

Spring 2019

# Performing Queerness

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*CUNY City College*

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## **Syllabus**

**WS 31117**

### **Performing Queerness**

Spring 2019

Monday, Wednesday 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

NAC 6/306

Jasmina Sinanovic

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City College

Office hour – by appointment only, email to schedule

Room NAC 7114D

#### Required texts

Readings will be posted on the black board. You are responsible for printing and bringing them to class or being able to access them on your electronic devices. If you need assistance, please let me know sooner rather than later (emailing the morning before the class is too late and I will likely not be able to help.)

“Performing Queerness” course will examine how we develop and question different meanings around queer bodies through performance practices in everyday life and on stage. We will analyze how queer identities are regulated, reinforced, recreated, and subverted through embodied modes of performance. Some of the questions we will discuss are: What is queer performance? Is queer performance a matter of identity or aesthetics? Spatial and temporal influences on our understanding of queer performance? Does queer necessarily mean radical? What are some examples of international queer performance? Does queer performance change based on a culture or is there a shared sense of what it is? What is the connection between queerness and globalization? In countries with high levels of homophobia queerness is often seen as a Western import – how much are artists contributing to cultural colonialism? Does audience affect our understanding of the performance? What is the relationship between class and performance? What is the connection between the gender identity in performance and queerness? We will look at a brief history of LGBTQ performance and its current connection to mass media. We will look at a variety of performances – in mass media, through social networks as well as live performances – theater, drag, burlesque, poetry and more.

In Part 1, Queer as an idea and state of being we will look at the meaning of word queer and performance as well as performance of queerness in every day.

In Part 2, Staging Queerness, we examine works by playwrights, visual artists, performance artists, and theatre artists who deploy performance practices to probe historical, social, and political understandings of our bodies as raced and gendered.

In both units, we consider the critical implications of performances of race and gender that trouble the boundaries between representational practices and lived realities.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will explore the development of queer as a culture.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast terms lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer.
3. Students will question how class and race shape the experiences and expressions of gender and sexuality.
4. Students will understand variety of identities.
5. Students will examine relationships between gender, sexuality, and availability of choices.
6. Students will think about the regulation of gender and sexuality within various institutions.
7. Students will think about relationship between gender, sexuality, and justice and how queerness can be seen as a part of resistance.
8. Students will examine the influence of a variety of discourses in our popular conceptions of gender, sexuality, and race and how queerness entered mainstream.
9. Students will analyze cultural products and their relation to creation of queerness.
10. Students will become familiar with artists who use gender and sexuality in their work and are identifying or considered queer artists.

## **Grades**

Attendance and participation 10%

Weekly writings 15%

Take home exams 20%

Artist presentation 10%

Reviews of a performance, lecture, exhibit or film 20%

Final project 25%

## **Explanation of the assignments**

Attendance – you can miss up to 4 classes without incurring a penalty, after that your grade will go down half a grade for each additional class. Being present in class means being prepared and participating in discussions. You can ask twice in the semester to be excused from discussions (while counted present).

Weekly writings – you will write a weekly blog that addresses readings assigned for the week and observation from an outside world. These are posted under Weekly Writings on Blackboard.

Take home exams – Two exams, posted through Blackboard.

Artist or scholar presentation – choose an artist or a scholar who works with gender and sexuality and write a 2-3 page presentation on them you will present in class. You can present at any point during the semester. Use of visual aids is highly recommended. Post on wiki (Blackboard)

Review of a performance, lecture, exhibit or film – write two reviews. Only one can be on a recorded event. At least one or both can be of a live event. I will post recommendations but you can choose your own or recommend some to all students. Post on wiki.

Final project or paper - you can choose an option based on your preference. Details will be explained. Proposal has to be submitted separately and you will present either paper or the project in class at the end of the semester during the finals week. Final cannot be missed or made up so please plan to be there.

**Generally check blackboard and your school email for any announcements or class communication.**

**Useful CCNY links**

Writing Center <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/writing>

Health and Wellness Center <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/health-wellness>

Accessibility Center <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/accessibility>

Academic integrity <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/about/integrity>

**GRADE SCALE**

**98-100% A+; 93-97% A; 90-92% A-**

**88-89% B+; 83-87% B; 80-83% B-**

**78-79% C+; 73-77% C; 70-73% C-**

**68-70% D+; 63-67% D; 60-63% D-**

**Under 60% F**

## **Schedule for Performing Queerness**

### **Schedule is subject to change**

January 28 Introductions

January 30 Vocabulary and terminology, definitions, what is queer? Short readings on Bb

February 4 Vocabulary and terminology, definitions, what is performance, performativity, hegemony, ideology, short readings and videos on Bb

February 6 Theory

February 11 and 13 Theory

February 18 - NO CLASS President's Day

February 20 Social construction; Sexes

February 25 Intersectionality

February 27 Intersectionality

March 4 SNOW DAY

March 6 watch Kiki in class

### **Exam 1 posted due March 13**

March 11-13 Ballroom Scene watch Paris is Burning at home

March 18-20 Drag

March 25, 27 Burlesque and Bar Scene

April 1, 3 Theater and Dance

April 8, 10 Film and TV

April 15, 17 Print

### **FINAL PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE before Spring Break**

April 22, 24 SPRING BREAK

April 29, May 1 Visual

May 6, 8 Social Media

### **Exam 2 posted due May 13**

May 13, 15 Protest as Performance

**All work besides the FINAL due May 15 (exception – if you are watching a live performance between May 10 and 20 this review is due by May 22).**

FINAL - either May 20 or 22 TBA