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# That's So Gay!: Queer Texts in the U.S.

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## That's So Gay!:

Queer Texts in the U.S.

First-Year Inquiry Writing Seminar (FIQWS)

Fall 2018

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T/R 3:30-4:45; North Academic Center

Library 1/301Y

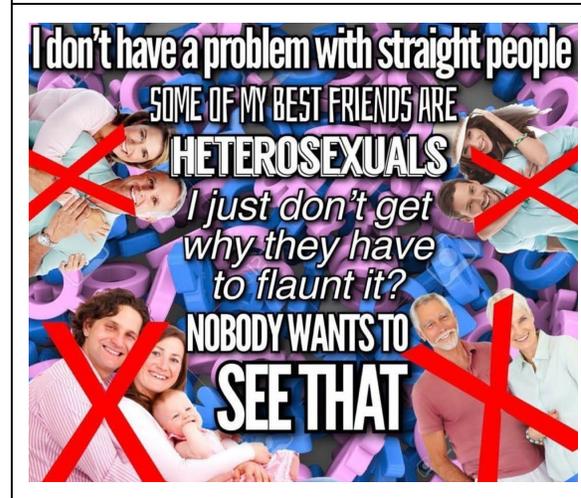
City College of New York

“Part of what undoes shame is to be heard, to be seen... I did that on a grand scale. I don't want people to look at me and go, see, queer people, this is how it's done. It's like, no, this is how it shouldn't have to be done.”

- Hannah Gadsby

“So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive.”

- Audre Lorde



@femme4memes

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Gender is facing an identity crisis: queer identities in the new era of gender and genre are subverting paradigms of communication and genre by working with language and narrative in new ways. Queer biography and autobiography mark an important turn in contemporary literature and poetics: the shift from a male-dominant gaze towards a kaleidoscopic perspective on queer embodiment, trans and non-binary narrative, and speculative writing about other worlds & possibilities, which offer us as readers new opportunities for storytelling and thinking about writing. These forms also make space for other identities traditionally excluded from mainstream cultural narrative spaces, and we're witnessing the emergence of queerness as digital, hybrid, and ephemeral. This course will center the expanding lexicon offered by queer writers, and ground students through including some of the queer studies canon.

**\*\*\*CONTENT NOTE\*\*\*:** Many of the texts we'll be examining deal with complex issues of violence, abuse, and trauma. Please do what you need to in order to prepare yourself for frank discussions of these themes and more. I will do my best to provide more specific content warnings throughout the semester as well.

**CLASS CONSTITUTION:** We will collaboratively discuss our commitments to our classroom as a space of communal learning and diverse experience. You will be expected to adhere to our agreements throughout the semester, both in-class and online.

## Course Learning Outcomes

- 1) Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view
- 2) Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions

- 3) Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed
- 4) Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process

**From City College’s Center for Teaching and Learning:**

Hybrid and online learning explore the potential for learning at a distance. Students can participate as their schedules allow and use instructional technologies for group work and collaboration. Online learning also relieves the college of classroom space demands during peak teaching times.

Hybrid learning arguably combines “the best of both worlds”: face-to-face contact between instructor and students with unlimited options that various technology tools can offer. Hybrid learning provides more support for those students while giving more flexibility to those with multiple responsibilities in their lives. Hybrid learning is one of the fastest growing and most successful instructional delivery models, as it uses a wide variety of tools to reach different types of students.

**Texts**

Poetry:

“On Using the Trans Panic Defense” & “Behold! A Spectacle” - Chrysanthemum Tran

“Ekphrasis on Unsolicited Dick Pic” & “Burning Haibun” - Torrin A. Greathouse

“The Bath” - Tyler Vile

“Girl” & “Bronx Antipastoral (#1-#6)” - Christina Olivares

“Dear Gone” by Grey Vild

I GOT LOST / I GOT DELETED - Andrea Abi-Karam

Fiction:

*Fierces Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir* - Kai Cheng Thom

“A Love Like in the Movies,” and “Couldn’t Hear You Talk Anymore” by Casey Plett

“Falafel” by Ryka Aoki

Nonfiction:

excerpts from *That’s Revolting!: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore

excerpts from *Zami: A New Spelling for My Name* by Audre Lorde

“Uses of Anger” - Audre Lorde

“The Transformation of Silence into Action and Language” - Audre Lorde

excerpts from *Between Men* by Eve Sedgwick

“The Comedy-Destroying, Soul-Affirming Art of Hannah Gadsby” by Melena Ryzik

excerpts from *The Argonauts* - Maggie Nelson

“Body of a Poem: Transition as Act of Consent//Writing as Act of Consent//Ghosts as Act of Consent” - Zefyr Lisowski

“When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own” by Jacqueline Jones Royster

excerpts from *The Queer Art of Failure* by Jack Halberstam

“The Literary Renaissance of Trans Women Writers” - Katharine Cross

“Rise of the Gender Novel” by Casey Plett

“Being Undocumented and Queer Means You Cannot Bury Your Dead” by YOSIMAR REYES

“How Pose Changed My Life — And Season 2 Will Change the Future” by DEVIN-NORELLE

“How *Dancer From the Dance* Changed Queer Lit Forever” - by MIKE MIKSCHÉ

Visual/Digital Texts:

*Black Mirror Season 3 Episode 6: San Junipero* (Netflix)

Questions Non Trans People Are Too Afraid To Ask | BuzzFeed

*Nanette* (Netflix) - Hannah Gadsby

Brujas - Princess Nokia

*Pose* (FX)

Kat Blaque

Make Me Feel - Janelle Monae

Transgender Rights: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

Mykki Blanco feat. Jean Deaux - "Loner"

Porpentine games!

Does the Left Hate Free Speech? - ContraPoints

## Assignments

**Research Project on Textual Artifact:** students will choose a textual artifact from **one or two** of the categories we've discussed (visual, aural, literary, theoretical, etc./others?) and work to dis-articulate and complicate various attributes of their chosen text in connection to larger cultural motifs/icons/signs; 1500-2000-word essay & multimodal component (handmade or digital); at least 5 scholarly sources/2 "everyday" sources; Here, you must convince us of a coherent, specific claim (your thesis) using textual evidence and your own analysis. 6-8 pages, MLA format, multimodal for points!

**Reflective Annotated Bibliography:** students will use library, database, and information technology skills to actively develop bibliographies for their own research projects for the topic & composition sections of this course; students will critically reflect upon these texts and evaluate their usefulness, bias, rhetorical efficacy, and limitations in relationship to their own research.

**Portfolio & Reflective Letter:** this is your chance to show me what you've learned. This portfolio will collect all of your written work from throughout the semester, including a curated selection of in-class freewrites, and will give you the opportunity to provide me with concrete evidence from your own writings demonstrating your engagement with the goals of our course. We will spend a

whole class period addressing the genre of reflective portfolio letters, so don't worry if this doesn't make sense yet.

### **Peer Review Groups**

Group work is mandatory and regular in this class. You will be paired with other students to workshop drafts of your written assignments throughout the semester. It is imperative that you attend class in order to maximize your group time, and you will be scored on your own revisions, as well as on feedback from the other members of your group.

### **Peer Reviews and Self-Assessments**

For each essay assignment, you'll be asked to use the criteria listed in the assignments to review your peers' essays as well as your own. Your goal here is to create a positive, supportive learning environment. While we are all learning to write (no matter how good we already are), we are also expert readers. The fact that you may struggle to produce a particular kind of essay doesn't mean that you can't evaluate another student's essay. On the contrary, reading someone else's work can not only assist that writer but it can also give you insight into your own writing.

## **Grading**

Commons blog writing - 20%	Reflective Annotated Bibliography - 10%
Peer & self evaluation & group work - 20%	Research project - 10%
Creative autobiography - 10%	Final portfolio - 20%
Labor log - 10%	

## Resources

### **Blackboard**

Fear not! BB can actually be great. We're using it to discuss our often complex readings, which will occur once a week throughout most of the semester (see calendar below for details).

### **The Writing Center**

The CCNY Writing Center offers a supportive learning environment where students can have one-on-one tutoring sessions with writing consultants. It is a great resource for you to obtain extra help as you write and revise your papers. They DO NOT proofread your papers, but offer assistance on improving certain aspects of them. They also offer ESL tutoring. To set up an appointment or semester-long sessions, contact them in person at the Writing Center, which is located in the NAC, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor plaza or call (212) 650-8104.

### **Gateway Advising Center**, NAC 1/220

Students without a declared major can receive academic advising, especially if you have questions about your course of study, core requirements, etc.

### **AccessAbility Center Tutoring Services**, NAC 1/218

Provides one-on-one tutoring and workshops to all registered students with learning or physical disabilities.

### **SEEK Peer Academic Learning Center**, NAC 4/224

Phone: 212-650-5786; email: [seekpals@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:seekpals@ccny.cuny.edu)

Offers counseling and peer tutoring for students in need of academic and financial support who have registered for the SEEK Program.

# Course Policies

## What's Up with FIQWS?

Ms. Stella and I are collaborating to bring you these courses. This means that we communicate regularly and collaborate on grades, assignments, and your overall performance in the courses; we *strongly* recommend that you give each section of this course your full attention.

## Late Assignments

Late assignments will have 10% deducted *if the assignment is submitted within 24 hours of the due date*. After this 24-window, up to 48 hours after the deadline, assignments will have 20% deducted. ***Assignments will not be accepted after 48 hours after the deadline.*** Technological foibles are not an excuse for lateness. Plan ahead.

## Digital Stuff

I am OK with you using devices in class, but please know that small-group work requires your full attention, as does creating your own writing, both of which will be primary focuses of this course. If I find that your device distracts you from engaging with these tasks, I reserve the right to revoke this privilege.

## Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is copying and using other people's words without proper acknowledgment or citation as it is indicated in the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. You are expected to read, understand, and adhere to this policy.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class session of this course and to be on time. Consistent absences, late arrivals, and early departures will have a negative impact on what you get out of this

course. If you have special circumstances, please contact me. I'm happy to work with you to help you complete this course.

**Food & Drink**

Please, no food in class. You may bring a drink, but you are expected to clean up after yourself.

**Student Code of Conduct**

All student members of the College community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect for the rights and personal/academic well-being of others, preserves the integrity of the social and academic environment, and supports the mission of the College. The College has an inherent right to address behavior that impedes, obstructs, or threatens the maintenance of order and attainment of the aforementioned goals by violating the standards of conduct set forth in the University student conduct policies noted below as well as other policies that may be established by the respective Schools, Global Sites, and administrative offices of the University. The goals of the CCNY Community Standards are:

- To promote an environment that supports the overall mission of the University
- To protect the University community from disruption and harm
- To encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior
- To foster ethical values and civic virtues
- To foster personal learning and growth while at the same time holding individuals and groups accountable to the standards of expectations established by the Code of Conduct

**Calendar**

Date	In-Class Activities	For Next Class
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<b>Week #1</b> August 28, 2018 F2F	What's a Text?; developing a list of "expert strategies" for reading texts & dealing with texts in students' own language	Bring a text that inspires, or that you dig, or that you want to share ( <b>hard copy</b> )
August 30, 2018 F2F	BBDB: Rhetoric/MAIDS discussion; dismember/collage a text	To watch: <i>POSE</i> ; answer questions abt MAIDS w/r/t <i>POSE</i>
<b>Week #2</b> September 4, 2018 F2F	Intro to <b>literacy narrative assignment</b>	To watch: <i>Nanette</i> (Netflix); BBDB: how is this a literacy narrative? What does Gadsby *do* with her stories?
September 6, 2018 ONLINE	<b>Literacy narrative</b> discussion & peer review	To read: Sedgwick <i>Between Men</i> intro
<b>Week #3</b> September 11, 2018 NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	—	BBDB: Discussion Board Do's & Don't's (sample BBDB posts); BBDB: Respond to Sedgwick and <i>at least 2</i> of your classmates by end of Week #3
September 13, 2018 F2F	Discussion Q: What questions do you have for Sedgwick?	<b>Literacy narrative</b> due 9/20
<b>Week #4</b> September 18, 2018 NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	—	<b>Literacy narrative</b> self-evaluation (following rubric) due 9/26; To read: "When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own" by Jacqueline Jones Royster
September 20, 2018 F2F	<b>FIRST-YEAR CONVOCATION</b> ; Quick lectures: MAIDS, the parlor model	To read: " <u>Sonnet 20: A woman's face with nature's own hand painted</u> " by William Shakespeare; To watch: Textual Hierarchies: The Presentation!

<p><b>Week #5</b> September 25, 2018 F2F</p>	<p>Intro to <b>summary &amp; response assignment</b></p>	<p>To do: <b>Literacy narrative</b> self-evaluation (following rubric) due 9/27</p>
<p>September 27, 2018 ONLINE</p>	<p>Discussion Q: what textual hierarchies can you name? what relationship can you see between these systems? describe the tensions you witness</p>	<p>To watch: <a href="#">Questions Non Trans People Are Too Afraid To Ask   BuzzFeed</a> and <a href="#">Kat Blaque</a>; To read: Trans femme poetry: “<a href="#">On Using the Trans Panic Defense</a>” &amp; “<a href="#">Behold! A Spectacle</a>” - Chrysanthemum Tran “<a href="#">Ekphrasis on Unsolicited Dick Pic</a>” &amp; “<a href="#">Burning Haibun</a>” - Torrin A. Greathouse “<a href="#">The Bath</a>” - Tyler Vile</p>
<p><b>Week #6</b> October 2, 2018 F2F</p>	<p>Discussion: trans femme poetics; common themes, metaphors, techniques; trans 101; <b>summary &amp; response assignment</b> ???s; Discussion Q: If you do not identify as trans, how would you react to some of the questions from the BuzzFeed video?</p>	<p>To watch: <i>Pose</i> (FX); <a href="#">Transgender Rights: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver</a> (HBO) To read: “<a href="#">How Pose Changed My Life — And Season 2 Will Change the Future</a>” by <a href="#">DEVIN-NORELLE</a></p>
<p>October 4, 2018 ONLINE</p>	<p>Discussion Q: what identity hierarchies can you name? explain your understanding of the relationships amongst/within these hierarchies; discuss your own identities and how you understand your own positionality</p>	<p>To do: <b>summary &amp; response assignment</b> due 10/10</p>
<p><b>Week #7</b> October 9, 2018 F2F</p>	<p><b>summary &amp; response assignment</b> ???s;</p>	<p>To read: <i>excerpts from The Argonauts</i> - Maggie Nelson “<a href="#">Body of a Poem: Transition as Act of Consent//Writing as Act of Consent//Ghosts as Act of Consent</a>” - Zefyr Lisowski</p>
<p>October 11, 2018 ONLINE</p>	<p>Discussion Q: write a brief annotation of the text: citation (MLA), reflection,</p>	<p>To do: discussion on form, who gets to write? 250 words for 10/16</p>

	quotables	
<b>Week #8</b> October 16, 2018 F2F	RESEARCH LECTURE starring XXX: study guides, finding sources, logging in offline, citation generators, how to make sure your source is *legit*	To read: <u>“The Literary Renaissance of Trans Women Writers”</u> - Katharine Cross and <u>“Rise of the Gender Novel”</u> by Casey Plett
October 18, 2018 ONLINE	To do: BBDB what other media items have recently openly discussed gender and sexuality? 150-200 words making connections between Cross/Plett and your text by 10/23	To read: <i>Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir</i> by Kai Cheng Thom
<b>Week #9</b> October 23, 2018 F2F	Discussion Q: Pick a passage from <i>Fierce Femmes</i> that you think relates back to the theme of our course; describe how the writer achieves this, and why you think this passage is valuable	To continue reading: <i>Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir</i> by Kai Cheng Thom
October 25, 2018 ONLINE	To do: BBDB response to <i>Fierce Femmes</i> discussion board Qs, including at least two (2) responses to your classmates’ posts by 10/30	To continue reading: <i>Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir</i> by Kai Cheng Thom
<b>Week #10</b> October 30, 2018 F2F	Quick lectures: femme theory, femmephobia	To finish reading: <i>Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Trans Girl’s Confabulous Memoir</i> by Kai Cheng Thom
November 1, 2018 ONLINE	To do: Respond to <i>Fierce Femmes</i> discussion board Qs, including at least two (2) responses to your classmates’ posts by 11/6	To read: <u>excerpts from <i>Zami: A New Spelling for My Name</i></u> by Audre Lorde
<b>Week #11</b> November 6, 2018 F2F	Last day to withdraw with a grade of “W” // Last day to file for Pass/NC option	To read: <u>“Uses of Anger”</u> by Audre Lorde and <u>“The Transformation of Silence into Action and Language”</u> by Audre Lorde

November 8, 2018 ONLINE	BBDB: 250-word response to Lorde's activist writing for 11/13	To read: " <u>Girl</u> " & " <u>Bronx Antipastoral (#1-#6)</u> " - Christina Olivares "Dear Gone" by Grey Vild <u>I GOT LOST / I GOT DELETED</u> - Andrea Abi-Karam
<b>Week #12</b> November 13, 2018 F2F	GUEST LECTURE: Zefyr Lisowski; Quick lectures: queer feminism; trans poetics	Collaboration! To watch: <u>Mykki Blanco feat. Jean Deaux - "Loner"</u> ; <u>Make Me Feel - Janelle Monae</u>  To read: excerpts of <i>Techne</i> by Jackie Rhodes // Jon Alexander
November 15, 2018 ONLINE	BBDB: Collaboration: <i>Propose a collaboration between 2 artists you admire; why?</i>	To read: excerpts from <i>That's Revolting!: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation</i> by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore
<b>Week #13</b> November 20, 2018	<b>THXGIVING - NO CLASSES SCHEDULED</b>	— CATCH UP WEEK —
November 22, 2018	<b>THXGIVING - NO CLASSES SCHEDULED</b>	— CATCH UP WEEK —
<b>Week #14</b> November 27, 2018 F2F	Discussion Q: How do you define your own politics in relation to the state? How are your identities treated by the state?	SPEC. FIC.  To read: " <u>Falafel</u> " by Ryka Aoki To watch: "San Junipero" (Netflix)
November 29, 2018 ONLINE	Discussion Q: Respond to <i>Black Mirror</i> discussion board Qs, including at least two (2) responses to your classmates' posts by 12/4	—

<p><b>Week #15</b> December 4, 2018 F2F</p>	<p>In-Class Portfolio Workshop: Wordpress, portfolio overview</p>	<p>To do: BBDB on MAIDS in portfolio, 500 words for 12/11</p>
<p>December 6, 2018 ONLINE</p>	<p>Discussion Q: how will you implement MAIDS in <i>your</i> portfolio?</p>	<p>To do: portfolio draft for 12/11</p>
<p><b>Week #16</b> December 11, 2018 F2F</p>	<p><b>PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP</b></p>	<p>To do: portfolio due 12/20</p>
<p>December 12, 2018 F2F</p>	<p><b>LAST DAY OF FALL CLASSES</b></p>	<p>To do: portfolio due 12/20</p>