

WGST 3100: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

Fall 2025

Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30 AM-10:50 AM

GAB 114

Instructor Information

Dr. Katherine Ritter (she/her)

Office: GAB 119C

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Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

This course introduces students to the deeply generative field of LGBTQ Studies. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer approaches, interrogations, and methodologies each have their own sociopolitical and historical context, with meaningful overlaps and departures between them. The term “queer”, for instance, has a fraught political history. “Queer” has functioned both as a historically derogatory identification of nonnormative sexualities, as well as a reclaimed celebration of self, community, and political affirmation. In this course, we will explore the emergence of LGBTQ Studies as an interdisciplinary field, as well as the underlying analytic frameworks that construct it. We will pay particular attention to the sociopolitical conditions (including counter cultural protest and political organizing) that paved the way for the emergence of queer/LGBTQ studies. We will also tease out the productive overlaps and tensions between queer analytic frameworks and others, such as feminist theory, lesbian and gay studies, and queer of color critique. Finally, we will use art, poetry, and film to deepen our understanding and broaden our conceptualization of queer analytics.

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

- Understand gender and sexuality using the lens of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans studies as well as queer theory and queer of color critique.
- Identify the intersections of various, overlapping forms of oppression, including racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.
- Demonstrate a meaningful understanding of the history of LGBTQ studies’ emergence in the academy, and the connection between this emergence and counter cultural protest and political organizing.
- Demonstrate a familiarity with queer analytic frameworks.
- Identify the productive overlaps and tension between feminist theory and LGBTQ Studies.
- Define and identify the function of normativity.
- Demonstrate a meaningful understanding of power, and the relationship between power and oppression.
- Use writing to build a strong argument.
- Demonstrate a meaningful use of critical thinking skills through evaluation of the evidence, critical reading practices, and reflexive analysis of texts.

COURSE FORMAT:

This class will be a combination of lectures and class discussion. Students can expect that the first half of class each week will be dedicated to a lecture by the instructor on how the materials for class each offer insight into the inquiries, interests, and methodological approaches of scholars, artists, and activists working in the field of LGBTQ Studies. The latter half of class will be dedicated to class-wide discussion in which students will offer their insights into the week's materials and voice any questions or concerns about the course material. Occasionally, students can expect to be partnered up to discuss the course materials in a smaller group before returning to the larger class discussion.

How to Succeed in this Course

The main components required for success in this course are curiosity, respect, and communication. I am always open and available to meet with you to discuss any issues or concerns that may come up over the course of our class. On that note, I find students are more likely to take advantage of office hours if I keep my availability for them flexible, rather than having a fixed office hours, so office hours are by appointment. Simply email me if you have a question or concern you would like to meet to discuss and we will find a time to meet that is convenient.

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Communication Practices:

Connect with me through email and/or by scheduling to meet with me over office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Academic Success Resources:

UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grow. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here's how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. Get hired. To learn more about convenient campus resources and information on how you can prioritize wellness and achieve success with the support of UNT's caring community, go to succeed.unt.edu (<https://succeed.unt.edu/>) and explore wellness.unt.edu (https://wellness.unt.edu).

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Hostilities, specifically in the form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, and any other ad hominem attacks will not be tolerated. Together, we can ensure a welcoming classroom for all. We will at times be dealing with difficult subject matter; I ask that we create a brave, open space together where everyone feels comfortable sharing. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding ([Code of Student Conduct](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012)) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Considerations and Responsibilities

Here are some things to consider as AI programs develop and their use rises. Natural language processing (NLP) applications like ChatGPT or Sudowrite can be tools for helping us improve our writing, communication, and stimulate our thinking. However, they should never serve as a substitute for our own thinking, writing, and communication. And, in our course, they cannot. If you must use one of these apps, think of the help you get from NLP apps as a much less sophisticated version of the assistance you can receive (for free!) from the UNT Writing Center tutor. UNT tutors and coaches might ask questions to jump-start your imagination, steer you away from the passive voice, or identify a poorly organized paragraph, but should never do the writing or thinking for you. Also, important to realize: an NLP app is not a person. It is a machine that is trained to recognize patterns, reorganize them and regurgitate “data” back. It cannot think for itself. And it cannot think for you. With that analogy in mind, we will adhere to the following guidelines in our class. Appropriate use of AI: • You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools (e.g., Grammarly) • You are free to use app recommendations for rephrasing sentences or reorganizing paragraphs you have already drafted: • Using sentences or paragraphs suggested by an app without providing quotation marks and a citation, just as you would to any other source, is plagiarism. If you use ChatGPT to *generate knowledge*, you must cite the information given to you. • You may not have an app write a draft of an entire post or assignment for you. In our class, your insights, and the connections you make are what we need to hear. **ANY** use of AI to generate entire paragraphs or stretches of writing, or to formulate arguments that you then pass off as your own, will be flagged as plagiarism and treated as such.

ALSO ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO NOTE: the devastating environmental impacts related to the development of AI, especially generative AI, cannot be overstated. This is especially pertinent to the themes of our course and will be something we will discuss in class.

Required/Recommended Materials

You are required to acquire one text, novel titled *I Keep My Exoskeletons to Myself* by Marisa Crane. I highly suggest utilizing the library early in the semester to acquire this. All other readings will be provided on Canvas under “Files.”

- All other course reading materials will be available on our Canvas.
- Supplementary materials and/or readings may at times be also offered and shared on Canvas.

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If circumstances change, you will

be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

- Technology requirements for courses with digital materials:

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Course Requirements/Schedule

ALL DATES/ASSIGNMENTS/SCHEDULE COMPONENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points Possible</i>	<i>% of Final Grade</i>
<i>Ongoing</i>	Participation	This portion of your grade is determined by a combination of attendance, consistent and informed participation in class discussion that makes it clear you have attended class prepared and having read that week's readings, and any in-class writing assignments or responses that may be assigned. For every class, you will be expected to bring in 3-4 discussion questions that you are prepared to pose to the larger class based on the readings. Students are allowed two "no questions asked" absences that will not impact your grade. The success of our class hinges on your showing up and participating in class discussion every class that you attend. It is vitally important that you show up. Beyond those two absences, students can expect to see their participation grade impacted.	100	25%

<i>Due</i> <i>Thursday</i> <i>October</i> <i>9th 11:59</i> <i>PM on</i> <i>Canvas</i>	Mid semester writing assignment	More information about this paper is forthcoming, but generally you will be asked to respond to a prompt that I will provide well in advance that will require you to engage with two texts from our course, putting them in conversation with one another, synthesizing their contributions, and making a unique argument about what you understand their interventions in the field of LGBTQ studies to be. This will be a 3-4 page writing assignment that will serve as a way to reflect upon and synthesize the knowledge you have gained at the mid-point of the course. While the assignment will draw on knowledge up until the mid-point of the course (at the end of which the assignment will be due), the prompt will be made available early in the semester so that you have time to prepare in advance.	100	25%
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See course schedule on syllabus for dates	<i>Class Presentations</i>	Over the course of multiple class sessions, each student will present on a novel they have chosen to read that is loosely or closely related to course themes. Students should secure approval on the particular novel they have chosen from Dr. Ritter by 9/25. In their presentations, students will engage the question: what makes a novel queer? Is it the themes/plot points? Character identity? Genre? Form? We will have dedicated class sessions to breaking down and discussing a novel, <i>We Keep Our Exoskeletons to Ourselves</i> , before these presentations and students should expect to utilize knowledge they gained from that class discussion to deconstruct the novels of their own choosing.	100	20%
Due by 11:59 PM December 10 th on Canvas	Final project/paper	We will collaborate together about the form that the final project/assignment will take. I am open to having the final paper/project be a creative interpretation of the themes of the course, including art pieces or a collection of poetry, etc, as well as the option of a traditional final paper. We will discuss this during our first class meeting.	100	30%

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The course calendar is subject to change based on campus closures. See more here: [Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

Assessing Your Work

Please refer to UNT's Academic Integrity Policy and familiarize yourself with the parameters of this policy and follow them diligently for every assignment:

[Academic Integrity Policy \(PDF\) \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

You will be provided with individual rubrics outlining the grading parameters of the midsemester and final assignments as well as the class presentations. Refer to the syllabus for what constitutes your participation grade for this class.

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people's work without citations will be violating UNT's Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Honor Code: "I commit myself to honor, integrity, and responsibility as a student representing the University of North Texas community. I understand and pledge to uphold academic integrity as set forth by [UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, 06.003 \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). I affirm that the work I submit will always be my own, and the support I provide and receive will always be honorable."

Attendance and Participation

*I have great respect for students who are balancing the demands of their coursework with the responsibilities of caring for family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class, please contact me. Students are allowed two "no questions asked" absences that will not impact your grade. **The success of our class hinges on your showing up and contributing consistently and robustly.** It is vitally important that you attend consistently and come to class prepared. Students should expect to push themselves to participate and contribute to our class discussions every class that they attend. Beyond those two absences, students can expect to see their participation grade impacted.*

Because this course involves collaboration, participation is essential to learning. Our project-based activities require you to be actively engaged in discussions and group work. I understand tardiness and absences may occur. If you are late to class, please drop me an email to let me know the circumstances. If you must miss class, please let me know prior to your absence when possible.

CLASS SCHEDULE – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Tuesday August 19th– Class Introductions / Syllabus Overview

Thursday August 21st – Constructions

Judith Lorber, “The social construction of gender” (Canvas)
“The Social Construction of sexuality” (Canvas)
Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I* (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday August 26th- SCHEDULE TBA

Thursday August 28th- SCHEDULE TBA

Tuesday September 2nd- Intersectional approaches

Watch: *Tongues Untied* (Documentary by Marlon Riggs)
<https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b7816328>

Read:
Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, Welfare Queens” (Canvas)
Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins” (Canvas)

Thursday September 4th- Mapping Queer and Trans Theories

Susan Stryker, “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin” (Canvas)
Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein” (Canvas)
Annamarie Jagose (1996), Introduction from *Queer Theory* (Canvas)

Tuesday September 9th- Overlaps and Departures between Queer and Trans Theories of Embodiment

Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity” (Canvas)
Kai Cheng Thom, “This Trans Woman Never Felt ‘Born in the Wrong Body’-And Here’s Why That’s So Beautiful” (link: <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/07/not-born-in-the-wrong-body/>)
Rivera, “Our Armies Are Rising and Getting Stronger” (Canvas)

Thursday September 11th – This Must Be the Place: Rural Queer Geographies

Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers In Rural Queer Studies (Excerpts) (Canvas)
Josh Thompson, Clint Whitten, “Possibilities for Rural Queer Liberation” (Canvas)
Lucas Crawford, “A Good Ol’ Country Time: Does queer rural temporality exist?” (Canvas)

Tuesday September 16th – Theoretical Intimacies

Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (Canvas)

Thursday September 18th- Theoretical Intimacies, continued

Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind" (Canvas)
Monique Wittig, "One is not born a woman" (Canvas)

Tuesday September 23rd – The Intersection of Disability Studies and Queer Theory

Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Thursday September 25th – Queer Thought Beyond Settler Paradigms

Kim TallBear, "'Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Sex and Family'" (Canvas)

Kim TallBear and Angela Willey, "Critical Relationality: Queer, Indigenous, and Multispecies Belonging Beyond Settler Sex and Nature" (Canvas)

Novel approval from Dr. Ritter due by this class period

Tuesday September 30th – Queer and Trans Methodologies

CLASS WILL MEET AT THE TEXAS FASHION COLLECTIVE –

Location: Texas Fashion Collection, 405 S. Welch St, Denton, TX

Meeting point: lobby of the building, accessible through the front door facing Welch Street / the Union Circle Parking Garage

Cifor, "Aligning Bodies: Collecting, Arranging, and Describing Hatred for a Critical Queer Archives" (Canvas)

Rawson, Accessing Transgender // Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics (Canvas)

Thursday October 2nd – Queer and Trans Methodologies, continued

Cetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings* (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday October 7th- The Death (and rebirth?) of the Lesbian Bar: A Case Study

Watch: The Lesbian Bar Project – Documentary on YouTube

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTLsfZk-FpE>

Read:

Baby, You Are My Religion: Women, Gay Bars, and Theology Before Stonewall (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Moby Dyke: An Obsessive Quest to Track Down the Last Remaining Lesbian Bars in America

Thursday October 9th- Queer Food Studies

Readings: "An Ethos With a Bite: Queer Appetites from sex to food" – E Probyn

"Toward a Queer, Crip Feminist Politics of Food" – KQ Hall

Mid semester writing assignment due by 11:59 PM

Tuesday October 14th- Queer Studies Beyond the Human

Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Thursday October 16th- Queer Studies Beyond the Human, continued

Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday October 21st – The Art of the Queer Novel

I Keep My Exoskeletons to Myself – chapters TBA

Thursday October 23rd – The Art of the Queer Novel

I Keep My Exoskeletons to Myself – chapters TBA

Tuesday October 28th- The Art of the Queer Novel

I Keep My Exoskeletons to Myself – chapters TBA

Thursday October 30th- Horror!

It Came From the Closet: Queer Reflections on Horror (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday November 4th- Class Presentations

Thursday November 6th- Class Presentations

Tuesday November 11th – (Out) In the Culture: Queer Representation (and its limits) in Pop Culture

Read:

Raymond, *Popular Culture and Queer Representation: A Critical Perspective* (Canvas)

Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film and Television (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Thursday November 13th – Pop Culture, continued

Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film and Television (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday November 18th- Utopia

Blanco-Fernández, “Thinking the future otherwise: Queer futures and queer utopias” (Canvas)

Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Thursday November 20th- Utopia, continued

Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (Excerpts) (Canvas)

Tuesday November 25th – NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Thursday November 27th- NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Tuesday December 2nd- Towards a Queer and Trans Futurity

Watch:

Janelle Monae's *Dirty Computer*. An Emotion Picture (available on Vimeo)

Readings:

Szaniawska, "Gestural Refusals, Embodied Flights: Janelle Monae's Vision of Black Queer Futurity" (Canvas)

Thursday December 4th- Final Class Reflections and Looking Forward

Final projects due by 11:59 PM, December 10th