

Women's and Gender Studies 391
LGBTQ Media
Spring 2023
T/Th 2:40pm - 4pm
Credit Hours: 0.50
Classroom: Ascension Hall room 126

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Herold (she/her)

Office Location: O'Connor House Room 208

Email: Herold1@kenyon.edu

Office Hours:

By appointment here: <https://calendly.com/herold1/office-hours>

Course Description:

Media shape the way we understand social norms and identity categories. This course introduces students to theories and debates about media representations of LGBTQ people. We will grapple with questions like: how has Hollywood represented LGBTQ identities and community issues over time? In turn, how have LGBTQ audiences and filmmakers responded to these images and used media technologies to represent their own experiences? We will examine how film, television, and digital media have circulated and amplified both homophobia and transphobia as well as LGBTQ struggles for justice, paying close attention to the ways in which race, gender, class, and geography shape representational dynamics. We will additionally explore how the evolution in media technologies, and in particular the invention of television, video, and digital and social media, have shaped the possibilities for the production, distribution, and reception of LGBTQ media. This course will interweave queer theory, LGBTQ history and politics, feminist theory, and media studies to analyze and critique the texts we watch. It requires either WGS 111 or WGS 121 as a prerequisite, or permission of the instructor.

Learning Objectives:

- To explore how ideologies about gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ identity are mediated by popular culture and screen media
- To identify major historical and activist trends within LGBTQ film, television, and digital media
- To strengthen media literacy skills by developing nuanced analyses of gender and sexuality in media
- To critically assess how sexuality and gender are always intertwined with race, class, ability, nationality and other identities in LGBTQ culture and media

Assignments & Grading:

There are 100 possible points available in the course, allocated as follows:

Assignment	Possible Points	Due Date
Meeting with Prof. Herold	5	Fri 3/3
Weekly Screening Reports (10)	20	Thurs 2/2, Thurs 3/2, Thurs 4/6, Thurs 5/2
Class Facilitation	20	–
Film/TV Review	10	Thurs 4/13
Final Paper or Project	25	Thurs 5/11
Participation	10	–
Attendance	10	–

Meeting with Prof. Herold: Recent research in higher education indicates that making connections with professors increases student academic success and sense of belonging. At the same time, lots of students don't necessarily feel comfortable walking into a professor's office during office hours or making an appointment. **Therefore, in this class one (1) scheduled, 15-minute office hour visit (either in person or via Google Meet), in the first half of the semester, is a requirement for the course.** I invite you to consider office hours as a space to support your learning and work throughout the semester. You might use office hours to discuss topics related to class (questions about the readings, ideas for an assignment, how to incorporate feedback for the next assignment) or topics unrelated to class (current events, politics, media, etc.). I look forward to the conversation!

Screening Reports: You will be asked to respond to the screenings ten (10) times over the course of the semester. The idea is to use your writing to think more deeply about the content of the class and articulate your own insights about the class material. You can address a particular aspect of a screening that you find intriguing, analyze an issue it raises in relation to its historical context or to a contemporary issue, connect the screening to a class reading, and/or pose questions to discuss further in class. Consider: how did the screening make you feel? What did you like about it, or not like about it? What questions do you think the creator is attempting to answer, how do their ideas fit in with what we've discussed in class, what is the significance of their ideas, and/or what is missing from their account of the world? **Responses should be about 300-400 words** of informal writing (but if you're on a roll, go for it!). Alternatively, you may upload a 2-5 minute audio or video recording of yourself discussing the screenings instead of writing a reflection and send it to me in an .mp3 or .mp4 format. **You should write these responses in a Microsoft Word or Google Doc. You have 10 opportunities to write reflections over the course of the semester and will receive 2 points per post. You will turn them in four times in the semester: on February 2nd, March 2nd, April 6th, and May 2nd.**

Class Facilitation: This assignment will allow you the opportunity to take a leadership role in the classroom. As a facilitator, you can use your experiences, interests, knowledge, and imagination in helping others analyze the day's texts, apply the ideas to some outside material(s), and contemplate how these ideas apply to our lived experiences at Kenyon College. You will sign up for a facilitation in the second week of class. Once you know when you will facilitate the class, you can get together with the classmate(s) who also signed up for that day and decide on a time when you can meet together to make a class plan. I will provide more detailed instructions about class facilitation on Moodle. Your facilitation should be 30-45 minutes long.

Film/TV Review: For this assignment, you will evaluate and critique an LGBTQ film or TV show of your choosing. You will form and share your point of view on the media object, with reference to its plot, aesthetic/visual components (genre, character development, cinematography, etc.), and its strong and weak points (according to you). This assignment will allow you to express your informed opinions about film and television. The review should be 1000-1500 words in length and is **due Thurs 4/13 on Moodle**.

Final Research Paper, Video Essay, or Short Film: You have three options for your final assignment for this class. The topic is open, but your final should draw together the various themes we discuss in the class and convey your knowledge about the historical and cultural contexts of LGBTQ media. You will turn in a proposal at the midterm that includes your topic, outline, and related class readings at mid-semester. The options: 1) Research paper: a 10-12 page paper that uses the concepts and ideas from the class to critically assess an issue related to or an example of LGBTQ media. You will advance a scholarly argument about the text and draw from class readings to do so. 2) Video Essay: a 5-10min video essay that identifies a key issue/debate in historical or contemporary queer media. You will use concepts, theories, and discussions from class as well as your own research to analyze and critique this issue. 3) Short film: a 5-10min short film that narrativizes or in some way reflects a key issue/debate in LGBTQ media studies. **Your final is due on May 11th.** More detailed instructions will be provided later in the term.

Participation: Our class time will be based around conversation, so participation is an essential component of class. In this class, you will set goals for your participation at the beginning of the semester and reflect on those goals at the midterm and end of the semester. At this time, you will have the opportunity to grade your own participation, and I will take these grades under advisement when I make my decisions about grades at the end of the semester.

In this class, participation includes verbal contributions *as well as* active and courteous listening. This does not mean you have to respond to every question or comment in class; however, the class will be most valuable to everyone if we take risks in front of each other. You are expected to read the assigned texts and to consider them carefully prior to the beginning of class. It is helpful to take notes on readings as well as to formulate questions that can contribute to the class

discussion. Please note that this is meant to be a respectful space where we engage one another's thoughts: abusive and/or aggressive language and behavior are not welcome here and will not be tolerated.

Attendance: Attendance is essential for a robust and thoughtful class discussion and learning environment. Please be courteous to your classmates and arrive to class on time. If you have a scheduling conflict that makes it difficult to arrive on time, speak to me about it. For contact tracing purposes, I will be taking attendance every time we meet. With that said, illnesses and emergencies happen, and many of us celebrate religious holidays during the year that require us to be absent. **Please do not come to class if you feel sick or if you have tested positive for COVID!** Additionally, please let me know in advance if you foresee any upcoming absences for whatever reason. If you miss three (3) days of class, I will reach out to you to check in. If you miss four (4) classes, I will contact you to offer makeup assignments. If you decide not to complete makeup work, I will take 1 (one) point off of your attendance grade, and will subtract one more point for every following absence.

If you need to isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 exposure or need to be absent for other reasons: get in touch with an in-class colleague and arrange for them to take notes for you while you are absent.

Grading Scale:

Point Total:	Letter Grade Equivalent:
97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
< 63	F

Class Policies:

Required Readings and Screenings: There is no required textbook or book that you need to buy for this course. All required texts, unless otherwise noted, can be found on our course Moodle site. You are required to complete the readings and screenings prior to the course meeting for

which they are assigned and should come to class prepared to discuss their content. Please let me know if you have any issues accessing the course material.

Communication with instructor: If you have any questions, problems, or difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or during office hours. Contacting me as early as possible will allow me time to assist you more effectively, so don't wait until the last minute to ask for help. I will do my best to respond to any questions within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Technology: This classroom is technology-friendly. You may use laptops or tablets in class if these technologies aid their learning. All technology should be silenced in order to minimize classroom distractions. Please put away your cell phones, unless you are using them to access course material.

Late assignments: Deadlines are designed to keep you on track to finish your work for the class in a timely manner as well as to allow myself ample time for grading. However, I understand that health, family, school, work, and personal emergencies come up across the semester. If you discuss any special circumstances for a late assignment with me at least 24 hours in advance, I will be happy to grant you an extension.

About Names and Pronouns: Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. I will refer to all students according to the names and pronouns you prefer to be called and will support classmates in doing so as well.

Statement about "Unprecedented Times," Mental Health, and Basic Needs:

If you find yourself struggling with your health, mental well-being, work-life balance, or familial caretaking responsibilities this semester, please feel free to approach me in ways that you are most comfortable with. It has been an incredibly challenging past two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing and intersecting crises of racial injustice, police brutality, and white supremacy. I am aware that some of you may have lost loved ones or may yourself have had/still be recovering from Covid-19, and also aware that these times have often exacerbated physical and mental health concerns. Others of you may have lost jobs or have family members who have lost jobs and may be struggling financially as a result. Still others of you may be dealing with other challenges I haven't listed here, but that still affect your daily life. These issues have increased barriers to education and classroom learning. Please let me know how I can support you. Counseling on campus is FREE for Kenyon College students. You can call the Counseling center at 740-427-5643 or email counseling@kenyon.edu or visit the office to make an appointment.

Course Schedule:

DATE	CLASS TOPIC	TEXTS DUE TODAY
T 1/17	Introduction to the Course: Welcome! <i>Screen in class: The T web series episodes 1-2</i>	
Th 1/19	Introduction to Queer Theory	Read: Hannah McCann and Whitney Monaghan, “Defining Queer Theory” (2020) Read: Susan Stryker, “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory’s Evil Twin” (2004)
T 1/24	Introduction to Analyzing Media	Read: Greg Smith, “It’s Just a Movie: A Teaching Essay for Introductory Media Classes” (2001) Read: David Bordwell, “Watching Films” (2006)
Analyzing LGBTQ Film		
Th 1/26	Early Histories <i>Screen in class: clips from The Celluloid Closet (1995)</i>	Watch: <i>Mädchen in Uniform</i> (Leontine Sagan, 1931) - YouTube Read: B. Ruby Rich, “From repressive tolerance to erotic liberation” (1981)
T 1/31	Film Noir	Watch: <i>Rope</i> (Alfred Hitchcock, 1948) - Archive.org Robin Wood, “The Murderous Gays: Hitchcock's Homophobia” (1995)
Th 2/2	LGBT Film Activism	Read: Matt Connolly, “Liberating the Screen: Gay and Lesbian Protests of LGBT Cinematic Representation, 1969-1974”

		<p>Read: Vito Russo, “Introduction: on the closet mentality” from <i>The Celluloid Closet</i> (1981)</p> <p>Recommended: Lauren Herold interview with Rich Ferraro, “Strategic advocacy at the GLAAD media awards” (2021)</p> <p>Due: Screening Reports part 1</p>
T 2/7	<p>Gay and Lesbian Avant-gardes in the 1960s-70s</p> <p><i>Screen in class: clips of films by John Waters, Barbara Hammer, Andy Warhol, Chantal Akerman, and Rocky Horror</i></p>	<p>Read: Richard Dyer, “Lesbian/woman: lesbian cultural feminist film” (1990)</p> <p>Read: Cael Keegan, “In praise of the bad transgender object: Rocky Horror” (2019)</p>
Th 2/9	New Queer Cinema	<p>Watch: <i>Paris is Burning</i> (Jennie Livingston, 1991) - Kanopy</p> <p>Read: Daniel Contreras, “New Queer Cinema: Spectacle, Race, Utopia” (2004)</p>
T 2/14	<p>HIV/AIDS on Screen</p> <p><i>Screen in class: Blue (Derek Jarman, 1993)</i></p>	<p>Read: Monica Pearl, “AIDS and New Queer Cinema” (2004)</p> <p>Read: Douglas Crimp, “Portraits of People with AIDS” (1992)</p>
Th 2/16	Queer Archives	<p>Watch: <i>The Watermelon Woman</i> (Cheryl Dunye, 1996) - Kanopy</p> <p>Read: Karin Wimbley, “Stereotypy, Mammy, and Recovery in Cheryl Dunye’s <i>The Watermelon Woman</i>” (2020)</p>
T 2/21	Queer Reading & Reception	Alexander Doty, “There’s Something Queer Here” (1993)

		Andre Cavalcante, “You have to be really strong: Practicing resilient reception” (2018)
Th 2/23	Mainstreaming Queer Movies	Watch: <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> (Ang Lee, 2005) - Netflix Read: Maria San Filippo, “Of Cowboys and Cocksman: Bisexuality and the Contemporary Hollywood Bromance” (2013)
T 2/28	Contemporary LGBTQ Film	Watch: <i>Lingua Franca</i> (Isabel Sandoval, 2019) - Netflix Read: Karl Schoonover and Rosalind Gait, “Queer, World, Cinema,” the Introduction to <i>Queer Cinema in the World</i> (2016)
Th 3/2	Is Visibility a Trap? <i>Screen in class: clips from Disclosure (Sam Feder, 2020)</i>	Read: Hari Ziyad, “ For Black Queers, Invisibility is Often the Best Liberation Strategy ” (2017) Read: Tourmaline, Eric R. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, “Known Unknowns: An Introduction to <i>Trap Door</i> ” (2017) Due: Screening Reports part 2
Analyzing LGBTQ TV & Digital Media		
T 3/21	Stereotypes & Social Problems	Watch: “ The Homosexuals ” (CBS, 1967) Read: Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch, “Television as a Cultural Forum” (1983) Read: John Fiske and John Hartley, “Reading Television” (1978)

<p>Th 3/23</p>	<p>Sex & the 1970s</p> <p><i>Screen in class: All in the Family, clips from Laugh-In, Hollywood Squares, Bewitched, Three's Company</i></p>	<p>Read: Elana Levine, "Sex with a Laugh Track: Sexuality and Television Humor" (2007)</p> <p>Read: Larry Gross, "Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media" (1991)</p>
<p>T 3/28</p>	<p>Art and Video Activism</p>	<p>Watch: <i>Dyke TV</i> (1993-2006) episode 1</p> <p>Read: Lucas Hilderbrand, "Joanie and Jackie and Everyone They Knew: Video Chainletters as Feminist Community Network" (2009)</p>
<p>Th 3/30</p>	<p>The Gay 90s</p> <p><i>Screen in class: "The Puppy Episode" of Ellen (1997)</i></p>	<p>Read: Ron Becker, "Prime-Time Television in the Gay 90s" (2004)</p> <p>Read: Joshua Gamson, "I want to be miss understood" (1998)</p>
<p>T 4/4</p>	<p>Lesbian Chic</p>	<p>Watch: <i>The L Word</i> (2004-2009) pilot episode - Hulu</p> <p>Read: Julia Himberg, "Multicasting: Lesbian programming and the changing landscape of cable TV" (2014)</p>
<p>Th 4/6</p>	<p>RuPaul's Drag World</p>	<p>Watch: <i>RuPaul's Drag Race</i> Season 15 premiere</p> <p>Read: Zeena Feldman and Jaime Hakim, "From <i>Paris is Burning</i> to #dragrace: social media and the celebrification of drag culture" (2020)</p> <p>Due: Screening Reports part 3</p>
<p>T 4/11</p>	<p>The Ryan Murphy's Queer America</p>	<p>Alfred Martin, "The Queer Business of Casting Gay Characters on US Television" (2018)</p>

		Read: Lynne Joyrich, “Posing as Normal?: The Televisual and the Queer, <i>The New Normal</i> and <i>Pose</i> ” (2022)
Th 4/13	Class Canceled	Due: Film/TV Review
T 4/18	Digital TV	Watch: episodes of <i>The Feels</i> Read: Aymar Jean Christian, “Expanding production value: The culture and scale of television and new media” (2019) **OPTIONAL** Read: Aymar Jean Christian and Khadijah Costley-White, “Organic Representation as Cultural Reparation” (2020)
Th 4/20	Queer Fandom	Read: Abigail DeKosnik, “Queer and Feminist Archival Countercultures: The Politics of Preserving Fan Works” (2016) Read: Jennifer Duggan, “Transformative Readings: Harry Potter Fan Fiction, Trans/ Queer Reader Response, and J. K. Rowling” (2020)
T 4/25	Online Community	Read: Addie Shrodes, “Humor as Political Possibility: Critical Media Literacy in LGBTQ+ Participatory Cultures” (2021) Read: Laura Horak, “Trans on YouTube: Intimacy, Visibility, Community” (2014)
Th 4/27	Ga(y)mes	Read: Whit Pow, “Reaching toward Home: Software Interface as Queer Orientation in the Video Game Curtain” (2018)

		Read: Bo Ruberg, “Introduction” to <i>Video Games Have Always Been Queer</i> (2019)
T 5/2	Influencing & Activism	Read: Tobias Raun, “Capitalizing intimacy: New subcultural forms of micro-celebrity strategies and affective labour on YouTube” (2017) Read: Mia Fischer, “#Free_CeCe: the material convergence of social media activism” (2016) Due: Screening Reports part 4
Th 5/4	Wrapping Up	Final paper or project due Thurs 5/11

College Policies:

Academic Honesty

At Kenyon College we expect all students, at all times, to submit work that represents our highest standards of academic integrity. It is the responsibility of each student to learn and practice the proper ways of documenting and acknowledging those whose ideas and words they have drawn upon (see Academic Honesty and Questions of Plagiarism in the Course Catalog). Ignorance and carelessness are not excuses for academic dishonesty. Please let me know if you have any questions about academic honesty and I will be happy to help you.

Statement on Title IX

As a faculty member, I am deeply invested in the well-being of each student I teach. I am here to assist you with your work in this course. If you come to me with non-course-related concerns, I will do my best to help. It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of harassment, discrimination, and intimate partner violence and stalking. Meaning, I must report any such discussion to the Civil Rights/Title IX coordinator. I cannot keep information involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, or any other form of harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic, confidential. The Health and Counseling Center, the College chaplains, and the staff at New Directions Domestic Abuse Shelter & Rape Crisis Center are confidential resources.

For further information, please refer to the following Kenyon College policies: [Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [ADA/504 Student Grievance Procedures](#).

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Kenyon College acknowledges that the lands on which we live, work, celebrate, and heal are the ancestral homelands of the Miami, Lenape, Wyandotte, and Shawnee peoples, among others. The disputed Treaty of Greenville (1795) and the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from this region allowed for the founding of the College in the early 1800s. As a community, we are committed to confronting this dark past while also embracing through education and outreach the many Indigenous communities that continue to thrive in Ohio.

Accessibility Accommodations: You have the *right* to an education in a way that works for you. Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. Our shared goal is to create learning environments that are accessible, equitable, and inclusive. If you have a disability (or just suspect that you have one) and need some sort of accommodation, please feel free to approach me to discuss what you need to help you learn. If you anticipate barriers related to the format, requirements, or assessments of this course, you are encouraged first to contact the office of Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) by emailing sass@kenyon.edu, and to meet with me to discuss accommodation options or adaptations.