

**Prof. Margot Weiss****Office Phone:** 685-5754**Email:** mdweiss@wesleyan.edu**Office:** Center for the Americas 206 and Anthropology 26**Course Time:** Tuesday 1:10 – 4:00pm**Office Hours:** Tuesday 4:30 - 5:30pm in ANTH 26 and Thursday 4:30-5:30pm in CAMS 206**Course Description**

This advanced seminar is organized around one central question: Can there be a queer anthropology?

Cultural anthropology and queer studies are often posed as oppositional fields, with the debate boiling down to methods/people/social science versus theory/abstractions/the humanities. Some anthropologists accuse queer studies scholars of excessive theoretical abstraction, narrow interest in Western forms of knowledge and power, and elitist, non-populist critiques of the political goals or modes of sexuality that "everyday" people desire. Meanwhile, while queer studies scholars take a less overtly hostile stance toward anthropology, they sometimes borrow its hallmark methodology (participant observation and cultural analysis) without acknowledging the disciplinary debates over the politics of representation or the vexed understandings of culture that produce anthropology's most finely-tuned, sensitive ethnographic texts. This course asks: Is it possible to resist this disciplinary divide and instead see anthropology and queer studies working productively with and against each other?

We will pursue this question by reading a series of ethnographies against and in dialogue with queer theory approaches to five main topics at the center of both fields: 1) Performativity and Subjectification; 2) Production and Consolidation of Identity; 3) Spaces, Places and Publics; 4) Normativities and Belonging; and 5) Nation, Transnation and Diaspora. Throughout, we will explore ethnography and queer studies as both method *and* theory, challenging ourselves to see the sometimes overlooked links between methodology (data, archive, material) and theory (analytics, frameworks, arguments) in *both* fields. We will ask: Is the "queer" in queer anthropology a theory, a method, a theme or something else? What happens when queer studies scholars use ethnographic methods? How might one do an ethnography of queerness?

**Course Texts**

1. Don Kulick, 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*
2. Gloria Wekker, 2006. *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro- Surinamese Diaspora*
3. Mary Gray, 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media and Queer Visibility in Rural America*
4. Jasbir Puar, 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*
5. Tom Boellstorff, 2007. *A Coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia*

*Books are available at the Bookstore and also on reserve at the library. Articles are in the E-Reserve folder on Blackboard*

**Course Assignments**

Attendance and Participation – 20%

Five Reading Analysis Papers – 40%

Final Paper – 40%

### Attendance and Participation

This is a seminar course, so your active participation is crucial to its success. I expect you to come to class on time and prepared, and to contribute to our discussion in a positive, relevant, and respectful way. Come to class ready to ask questions as well as give your analysis. When responding to the material and each other, please aim to be generous, sympathetic, and supportive readers and listeners (take the time to try and understand where someone is coming from before launching into critique). Aim for a collective approach; our discussion should allow us each to think out loud, with each other.

You may miss one class without explanation or penalty. Unexcused absences after one will negatively impact your final grade. If you think you have a valid reason for missing class (emergency, health problem, etc.), please contact your class dean/other relevant Wesleyan official and have that person contact me. Excused absences are only granted when a Wesleyan official contacts me on your behalf (not when you send me an email). If you like to take notes on your laptop, you may bring it to class; however, any use of your computer for non-class purposes will result in suspension of this privilege.

### Reading Analysis Papers

You will turn in 5 short (2-3 double-spaced page) papers on course readings throughout the semester. Papers are due at the start of our class on the date listed on the syllabus. The papers should be a generous, engaged, and critical reflection on the readings and course themes. Do not use outside readings/research for these papers; they are intended to help you process and analyze the course material.

Each paper asks you to think about the theme (e.g. “performativity”) as it is used, critiqued, expanded, or etc. in the ethnography. To start thinking about the paper, ask yourself: *(How) does the reading on the first day help us think about the material in the ethnography? What (if anything) is missing from the analytical framework or theoretical approach that is revealed in the ethnographic case study? (How) does the “method” of ethnography shed light on the “theory” we’ve read – and vice versa? Are there disagreements between differently positioned people, or communities, within the ethnographic texts, and does this challenge our theoretical understandings? What is “queer” – a topic, a method, an analytic, something else? -- across these readings?*

Once you have thought through these questions, focus in on one key topic. The paper is a short, critical essay (**not personal reflection** or narrative) -- think of these papers as a relatively informal (but proofread!) first draft of what could be a much longer paper. Keep your paper as tightly focused as possible, and jump right in to the argument without wasting space on extensive introductions or conclusions. Avoid generalizations and pontificating; instead, focus in on one issue or theme and make a succinct argument. You must back up all statements with textual citations and specific examples from the readings. In general, an excellent paper 1) will demonstrate not only that you have read the material, but that you have carefully reflected upon it and 2) will be clear, concise, and well-written.

Papers will be graded with a check system: √+ plus for truly outstanding work/effort, √ for good work/effort, and √- for poor work/effort.

### Final Paper/Project

Your final assignment is a research paper on the aspect of Queer Anthropology of your choice. The paper should be 12-15 typed, double-spaced pages, and should demonstrate a critical understanding of the key concepts of the course. Be on the lookout throughout the semester for something you want to examine, and be sure to meet with me early on if you are having trouble

coming up with a topic.

**Please note:** for those of you taking this course as an FGSS “Research Option,” you will complete a semester-long research paper in lieu of other writing assignments. If you are taking the course Research Option, please let me know asap.

Final papers are due by **5/12** at 5pm (in my office, under my door, or in my mailbox).

### **Extra credit**

You have two options for extra credit: 1) you may write an extra reading analysis paper on the recommended reading, linking it to the main readings, or 2) you may write a short “book review” (2-3 pages) of a queer ethnography (I will need to pre-approve your choice), discussing how it relates to our course themes and readings. The recommended reading paper is due the day that reading is due; the book review may be completed at any time before the end of the semester. You may do one or both of these options.

### **Class Policies**

**Late papers will not be accepted. Seriously.**

You are strongly encouraged to come to see me in office hours if there is any course material you do not understand, or if you need guidance on my expectations for papers or any other aspect of this course.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/deans/disability-students.html>.

### **Honor Code:**

All work must be done in compliance with the Honor Code. If you need help with proper citations or you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism, let me know or contact the Writing Workshop: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/>

## Course Schedule

### Course Introduction

#### Tuesday, January 26: Introduction

#### Tuesday, February 2: Queer Studies / Sexuality / Anthropology

##### *Queer Studies:*

Annamarie Jagose, 1996. "Introduction" to *Queer Theory*

David Eng, Judith Halberstam & Jose Munoz, 2005. "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?"

*Social Text*

##### *Anthropology of Sexuality:*

Carole Vance, 1991. "Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality" in *Same-Sex Cultures*

Kath Weston, 1998. "The Bubble, the Burn, and the Simmer" in *Long Slow Burn*

Tom Boellstorff, 2006. "Queer Theory Under Ethnography's Sign" *GLQ*

##### *Anthropology vs. Queer Theory:*

Ellen Lewin and Bill Leap, 2002. "Introduction" to *Out In Theory* (pp. 8-12)

Deborah Elliston, 2002. "Feminist Lessons from Tahiti" *Out In Theory* (pp. 287-292, 305-307)

##### Recommended:

Kath Weston, 1993. "Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology," *Annual Reviews of Anthropology*

Tom Boellstorff, 2007. "Queer studies in the House of Anthropology," *Annual Reviews of Anthropology*

In-class: Kath Weston, "Theory, Theory, Who's Got the Theory?"

### Theme 1: Performativity and Subjectification

#### Tuesday, February 9: Performativity and its Critics

##### *Performativity:*

Judith Butler, 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" *Theatre Journal*

Eve Sedgwick and Andrew Parker, 1995. "Introduction" to *Performativity and Performance*

##### *Anthropological Critiques:*

Rosalind Morris, 1995. "All Made Up" *Annual Review of Anthropology*

Kath Weston, 1993. "Do Clothes Make the Woman?" *Genders*

Saba Mahmood, 2005. Excerpt of *Politics of Piety* (pp. 17-25)

##### Recommended:

Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*

C. Jacob Hale, 1997. "Leatherdyke Boys & Their Daddies" *Social Text*

Roger Lancaster, 1997. "Guto's Performance" in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader*

#### Tuesday, February 16: Ethnography of Performativity

Don Kulick, 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*

**Due: Reading Analysis Paper 1**

### Theme 2: Production and Consolidation of Identity

#### Tuesday, February 23: Production of Categories and Identities

##### *Taxonomies and Power:*

Michel Foucault, 1977. "The Repressive Hypothesis," from *History of Sexuality 1*

Diana Fuss, 1995. "Inside/Out" in *Critical Encounters*

Gayle Rubin, 1984. "Thinking Sex" in *LGBT Reader* (focus on pp. 9-23)

##### *Capitalism and Identity:*

John D'Emilio, 1983. "Capitalism and Gay Identity" in *Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*  
Debra Curtis, 2004. "Commodities and Sexual Subjectivities" *Cultural Anthropology*

Recommended:

Linda Singer, 1993. "Sex and the Logic of Late Capitalism" in *Erotic Welfare*

Rosemary Hennessey, 2000. *Profit and Pleasure*

Janet Jakobsen, 2005. "Sex + Freedom = Regulation: WHY?" *Social Text*

In class: Donald Lowe. Excerpt of *The Body in Late-Capitalist USA*

David Valentine. Excerpt of *Imagining Transgender*

**Tuesday, March 2: Identities, Sexualities, Economy**

Gloria Wekker, 2006. *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro- Surinamese Diaspora*

**Due: Reading Analysis Paper 2**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Theme 3: Spaces, Places and Publics**

**Tuesday, March 23: Sex Publics and Cultures**

*Publics and Counterpublics:*

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, 1998. "Sex in Public" *Critical Inquiry*

Michael Warner, 2002. "Publics and Counterpublics" *Public Culture* (skim)

*Urban Communities:*

Gayle Rubin, 2002. "Studying Sexual Subcultures: Excavating the Ethnography of Gay Communities" in *Out In Theory*

Kath Weston, 1995. "Get Thee to a Big City" *GLQ*

Martin Manalansan, 2005. "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City" *Social Text*

Recommended:

Pat(rick) Califia, 1991. *Public Sex*

Kathy Rudy, 1998. "Sex Radical Communities and the Future of Sexual Ethics" in *Lesbian Sex Scandals*

Samuel Delany, 2001. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*

Laud Humphreys, 1970. *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*

Dangerous Bedfellows, 1996. *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics & the Future of AIDS Activism*

**Tuesday, March 30: Rethinking Community and Visibility**

Mary Gray, 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media and Queer Visibility in Rural America*

**Due: Reading Analysis Paper 3**

**Theme 4: Normativities and Belonging**

**Tuesday, April 6: Hetero-, Homo-normativity and Marriage**

*Homonormativity:*

Lisa Duggan, 2001. "The New Homonormativity" in *Materializing Democracy*  
(Bring Berlant and Warner, "Sex in Public")

*Marriage Debate:*

Michael Warner, 1999. "Normal and Normaller: Beyond Gay Marriage" *GLQ* (skim)

Judith Butler, 2002. "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual"? *differences*

Ellen Lewin, 2009. "How Can You Study Such Yucky People?" in *Gay Fatherhood*

Tom Boellstorff, 2007. "When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time" *GLQ*

In-class: More on Gay Marriage

Recommended:

Susan Stryker, 2008. "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity," *Radical History Review*

Miranda Joseph, 2002. *Against the Romance of Community*

Rodrick Ferguson, 2005. "Of Our Normative Strivings" *Social Text*

Erica Rand, 2005. "Breeders on a Golf Ball" in *The Ellis Island Snow Globe*

Chrys Ingraham, 2008. *White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture*

David Eng, 2010. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*

### **Tuesday, April 13: Nationalism and Homonormativity: Non-Ethnographic Take**

Jasbir Puar, 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*

**Due: Reading Analysis Paper 4**

## **Theme 5: Nation, Transnation and Diaspora**

### **Tuesday, April 20: Global Gays, Transnational Sexualities**

*Global Gays/Transnational Sexualities:*

Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, 2001. "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality" *GLQ*

Dennis Altman, 1997. "Global Gaze/Global Gays" *GLQ*

*Ethnographic Critiques:*

Lisa Rofel, 1999. "Qualities of Desire: Imagining Gay Identities in China" *GLQ*

Peter Jackson, 2009. "Capitalism and Global Queering" *GLQ*

*"Lesbian" Identity:*

Katie King, 2002. "There are No Lesbians Here" in *Queer Globalizations*

Kendall, 1999. "Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia" in *Female Desires*

Recommended:

Ara Wilson, 2006. "Queering Asia" *Intersections*

Martin Manalansan, 1995. "In the Shadows of Stonewall" *GLQ*

Florence Babb, 2003. "Out in Nicaragua: Local and Transnational Desires after the Revolution" *Cultural Anthropology*

On-line Debate: Dennis Altman, 1996. "On Global Queering," *Australian Humanities Review*:  
<http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-July-1996/altman.html>

Lorraine Herbst, 2009. "Imagined, Desired: Coming of Age with Queer Ethnographies" *GLQ*

Martin Manalansan, 2003. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*

Megan Sinnott, 2004. *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same Sex Relationships in Thailand*.

David Eng, 1997. "Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora in Asian American Studies" *Social Text*

### **Tuesday, April 27: Queer Studies / Queer Anthropology**

Tom Boellstorff, 2007. *A Coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia*

**Due: Reading Analysis Paper 5**

### **Tuesday, May 4: Final Take**

Course wrap-up

**Final Paper Due: 5/12 at 5pm**