**WGSS 282: Introduction to LGBT Studies**

**Instructor: Jaime Hough**

**Required Texts:** *Straight: The Surprisingly Short History of Heterosexuality* by Hanne Blank. Other readings, unless noted otherwise, will be posted on Blackboard in the folder for the week which they are assigned.

**Course Description:**

This is an introductory, survey course to issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans identities. This course focuses primarily on the evolution, history, and shifting visibilities of these groups in a Western, and most often US, context. This course is, predominately, organized around themes, or central issues, such as the evolution of gay identity, LGBT presence in media, LGBT experience across racial and ethnic backgrounds and so on. A fundamental concept in this class is that identity, media representation and political discussion are always linked to each other. The course schedule progresses, more or less, in a topical way moving from definitional questions (e.g. what is sex? What is sexuality?) to a more nuanced analysis of how these concepts shape the us and the world we live in and, concludes with reflection on how we can shape these concepts to create the world we wish to live in.

**Recurring Questions:**

Who do I see represented? Who or what do I not see? Why do I see certain people, objects and groups and not others? What does that mean for the Community? What does that mean for me and my life?

**Goals:** This course aims to develop the skills of

* Thinking critically about issues of sex, sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual object choice as represented in academic research, traditional media, and social media.
* Engaging questions of sexism, classism, racism and how they inform and are informed by issues of sexuality.
* Gain a working knowledge of the history of LGBT groups in Western history.

**Attendance and Participation**

Your attendance is necessary for the success of this class! Your insights, informed opinions, questions, humor, and experience are vital components of a successful learning environment. Be advised that attendance requires that you be mentally, not just physically, present in the classroom. You are expected to complete readings prior to the assigned class and come to class with questions and discussion points. On days that assignments are due they will be due at the beginning of class. If you are ill or otherwise unable to make it to class your assignment is still due at the beginning of class. I recommend sending the assignment with a friend or, if that is not possible, emailing it to me by the start of class.

In addition to being prepared students are expected not to bring distractions into the classroom. Distractions include but are not limited to: laptops, phones, newspapers, work for other courses, knitting, and crosswords. If you are engaging with these or other materials in a way that limits your involvement in class or distracts your peers I reserve the right to ask you to leave class.

**Respect**

Truth: talking about sex is difficult. Talking about gender is difficult. Talking about identity is difficult. Talking about race, class, ability and privilege are also difficult. Talking about these things together is EXTREMELY difficult. This class is about tackling difficult questions and in that process we may touch on material that is extremely emotional or difficult for you or your colleagues. Therefore, at all times, every member of this class is expected to be respectful of the viewpoints, opinions, experiences and questions that are shared in this classroom. Anyone exhibiting disrespectful behavior will be asked to leave the classroom and will forfeit any points for in-class activities that day. I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action in accordance with the College of Liberal Arts’ classroom civility statement listed below.

**Classroom Civility**

Purdue University is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion and welcomes individuals of all ages, religions, sex, sexual orientations, races, nationalities, languages, military experience, disabilities, family statuses, gender identities and expressions, political views, and socioeconomic statuses. Please respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by everyone in this course. Behaviors that threaten, harass, discriminate or that are disrespectful of others will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behaviors will be addressed with disciplinary action, which may include being referred to the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism, simply defined, is the attempt to pass off another’s work as your own. Plagiarism takes many forms: failure to cite appropriately, copying another’s work exactly or almost exactly, or presenting another person or group’s ideas as your original thoughts. Any and all instances of plagiarism in this class will be punished by an automatic “F” for the course. They will also be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

Don’t risk it! If you’re not sure if it is plagiarism don’t guess! Go to the writing center or make use of the OWL here, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

If you are still confused then ask me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Finally, NEVER plagiarize because you are in a rush to get an assignment done. An “F” on one assignment is much, much better for your grade in this class and your career as a whole then failing the course because of turning in plagiarized work.

“As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together – We are Purdue.”

**Students with Special Needs**

This classroom strives to be a welcoming space for all students. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because of a documented disability please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible so we can work out a plan to make sure that you are able to get the most out of this course.

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at : [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 765-494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

**Assignments and Grading**

The goal of all assignments in this class is to promote learning. For our purposes, learning will be defined as the process whereby information you incorporate information you did not have before into your world view.

***25 QCQ Cards at 5 pts./ea. (125)***

Quote—A quote you selected from the reading.

Comment—A comment you have about either the quote you chose or the reading as a whole.

Question—A question you have about the reading.

All three of these should be written on a 3x5 card and brought to class. Cards will be turned in at the end of each class period. Out of roughly 30 days of class you are responsible for 25 QCQ cards. Cards will receive a grade of “0” for cards that are not turned in or cards that are missing an element. Cards which contain all elements will automatically receive at least 3 points. Cards will receive the full 5 points if they exhibit critical thinking which seeks to make connections between the text and a meaningful part of your life and/or other texts from this or other courses.

***12 original blog posts at 10 pts./ea. (120)***

For twelve weeks out of our sixteen week semester you will be responsible for posting to our private course blog, [] The primary goal of these posts is to promote class discussion and to assist you in refining concepts you want to include in your projects. Posts should be between 250-300 words and need to be on the blog by 11:59 p.m. Wednesday night. We will not have a blog due during spring break or the last two weeks of the semester. For full points post on time, discuss one course text, and meet the minimum word count.

***24 comments/responses at 5 pts./ea (120)***

The rules governing comments are largely the same as those governing blogs. You will be graded on two per week. Individual responses should be between 100 and 150 words in length. They are due at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday and are governed by the respect clause of the syllabus. You do not need to post any comments on weeks that blogs are not due.

***Projects—You must complete a total of 500 points worth of projects over the course of the semester.***

There are a few mandatory projects which the whole class will complete. In addition to those you must do a sufficient number of elective projects to reach the point total of six hundred. Projects which require relatively little work outside of class such as the documentary project, the Anita Hill project, or the LGBTQ Film Festival project, are worth 50 points apiece. Students may complete two documentary projects for a total of 100 points.

More involved projects such as the Benefits of Marriage project are worth 100 points.

For each project you will be graded on the accompanying report which you turn in. Guidelines for each project, including the accompanying report, can be found on Blackboard. In general, I will expect you to connect your project to at least two course materials (assigned readings, films, or other media watched in class). “C” level work will briefly tell me ***what*** connections you perceive between individual elements of your project to individual course materials. “B” level work will tell me about ***what*** connections you see between course materials and ***how*** they connect to your project. At this level I expect to see you making an effort to think about your project and the class as whole entities (rather than breaking each down into its separate components) and thinking about how these entities connect. “A” level work will tell me about ***what*** connections you see between course materials, ***how*** they connect to your class and ***why*** these connections are valuable. At this level I expect to see you thinking about the class and your project as one thing with your project filling a gap in the existing course syllabus and seamlessly integrated into the existing course structure.

***Intersectionality Illustration—30 pts.***

The one exception to the above is our first mandatory project, the Intersectionality Illustration, which should be completed according to the guidelines above but is worth a total of 30 points.

***1000 total points available for the course.***

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| Points | Letter Grade |
| 1000-980 | A+ |
| 970-940 | A |
| 930-900 | A- |
| 890-870 | B+ |
| 860-830 | B |
| 820-800 | B- |
| 790-770 | C+ |
| 760-730 | C |
| 720-700 | C- |
| 690-670 | D+ |
| 660-630 | D |
| 620-600 | D- |
| 590 or lower | F |

**Course Schedule**

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| Date | Topic | Assignment |
| **Week 1: Introductions** | | |
| Aug. 22 | Introductions | What 3 things do you want from this class? |
| Aug. 24 | Go Over Syllabus | “Introduction” from *Straight* |
| **Week 2: What is sex?** | | |
| Aug. 29 | What is sex?  Who can have it? | “When Women Wanted Sex More Than Men” and “Sex Before Sexuality” |
| Aug. 31 | Global Definitions | Bring in your preliminary research on sexuality from different cultures around the world. |
| **Week 3: What sex is not.** | | |
| Sept. 5 | Sex is not transhistorical | *Tech of Orgasm* excerpt |
| Sept. 7 | Acts vs. Identity  **Due: Oral History Overview (Oral History Project, Step 1)** | *Capitalism and Gay Identity* |
| **Week 4: Identity in Social Context** | | |
| Sept. 12 | Identity in Social Context | *Sexuality and Socialism* excerpt “Intersectionality 101” |
| Sept. 14 | Going Back  **Due: Intersectionality Illustration** | *Straight*, Chapter 1 |
| **Week 5: Methods** | | |
| Sept. 19 | Going Forward  **Due: Potential Oral History Questions (Oral History Project, Step 2)** | *Gay New York* excerpt |
| Sept. 21 | Methods | “Swastika, Pink Triangle, and Yellow Star,” OR “Writhing Bedfellows” |
| **Week 6: Sexology** | | |
| Sept. 26 | Sexology | *Straight*, Chapter 2 |
| **Sept. 28** | Whose Afraid of Freud? | “Cassandra Among the Creeps” |
| **Week 7: Sex and Marriage** | | |
| Oct. 3 | Architects of Sex  **Due: Anita Hill Project** | *Straight*, Chapter 3  “The Five Sexes” |
| Oct. 5 | Sex and Marriage  **Due: Being LGBT on the Internet Project** | *Straight*, Chapter 4 |
| **Week 8: Marriage-Part 1** | | |
| Oct. 10 | OCTOBER BREAK |  |
| Oct. 12 | Marriage: What we won. | “United States vs. Windsor” Opinion of the Court |
| **Week 9: Marriage-Part 2** | | |
| Oct. 17 | Marriage: Why we fought for it. |  |
| Oct. 19 | “Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100”  **Due: Documentary Project** | *The Trouble With Normal*, excerpt. |
| **Week 10: Marriage-Part 3** | | |
| Oct. 24 | “Screaming Queens” screening  **Due: Purdue LGBTQ Film Fesitval Project** |  |
| Oct. 26 | For Tax Purposes: Revisiting Marriage  **Due: Benefits of Marriage Project** |  |
| **Week 11: Being LGBT** | | |
| Oct. 31 | Being LGBT on the Internet | Readings TBD from “Being LGBT on the Internet” Project |
| **Nov. 2** | Guest Lecture: Mel Stanfill | “When Is It Queer Baiting and When Is It Not?” |
| **Week 12: LGBT Rights in Indiana** | | |
| Nov. 7 | LGBT Rights in Indiana  **Due: LGBT at Purdue Project** | “Indiana Republicans Introduce The Most Anti-LGBT Rights Bill Ever” and “Pence Has Led a Crusade Against Abortion Access and LGBT Rights” |
| Nov. 9 | Other Ways | *When Did Indians Become Straight* excerpt |
| **Week 13: LGBT Around the World** | | |
| Nov. 14 | **Due: LGBT Around the World Project** |  |
| Nov. 16 | Queer: An Intersectional Category | “A Black, Queer, Socialist Perspective” and  “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens” |
| **Week 14: Queer** | | |
| Nov. 21 | Queer: A Praxis | “It’s So Queer To Give Away Money” |
| Nov. 23 | THANKSGIVING BREAK | DON’T FORGET TO WORK ON YOUR FINAL PROJECT. |
| **Week 15: Building A Better World** | | |
| Nov. 28 | Building A Better World: Dream  **Due: An Intersectional, Queer, Socialist Analysis of Steven Universe Project** | *Straight*, Chapters 6 & 7 |
| Nov. 30 | Building A Better World: Plan  **Due: Documentary With Your Family Project** | “Ain’t Never Scared” |
| **Week 16: Wrapping Up** | | |
| Dec. 5 | **Final Presentation Preparation** |  |
| Dec. 7. | **Class Wrap-Up** |  |

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.

***This is a working syllabus. As such, I retain the right to change it at any time throughout the semester. You will be notified, as soon as possible, of any changes.***