

Queer American Literature
Spring 2013
Professor A. Soltysik
Anthropole 3068
Moodle Key: QueerAmerica13

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Syllabus: Queer American Literature

Feb. 19: Theoretical and historical introduction to queer theory

Feb. 26: Queer Desire Before the Invention of the Homosexual
Queer Theory, Introduction and Chapter Two, Whitman, “Calamus,” *Leaves of Grass* (1860)

March 5: Lesbians and the Poetics of Invisibility:
Terry Castle, “Polemical introduction” & Dickinson, poems, & Kate Chopin, short story

March 12: Ambiguity & Victorian Closets: Henry James, “The Figure in the Carpet” (1896)(especially chapters I through IV, and XI) & Sedgwick, “Epistemology of the Closet” (1990)

Recommended but not required background reading: Hugh Stevens, “Queer Henry *In the Cage*”

March 19: Modernism & the Poetics of Opacity
Sedgwick and “Axiomatic,” part 1, Melville, excerpts

March 26: Modernism and the Poetics of Opacity
Sedgwick and “Axiomatic” part 2 & Gertrude Stein, excerpt from *Tender Buttons* (1914) & Hart Crane, selected poems (1930s);

Easter Break

April 9: Reading Week & Film *Celluloid Closet*

The Poetics of Shame

April 16: Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* (1956) & Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” from *The Gay and Lesbian Studies Reader*

April 23: James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*

Recommended background text: Jonathan Dollimore, “Different Desires: Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide”

Background film: *Brother to Brother*

April 30: The Queer Beats: Burroughs and Ginsberg

May 7: Ann Aldrich, *We Walk Alone* (1955) & lesbian pulp fiction

Background film (optional): *The Children’s Hour*

May 14: The Counterculture of Gay Liberation:

Mark Crowley, *Boys in the Band* (1968)

Film of *Boys in the Band* (1970)

May 21: 1970s & 80s Lesbian Feminism:

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality" & Gloria Anzaldua, excerpts from *Borderlands/La Frontera* & lesbian S&M, excerpts from SAMOIS's *Coming to Power*
Background films: *Cruising*, *Brother to Brother*

May 28: Presentation of final essay projects

Films we need to watch together: *The Celluloid Closet*, *Boys in the Band* (optional: Billy Budd, *The Children's Hour*, *Cruising*, *Desert Hearts*, *Brother to Brother*)

Course Requirements:

1. regular attendance
2. active participation in discussions
3. take-home written midterm
4. oral presentation or group discussion animation (see below for topics)
5. final essay: 12-15 pages, due May 28, or end of June;

Oral reports:

A 10-15 minute presentation on a specific topic, providing critical background information and raising pertinent questions for class discussion OR leading a group discussion on the assigned text (this will depend on class size).

March 12: Henry James and/or Oscar Wilde (and the criminal sex trials of the 1980s)

March 19: Sedgwick and/or Melville

April 2: Melville & *Billy Budd*

April 9: group discussions

April 16: Butler and/or Baldwin

April 23: the Dollimore article + group discussions

April 30: William Burroughs or Allen Ginsberg + group discussions

May 7: 50's lesbian pulp fiction + group discussions

May 14: Stonewall and/or *Boys in the Band* (play and/film) OR the aesthetics of camp

May 21: Rich and/or Anzaldua

Course Material: The following book is available at Basta! (1st floor Anthropole): *Giovanni's Room*. Everything else will be on Moodle.

Bibliography:

Butler, Judith. "From Interiority to Gender Performatives." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. Ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Barale, David Halperin. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Castle, Terry. "Polemical Introduction." *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.

Creech, James. "From Kitsch Attribution to Camp Recognition." *Closet Writing/Gay Reading: The Case of Melville's Pierre*. Chicago & London: Chicago UP, 1993.

Interesting differentiation of camp from kitsch in the context of queer hermeneutics.

Dollimore, Jonathan. "Different Desires: Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. Ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Barale, David Halperin. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality* Volume One (1976). Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "Axiomatic" and "The Epistemology of the Closet," *The Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990.

Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: NYUP, 2003. A good introduction to queer theory. Available at the UNIGE library through interlibrary loan.

Summers, Claude J. *Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995.

Yagose, Annamarie. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. New York: NYUP, 1996.
An excellent introduction to queer theory and the primary textbook for the class. On Moodle.

Yingling, Thomas. "Homosexuality and the Matter of Style." *Hart Crane and the Homosexual Text*. Chicago & London: U of Chicago P, 1990.

NB: A course on "Approches *queer* et cinéma" is being offered this semester by Charles-Antoine Courcoux and could be an excellent complement to this course for students particularly interested in cinema.

« Approches queer et cinéma »
Cours MA – Histoire et société
Semestre de printemps 2013
Enseignant : Charles-Antoine Courcoux
Section d'histoire et esthétique du cinéma
Université de Lausanne (UNIL)
Unithèque, salle 4215, jeudi, 15h-17h

Approches queer et cinéma

Ce cours-séminaire débutera par une exploration de plusieurs textes fondateurs des théories et approches queer (Teresa de Lauretis, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, etc.) en vue d'appréhender les concepts, les objets, les problématiques et les méthodes relatifs à cette perspective de recherche ainsi qu'aux pratiques militantes qui lui sont liées. L'enseignement se déploiera ensuite autour de l'analyse de ce qui sera considéré initialement comme deux corpus de réalisations distincts. On s'attachera en effet d'abord à « queeriser » – c'est-à-dire à pervertir par leur (re)lecture – un certain nombre de productions en provenance, pour la plupart, du cinéma classique hollywoodien, telles que *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *The Women* (1939), *Citizen Kane* (1941) ou *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). Au gré de cette entreprise, on sera progressivement conduit à se pencher sur des films dans lesquels la perturbation des conceptions dominantes de genre et de la sexualité ainsi que les enjeux politiques qui leurs sont attachés ne s'inscrivent plus seulement de façon symptomatique, mais sont thématiques voire problématisées par le texte filmique. Cette seconde partie, qui inclura l'étude de *Batman Forever* (1995), *Psycho* (1998), *Boys don't Cry* (1999), *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) et *I Love You Phillip Morris* (2010), sera propice à l'engagement d'une réflexion sur les chevauchements entre les deux corpus de films, sur les enjeux de savoir et de pouvoir qui les

traversent ainsi que sur le potentiel épistémologique radical des théories et approches queer. Cet enseignement peut être utilement complété par le suivi du cours American Literature : Queer American Literature, dispensé durant le même semestre par Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet au Département d'anglais, le mardi de 13h à 15h (Anthropole, 3068).