

## **Queer Cinema**

### **ENG 4133 (06HB) and WST 4930 (091A)**

Associate Professor Barbara Mennel

Office Hours: T 9:00-11:00 and by appointment

Office: 4219 Turlington Hall

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Meeting times: Class meeting: T 5-6 (11:45am-1:40pm) and R 6 (12:50pm-1:40pm)

Screening: M E1-E3 (beginning at 7:20pm) (attendance required)

Room for meetings and screening: TUR 2322

#### **Course description and objectives:**

This course introduces students to the intersection of film studies and queer theory. It traces the history of visual encoding of non-normative sexual desire in dominant genres, such as the activist documentary and the melodrama, and discusses key concepts, such as camp and trash. The course investigates points of contact between exploitation film and the avantgarde by discussing works by directors, such as Su Friedrich, John Waters, Andy Warhol, and Edward D. Wood. Based on the question whether the depiction of gay and lesbian desire has produced a distinct queer film aesthetic, we will investigate the paradox of socially imposed invisibility and the visibility inherent in the medium film. Because the course highlights marginal subjectivities and their cinematic expression, it includes films that can be experienced as strange and weird or traumatic and painful. Participants in this class need to be able to approach such films with an open mind that allows them to engage with the texts productively, scholarly, and theoretically.

"Queer Cinema" provides an overview of the history of gay and lesbian cinema with its key turning points and periods; it introduces students to the theoretical questions that queer cinema produces for film studies; and, it highlights the emergence of queer studies in relationship to film culture. Films might include *Different from the Others* (1919), *Girls in Uniform* (1931), *Glen or Glenda* (1953), *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1959), *The Children's Hour* (1961), *Therese and Isabelle* (1968), *Desert Hearts* (1985), *Torch Song Trilogy* (1986), *Looking for Langston* (1989), *Paris is Burning* (1990), *Swoon* (1992), *The Watermelon Woman* (1996), *Ma Vie En Rose* (1997) and *XXY* (2007). We will read queer theory and film studies by Judith Butler, Richard Dyer, Susan Sontag, and Patricia White, among others. The course will be reading and viewing-intensive. In addition, writing assignments throughout the semester serve as building blocks for a final research paper.

#### **Required Reading:**

Course Pack: Available at Xerographic Copy Center, 927 NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street [R]

Book available at University Bookstore, Reitz Union:

Barbara Mennel. *Queer Cinema: Vampires, Schoolgirls and Gay Cowboys*. New York: Wallflower, 2012.

All readings are also on reserve and accessible through the website of Library West, as well as on sakai. It is your responsibility to have readings in front of you for discussion, either by printing them out or by using an ipad or laptop, and to be able to navigate the text.

**Grading:**

Participation and on-time attendance	10%
Regular reading and viewing quizzes	10%
Close reading of a short film or sequence	20%
Final paper:	
Topic proposal and bibliography	10%
Annotated bibliography	20%
Final Paper	30%

**Due Dates:**

Short Paper	Thursday, October 10, 2013
Topic Proposal and Bibliography	Thursday, October 31, 2013
Annotated Bibliography	Thursday, November 14, 2013
Final Paper	Monday, December 9, 2013 by 5:00pm

**Grading Scale:**

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899
B	3.0	83-86	830-869
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799
C	2.0	73-76	730-769
C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
D	1.0	63-66	630-669
D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
F	0.00	0-59	000-599

**Attendance:**

Attendance in class and at the screenings is mandatory. You need to provide written documentation for absences resulting from sickness, personal crises, natural catastrophes, and deaths among family and friends. Unexcused absences lower your attendance grade. More than two unexcused absences will affect your final course grade by lowering it one increment (e.g. from A to A-, A- to B+ etc.) for each unexcused absence. Three instances of tardiness without formal excuses equal one absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the missed materials, which includes viewing the films you have missed and getting notes from class discussion. I take

attendance at every class meeting. Should you be late, it is your responsibility to make sure that I marked you as present by coming up to me at the end of class.

**Participation:**

Academic conversation is one of the skills that you should acquire in college and thus need to practice. Quality of oral participation reflects coherence of arguments, precision of analysis, level of attention to details, complexity of questions that drive academic inquiry, application of the vocabulary that pertains to the particular discipline, and the consistency and level of preparedness and engagement with the course material, including viewings and readings. Your grade for participation will reflect the quality and quantity of your contributions to the class, including the productive engagement with your classmates.

**Reading Quizzes:**

These are simple, short, unannounced but regular quizzes at the beginning of class that pose a limited number of straightforward content questions about the readings and the films. These will begin after the end of drop/add on Thursday, August 29. No make-up quizzes are given. If you have a formal excuse (e.g. doctor's note), the points for the missing quiz is averaged from your other quizzes. If you miss a quiz because you are late or absent without a written excuse, you receive zero points for the missing quiz.

**Assignments:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due dates. No late assignments are will be accepted, except with a doctor's note or equivalent document. Should you have to miss an assignment, communicate with me prior to the deadline. This applies to all assignments, but is particularly important for the final research paper. Should you experience extenuating circumstances beyond your control that prevent you from handing in your final paper on time, you need to contact me before the deadline with official documentation and negotiate an appropriate and realistic date for submission. If you are unable to complete the course in time for me to grade your final paper and calculate your final grade before final grades are due, we need to sign a contract for an incomplete, which includes documentation of your extenuating circumstances (most likely a doctor's note). This procedure follows university regulations. I am unable to give an Incomplete without completing this paperwork, for which you have to be present in person.

**Short Paper:**

The short paper focuses on an analysis of a film or a sequence from a feature-length film that we have either viewed in class or that is related to the course topic. Please focus on the close reading of the formal elements of the film in your analysis, but feel free to include or apply secondary literature we have read in class. Length: 4-5 pages (min. 1000 words) with 12pt font and 1 inch margins, including page numbers. No outside research is necessary. **Due: Week 8, Thursday, October 10, 2013.**

**Topic Proposal and Bibliography:**

You need to submit a proposal for the final paper, which should be the length of one paragraph. The proposal does not receive a letter grade. However, points will be deducted for late proposals, for missing sections, grammatical and stylistic errors, for formatting issues (e.g. hand-written material) and for mistakes in the bibliography (incomplete entries or inconsistencies). You will receive 0 points for not handing in a proposal. After one week, I will not accept late proposals.

The proposal has to include the following:

- a tentative title
- an explanation and description of your research interest and your research questions,
- the film(s) that you will discuss in your final paper,
- a bibliography of at least five titles of scholarly texts (books or articles) that relate to your topic but are not listed on the syllabus. You may not include websites or blogs as your sources.

The proposal has to be typed in 12pt font with 1 inch margins and include your name. Incorrect references, incorrect citation, and incomplete proposals will result in a deduction of points.

**Due: Week 11, Thursday, October 31, 2013.**

**Annotated Bibliography:**

The annotated bibliography includes two bibliographic entries (most likely from your topic proposal), each with a short summary and your evaluation of the texts' productivity for your final paper, and **one paragraph on how these two texts relate to one scholarly text that we have read in class.**

You may change your topic from the topic proposal to this assignment. If you change your topic, include one paragraph on your new topic. It is common that our topics change once we engage in research. Minimum: 500 words (1-2 pages)

The proposal has to be typed in 12pt font with 1 inch margins and include your name and page numbers. Annotated bibliographies are typically written in single space.

**Due: Week 13, Thursday, November 14, 2013.**

This assignment does not receive a letter grade but points will be deducted for the following: incorrect or incomplete bibliographic entries; incorrect or incomplete assignment; missing, random, incorrect or inappropriate titles\*; sloppy writing; the impression that you have not actually read the material.

\*For example, sometimes articles include words in their title but the article itself does not discuss the topic at all. Students who list such an article reveal that they have done a title search but that they have not actually read the article.

**Final Paper:**

The final paper is 8-9 pages long (min. 2000 words) on a research topic related to Queer Cinema. It should go beyond class discussion. However, you can focus your paper on films that we have seen in class or films that we have not seen in class. The final paper has to integrate at least two outside source of scholarly texts that we did not read in class and at least one academic text from class. You may integrate the material from

your short paper into your final paper for a final paper of 12-14 pages (3000 words). I offer this as an opportunity to create writing samples for application to graduate schools in English or Film Studies. Please keep in mind that the complete paper needs to be coherent, which might imply that you have to rewrite sections of the midterm, for example, the introduction and conclusion. If you are interested in that option, you might want to discuss it with me prior to deciding on the topic of your midterm. The final paper has to be typed in 12pt font with 1 inch margins, include your name and page numbers.

**Due: Monday, December 9, 2013 by 5:00. You may drop off your paper in my office or email it to me. Until you receive a confirmation that I have received your email and have been able to print out your paper, it is your responsibility to remain accessible and keep a copy of your paper. If you drop off a paper in my mailbox, please follow up with a confirmation email that I received your paper.**

**Plagiarism and Cheating:**

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dsoufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional unacknowledged use of the intellectual works of others, including published and unpublished material from the web or friends. I prosecute plagiarism and cheating to the fullest extent possible at UF, the minimum of which is that you will fail this class and receive the letter grade F for this course. Per university policy, all allegations of academic misconduct are required to be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) in the Dean of Students Office.

**Graded and Submitted Materials:**

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned work until they have received their final grades on ISIS. Should the need for a review of the grade arise, it is the student's responsibility to have and make available all returned assignments and quizzes.

**Special Dispensations:**

If you have a learning disability, hardship, or other dispensation approved by the Office of Student Affairs, please meet with me to discuss your requirements as early in the term as possible. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodation for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Technology Use in Class:**

**All cell phones must be absolutely silent and invisible during the actual class periods (off the desk and not in your pockets).** Since some students now read on their laptops and ipads, I allow the use of laptops and ipads in the classroom. Should I see that you

use your electronic device at any point during class time for any activity not related to the course materials or note-taking on this course, your use of individual electronic media will be banned for the rest of the semester. Should you use your phone to text during class, you will count as absent that day.

**Statement on Harassment:**

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sexual, racial, ethnic, gender, and religious discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcodephp#s4041>

**A Note on Religious Holidays:**

Students who belong to a religious community are not required to attend classes on their religious holidays. Please let me know in advance.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**I: Introduction and Silent Cinema**

Week 1

Thursday, August 22

Introduction

Week 2

Monday, August 26

Screening. *Anders als die Anderen* (Richard Oswald, *Different than the Others*, 1919)

Tuesday, August 27

Barbara Mennel. "Introduction" and "Chapter One," *QC: SVGC*: 1-5 and 6-15.

Thursday, August 29

Richard Dyer. "Weimar: Less and More like the Others." *Now You See It: Studies in Lesbian and Gay Film*. London: Routledge, 1990: 7-27.

Week 3

Monday, September 2--**NO SCREENING LABOR DAY**

Watch outside of class in Library West or LLC. With subtitles only available on VHS. *Mädchen in Uniform* (Leontine Sagan, *Girls in Uniform*, 1931)

Tuesday, September 3

Barbara Mennel. "Chapter One," *QC: SVGC*: 15-25.

Richard Dyer. "Weimar: Less and More like the Others." *Now You See It: Studies in Lesbian and Gay Film*. London: Routledge, 1990: 27-48.

Thursday, September 5

B. Ruby Rich. "From Repressive Tolerance to Erotic Liberation: *Maedchen in Uniform* (1979-1983)." *ChickFlicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998: 179-206

## **II: Hollywood and the Avantgarde: Homophobia and Camp**

Week 4

Monday, September 9

*Glen or Glenda* (Edward D. Wood, Jr. 1953)

Tuesday, September 10

Barbara Mennel. "Camp: Where Trash Meets Art." *QC: SVGC*: 26-44.

Susan Sontag. "Notes on 'Camp.'" *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002: 53-65.

Thursday, September 12

Jack Babuscio. "The Cinema of Camp (aka Camp and the Gay Sensibility)." *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002: 117-135.

Week 5

Monday, September 16, 2013

*Suddenly, Last Summer* (Joseph L. Makiewicz, 1959)

Tuesday, September 17

Eve Sedgwick. "Introduction: Axiomatic." *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999: 1-63.

Thursday, September 19

Eve Sedgwick. "Introduction: Axiomatic." *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999: 64-90.

Week 6

Monday, September 23

*The Children's Hour* (William Wyler, 1961)

Tuesday, September 24

Patricia White. "Introduction." *UnInvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999: xi-xxiv.

Thursday, September 26

"Chapter One: Reading the Code(s)." *UnInvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999: 1-28.

## Week 7

Monday, September 30

*Kustom Kar Koomandos* (Kenneth Anger, 1965)*Chained Girls* (Joseph P. Mawra, 1965)

Tuesday, October 1

Barbara Mennel. "Lesbians and Sexploitation." *Queer Cinema: Schoolgirls, Vampires and Gay Cowboys*. London: Wallflower, 2012: 44-48

Thursday, October 3

Matthew Tinkcom. "SCANDALOUS! Kenneth Anger and the Prohibitions of Hollywood History." *Outtakes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*. Ed. Ellis Hanson. Durham: Duke University, 1999: 271-287.**III: Gay and Lesbian Liberation**

## Week 8

Monday, October 7

*Desert Hearts* (Donna Deitch, 1985)

Tuesday, October 8

Barbara Mennel. "Stonewall and the Positive Identification Figure." *Queer Cinema: Schoolgirls, Vampires, and Gay Cowboys*. London: Wallflower, 2012: 49-61.

Thursday, October 10

Mandy Merck. "Desert Hearts." *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*. Ed. Martha Gevers, John Greyson, and Pratibha Parmar. New York: Routledge, 1993: 377-382.**Due: Paper 1**

## Week 9

Monday, October 14

*Torch Song Trilogy* (Paul Borgart, 1988)

Tuesday, October 15

Barbara Mennel. "Cinematic Mourning." *Queer Cinema: Schoolgirls, Vampires and Gay Cowboys*. London: Wallflower Press, 2012: 61-66.Esther Newton. "Role Models." *Camp: Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002:96-109.

Thursday, October 17

Barbara Mennel. "New Queer Cinema: A New Aesthetic Language." *Queer Cinema: Schoolgirls, Vampires and Gay Cowboys*. London: Wallflower Press, 2012: 67-93.

#### IV: New Queer Cinema

##### Week 10

Monday, October 21

*Looking for Langston* (Isaac Julien, 1989)

Tuesday, October 22

Michele Aaron. "New Queer Cinema: An Introduction." *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Michele Aaron. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004: 3-14.

Thursday, October 24

B. Ruby Rich. "New Queer Cinema." *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*. Ed. Michele Aaron. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004: 15-22.

##### Week 11

Monday, October 28

*Paris is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1990)

Tuesday, October 29

Jackie Goldbsy. "Queens of Language: Paris is Burning." *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Film and Video*. London: Routledge, 108-115.

Thursday, October 31

Judith Butler. "From Interiority to Gender Performances." *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject: A Reader*. Ed. Fabio Cleto. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002: 361-368.

**Due: Topic proposal for final paper with bibliography**

##### Week 12

Monday, November 4

*Go Fish* (Rose Troche, 1994)

Tuesday, November 5

B. Ruby Rich. "Goings and Comings, the Go Fish Way." *New Queer Cinema: The Director's Cut*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013: 58-65.

Thursday, November 7

Sue-Ellen Case. "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic." *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*. Ed. Fabio Cleto. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999: 185-199.

## Week 13

Monday, November 11--**NO SCREENING VETERAN'S DAY**

Screening: *The Watermelon Woman* (Cheryl Dunye, 1996)

Tuesday, November 12

Laura L. Sullivan. "Chasing Fae: The Watermelon Woman and Black Lesbian Possibility." *The Black Studies Reader*. Eds. Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Judley. London: Routledge, 2004: 211-225.

Thursday, November 14

Kara Keeling. "'Joining the Lesbians': Cinematic Regimes of Black Lesbian Visibility." *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. Ed. E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005: 213-228.

**Due: Annotated Bibliography**

**V: Transgender and Transsexual**

## Week 14

Monday, November 18

*Ma Vie En Rose (My Life in Pink, 1997)*

Tuesday, November 19

Leslie Feinberg. "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come." *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle. London: Routledge, 2006: 205-235.

Thursday, November 21

Susan Stryker. "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies." *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle. London: Routledge, 2006: 1-17.

## Week 15

Monday, November 25

*XXY* (Lucia Puenzo, 2007)

Tuesday, November 26

Dean Spade. "Mutilating Gender." *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle. London: Routledge, 2006: 315-332.

Thursday, November 28

**THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS**

**VI: The New Normal or the New Global or Whatever You Want**

Week 16

Monday, December 2

*The Kids are Alright* (Lisa Cholodenka, 2010) or *Blue is the Warmest Color* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2013) or *Pariah* (Dee Rees, 2011) or *Tropical Malady* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2004)

Tuesday, December 3

Final discussion

**Final Paper Due: Monday, December 9, 2013 by 5:00pm**