

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

FILM 307 L01 and B01
Topics in Cinema and Gender Studies: Contemporary Queer Cinema
Fall 2018 Block Week

Class Meetings August 27-31, with some assignments due during regular fall term

MTWRF, 9:00am-5:00pm

Instructor: Dr. Dawn Johnston
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Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: By appointment – I will be available to meet students by appointment both in advance of the course and throughout the fall semester.

Course Description

The course will explore various incorporations of queer experience in the context of films from multiple countries and cultures. The course engages in critical discussions on film as a space for resistance against coercive sexual and gender binaries. It also alludes to cinema's articulation of sexual identity as a social construct within a complex set of social, historical, and institutional relations.

Additional Information

This course examines representations of gender and sexuality in film, and it is entirely possible - quite likely, in fact - that some of the material will be sexually explicit, and may challenge your comfort level with regards to portrayals of gender roles and identities, sexualities, and sexual orientations. This material is crucial to the course, so please consider your course selection carefully if you are concerned about your response to the material.

This is a block week course. We will be in class from 9am-5pm Monday through Friday.

This is an extremely intensive learning format, and will require your full attention for all five days. There will be assigned reading and some research/writing each night, so students should not plan any additional activities (work shifts, volunteer activities, etc.). Students should expect to spend approximately two hours each night during the week in preparation for the next day's class. This intensive learning format can be exciting and invigorating, but it can also be exhausting, so do whatever you can to protect your time during the week of classes!

Objectives of the Course

This course encourages students to consider the performance and representation of queer sexualities in contemporary cinema. We will examine films from several countries, analyzing the rhetoric, performance, and representation of homosexuality, bisexuality, trans and non-binary gender, and other expressions of queerness in these visual texts.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop their skills in critical analysis
- Analyze films within the context of a larger popular culture landscape
- Consider the broader rhetorical context of contemporary social and political debates about representations of gender identity and sexuality in popular media
- Write and discuss films using criticism and analysis, rather than review*

*In this course you are engaging in criticism and analysis, not what we commonly see as "review." We're not looking at whether you like or dislike the selected films - we're looking at what these films are doing and why it matters. A review usually expresses a first impression after a single viewing. Critical analysis is the result of careful, considered, and complex thought, and it usually requires multiple viewings. Where a review describes or summarizes a film or television show, criticism analyzes how the specific elements of the text - e.g., its plot, characterization, narrative structure, dialogue, settings, sound, lighting, editing, etc. - work together to advance the theme that you are defining in your work. The strength of your argument will depend upon the "evidence" from the film that you use to support your claims. For your models of critical writing, look to academic books on film and to the specialized film and popular culture journals (e.g., *Film Quarterly*, *Journal of Popular Film/TV*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Jump Cut*, *Film Comment*, *Sight and Sound*, *Cineaste*, etc.).

Textbooks and Readings

There is no textbook for this course. Required readings (which should be completed in advance of the class in which we will discuss them, and will include both scholarly articles and popular and independent press "think pieces") will be posted or linked on D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops are permitted for note taking only. Phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during class. If you need to leave your phone on your desk during class because of the potential for an emergency call, please let me know. Otherwise, please do not use your phones at all during lecture and screening time. Laptops may not be open at all during film screenings – if you wish to take notes during our class screening of a film, please use a pen and paper. On the whole, please respect your fellow students and your instructor by avoiding distracting uses of technology.

Assignments and Evaluation (see detailed descriptions below table)

Weight	Course components	Date
25%	In-class test. Closed book, based on key concepts in queer theory and the history of queer cinema	Wednesday, August 29
30%	Group presentation	Selected or assigned date between Tuesday August 28 and Friday

		August 31
35%	Excluded film essay	Wednesday, October 31
10%	Daily “Critical Incident” reflection (must complete four)	Due by midnight each day of block week

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All students will be required to give an in-class group presentation introducing one of the films being screened as part of this course. Presentations will take place in the discussion time immediately following the film screening. Presentations should be 15-20 minutes in length, and should provide some contextual background and preliminary commentary on the selected film. The main purpose of each presentation is to generate and frame our class discussion and analysis of the film – discussions of directors, cultural contexts, specific film techniques, major themes, critical response and popular reception would all be welcome, **but not all are required** – your group should select which elements are most useful in generating and guiding discussion of your film. The presentation need not conduct in-depth analysis, but should provide us with contextual tools to aid in our classroom analysis of the film that we have watched. While online resources like Wikipedia and IMDB, among others, may be useful in gathering some of your background information, your presentation should elevate any such resource by demonstrating independent critical thought. The group must submit (by email or hard copy, on the day of your presentation) a copy of any slides or speaking notes that are used, as well as a complete bibliography of all sources consulted in your preparation. Please remember that guidelines around plagiarism and academic integrity apply to oral presentations exactly as they do to written work. I will be using the randomizing function on D2L to create presentation groups. Each student will be assigned a group and film. These group assignments and corresponding films will be communicated to students in D2L and by email one week in advance of the start of the course. While students will be given ample time in class on the first day of block week to meet with their groups and prepare their presentations, groups will be encouraged to connect by email in advance of block week to create their group contract (details provided on D2L) and start doing some preliminary work on your film (you would likely want to watch it and read about it in advance of the start of the course). For the grading of this presentation, unless there is compelling evidence to indicate otherwise, all group members will receive the same grade on the assignment. This assignment will be worth 30% of your course grade.

The test on August 29th will consist of short answer questions focusing on key concepts in queer film theory and the history of queer cinema – the major focus of our first day of class. These questions may take the format of short definitions or fill-in-the-blanks. The test is worth 25% of your course grade.

One of the most commonly asked questions in a topics-based film course is: "Why aren't we watching...?" We all have ideas about which films *should* be part of a course on contemporary queer cinema, and this is your chance to defend your choice. You are required to write a 1000-1250 word essay about which excluded film of the last twenty years *you* would have included in this course. Your essay should include a *brief* plot description, some background information on the film, and, most importantly, a rationalization of why it would make a significant contribution to a course on contemporary queer cinema. You are encouraged to use the concepts from queer theory and queer film history discussed at the beginning of this course. You should also incorporate 3-4 **scholarly** sources about queer film, culture, and/or history into your argument. You may also wish to consider which course from our syllabus that you would have removed to make space for your selection, though this is not required. Your essay should be submitted to the D2L drop box by October 31. This essay is worth 35% of your course grade.

The remaining 10% of your course will be evaluated through a daily "critical incident" reflection. This is a very short questionnaire asking you to briefly reflect on your responses to the films and our class discussions of them. You must complete **four** of these reflections to an acceptable standard in order to receive the 2.5% allotted to each assignment. You may complete two per day (on days with two films) if you so choose. These assignments are due at midnight on the day in which we screen the film in class.

You do not need to complete all assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments: Please upload your assignments to the dropbox on D2L. If you encounter technological issues, you may send your assignment by email to the instructor to demonstrate that it was completed (and submission was attempted) on time.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. In this course, letter grades will be used for the group presentation and the essay, while percentage grades will be used for the test and critical incident reflections.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%

1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For further information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</p>
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Tentative Screening and Reading List

Because this is such an intensive class, it is strongly recommended that you complete all readings in advance of the start of block week – you have daily required writing assignments and group presentations that you may need to work on in the evenings of our class week. **NOTE: Two readings below are with an asterisk (*) or listed as “TBA,” and are awaiting final decision and copyright clearance. The full and final reading list will be updated on D2L by August 13, at which time any remaining PDFs or links will also be posted.**

August 27: Introduction to class
Screening: *The Celluloid Closet* (1995)
Reading: Benschhoff, Harry and Griffin, Sean. “General Introduction” Queer Cinema. New York: Routledge, 2005. (PDF on D2L)

*Reading: Doty, Alexander “Queer Theory” (PDF on D2L)

Screening: *Milk* (2008) (will start screening on Monday afternoon and finish Tuesday morning)

Reading: Benschhoff, Harry. “*Milk* and gay political history.” Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media 51. Spring 2009. (Link on D2L)

August 28: Screening: *Brokeback Mountain* (2005)

Reading: McDonald, Janet. “Queering the representation of the masculine ‘west’ in Ang Lee’s *Brokeback Mountain*.” Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review 3:2, 2007. (Link on D2L)

Screening: *Bound* (1996)

Reading: Straayer, Chris. “Femme Fatale or Lesbian Femme: *Bound* in Sexual Difference.” Women in Film Noir. Ed: E. Ann Kaplan. London: British Film Institute, 1998. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/lib/ucalgary-ebooks/reader.action?ppg=232&docID=3413971&tm=1533158501650>

August 29: Screening: *Pariah* (2011)

Reading: Keeling, DeClue, Welbon, Stewart & Rastegar. “Pariah and Black Independent Cinema Today.”
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=14&sid=ea9ffa2d-8687-4458-af6e-56e0a24caf27%40sessionmgr120>

Screening: *Love, Simon* (2018)

Reading: “What’s Happening to ‘Queer’ Cinema in the LGBT Film Boom?”
<https://slate.com/culture/2018/05/queer-cinema-whats-happening-to-it.html>

August 30: Screening: *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999)

Reading: Barron, Alexandra. "Productive Discomfort in the Classroom: Teaching *Boys Don't Cry*." New Review of Film and Television Studies 3:1, 2005. (Link on D2L)

Reading: Halbertstam, Jack. "Hiding the Tears in My Eyes – *Boys Don't Cry* – A Legacy." <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2016/12/07/hiding-the-tears-in-my-eyes-boys-dont-cry-a-legacy-by-jack-halberstam/>

Reading (of interest, but not required):
<https://www.villagevoice.com/2018/06/20/how-i-broke-and-botched-the-brandon-teena-story/>

Screening: *Tangerine* (2015)

Reading: Green, McKinley. "Tangerine: Review."
http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=T002&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=6&docId=GALE%7CA483829945&docType=Movie+review&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=AONE&contentSet=GALE%7CA483829945&searchId=R3&userGroupName=ucalgary&inPS=true

April 8: Screening: *Moonlight* (2016)

Reading: Nayman, Adam. "Moonlight, a prism of repression and desire, awash in poetry." <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/reviews-recommendations/moonlight-barry-jenkins>

Reading: Gates, Raquel. "The Last Shall Be First: Aesthetics and Politics in Black Film and Media." <http://fq.ucpress.edu/content/ucpfq/71/2/38.full.pdf>

C.R.A.Z.Y. (2005)

Reading: TBA