

**Prof. Margot Weiss****Office:** Center for the Americas (255 High Street), Room 211**Email:** mdweiss@wesleyan.edu**Office phone:** 860-685-5754**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays, by appointment: <http://calendly.com/margot-weiss>

This course explores the operations of power on and in the body, drawing on the interdisciplinary fields of queer, disability, and transgender studies. We will examine the ways bodies are marked as deviant, abnormal, and/or pathological, and explore where processes of sexed, raced, gendered, and able-bodied normalization intersect and diverge. Case studies range from turn-of-the-century sexology to the modern freak show, the politics of passing, the science of homosexuality, the pleasures of trans and queer embodiment, the biopolitics of AIDS, and eugenics and US citizenship.

Our course will take an intersectional and interdisciplinary American Studies approach. Readings include theoretical, historical, and ethnographic approaches to power, difference, and the body. We will read several memoirs to help us ground the body politics of life lived in the intersections of queer, trans, and disability. Working with these texts is an opportunity to synthesize and explore our more theoretical and analytic readings.

This course is part of the Queer Studies concentration in American Studies, as well as the Disability Studies and Queer Studies Course Clusters. This semester, you will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with the students taking the class at the York CI (the women's prison in Niantic).

**Course texts**

1. Terry Galloway (2009), *Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir*
2. Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), *The End of San Francisco*
3. Samuel Delany (1999), *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*
4. Eli Clare (2009), *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, And Liberation*

Books are available at Broad Street Books and on reserve at Olin library. Essays and articles are in the course pack, which is available through Wesleyan's print shop. Go to "Academic Resources" in your Portfolio and click on "Supplemental Course Materials." There, you will be able to order a printed, bound copy of the course pack, which will appear in your WESU box within a few days of the order. They can also be accessed through the course Moodle.

**Course Assignments**

1. Participation ----- 10% (→ includes Tumblr posts)
2. In-class Presentation ----- 10%
3. Group Workshop ----- 15%
4. 5 Memos ----- 35%
5. Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography ----- 5%
6. Final Paper/Project (8 pages) ----- 25%

**1. Participation**

Your daily preparation and in-class participation is 10% of your grade. I expect you to be active in discussion and to shape the course with your own interests. There is a lot of reading for this class, so coming to class ready to talk and think together about the readings is essential. You don't need to have figured it all out: asking questions is a great way to participate. When you have read the extra

reading, volunteer to share that material with your classmates. Your participation should be grounded in the reading—pointing us to relevant sections of an article or a particular page is most productive. Remember, participation does not just mean talking; it means contributing to our collective learning. Posting on Tumblr is a good way to add to your participation grade if you are particularly shy.

## 2. In-class Presentation

You will be responsible for one presentation during the semester, for 10% of your course grade. This is your chance to guide our discussion of one of the assigned memoirs. An ideal presentation will draw our attention to one or two particular pages or passages that you find worthy of sustained discussion, and connect the passage(s) to one of our other readings and/or other material from the course. Your goal is to lead class discussion for 10-15 minutes through a combination of presentation and discussion questions. You should plan to check in with the other students presenting on the memoir the same day to get a sense of what others will be discussing. **You will also turn in a one-page memo that contains your notes and marked passage(s).**

## 3. Group Workshop

Once during the semester you will work in a group on a class project, for 15% of your grade. These projects require you to do a little research on a pre-determined topic (I will give you starting places and ideas), and present this material to the rest of the class in both oral and written forms (on our class Moodle page). Projects focus on **sexology (2/9), the freak show (2/11), children and GID (3/25), legal gender (3/25), eugenics (4/15), and AIDS and immigration (4/20)**. This is a collaborative project – you will want to work together to decide how best to do research, summarize findings, and present them to the class. This assignment is peer graded. **You are encouraged to meet with me in office hours to discuss the workshops and materials.**

## 4. Memos

At the end of each course unit you will turn in a 2-page reflection on the readings. Together, the five memos are worth 35% of your course grade. The memos give you the opportunity to reflect on material and connect ideas in a more synthetic way. You should quote and cite particular passages or ideas from at least four readings, over at least two course days. As you read, ask yourself: *Where do these authors agree? Where (and why) do they disagree? Which ideas are most important, controversial, enlightening, difficult to understand, provocative? How do these readings connect to (or disconnect from) other texts we have read? And finally, what do you think about these arguments or concepts?* Memos are due in class on the days marked. **Starting questions for the memos are on the last page of this syllabus.**

## 5. Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography

You will turn in a proposal for your final paper (see below) that outlines your research question / starting point in 300-500 words, and includes an annotated bibliography of at least three sources (one paragraph per source) that you have consulted. Ask me if you have any questions on appropriate sources. Your proposal should be as detailed as possible; the point is for you to do some preliminary research on your paper topic so that you understand the scholarly conversation around it, and get a jump-start on the final paper. After you turn in your proposal, we will meet to discuss it so that I can give you additional recommendations and assistance.

## 6. Final Paper

Your final paper is an 8-page research paper on the topic of your choice – as long as it is relevant to the themes and questions raised in this course. You should choose a topic in which you are

particularly interested, and integrate the concepts and frameworks you have learned in the course with new perspectives you have researched on your own. Be on the lookout throughout the semester for a topic that intrigues you. If you are having trouble coming up with a topic, be sure to meet with me early in the term so that we can brainstorm together. The final paper is due: **5/14 by 5pm**

**Extra credit:** There are quite a few events happening at Wesleyan this semester that intersect with our class. Attending a lecture and writing a short “review” posted on our class Moodle will serve as extra credit.

### Course Policies

**1. Policy on Absences:** You may miss two classes without explanation or penalty: think of these as your sick (or health) days, and take them as you see fit. I do not accept “excused” absences except in the case of catastrophic happenings, for which I will expect to be notified by your class dean/other Wesleyan official. If you miss more than 2 classes, I may ask you to withdraw. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will fail the course.

**2. Policy on extensions and late papers:** I do not grant extensions. I will accept late memos with a grade penalty of ONE letter grade (=10 points) per day.

**3. Policy on computers in the classroom:** Please talk with me if you want to use your laptop to take notes, store readings, or you have another documented reason for having it in the class. Otherwise, please do not use your laptop, cell phone, or other device during our class.

### Resources

Please come see me in office hours if there is any course material you do not understand, if you want to talk through the course material or dynamics, or if you need guidance on my expectations for memos, presentations, group projects, or any other aspect of this course. Use my online calendar—<http://calendly.com/margot-weiss>—to make an appointment. If you cannot make any of my available times, email me and I will work out an alternative time to meet with you.

### Disability Resources

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

### 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

### 0. Course Introduction: Normativity, Intersectionality, and Queer / Trans / Disability Studies

#### Monday, Jan 26: Introduction to the Course

#### Wednesday, Jan 28: Queer / Trans / Disability Studies

- Cherry Smith (1996), “What is this Thing Called Queer?” in *The Material Queer*
- Simi Linton (2005), “What Is Disability Studies?” *PLMA*
- David Valentine and Riki Anne Wilchins (1997), “One Percent on the Burn Chart: Gender, Genitals, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude” *Social Text*

*If you have extra time:*

Carol Breckenridge & Candace Vogler (2001), “The Critical Limits of Embodiment” *Public Culture*

Noreen Giffney (2009), “Introduction: The ‘q’ Word” *Ashgate Companion to Queer Theory*

#### Monday, Feb 2: The Politics of the Body

- Robert McRuer (2002), “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence” *Disability Studies Reader*
- Susan Bordo (1993), “Feminism, Foucault, and the Politics of the Body,” in *Feminist Theory and the Body*

\*\*\*\*\***Due: Memo 1**

### I. Bodies on Display: Difference, Deviance, Visibility

“Bodies on Display,” begins with sexology (turn-of-the-twentieth-century writings and case studies of bodies marked deviant, abnormal, pathological, and perverse), before moving to the visual politics of the freak show and contemporary work on the “homosexual body” and passing (as cisgendered, able-bodied, white, and/or straight).

#### Wednesday, Feb 4: Sexology: Race / Homosexuality / Nation

- Siobhan Somerville (2000), “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body” in *Queering the Color Line*
- Anne Fausto-Sterling (1995), “Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of Hottentot Women” in *Deviant Bodies*
- Jennifer Terry (1995), “Anxious Slippages Between 'Us' and 'Them': A Brief History of the Scientific Search for Homosexual Bodies” in *Deviant Bodies*

#### Monday, Feb 9: Sexology Then and Now

- Margaret Otis (1913), “A Perversion not Commonly Noted”

#### Workshop 1: Sexology, then and now

#### Wednesday, Feb 11: Public Display

- Rosemarie Garland Thomson (1997), “The Cultural Work of American Freak Shows, 1835-1940” in *Extraordinary Bodies*

### Workshop 2: The Freak Show

#### Monday, Feb 16: Passing/Visibility

- Susan Schweik (2009), “Introduction,” *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*
- Ellen Samuels (2003), “My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse” *GLQ*
- Julia Serano (2007), “Skirt Chasers: Why the Media Depicts the Trans Revolution in Lipstick and High Heels” in *Whipping Girl*
- Megan Jones (1997), “‘Gee, You Don’t Look Handicapped’: Why I Use a White Cane to Tell People that I’m Deaf” & Amanda Hamilton, “Oh the Joys of Invisibility” *Electric Edge*

*If you have extra time:*

Mia Mingus (2011), “Moving Toward the Ugly: A Politic Beyond Desirability” (speech)

Adrian Piper (1992), “Passing for White, Passing for Black” *Transition*

**In-class:** Adrian Piper’s “Cornered”

\*\*\*\*\***Due: Memo 2**

#### Wednesday, Feb 18: *Mean Little deaf Queer*

- Terry Galloway (2009), *Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir* (pp. 1-104)

**Presentations on *Mean Little deaf Queer***

#### Monday, Feb 23: *Mean Little deaf Queer*

- Terry Galloway (2009), *Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir* (pp. 105-228)

**Presentations on *Mean Little deaf Queer***

## II. Bodies Touch: *Bodies and Pleasures, Sex and Desire*

“Bodies Touch,” explores the pleasures of embodiment—the desiring (queer, trans, disabled) body, and the possibilities for resistance and community in pleasure.

#### Wednesday, Feb 25: **Bodies and Pleasures**

- Michel Foucault (1982), “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity” in *Foucault Live*
- Audre Lorde (1984), “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” *Sister Outsider*

*If you have extra time:*

Michel Foucault (1976/1990), excerpt of *History Of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (145-159)

Ladelle McWhorter (1999), excerpt of *Bodies and Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Sexual Normalization*

Gayle Rubin (1984), “Thinking Sex” *Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (pp. 1-16)

#### Thursday, Feb 26: FGSS Panel on “Social Death”

#### Monday, Mar 2: Embodiment and desire

- Amber Hollibaugh and Cherrie Moraga (1983), “What We’re Rollin Around in Bed With”

- Lezlie Frye (2012), "Fingered" in *Sex and Disability*
- Nomy Lamm (1999), "Private Dancer: Evolution of a Freak" in *Restricted Access*

*If you have extra time:*

film: *Sins Invalid*

Abby Wilkerson (2012), "Normate Sex and its Discontents" in *Sex and Disability*

\*\*\*\*\*Due: Memo 3

### **Wednesday, Mar 4: Public Sex and Dangerous Desires**

- Samuel Delany (1999), "Times Square Blue," *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*

**Presentations on *Times Square Red***

### **SPRING BREAK**

### **III. Social Bodies: Institutions, Norms, Categories**

"Social Bodies," takes a closer look at the social institutions that shape and form cultural meanings of bodily difference, exploring medicine, psychiatry, and the law alongside other systems of social categorization, such as bathroom policing and naming practices in the academy.

### **Monday, Mar 23: Medical and Legal Bodies**

- Michel Foucault (1975/1995), "Docile Bodies" in *Discipline and Punish* (focus to p. 156)
- Judith Butler (2004), "Introduction" to *Undoing Gender*
- Suzanne Kessler (1990), "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants," *Signs*

*If you have extra time:*

Eric Plemons (2010), "Envisioning the Body in Relation" in *The Body Reader: Essential Social and Cultural Readings*

### **Wednesday, Mar 25: Workshops**

- Dean Spade (2011), "Preface" and "Administrating Gender" in *Normal Life*

**3: GID and Children**

**4: Legal Sex and Gender**

Film: *Toilet Training*

### **Thursday, Mar 26: Lisa Cacho lecture**

### **Monday, Mar 30: Gender and Incarceration**

*Cruel and Unusual (64 min)*

### **Wednesday, Apr 1: Knowledge / Naming**

- David Valentine (2007), "I Know What I am" on *Imagining Transgender*
- C. Jacob Hale (1997), "Leatherdyke Boys and Their Daddies: How to Have Sex without Women or Men" *Social Text*
- Cheryl Chase (1998), "Hermaphrodites With Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism," *GLQ*

*If you have extra time:*

Gayle Salamon (2010), "Transfeminism and the Future of Gender" in *Assuming A Body*

\*\*\*\*\***Due: Memo 4**

**Monday, Apr 6: *Exile and Pride***

- Eli Clare (2009), *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, And Liberation* (part 1)

**Presentations on *Exile and Pride***

**Wednesday, Apr 8: *Exile and Pride***

- Eli Clare (2009), *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, And Liberation* (part 2)

**Presentations on *Exile and Pride***

**IV. Body Politics: Biopolitics, Nationalism, Citizenship**

"Body Politics" tackles explicitly political intersections of queer, trans, and disability theory: biopolitics, nationalism and AIDS, eugenics, and citizenship and perversion.

**Monday, Apr 13: Biopolitics**

- Michel Foucault (1976/1997), "Society Must Be Defended" (lecture 11) *Security, Territory, Population*
- Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell (2006), "Subnormal Nation: The Making of a US Disability Minority" *Cultural Locations of Disability*

*If you have extra time:*

Margot Weiss (2009), "Consensual BDSM and 'Sadomasochistic' Torture at Abu Ghraib," *Out in Public*

**Monday, Apr 13: Claire Kim lecture**

**Wednesday, Apr 15: Eugenics**

- Nancy Ordover (2003), "Introduction" to *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism*

**Workshop 5: Eugenics**

*If you have extra time: film: Fixed*

**Thursday, Apr 16: Jasbir Puar lecture**

**Monday, Apr 20: AIDS Biopolitics**

- Catherine Waldby (2004), "Introduction" to *AIDS and the Body Politic: Biomedicine and Sexual Difference*

**Workshop 6: AIDS and Immigration**

**Monday, April 20: Gayle Salamon lecture**

**Wednesday, Apr 22: Queer Necropolitics / Citizenship**

- Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman and Silvia Posocco (2014), "Introduction" to *Queer Necropolitics*
- Che Gossett (2014), "We Will not Rest in Peace"
- Sarah Lambie (2013), "Queer Necropolitics and the Expanding Carceral State: Interrogating Sexual Investments in Punishment," *Law Critique*

*If you have extra time:*

C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn (2013), "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife" *Transgender Studies Reader*

Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai (2002), "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text*

Eric Stanley (2011), "Near Life, Queer Death: Overkill and Ontological Capture" *Social Text*

Achille Mbembe (2003), "Necropolitics" *Public Culture*

\*\*\*\*\***Due: Memo 5**

**Thursday-Friday, Apr 23-24:** Queer Poetics symposium

<b>Conclusions: Narrating and Resisting Oppression</b>
--

**Monday, Apr 27: Alt-Memoir**

- Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), *The End of San Francisco* (pp. 9-105)

**Presentations on *The End of San Francisco***

**Wednesday, Apr 29: *The End of San Francisco***

- Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), *The End of San Francisco* (pp. 107-186)

**Presentations on *The End of San Francisco***

**Monday May 4: FILM TBA**

**Wednesday, May 6: wrap-up**

**In-class:** Yasmin Nair, "The Politics of Storytelling" and Dean Spade, "Impossibility Now"

Final papers are due **5/14 by 5pm**

**Starting questions for the memos**

(don't try to answer all these questions – think of them as jumping off places)

**Memo 1 – due Monday, Feb 2**

\* draw on readings from Jan 28 and Feb 2

**Starting questions:** What are the “politics of the body?” How do queer, transgender, and disability studies help us think about bodily norms and social regulations? How do bodily norms or ideals connect to power and privilege?

**Memo 2 -- due Monday, Feb 16**

\* draw on readings from Feb 4 - 16

**Starting questions:** How does race connect to sexuality and to gender? What are the ways visible (and invisible) forms of difference intersect with power? What forms of difference register as normal (versus not-normal, disabled, queer, trans, freakish) bodies and people?

**Memo 3 – due Monday, Mar 2**

\* draw on readings from Feb 25 and Mar 2

**Starting questions:** How do histories of oppression, stigma, pathologization, or shame impact sexuality? When is intimacy or sex a source of connection, or community, and when it is a site of oppression? How do sexual identities intersect with systems of norms?

**Memo 4 – due Wednesday, Apr 1**

\* draw on readings from Mar 23 - Apr 1

**Starting questions:** How do social institutions (like the law, or medicine) create knowledge about people and bodies? How can these forms of knowledge lead to oppression? How do other ways of knowing or naming our bodies resist such normative control?

**Memo 5 – due Wednesday, Apr 22**

\* draw on readings from Apr 13 - Apr 22

**Starting questions:** What is “biopower” and how is it related to eugenics? How can we see connections between disability, race, and sexuality in this history—and today? When and how are borders drawn between good and bad citizens or populations? How what does the concept of “necropolitics” allow us to see—esp. about queer and trans bodies?