

## WGS 303 • Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

**Instructor:** Richey, W. L.  
**Unique #:** 46995  
**Semester:** Fall 2025

**Cross-lists:** N/A  
**Prerequisites:** N/A  
**Computer Instruction:** See class website section

### Description:

The people we today call lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, (LGBTQ) among many other identities (+) are part of a complicated community. Their history extends long before any of those identity labels existed to name their experiences. But even though such labels are new, what is consistent is that gender and sexual minorities have given voice to and worked through their experiences and inner lives in expressive culture—literature, music, movies, video games, visual art, and more.

This course explores concepts of gender and sexuality, race, class, religion, and nation; as well as skills in theory, history, and research methods relevant to LGBTQ studies. The course will also survey the making of modern understandings of sexual and LGBTQ identities in the last one hundred years and the implications of this history for broader understandings of gender and sexuality.

### Texts:

#### Films:

*Paris Is Burning* (dir. Jennie Livingston, 1990), *The Doom Generation* (dir. Gregg Araki, 1993), *I Saw the TV Glow* (dir. Jane Schoenbrun, 2024)

#### Literature:

*Bluets* by Maggie Nelson (2009)

#### Music:

*Dirty Computer* by Janelle Monáe (2018), *Something to Give Each Other* by Troye Sivan (2023), *Brat* by Charli XCX (2024)

#### Video game:

*Gone Home*, developed by The Fullbright Company (2013)

### Requirements & Grading:

#### Entry and Exit Reflections (10%, 5% each)

At the beginning of the semester, in 1-3 double-spaced pages, I will ask you to reflect on your feelings coming into the course.

At the end of the semester, I will ask you to do the same exercise, but reflecting on the ways in which your feelings, beliefs, knowledge, etc., have changed, and what texts you have found most meaningful in the course.

More specific guiding prompts will be offered in-class.

#### Synthesis Paper (20%)

I will ask you to write a short essay (3-5 pages) in which you synthesize two texts of your choice, creating an argument—using specific textual evidence—that puts the two texts into conversation with each other. I will suggest a couple of ideas, but you're always free to choose your own adventure.

#### Research Assignment (20%)

I will ask you to choose between one of two choices:

- A. Revise your synthesis essay into a long essay (7-9 pages) in which you respond to a theme, idea, worry, concern, etc., raised by one or more texts encountered throughout the semester. This essay should incorporate research.
- B. Create an annotated bibliography of at least 8 sources that would be useful to answering a specific research question about a theme, idea, worry, concern, etc., raised by one or more texts encountered in class.

#### Creative Project (20%) + Rationale (5%)

Instead of a large final project, I will ask you to produce a creative work in response to a theme, idea, worry, concern, etc., raised by one or more texts encountered throughout the semester. This creative work will be workshoped in a small group toward the end of the semester, and will be accompanied by a 1 page rationale explaining the purpose of the project and the text(s)/theme(s)/etc. responded to by the project.

Length requirements will depend on the nature of the project.

### Baby Papers/Baby Responses (15%)

Every week, I will ask you to respond to what you are reading. You can adopt one of two approaches and feel free to mix and match:

A. Write at least 300 words exploring your thinking about the text.

B. Make a small, creative response in response to the text. (A drawing, a short poem, a work of flash fiction, a playlist, etc.)

The nature of your response is up to you, but a general prompt across readings would be: How does this text shift, expand, challenge, reorient, affirm, ignore, or enliven your understandings of gender, sexuality, race, minds/bodies, disability, religion, etc.? I welcome your own thoughts, ideas, and experiences, but be sure you are engaging with the text.

All baby papers will be due by Friday at 11:59pm, responding to that week's texts. You may skip two (2) week's baby papers without penalty.

Remember: these are not graded, i.e., I will not deduct points if you get the thesis "wrong." Instead, your journal is a place where you can think through the readings. Try out new positions, experiment with an argument, practice paraphrasing a complicated thesis, and so on. ENGAGE, THINK, PLAY, CONNECT, WONDER, QUESTION!

### Participation (10%)

Your participation is essential in a lot of ways—for your grade, for your enjoyment of the class, and for what you and your peers learn. "Participation" simply means that every time you come to class, you show me that you're engaged in the course and that you're doing the work. Here are some concrete ways you can participate:

- Ask questions. Whatever they are, whenever you have them. There's no better way to show me that you're engaged in the course.
- Share your insights with the class, float your ideas (even if they feel iffy or half-formed), expand upon, disagree with, and celebrate your classmates' contributions.
- Come to office hours. Office hours are a great resource if you have questions or want additional help outside class.

Final grades will be determined on the following scale. Please note: To ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. For example, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.0000 through 83.9999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

A=94-100   A-=90-93   B+=87-89  
B=84-86   B-=80-83   C+=77-79  
C=73-76   C-=70-73   D+=67-69  
D=63-66   D-=60-63   F=0-59

### Attendance Policy

While attendance is not a formal part of your grade, it is mandatory in this course. Please make every effort to attend every day and be on-time.

I will allow you three absences without explanation. Beginning with your fourth unexplained absence, your final grade will diminish by one half-grade. (For example, if you would otherwise have earned an A- but did not explain six Upon your eighth unexplained absence, you will fail the course.

Please do not come to class if you are sick. I will not penalize you. The same applies to serious injuries, religious holy days, jury duty, or school sponsored events. For all cases, you must notify me.

### **Schedule:**

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change as needed. All readings and other homework assignments should be completed in preparation for the day on which they're listed.

Date	Assignment/reading due
Monday, August 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take a look at the syllabus and come with any questions you may have</li><li>• Look through PFLAG National's <a href="#">Glossary of Terms</a> and be prepared to share one term you hadn't heard before or didn't know about</li></ul>

Wednesday, August 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Queer Theory Revisited” by Michael Hames-García (2011)</li> </ul>
Friday, August 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Gay Identity and Its Discontents,” from <i>How to Be Gay</i> by David M. Halperin (2012)</li> <li>• “i love you to the moon &amp;” by Chen Chen</li> </ul>
Sunday, August 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry Reflection due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, September 1	Labor Day: NO CLASS!
Wednesday, September 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Aye, and Gomorrah...” by Samuel R. Delany (1967)</li> <li>• “The Transformation of Silence into Action and Language” by Audre Lorde (1977)</li> <li>• “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” by Audre Lorde (1978)</li> </ul>
Friday, September 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Epistemology of the Closet,” from <i>Epistemology of the Closet</i> by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990)</li> <li>• Baby Paper 1 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, September 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selections from <i>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</i> by Judith Butler (1990)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, September 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sex in Public” by Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1993)</li> </ul>
Friday, September 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Something to Give Each Other</i> by Troye Sivan (2023)</li> <li>• <i>Brat</i> by Charli XCX (2024)</li> <li>• Baby Paper 2 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Is the Rectum a Grave?” by Leo Bersani (1987)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, September 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Unhappy Queers,” from <i>The Promise of Happiness</i> by Sara Ahmed (2010)</li> </ul>
Friday, September 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Brokeback Mountain” by Annie Proulx (1997)</li> </ul> <p>Baby Paper 3 due by 11:59pm</p>
Monday, September 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Future Is Kid Stuff,” from <i>No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive</i> by Lee Edelman (2004)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, September 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Introduction: Feeling Utopia,” from <i>Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity</i> by José Esteban Muñoz (2009)</li> </ul>
Friday, September 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Introduction,” from <i>A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation</i> by Nguyen Tan Hoang (2014)</li> <li>• Baby Paper 4 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, September 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Introduction: Pastness Is a Position,” from <i>There’s a Disco Ball Between Us: A Theory of Black Gay Life</i> by Jafari S. Allen (2021)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, October 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Doom Generation</i>, directed by Gregg Araki (1995)</li> </ul>
Friday, October 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby Paper 5 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, October 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips,” from <i>Feminist, Queer, Crip</i> by Alison Kafer (2013)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, October 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Bloodchild” by Octavia E. Butler (1984)</li> </ul>
Friday, October 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dirty Computer</i> by Janelle Monáe (2018)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesis Essay due by 11:59pm. (NO BABY PAPER THIS WEEK)</li> </ul>
Monday, October 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selections from <i>Females</i> by Andrea Long Chu (2019)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, October 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Paris Is Burning</i>, directed by Jennie Livingston (1990)</li> </ul>
Friday, October 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Is Paris Burning?" by bell hooks (1992)</li> <li>Baby Paper 6 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, October 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Introduction: Homonationalism and Biopolitics" from <i>Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times</i> by Jasbir K. Puar (2007)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I Sexually Identify as an Attack Helicopter" by Isabel Fall (2020)</li> </ul>
Friday, October 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The Queer Art of Failure," from <i>The Queer Art of Failure</i> by Jack Halberstam (2011)</li> <li>Baby Paper 7 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, October 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bluets</i> by Maggie Nelson (2009), pp. 1-32 (propositions 1 through 84)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bluets</i>, pp. 33-63 (propositions 85 through 160)</li> </ul>
Friday, October 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bluets</i>, pp. 64-end</li> <li>Baby Paper 8 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, November 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Trans, Feminism: Or, Reading Like a Depressed Transsexual" by Cameron Awkward-Rich (2017)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, November 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selections from <i>Trans Care</i> by Hil Malatino (2020)</li> </ul>
Friday, November 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I Saw the TV Glow</i>, directed by Jane Schoenbrun (2024)</li> <li>Baby Paper 9 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, November 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>
Wednesday, November 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Let's Call It What It Is: The Tragedy of Heterosexuality" from <i>The Tragedy of Heterosexuality</i> by Jane Ward (2020)</li> </ul>
Friday, November 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Because Change Was the Ocean and We Lived by Her Mercy" by Charlie Jane Anders (2016)</li> <li>Baby Paper 10 due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>
Monday, November 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selections from <i>Times Square Red, Times Square Blue</i> by Samuel R. Delany (1999)</li> </ul>
Wednesday, November 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Introduction: Unspeakably Queer," from <i>Queer Silence: On Disability and Rhetorical Absence</i> (2022) by J. Logan Smilges</li> </ul>
Friday, November 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> <li>Research Essay due by 11:59pm. (NO BABY PAPER THIS WEEK)</li> </ul>
November 24, 26, and 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall Break: no class</li> </ul>

Monday, December 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gone Home</i>, developed by The Fullbright Company</li> </ul>
Wednesday, December 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None: creative project pitches</li> </ul>
Friday, December 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None: creative project pitches</li> </ul>
Monday, December 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>
Monday, December 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit Reflection and Creative Project Due by 11:59pm</li> </ul>

**Policies:**

*Documented Disability Statement:* The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

*Honor Code:* The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

*Academic Integrity:* Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint.php>.

*Religious Holy Days:* By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Web Site:** Canvas, <https://www.canvas.utexas.edu>.