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2006.
- **Lisa Duggan.** *The Twilight of Equality? : Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy.* Beacon Press, 2003.
 - Introduction and 1 chapter of your choosing.

February 25th: Week Seven—Latina Feminist Contributions

- **Marcia Ochoa,** *Queen for a Day Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
 - Introduction
 - Chapter 1
 - Chapter 2
- **Gloria Anzaldúa,** *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,*
 - Chapter 1: The Homeland, Aztlán, El Otro México
 - Chapter 3: Entering Into the Serpent
 - Chapter 4: La Herencia de Coatlicue/ the Coatlicue State
 - Chapter 5: How to Tame a Wild Tongue

March 4th: Week Eight—Lesbian Poetry and the Personal is Political

- **Adrienne Rich,** "Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence." *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 15, 1980.
- **Audre Lorde,** *Sister Outsider*, 1983.
- Selections of **Cathy Opie’s** Art

March 11th: Week Nine—No Class Spring Break

UNIT THREE: QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE AND NATIONAL BELONGING

March 18th: Week Ten—Queer of Color Critique

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

March 25th: Week Eleven—Diaspora and Delocalized Place

- Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, Duke University Press, 2005.
- Nayan Shah. "Policing Privacy, Migrants, and the Limits of Freedom." *Social text* 23, no. 3-4: 275–284, 2005. *Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*

April 1st: Week Twelve — Queer Migrations

- **Mary Pat Brady**, "The Fungibility of Borders" in *Nepantla: Views from South* pages 171-190, 2000.
- **Eithne Luibheid, Karma R. Chávez**, et. al, *Queer and Trans Migrations: Dynamics of Illegalization, Detention, and Deportation*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2020.
 - Choose own selections from chapters
- **Melissa Linton-Villafranco**. "Technologies of Care: Transborder Activism in the 2018 Central American Caravan." *Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of MALCS*, Vol. 23 Issue 2: 30-67, 2024.

April 8th: Week Thirteen— A Black History of Trans Identity

- **Riley Snorton**, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

April 15th: Week Fourteen— Queer of Color Critique Part Deux

- **Roderick A. Ferguson**, *One Dimensional Queer*, Yale University Press, 2018.
- **Roderick A. Ferguson**, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
 - Introduction only.

April 22nd: Week Fifteen—Presentations.

April 29th: Week Sixteen—Presentations and End of Class.