

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS

English 160.01, “Introduction to Studies in Women’s Writing”

STV 219, TR 3:35-4:50 p.m.

“Lesbian, Queer, and Trans Lives and Ideas in Literature, Film, and other Cultural Expressions”

Instructor: Dr. Paula Ressler

Phone: 309-438-7798

Office: 420F STV

Office hours: TR 2:00-3:00, and by appointment.

Overview

In this course we will be inquiring into and exploring a wide range of literature, essays, film, video, and other media related to lesbian, gay, bi, queer, and trans cultures, aesthetics, politics, and history. It is my hope that this course will provide you with some important experience in communicating with multiple audiences about complex ideas and events related to sexual orientation and gender identities and expressions that you will find relevant and that is often misunderstood and sometimes complicated by bias. We will explore how these ideas might influence your own and other people’s ideas and emotions about sexual and gender variation, and multiple intersecting forms of diversity and identity.

Through discussion, writing, various classroom activities, and interacting and engaging with texts and with one another, we will be asking questions and trying to answer questions about the roots of sexual and gender inequality, discrimination, and violence, and learning more about the long-term and often suppressed contributions of lesbian, queer, and trans-identified people to society today and in the past.

In this process, you will not only gain information by reflecting on the ideas embedded in these texts, but will have the experience of creating individual meanings relating these texts to your own lives. You will raise and articulate your own critical questions and ideas and respond to the questions and ideas of your peers, while also referencing texts, through discussion and writing that coherently and logically support your arguments and thinking. In these ways, you will see that there is not one correct way to analyze and understand literature and other written and visual texts, but multiple ways, and that everyone can become knowledgeable enough to play a significant role in creating meaning and making this world safer and more just for all.

Course Requirements

Discussion Participation

You are expected to come to class each day on time, prepared with the reading and writing you were assigned, and are expected to participate actively in all classroom discussions. Although some people are shyer than others, everyone is still responsible for the success of class discussions. We cannot have meaningful and successful discussions without widespread participation and much of what you will be learning this semester will be clarified during discussions based on complex topics.

Assessments and Assignments

Your grade will be determined through timely and thoughtful completion of all reading and writing assignments, and demonstrated preparation for all classes, including participation in small and large group discussions and various in-class learning activities, and attendance.

Class work in this highly interactive course is important and cannot be made up by taking extra tests or handing in extra writing assignments. This class is structured as an intensive and collaborative learning community in which you will be engaged in a considerable amount of group work and in which your voice will be valued. You need to be in class in order to be responsible for your own learning and to maximize the learning of your peers.

Everyone is expected to bring the book or an electronic version of the texts we are reading to class on days the texts will be discussed as well as the assignments you wrote in preparation for class.

Graded Assignments on ReggieNet

You will submit all written assignments on ReggieNet, except for your in-class writings. On ReggieNet, submit your assignment in the text box and also attach as a Word document, using Times New Roman (or equivalent) 12-point type, double-spaced, with approximately 1" margins, and carefully proofread. You are to use MLA format for all references in these assignments.

Directions for your written assignments will be posted on ReggieNet under Assignments or Discussions. Other resources will be posted under ReggieNet Resources and Materials.

Non-Graded Assignments

You will be submitting two to three assignments for which you will not be graded. These assignments will be posted on ReggieNet under Assignments or under Discussions as well. You will have similar guidelines for non-graded assignments as you have for graded assignments. These will not be as long or complex as graded assignments, but I do consider them very important aspects of the course and will contribute to you having as positive a learning experience as possible.

Individual Conferences

I encourage you to meet with me to discuss concerns you have about individual assignments, grades, or any questions or difficulties you are having with the class during my office hours or at another prearranged time. If you do not meet with me, I will assume that everything is going satisfactorily with you and that you are gaining all you can gain from your experience in this class.

Absences and Latenesses

You are entitled to four excused absences, for significant reasons. Two latenesses are the equivalent of one absence. 30 points will be deducted from your grade for each additional absence after four.

Even when absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed from your peers in the class. You will have a contact list from which you will select people to call when you are absent. Do not ask me for what you have missed when absent, unless there is some problem that cannot be clarified by another student. In this way, everyone is responsible for the learning that occurs each day in class, those who are in attendance, and those who cannot be.

Even though attendance is very important in this class, to protect the health of other members of class or people who may have compromised immune systems, please do not attend class or visit the instructor during office hours if your illness is contagious, for example: actively coughing or sneezing.

To deal with this strict attendance policy I recommend that you not let family vacations, work, traffic, or minor discomforts interfere with your attendance. It is very important that you plan your school semester in advance so other obligations will not interfere with your academic work.

Grading and Assessments

Three exams, worth 300 points each

Participation, worth 100 points

Absences/Latenesses (2 latenesses, minus 30 points for each absence over 4.

Non graded assignments: (Although no points will be added for completing non-graded assignments, 100 points will be deducted for non-graded assignments you do not complete.)

- Questionnaire
- Event paper
- Not yet identified

Academic integrity

I expect everyone in the class to behave with integrity and mutual respect, whether disagreeing with one another or me, or in relation to fulfilling academic expectations.

Willful use of someone else's text without citation and presenting the same paper for two different courses without permission from both instructors are breaches of academic ethics. Students who willfully misuse texts without citation or submit the same paper for two courses without permission should expect to fail the paper or, under extreme circumstances, fail the course. Read the section on academic integrity in the ISU Code of Student Conduct at http://www.crr.ilstu.edu/downloads/Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf. For further information on academic integrity, read the Writing Program Administrator's "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices," which can be found at <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>.

Also considered a breach of academic integrity is expecting others to do your work for you, whether as a group member or as an individual. Each person in the class is responsible for doing their own work as well as participating as a responsible member within a group.

Disability Accommodations.

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD), 309-438-7713 (fax), web site, <http://www.disabilityconcerns.ilstu.edu>. Please feel free to discuss with me other reasonable ways in which I can make further accommodations or modifications that will benefit you as a learner, whether or not you have a documented disability.

Student Counseling Services

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) Minor

This course counts for the WGS Minor: The minor in Women's and Gender Studies enhances any undergraduate major by integrating a working knowledge of gender issues with the student's field(s) of study. Women's and Gender Studies employs gender as an analytical category, along with race, sexuality, class, ethnicity, ability, age, nationality, and transnationality to focus on women's contributions to society and the gender implications of cultural, political, and economic processes. The **21 credit hours required for the minor** are drawn from diverse academic disciplines, and are made up of the required courses and electives listed below. To apply please visit: <http://wgs.illinoisstate.edu/academics/undergrad/>

Required Course Texts

Novels and Short Stories:

1. *The Well of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall
2. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, by Audre Lorde
3. *The Collection: Short Fiction from the Transgender Vanguard*, edited by Tom Leger and Riley MacLeod.

Other literature and articles: (no purchase necessary)

Films, video clips, and audio recordings (viewed at home and in class):

1. Radclyffe Hall photos. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B34fyK65dIA>
2. *Paris Was a Woman* (VHS). (75 min.)
3. *Orlando*. YouTube. Movie trailer and excerpts, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFMmMh288pE>. (45 sec.)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmi8zt2FYAk>. (2 min. 1 sec.)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fw6SxyolxQc>. (1 min. 35 sec.)
4. Miss Furr and Miss Skeene, by Gertrude Stein. Audio Recording, (15 min.)
<http://www.gertrudesteinaloud.com/furandskeene.php>.
5. Brick Top. YouTube, 1970, New York. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7-2u2LUyOE>. (not available.)
6. Brick Top. YouTube, 1930s, Paris. <http://riverwalkjazz.org/2012/09/27/a-night-at-bricktop%E2%80%99s-jazz-in-1930s-montmartre/>. (only audio, "Miss Otis Regrets")
7. Josephine Baker video. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ggb_wGTvZoU. (59 min. 2 sec.)
8. *Paragraph 175*. (75 min.). (Milner Library).
9. *Aimée and Jaguar* (126 min.) (Netflix, instant queue).
10. Leslie Feinberg, *Beyond Pink and Blue*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaRF0Ohb1mg>. (1 hr., 8 min., 4 sec.)

11. *Transgender Basics*: Youtube. (19 min. 27 sec.), Trans Identity Project. New York City LGBT Community Center. Gender Identity Project, Center CARE.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXI9w0PbBXY>.
12. Transgender marriage equality video, (5 min. 46 sec.) <http://www.upworthy.com/some-couples-you-just-dont-mess-with-especially-not-right-before-their-20th-wedding-anniversary-8>