

CWEL_52500

Queer Cinema

Thursdays 9am-12pm

Instructor Chun-Chi Wang

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-3pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an in-depth examination of LGBTQ+ film from early examples of coded imagery to more current representations across different genres in wide range of historical and cultural contexts. It begins with an investigation of how mainstream cinema has led to the problematic typification of LGBTQ people. It then proceeds to an exploration of strategies and modes of address of queer representation used in specific communities, cultures, and movements that challenge heteronormativity as well as the attempt to homogenize LGBTQ experiences. Through a combination of lectures, screenings, and group discussions, students will engage with the critical debates surrounding queer representation in film, including issues of stereotypes, visibility, performativity/authenticity, and postcoloniality. By the end of the course, students will have a thorough understanding of the ways in which queer identities have been represented in film and the cultural, historical, and political factors that have shaped these representations. They will also have the critical tools necessary to analyze these representations, as well as an appreciation for the rich history and diversity of LGBTQ+ representation in film.

MAIN TEXT

1. [Course Reader](#) in google drive.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation (15%):** Regular attendance and active, respectful participation. More than three absences, including from, are likely to affect your grade.
2. **Responses (20%):** Throughout this semester, students must complete a variety of responses: 1) a comment AND a discussion question to a required reading AND the shown film if applicable, 2) a response to at least one other student's discussion question, and 3) a response to the final paper projects of other students.

We will use a private Facebook group as the space for discussion. It is highly recommended that your response follows the instruction below:

- a brief paragraph of substantive critical opinion on the chosen reading or a specific shot/scene/sequence of the shown film.

- The discussion question should be text-specific, meaning that it needs to be asked in a way that encourages conversation that can only be answered by thoroughly engaging and analyzing the text and the author's intentions. Leave clarification questions like "I did not understand what the author meant by ..." or "What is...?" to the verbal discussion in class.

Feel free to include an image, a link, or a video clip if that helps you to get your point across.

3. **Discussion leader (15%):** In a group of 2-3, students will be in charge of preparing and leading a class discussion. The designated group will do a brief introduction to the discussed film and initiate the discussion, linking it with one or more assigned readings. Use the important points and questions that your classmates brought up in our Facebook discussion group to start a conversation about the text. It can be helpful to find a clip to show in class, but the clips should be limited to 3 minutes.
4. **Final paper proposal and presentation (15%):** Each student will do a 10-min presentation on their final project, and a 300-word term paper proposal that includes a topic, a working title, and a clear idea of what you want to do with the paper needs to be submitted on the day of your presentation.
5. **A final research paper (35%):** Undergrads have to turn in a five-page paper (typed, double-spaced, 12pt, Calibri) with a list of sources, and grad students have to turn in an eight-page paper. The final paper is due on 12pm, June 16.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(*Note: most films will be discussed the week after the screenings, and all readings will be due for the week they are listed)

Week 1 (02/16) Course Introduction

1. Anneke Smelik, "Gay and Lesbian Criticism," in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, pp.135-146.
2. (supplementary) Robin Wood, "Responsibilities of a Gay Film Critic" in Bill Nichols ed., *Movies and Methods Volume II*, pp. 649-660.

Week2 (02/23) What is homosexuality?

1. Annamarie Jagose, "Theorizing Same-Sex Desire" in *Queer Theory: An Introduction*, pp. 7-21.
2. Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality: A Reader*, 143-178.
3. (supplementary): Michel Foucault, "The Repressive Hypothesis" in *History of Sexuality Volume 1*, pp. 1-50

Week 3 (03/02): Stereotypes

1. Stuart Hall “The Spectacle of the Other” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, pp. 223-290.
2. Richard Dyer, “The Role of Stereotypes” in *The Matter of Images*, pp. 11-18.

Week 4 (03/09) Lesbian Stereotypes in Film (the class will run overtime until 12:30pm)

1. Richard Dyer, “Seen to be Believed” in *The Matter of Images*, pp. 19-51.
2. Michele Eliason, Carol Donelan & Carla Randall. “Lesbian stereotypes.” *Health Care for Women International*, 13:2 (1992), pp. 131-144.

Screening: *The Killing of Sister George* (Robert Aldrich, 1968, 138 min)

Week 5 (03/16) (Anti-)stereotypes of Gay Men in Film (Leading discussion on *The Killing of Sister George*)

1. Richard Dyer, “Coming out as going in: the image of the homosexual as a say young man” in *The Matter of Images*, pp. 73-92.
2. Chris Berry, “Happy Alone? Sad Young Men in East Asian Gay Cinema.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 39:3-4 (2000). pp. 187-200.

Screening: 《愛情萬歲》 (*Vive l'Amour*, 蔡明亮, 1994, 105min)

Week 6 (03/23) Gay Underground Cinema (Leading discussion on *Vive l'Amour*)

1. Richard Dyer, “Underground and After” in *Now You See It*, pp. 109-168.
2. Janet Staiger, “Finding Community in the Early 1960s: Underground Cinema and Sexual Politics” in *Queer Cinema*, pp. 167-88.

Screening: *Un chant d'amour* a.k.a. *A Song of Love* (Jean Genet, 1950), *Firework* (Kenneth Anger, 1947, 14 min) or *Scorpion Rising* (Kenneth Anger, 1964, 28 min)

Week 7 (03/30) Lesbian Experimental Filmmaking after Stonewall: Barbara Hammer (Leading discussion on *gay underground cinema*)

1. Richard Dyer, “Lesbian/woman: Lesbian Cultural Feminist Film” in *Now You See It*, pp. 169-200
2. Sarah Keller, “Feminist Iconography and Queer Aesthetics” in *The Oxford Handbook of Queer Cinema*, 2021.
3. Barbara Hammer, “The Politics of Abstraction” in *Queer Looks*, pp. 70-75.

Screening: Works by Barbara Hammer from 1974-1978 (about 1hr)

**Week 8 (04/06) The Issue of Authorship: Dorothy Arzner
(Leading discussion on works by Barbara Hammer)**

1. Richard Dyer, "Believing in Fairies: The Author and the Homosexual" in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, pp. 185-200.
2. Judith Mayne, "A Parallax View of Lesbian Authorship" from *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, pp.173-184.
3. Andy Medhurst, "That special thrill: Brief Encounter, homosexuality and authorship." *Screen*, 32/2 (1991): 197–208.

Clips: *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935) and *Christopher Strong* (Dorothy Arzner, 1933)

Week 9 (04/13) Reading Against the Grain

1. Alexander Doty, "There's Something Queer" in *Out in Culture*, pp. 71-90
2. Judith Mayne, "The Critical Audience" in *Cinema and Spectatorship*, pp. 157-173.
3. Alexander Doty, "Whose Text Is It Anyway? Queer Cultures, Queer Auteurs, and Queer Authorship" from *Making Things Perfectly Queer*, pp.17-38

Home Viewing: [The Celluloid Closet](#) (Rob Epstein and Jeffery Friedman, 1995)

Week 10 (04/20) Camp I

(Leading discussion on *The Celluloid Closet*)

1. Jack Babuscio, "Camp and the Gay Sensibility" in *Gays and Film*, pp. 40-57
2. Sontag, "Notes on Camp" in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, pp. 53-65;
3. Mark Booth, "Campe-Toi! Origins & Definitions" in *Camp*, pp. 11-41.

Week 11 (04/27) Camp II

Screening: *Mommie Dearest* (Frank Perry, 1981, 129 min)
(supplement) [Dottie Gets Spanked](#) (Todd Haynes, 1993)

Week 12 (05/04) From Gays and Lesbians to Queer

(Leading discussion on *Mommie Dearest*)

1. Annamarie Jagose, "Limits of Identity" and "Queer" in *Queer Theory: An Introduction*, pp. 58-100.
2. Teresa De Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities: An Introduction." *Differences* 3:2 (1991): iii-xviii.
3. Eve Sedgwick, "The Epistemology of the Closet" in *Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 67-90.
4. Judith Butler, "Critically Queer." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1.1 (1993): 17–32.

Week 13 (05/11) New Queer Cinema

1. B. Ruby Rich, "The New Queer Cinema" in *Queer Cinema*, pp. 53-60
2. Monica B. Pearl, "AIDS and New Queer Cinema" in *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*, pp. 23-38.

**4 final paper presentations

Week 14 (05/18) New Queer Cinema from Queer of Color II

1. José Muñoz, "Performing Disidentity: Disidentification as a Practice of Freedom," in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and Performance of Politics*, pp. 1-36.
2. Roderick A. Ferguson, "Introduction: Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology" in *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, pp.1-30.

Home Viewing: [Watermelon Women](#) (Cheryl Dunye, 1995, 90 min)

**3 final paper presentations

Week 15 (05/25) Challenging Western Epistemology of LGBTQ (Leading Discussion on *Watermelon Women*)

1. Niamh N. Mhaolieoin, "The Ironic Gay Spectator: The Impacts of Centering Western Subjects in International LGBT Rights Campaigns." *Sexualities* 22: 1-2 (2017): 148-164.
2. Alexander Stoffel, "The Dialectic of the International: Elaborating the Historical Materialism of the Gay Liberationists." *International Studies Quarterly* 66:3 (2022): pp. 1-12.
3. Hwa-Jen Tsai, "Queerly, Hopelessly, Precariously: Reimagining a Queer Politics of Globalization through Three Taiwanese Films" in *The Oxford Handbook of Queer Cinema*, pp. 698-719.

**3 final paper presentations

Week 16 (06/01) Queer Cinema Now

1. B. Ruby Rich, "After the new queer cinema: intersectionality vs. Fascism" in *The Oxford Handbook of Queer Cinema*, pp. 3-14.
2. Teresa De Lauretis, "Queer Texts, Bad Habits and the Issue of a Future." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 17:2-3 (2011), pp. 243-263.

Week 17 (06/09) Self-study

Week 18 (06/16) Final paper due