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WGS 4310-001: Queer Theories

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Eastern Illinois University

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WGS 4310 Queer Theories
Sect. 001, CRN 36538
Dr. Jeannie Ludlow
Spring, 2021
Hybrid course: D2L plus in-person
T 2-3:15 p.m. in CH 3290
R 2-3:15 p.m. via [Zoom](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Do not use Internet Explorer with D2L. I use Safari, Chrome, and Firefox with no problems. If you need additional software and/or network security access, please check the Panthertech page for free downloads: <https://www.eiu.edu/panthertech/software.php>

Office: Coleman 3139 **Mailbox:** English, CH 3155

EMAIL POLICY: Please send all course-related email to me via D2L (add hotlink <https://online.eiu.edu/d2l/lms/email/frame.d2l?ou=181569>) If you email me on D2L (rather than on panthermail), I am more likely to see your email quickly and respond to it right away. Watch your D2L email for my response. **Please note:** if you are for some reason unable to access D2L or D2L email, please do use Panthermail. I will get back with you in a timely manner.

Response time policy, email: If you email me during my posted office hours, you will receive a response very quickly—usually within a few minutes. I check our course D2L site for postings and emails every work day (Mon.-Fri.), at least three times per day between 8 am and 6:30 pm. I will respond to weekend emails on Monday.

For emergencies: If you need to reach me immediately during the work-day (8 am-4 pm, M-F), please call the English Dept. main office (217-581-2428) and leave a message; they will track me down.

Office Hours: T 4:30-6:30; W 2:30-4:30; R 11:30-1 All office hours will meet on D2L Zoom; please log in to D2L to access the Zoom room. If you prefer, I can also arrange to meet with you on Collaborate Ultra, Skype, Google Hangout, FaceTime, Teams, or via telephone call. If you wish to record our office hours conversation, please let me know. I will ensure that this is possible for you.

Catalog description: This course introduces students to queer theories, which explore how genders, sexualities, social practices, and even ways of making knowledge come to be considered “deviant” or “non-normative.” This interdisciplinary course will consider the intersections between queer theories and other theories, such as critical race theory, feminist theories, disability studies, and other critical theories.

Description: This senior capstone course provides an overview of the trajectory of 20th-21st century queer theories and methodologies and the history behind them, paying particular attention to the ways queer knowledges and perspectives intersect with and transform progressive analyses of sexism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, racism/ethnocentrism, classism, and settler colonization.

Course Format and Expectations: This is a seminar course, which by definition means that it is student-centered and student-driven. It is my educational philosophy that each of us is responsible for our own education; the role of the professor is not so much to profess as to guide and facilitate the learning process. I do not tell students what to think. Therefore, it is expected that students will come to class sessions or complete online assignments fully prepared to engage in discussions, activities, etc., that revolve around the assigned materials. I am a feminist professor and this is a feminist course, which means that the course content and teaching are based in a particular political perspective. It is, however, never expected that students will unquestioningly agree with (or even completely understand) materials assigned for class. Critical thinking and articulation of disagreements and difficulties are encouraged.

Course Learning Objectives—at the end of WGS 4310 you should be able to:

a) Articulate a nuanced understanding of the terms “queer” and “queer theory”—one that takes into account the cultural and historical nature of these concepts and that consider the ways in which these terms are contested.

- b) Apply queer theory to analyze how power, privilege, and oppression shape institutions, cultural artifacts, historical events, and/or disciplines.
- c) Use queer theories to articulate how genders, sexualities, social practices, and even ways of making knowledge come to be considered "deviant" or "non-normative."
- d) Articulate intersections among queer theories and other social-cultural theories that highlight and critique power, marginality, privilege, and normativity (e.g., critical race theory, feminist theories, disability studies, Marxism).
- e) Engage in informed advocacy that enacts one or more theories learned during the semester.
- f) Demonstrate an ability to write and speak knowledgeably and effectively about queer theory.

Special circumstances: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact EIU's Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible. If you need COVID-specific accommodations, please also contact SDS. In either case, and/or if you require assistance with that or any other circumstance that arises, please contact me immediately, so we can work out a good plan of action together. **If you wish to record an individual or group meeting or a class session, please do let me know. I will help you make this happen.**

Tech Support: Please know that, although I want to support you as much as I can, I am not your best resource for technical difficulties. Certainly, let me know what you are struggling with. In addition to letting me know, try these: a) for problems with **EIU.edu**, including being able to log in to D2L, contact EIU User Services—you can contact them via phone at 217-581-4357, email at support@eiu.edu, or on the web at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu>; b) for problems with **D2L**, contact Brightspace support—you can contact them via phone (1-877-325-7778), email, LiveChat, or the Brightspace Help link, all available in the bottom right-hand corner of your D2L homepage. Of course, if you have questions about the course content or assignments, you should ask me.

EIU Student Support Services: If you struggle with reading (or remembering what you read), notetaking, test-taking, time management/procrastination or other aspects of academic success, check out EIU's **Student Success Center**. Call for an online appt.: 217-581-6696. If writing (or, at least, academic writing) just isn't your superpower, take your assignment and drafts to an online session with EIU's **Writing Center**—the folks there can help you shine up your argument and polish your words until your essay is sharp and clear. Go to <https://www.eiu.edu/writing/> to learn more and/or book an appointment. If you have to confront academic anxiety, addiction, grief, depression, or other mental health struggles, please do call EIU's **Counseling Clinic** for a remote appointment—217-581-3413. Go to <https://www.eiu.edu/counscstr/> for more information. These are all wonderful resources for students who need support—and your student fees have already paid for it, so your appointments will be no charge. All services at the Counseling Clinic and Disability Services are completely confidential. If you feel unwell, please call your medical care provider or EIU's **Medical Clinic**: 217-581-3013.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID, REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU HAVE YOUR TEST, PLEASE CALL EIU'S MEDICAL CLINIC: 217-581-3013. This is campus policy. Failure to call and report your positive test may result in disciplinary action or removal from campus.

Materials needed:

PLEASE NOTE: You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. Two required texts for this course are available from Textbook Rental. Several required readings will also be available only via D2L. REQUIRED TEXTS from TRS

Hall and Jagose with Bebell and Potter, eds., *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, 2013

Barker and Scheele, *Queer: A Graphic History*, 2016.

Other Requirements:

A good academic-level dictionary. The [Oxford English Dictionary](#) is the best (available to you for free via Booth Library's homepage). I also like www.onelook.com.

You will need regular access to a computer and email and the ability to use D2L. If you need help with this, let me know right away. Please remember not to use Internet Explorer with D2L. If you need additional software and/or network security access, please go here for free downloads:

<https://www.eiu.edu/panthertech/software.php> If you experience temporary technical difficulties (e.g., your home internet goes down for a day when an assignment is due, or your computer breaks), **please do not panic**. This is not an emergency. Just let me know what has happened as soon as is reasonable for you. I will work with you to establish alternative due dates or otherwise get caught up.

GRADES will be earned through the following graded components:

75 points Participation (earned either by coming to class fully prepared and actively participating in discussions, questionings, and explorations or by posting answers to discussion questions in the **participation** discussion forum and posting comments to other students' discussion posts; up to 3 pts per class meeting)

30 points Review of an LGBTQ/Queer organization, due R, 1/28/21, to DropBox

30 points VIP presentation, due as assigned, to VIP Discussion Forum

90 points 3 reflection papers (30 points each), due R 2/11/21, 3/11/21, 4/15/21

75 points Research project (15 points proposal; 15 points first draft; 45 points final draft): proposal due 4/6/21; first draft due 4/20/21; final draft due 5/6/21, all due to DropBox

Late work is discouraged; however, late is better than never. All assignments are due before midnight on the date specified. If you request an extension before the due date, there will be no grade penalty; late work with no advance warning will receive a depreciated grade.

Final grade scale:

270-300 = A

240-269.9 = B

210-239.0 = C

180-209.9 = D

179 and below = F

RESPONSE TIME POLICY, grading: I will do my best to get all on-time assignments evaluated in a reasonable amount of time (within 1-2 weeks of the due date for writing assignments; sooner for discussion posts). **Please note:** assignments submitted late go to the bottom of the grading queue and will be evaluated in the order in which they are received. There will be no exceptions to this practice.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In this course, we will comply with EIU's academic integrity policy (please see your catalog). I have absolutely no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. Please note that "plagiarism or cheating" includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. **quoting** from a source without correctly citing that source and/or without using quotation marks
2. **paraphrasing** from a source without correctly citing that source
3. turning in a paper with an **incorrect or incomplete works cited list**
4. **falsifying** data
5. turning in **someone else's work** as your own—this includes (but is not limited to)
 - a. **copying** another's work from a quiz or assignment
 - b. turning in work that **someone else wrote** for you
 - c. using on-line or hard copy **paper mills**
6. turning in **your own work that was written for another course**, without prior permission.

IMPORTANT: This is a senior-level course; you are expected to demonstrate senior-level facility with proper research, writing, and citation conventions. In your papers, do not cite/use Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers, Wiki Answers, Ask.com, or any other non-academic, non-reliable source. Be certain your paper uses a standard, accepted academic citation style (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style, ASA, etc.) correctly and consistently. If you do not know how to use your citation style correctly, please get help. The best help is found in my office hours, on the Purdue OWL (online writing lab) website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>), and in EIU's Writing Center (<http://castle.eiu.edu/writing/>).

Violations of EIU's academic integrity policy will result in an **automatic failing grade** in this course and notification of the Office of Student Accountability. For more information, see www.eiu.edu/~judicial.

COURSE NETIQUETTE for online interactions

1. Identify yourself in every post, email, etc.—make sure everyone knows who is posting. Sign your posts.
2. Respect others' identities—use the names and pronouns that people ask you to use. If you make a mistake, apologize and then work to do better.
3. Be professional—remember that everything you "say" in our course discussions will be visible to others all semester long. Before you post, read what you have written out loud, to make sure that it really

sounds the way you mean it to. Remember that being professional means attending to cultural differences in communication, too.

4. Be mindful of others' POV—digital communication is often not as clear as in-person communication. Avoid ALL CAPS (SHOUTING!), multiple exclamation marks (omg!!!), swearing, and sarcasm. Use emoticons, when appropriate, to share your intentions, so others can tell you are being casual or playful and not a jerk. ;-)
5. Cite your sources—be very careful to say where you got the idea or understanding that you are sharing. Remember that your posts are earning graduate credit, and you don't want to appear to have plagiarized.
6. Respect others' privacy—never share contact information of a classmate to anyone for any reason. If someone asks you not to contact them again, then don't contact them again. Also, never share inappropriate, "NSFW," or potentially embarrassing material in the learning environment or with a classmate in a private message. If a classmate does not respect your privacy online, please contact me right away. I will take care of this situation.

ASSIGNMENTS AND PROTOCOL

PARTICIPATION (25% of final grade)

In-class participation

Participation consists of regular attendance and productive participation in class discussions and in-class activities. Please note that the **bolded** phrases are most important.

- A = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **active and substantive participation in class discussions, explicitly about the materials assigned for that day or unit**, involving obvious critical thought and making connections to other materials or examples; avoidance of "side" conversations in class; leadership role in group activities and discussion; professional interactions with others in class, even when disagreeing strongly, and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices, except for class work
- B = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **consistent participation in class discussions and activities with some references to assigned materials**, even when confused or struggling with ideas; professional behavior in class (including not carrying on "side" conversations and not being rude) and in all communication with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices, except for class work
- C = consistent attendance with full preparation of course materials but **little to no verbal participation in discussions** unless required; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; consistent "follower" role in group activities; **OR consistent enthusiastic participation in discussions and activities, with no explicit evidence of full preparation of course materials**; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices, except for class work
- D = frequent lateness or absence; unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior in class or on the discussion board (including, but not limited to, doing homework for other classes, reading newspapers in class, occasionally attending to electronics, "side" conversations, etc.)
- F = missing class; disruptive or hostile behavior in class or on the course discussion board; frequently attending to cell phones or other electronic devices during class.

Discussion board participation—discussion board posts will be due on the day noted in the Modules unless you attend class in person/on zoom and participate in discussions there

- A = answers the question with insight, creativity, and/or intellectual risk-taking; refers to specific aspects of the readings assignments; makes connections between readings/materials
- B = answers the question directly and fully or articulates where and how the writer is confused; refers to specific aspects of the reading assignments for that week or Module
- C = attempts to answer the question but is not completely accurate or complete; refers to specific aspects of the reading assignments for that week or Module
- D = attempts to answer the question but does not link the answer to the reading assignments for that week or Module or writes about the reading assignments for that week or Module but does not address the question

F = not done or not approached with professionalism

Review of LGBTQ organizations (10%) Once during the semester, on Jan. 28, 2021, you will turn in a report in which you have located and reviewed 2 LGBTQ organizations. Your report will be between 500 to 800 words long; it should compare and contrast the two organizations (remember: to compare = to identify similarities; to contrast = to identify differences). *Do not be afraid to be critical of them!* You can choose local (i.e. central Illinois or from your home area), national, or international organizations. I will post a grading rubric to D2L soon.

VIP Presentation (10%) Each student in the class will create and share (online) a presentation about a Very Important Person in Queer Theory. Your presentation should be 7-10 minutes long, and it should provide the class with additional information (in addition to what is in the assigned readings) about the artist/thinker/philosopher/author we are currently studying. Your presentation should include a visual component. NOTE: we are more interested in the Big Ideas of this person, rather than where they were born or went to college, etc. I will, of course, help and support you with this assignment. Your presentation will be shared virtually, in any form you choose: a YouTube video, a podcast/audio recording, a slideshow with voice-over, etc. You must post the presentation to the presentation discussion forum, so your classmates can see and comment on it. And, of course, you will be expected to watch and comment on others' presentations, as well. Your presentation has a firm deadline; late presentations will earn lower grades. A rubric for VIP presentations will be posted to D2L during the first week of the semester.

Reflection papers (30% of final grade; 3 reflection papers @ 10% each; due before midnight on R 2/11/21, R 3/11/21, and R 4/15/21) Reflection papers will ask considerably more specificity and depth of you than discussion questions. These are basically mini take-home essay tests. Each reflection paper has a specific prompt; that prompt will include guidelines for length, inclusion of out-of-class sources, etc. Be sure to read each prompt carefully and ask for clarification if you need it. I will post a rubric for reflection papers to D2L soon.

Final research project (25% of final grade: 5% proposal + 5% first draft + 15% final draft) Due dates: proposal 4/6/21; first draft (rough/incomplete) 4/21/21; final draft 5/6/21. Your final project for the course will be a research project. I encourage you to research something that connects queer theory to your major or to something you have a strong interest in. Your final product will be either an academic research paper (1,250-2,000 words/5-8 pp) or some other product that demonstrates your ability to share research with others (e.g., if you plan to be a teacher, create a lesson plan; if you love communications, create a short podcast series; if you play table-top rpgs, create a role-playing game; if you are a journalism or broadcasting major, create a news story; have an idea? run it by me!). By April 6, you will submit your research paper topic to the DROPBOX; on April 21, you will submit a partial rough draft (NOTE: the more complete your draft, the less work you will have to do on this project during finals week). Please make a Final Project conference appointment when you submit your draft. During our final exam session (Thu., May 6, 10:15-12:15), I will be in our zoom office hours space to give you any last-minute coaching on your Final Project. The final version is due Thursday, May 6 before midnight). A rubric for this project will be posted to D2L later in the semester.