**Florida Atlantic University**

**Department of EnglishLIT 4842**

**LGBTQ+ Literatures**

**(3 Credits)**

**Spring 2018**

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**Office hours:** T R 12:30-2:00, W 12:00-2:00 *and by appointment*

**Meeting times:** T R 11:00-12:20 **Room:** ED 116

**Course Description:**

Following the Supreme Court’s landmark ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the LGBT rights movement in the U.S. lost its principal organizing issue in finally achieving recognition of the right to marry for same-sex couples. As people have “come out” and/or “come around” on the issue of the rights of LGBT communities, queerness has been quickly integrated into popular culture suggesting that much like the question of gay marriage, certain questions about queerness have been settled. That is, at a time of *RuPaul’s Drag Race* and *Moonlight*, it seems like the queer community, and by consequence queerness, has arrived! However, as cultural critic José Esteban Muñoz warns us, “Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer” (*Cruising Utopia*, 2009, 1). Queerness, in this context, is more than a sexual identity or a way of desiring. Queerness is, more broadly, an imaginative mode that allows us to reconsider what we are allowed to say, how we are allowed to perform, and who we are allowed to be in ever-changing social, legal, and cultural landscapes. This course will explore how LGBTQ writers and visual artists have imagined sexuality and the spaces than account for queer people’s experiences in the U.S.

In this course we will map out a dominant narrative of the development of queer culture in the U.S. to set alongside literary works that will challenge us to reimagine queer cultural work as concerned with not only sexuality, but also race, gender, and class. We will complicate the narratives offered by now canonical queer films (*Paris is Burning*, *How to Survive a Plague*, and *Boys Don’t Cry*) and contemporary television (*RuPaul’s Drag Race*, *Looking*) by considering how narratives by women, working class people, and/or communities of color imagine an investment or divestment in mainstream LGBTQ advocacy and culture. This course will, then, consider not only the place of LGBTQ writers in a broader literary tradition but also allow us to reimagine how we tell the story of the emergence of queerness in U.S. popular discourse and what new imaginative possibilities queerness might afford us in a contemporary time and place.

**Catalog Description:**

An introduction to literature by and/or about LGBTQ people as well as cultural events/movements/histories that have informed the emergence and establishment of a queer literary tradition. Topics, national traditions, and/or chronological period may vary.

**Required Texts:**

Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina*. (1996). New York: Penguin, 2012.

Baldwin, James. *Giovanni’s Room*. (1956). New York: Vintage, 2013.

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home*. Boston: Mariner, 2007.

Lemus, Felicia Luna. *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties*. New York: Ferrar, Straus, & Giroux , 2003.

Nava, Michael. *The Death of Friends*. New York: Bantam, 1996.

González, Rigoberto. *Crossing Vines*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 2003.

All other required texts will be made available through our course site.

**Course Objectives:**

* Students will learn and engage with the literary and cultural history of queer people in the U.S.
* Students will develop the necessary competencies to address questions about race, class, gender, and sexuality in contemporary cultural discourse.
* Students will learn about various LGBT literary traditions that inform contemporary affairs.
* Students will be asked to evaluate their own sense of audience as their writing engages with a diverse array of literary texts.

**Course Requirements:**

* **Readings:** Our in-class discussion and activities will be centered on critically engaging with the texts (both written and visual) we read and view. Our reading load for this class will be appropriate to a 4000-level course and each student is expected to come to class having completed all of the reading assigned for a particular class session.
* **Preparation and Participation:** Since the active engagement of each individual is integral to a dynamic learning environment, it is imperative that you come to class each day having completed all assigned tasks and ready to participate in any in-class activities and discussions.
* **Conferences:** You are strongly encouraged to attend conferences with me at least two times during the semester. These are to check in and discuss any questions about your performance in the class and/or writing assignments. I will let you choose when you will meet with me, but I suggest you meet with me once before and once after midterm.
* **Peer-Review Sessions:** Before turning in your final paper, we will have a writing workshop and two peer review session. The writing workshop will allow us to speak about the expectations, sourcing of texts, and methodological approaches to the project. The peer-review session will allow you to get feedback on your writing from your peers and follow-up on any questions you might have about your research project.

**Grading Policy:**

* **Participation:** You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all assigned readings. The success of our class will depend on your ability to engage in conversation both in class and through your writing outside of class. Your active engagement, in-class writing, and attendance will all be considered to formulate a grade for participation. This will account for **20%** of your grade.
* **Group Presentation:** Throughout the semester, you will be responsible (along with a few of your peers) for a presentation on the course material we will cover in class that day. The presentation will be approximately 15 minutes in length with some additional time for questions from the audience. The purpose of the presentations is not to overview the material, per se, but to help guide the conversation and bring your interests to the forefront of our class discussion. This will account for **20%** of your grade.
* **Reading Responses:** You will be responsible for 5 one-page-length (double spaced) reading responses throughout the semester. This will account for **10%** of your grade.
* **Proposal and Annotated Bibliography:** Half way through the semester, you will be required to submit an annotated bibliography. I will offer you an assignment sheet with guidelines for the project. This will include at least 5 reliable secondary sources, each of which will be accompanied by a page-length (double-spaced) annotation that includes: bibliographical entry, thesis of the source, brief description of the argument, and a discussion of how this source will be valuable or useful to your final project. Importantly, this will also include a 2-page introduction to your essay/argument. The critical context can be of a methodology of your choice (historical, theoretical, or cultural, etc.). This will account for **25%** of your grade.
* **Final Paper:** As part of your work in the class, you will produce a final paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced). I will offer you a broad guiding prompt later in the semester. However, you are free and encouraged to deviate from the prompt and follow your own area of interest as long as it speaks to the theoretical and/or primary texts we cover in the course. If you decide to take on a writing project outside of the parameters of the prompt, please come speak with me so we can work through your ideas and create parameters for the assignment together. This will account for **25%** of your grade.

**Grade Scale**

Florida Atlantic University follows a plus/minus (+/-) grading system. Numeric values for this course are as follow:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D | F |
| 93-100 | 90-92 | 87-89 | 83-86 | 80-82 | 77-79 | 73-76 | 70-72 | 60-69 | 0-59 |

**Course Policies:**

**Disability policy statement:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center:** Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to http://www.fau,edu/counseling/

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed 3 without any reduction in the student’s final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

You are expected to attend all class meetings.You will be allowed *two* absences. Any absences beyond that will affect your grade by a letter grade (for example, dropping from an A to an A-). If an emergency arises, please email me *in advance of our class meeting*, and we will arrange to meet to cover any material discussed in class. I will do my best to accommodate to absences due to unforeseeable emergencies. After three absences (excused or unexcused), however, I reserve the right to meet with you to discuss the viability of your continued enrollment in the course. Please come and speak with me about your absences before you think they have become an issue.

**Respect in the Classroom:** Every student has the right to a safe and comfortable learning environment. The issues raised during our class discussions will sometimes be complex and politically charged, and you may have strong feelings about them. In order to create an intellectual safe space, we must each commit ourselves to being respectful in our disagreements and to turning these into productive conversations through which we might all gain a more complex understanding of the topics at hand.

**Code of Academic Integrity policy statement:** Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001. <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf>

**Calendar**

**Week 1**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 01/09 | * Introductions * Syllabus Overview * Introduction to *Paris is Burning* (film) |
| 01/11 | * *Paris is Burning* (film) |

**Week 2**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 01/16 | * Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* |
| 01/18 | * Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* |

**Week 3**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 01/23 | * Nava, *The Death of Friends* |
| 01/25 | * Nava, *The Death of Friends* * **Response 1 Due** * **Presentation: Group 1** |

**Week 4**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 01/30 | * Nava, *The Death of Friends* |
| 02/01 | * *How to Survive a Plague* (film) |

**Week 5**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 02/06 | * *How to Survive a Plague* (film) * **Response 2 Due** * **Presentation: Group 2** |
| 02/08 | * Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* |

**Week 6**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 02/13 | * Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* * **Response 3 Due** * **Presentation: Group 3** |
| 02/15 | * Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* |

**Week 7**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 02/20 | * *Boys Don’t Cry* (film) |
| 02/22 | * *Boys Don’t Cry* (film) |

**Week 8**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 02/27 | * Gonzalez, *Crossing Vines* * **Response 4 Due** * **Presentation: Group 4** |
| 03/01 | * Gonzalez, *Crossing Vines* * **Annotated Bibliography Due** |

**Week 9**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 03/06 | **SPRING BREAK** |
| 03/08 | **SPRING BREAK** |

**Week 10**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 03/13 | * Gonzalez, *Crossing Vines* |
| 03/15 | * Select episode of *Looking* |

**Week 11**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 03/20 | * Bechdel, *Fun Home* |
| 03/22 | * Bechdel, *Fun Home* |

**Week 12**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 03/27 | * Bechdel, *Fun Home* * **Response 5 Due** * **Presentation: Group 5** |
| 0329 | * Bechdel, *Fun Home* |

**Week 13**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 04/03 | * Select episode of *RuPaul’s Drag Race* |
| 04/05 | * **Class will have online assignment. Professor will be out of town for a conference.** |

**Week 14**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 04/10 | * Lemus, *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* |
| 04/12 | * Lemus, *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* * **Response 6 Due** * **Presentation: Group 6** |

**Week 15**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 04/17 | * Lemus, *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* |
| 04/19 | * Lemus, *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* |

**Week 16**

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| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 04/24 | **READING DAY** |
| 04/26 | **FINALS WEEK** |

**Week 17**

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| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Readings** |
| 05/01 | **FINALS WEEK**  **Final Paper Due** |