

REPRESENTING SEXUALITY: AN INTRODUCTION TO QUEER VISUALITIES

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is fundamentally concerned with the representation of that class of difference which today is commonly called lesbian/gay/queer/bisexual/and/or transgendered, but which in other historical periods could have been called Uranian, Inversion, Sapphic, Butch, Wildean and a host of other terms. More often than not, it was simply not called anything at all. Often, in lieu of the historical articulation of queer identity, we have instead visual images, literary descriptions, and evocative lyrics. The course will use Paintings, poems, novels and songs as primary texts towards understanding the shifting construction of largely Anglo-American queer identity in the late 19th and 20th centuries– that moment when, Foucault famously claimed, homosexuality was transformed from being a verb to a noun, from a behavior to an identity. Given the peculiar and particular array of pressures– political, religious, judicial among others– governing the recognition of queerness, in place of naming, often all we have are these historical representations. Such representations, and what they tell us about the ever-changing constructions of queerness, are the subject of this course.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The organization is largely chronological and entirely interdisciplinary. We will shift our attention fluidly between paintings, poems, novels, film and video, and music towards an historical consideration of queer representations and their significance. Throughout the course, in every respect, we will be attentive to the ways race, gender and social class cross-cut the story of sexuality and its representations, shifting construction of largely Anglo-American queer identity in the late 19th and 20th centuries– that moment when, Foucault famously claimed, homosexuality was transformed from being a verb to a noun, from a behavior to an identity. Given the peculiar and particular array of pressures– political, religious, judicial among others– governing the recognition of queerness, in place of naming, often all we have are these historical representations. Such representations, and what they tell us about the ever-changing constructions of queerness, are the subject of this course.

THE PROBLEMATICS OF QUEER REPRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

Tobias Smollett, *Roderick Random* (1763)

18th Century aristocratic portraiture and effeminacy

ADHESIVENESS: WHITMAN, WINSLOW HOMER AND THE PROBLEM OF NAMING IDENTITY

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*—selections (1855)

Martin, Robert K. *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*: 3-47.

Paintings by Winslow Homer

SELF-FASHIONING

DANDIES: REPRESENTING OTHERNESS

Charles Baudelaire "The Dandy" from *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863)

Oscar Wilde, "Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young" (1894)

Jonathan Dollimore, "Different Desires: Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide" in *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (1991)

Paintings by Rosa Bonheur, John Singer Sargent

MIMESIS: HOMOSEXUALITY AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion:

Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War 1 Era" in Martin Duberman, *Hidden from History* (1989): 294-317

Paintings by Thomas Eakins, George Bellows

SOCIAL CLASS AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

EXPATRIATES IN PARIS

Stein, Gertrude. "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" in *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*. : 561-568.

Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*: 62-67.

Paintings by Romaine Brooks, photos by Bernice Abbot

HARLEM IN THE TWENTIES

Garber, Eric. "A Spectacle in Color", in Martin Duberman, *Hidden from History* (1989): 318-331.

Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*: 68-88

Listen to *AC/DC Blues* (queer blues by Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey and others)

Photos by Carl Van Vechten

IDENTITY AND MARGINALITY

YOUTH

Watson, Steven. Introduction to *The Young and Evil*. 1988. pp vii-xxxvii.

Parker Tyler And Charles Henri Ford, *The Young and Evil*: (1933) –Chapter 2

George Platt Lynes photos

Film: *Sleep in the Nest of Flames*

GENDERED REPRESENTATIONS

BUTCH/FEMME

Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman" in Martin Duberman, *Hidden from History* (1989):281-293.

Leslie Feinberg, "Butch to Butch: A Love Song" and "Letter to a Fifties Femme from a Stone Butch"

Paintings by Georgia O'Keefe

MILITANTS & QUEENS: STYLES OF RESISTANCE

BEAT AND BEATNIK

Allen Ginsberg—selected poems

Jonathan Katz, Allen Ginsberg interviewed (1989)

Larry Rivers Paintings

QUEENS

Frank O'Hara—selected poems

Jess Paintings

CAMP RESISTANCES

DIFFERENT DRAGS

Patrick Dennis, *Little Me* (1962)—selections

Michael Bronski, Judy Garland and Others

Warhol Paintings

CAMP

"Gay party at Police Station" *Mattachine Newsletter*, 1969.

Jack Babuscio, "Camp and the Gay Sensibility"

Andy Warhol's *Bike Boy*

PUTTING THE SEX IN SEXUALITY

HUSTLERS AND WHORES

John Rechy, *City of Night* (1963)—selections

Paintings by Paul Cadmus

LEATHER AND S/M

Thom Magister, "One Among Many" in *Leatherfolk* (1984)

photos by Robert Mapplethorpe, Catherine Opie

SEPARATISMS

LESBIAN FEMINIST

Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman,"

Jill Johnston *Lesbian Nation* (1973)—selections

performance art by Betsy Damon

FEMINIST LESBIANS

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, *Lesbian/Woman* (1972)

installations by Judy Chicago, photos by Tee Corrine,
The Cunt Coloring Book

GAY MALE SEPARATISMS

THE GAY GHETTO

Brian Currid "We Are Family: House Music and Queer Performativity" (1995)

DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

MARLON RIGGS

Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julien, "True Confessions"
See *Tongues Untied*

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN-AMERICAN QUEERNESS

Audre Lord *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982)—selections
Essex Hemphill *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry* (1992)—selections
Art by Glen Ligon

AIDS

VISUALIZING AIDS

Douglas Crimp, *AIDS Cultural Analyses/ Cultural Activism*
Art by Keith Haring, Jerome Caja

WRITING AIDS

Paul Monette *Love Alone: Eighteen Elegies for Rog* (1988)
David Wojnarowicz *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (1991)—selections
Art by David Wojnarowicz, Gran Fury, Rudy Lemcke

QUEER NATIONALS

QUEER WORDS

Simon Watney, "Queer Epistemology: Activism, Outing and the Politics of Sexual Identity"
Art by Deborah Kass and Queer activist graphics

QUEER VISIONS

Lynda Goldstein, "Revamping MTV: Passing For Queer Culture in the Video Closet"
See Stuart Marshall's *Bright Eyes*

TRANSPOLITICS

TRANSEXUALITIES

Sandy Stone "The Empire Strikes Back: A Post Transexual Manifesto" In *Body Guards* (1991)
photos by Nan Goldin, Loren Cameron

TRANSPOLITICS

See *Paris is Burning*