AMST 293: Politics of the Body  Fall 2013

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Course Description
This course explores the politics of embodiment: the operations of power on and in the body. We’ll pay particular attention to processes of sexed, raced, gendered, and able-bodied normalization, drawing on the interdisciplinary fields of queer, disability, and transgender studies. Each of these fields has generated a framework for understanding and critiquing regimes of normalization: queer studies through a critique of heteronormativity, disability studies through a critique of able-bodied norms, and trans studies through a critique of gender normativity.

Our course will take an intersectional approach, exploring race, gender, sexuality, and ability as they intersect and diverge. It has four main themes. The first, “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). Our second theme, “Bodies Touch,” explores the pleasures of embodiment -- the desiring (queer, trans, disabled) body. Our next theme, “Social Bodies,” takes a closer look at the social institutions that shape and form cultural meanings of bodily difference -- medicine, psychiatry, and the law – alongside other systems of social categorization, such as bathroom policing and naming practices in the academy. Our course concludes with a consideration of “Body Politics,” which tackles explicitly political intersections of queer, trans, and disability theory: biopolitics, nationalism and AIDS, eugenics, and citizenship and perversion.

This American Studies course is interdisciplinary; readings include theoretical, historical, ethnographic, and literary approaches to power, difference, and the body from 19C sexology to contemporary theorizations of biopolitics, trans materiality, and homonormativity. We will also read five memoirs that narrate 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 analytical readings.

This course is part of the Queer Studies concentration in American Studies and the Disability Studies Course Cluster. It is cross-listed with Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Course texts
Terry Galloway (2009), Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir
Matilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), The End of San Francisco
Samuel Delany (1999), Times Square Red, Times Square Blue (recommended)
Eli Clare (2009), Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, And Liberation

Books are available at Broad Street Books and on reserve at Olin library. All other readings are available on the course Moodle.
Course Assignments

- Attendance and Participation ----- 15%
- 3 Workshops ----- 15%
- 2 Short Papers (4-5 pages) ----- 30%
- In-class Presentation/Memo ----- 10%
- Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography ----- 5%
- Final Paper/Project (8 pages) ----- 25%

Attendance and Participation ---15%
You are expected to come to class on time and to contribute to class discussion in a positive, relevant, and respectful way. I expect you to be active in discussion and to help shape the course with your own interests. Your comments and questions should be grounded in the reading; pointing us to relevant sections of an article or book, or to a particular quote is most productive. The quality of your participation in the workshops will also factor into this grade.

Workshops --- 15%
Three times during the semester you will work in a small group on a class project. 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 Wiki). Projects focus on sexology (9/16), legal gender (10/23), and eugenics (11/11). 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 portion of the course is peer graded.

Short papers – 30%
You will turn in two 4-5-page double-spaced papers during the semester. Your paper should be an analytical, argumentative essay, and reflect a critical engagement with course materials – it does not require additional research. It should focus on the memoir, and connect the theoretical or analytical material we’ve read to specific passages, events, or quotations in the memoir. Be sure to use specific examples backed by precisely chosen textual evidence.
* NOTE: There are 4 possible papers: you will sign up for two due dates, but you may do one additional paper for substantial extra credit. Papers are due: Mon, 9/30; Fri, 10/11; Mon, 11/4; and Mon, 12/2.

In-class Presentation/Memo – 10%
You will sign up to present on one of the days that we are discussing the memoirs. An ideal presentation will draw our attention to a particular passage you think is worth bringing to the class’s attention and connect that passage to one of our theoretical readings and/or other material from the course. You goal is to lead 5-10 minutes of class discussion through a combination of presentation and discussion questions. You will also turn in a one-page memo that contains your notes and passage marked. Your grade will be based primarily on the substance of your presentation/discussion question(s).
* NOTE: If you wish, you may do one additional presentation for extra credit. There are 8 days of presentations: Wed, 9/25; Mon, 9/30; Mon, 10/7; Wed, 10/9; Wed, 10/30; Mon, 11/4; Mon, 11/25; and Mon, 12/2.

Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography --- 5%
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; you may include one source from class (this is not required). Your proposal should be as detailed as possible in terms of the specific arguments and material you plan to address. Likewise, bibliography entries should not be generic summaries, but should explain how each source specifically illuminates or takes a position on your research question. 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.

Final Paper --- 25%
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 or case studies 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. On the last day of class, you will give a very short presentation on your topic in order to share your research with the rest of the class and also receive comments and/or advice from your classmates. The final paper is due: Wednesday, 12/11 by 5pm by email (please send as a .pdf).

Class Policies:
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. Otherwise, I will expect you in class. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will fail the course.

Policy on extensions: I do not typically grant extensions. If you have a dire family, medical, or other emergency that makes it impossible to complete your work for this class, please have your class dean contact me and/or speak to me about your options (such as taking an incomplete).

Policy on late papers: I will accept late papers with a grade penalty of one whole letter grade (=10 points) per day. For example, the paper is due at 5pm on Tuesday, and, had it been on time, you would have received an A (95). If you turn it in by 5pm on Wednesday, you will receive a B (85). Half days are ½ a letter grade. You cannot turn in workshop or memo work late.

Policy on computers/cell phones in the classroom: Do not text, use facebook, shop online, look at pictures of cats, tumble, etc. during our class. Your cell phone should be off or on silent and put away. If you take notes on your laptop or have another documented reason for having it in the class, you may bring it. Any use of your computer for non-class purposes will result in suspension of this privilege. Keep in mind that such use interferes with your ability to learn and focus on material; it is also distracting and disrespectful to me and your fellow students (read this study on how computer use in the classroom lowers grades for both the computer user and other students within view).

Resources:
Please come 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, presentations, group projects, or any other aspect of this course. During my office hours my door is open (unless I’m meeting with a student, of course), so please come in and talk with me! If you cannot make my office hours, you can email me to set up
an appointment. You can also post routine questions or comments on our course’s Google group for me (or, when appropriate, other students) to answer.

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 860-685-2332 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

Course Introduction:

*Normativity, Intersectionality, and Queer / Trans / Disability Studies*

Monday, Sept. 2: Introduction to the Course

Wednesday, Sept. 4: The Body and Power

- Judith Butler (1993), “Bodies that Matter” in *Bodies that Matter* (pp. 27-36, 53-55)

Monday, Sept. 9: Intersectionality and Embodiment

- David Valentine and Riki Anne Wichins (1997), “1% on the Burn Chart” *Social Text*

I. Bodies on Display:

*Difference, Deviance, Visibility*

Wednesday, Sept. 11: Sexology: Race / Homosexuality / Nation


Monday, Sept. 16: Sexology Then and Now

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

Workshop: Sexology, then and now

Wednesday, Sept. 18: Public Display

- Susan Schweik (2009), “Introduction,” *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*

In-class: freak show

Monday, Sept. 23: Passing/Visibility

• Gayle Wald (2000), “Introduction” to Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture (pp. 1-10)
--or--
• Adrian Piper (1992), “Passing for White, Passing for Black” Transition

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

**Wednesday, Sept. 25:** *Mean Little deaf Queer*
• Terry Galloway (2009), *Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir* (pp. 1-104)

**Presentations on Mean Little deaf Queer**

**Monday, Sept. 30:** *Mean Little deaf Queer*
• Terry Galloway (2009), *Mean Little deaf Queer: A Memoir* (pp. 105-228)

**Presentations on Mean Little deaf Queer** (or on Galloway’s performance art, or other queer/crip performance art)

**Paper 1 Due**

**II. Bodies Touch:**

*Bodies and Pleasures, Sex and Desire*

**Wednesday, Oct. 2:** Bodies and Pleasures
• Michel Foucault (1976/1990), excerpt of *History Of Sexuality, Vol. 1*
• Audre Lorde (1984), “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” *Sister Outsider*
• Ladelle McWhorter (1999), excerpt of *Bodies and Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Sexual Normalization*

**Monday, Oct 7:** *Dangerous Desires*

**Presentations on My Dangerous Desires**

**Wednesday, Oct. 9:** *My Dangerous Desires*

**Presentations on My Dangerous Desires**

**Friday, Oct. 11** Paper 2 Due

**Monday, Oct 14:** Embodiment and desire
• C. Jacob Hale (1997), “Leatherdyke Boys and Their Daddies: How to Have Sex without Women or Men” *Social Text*
• Abby Wilkerson (2012), “Normate Sex and its Discontents” in *Sex and Disability*
• Lezlie Frye (2012), “Fingered” in *Sex and Disability*

**III. Social Bodies:**

*Institutions, Norms, Categories*
Wednesday, Oct. 16: Medical Bodies
- Cheryl Chase (1998), “Hermaphroditism With Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism,” GLQ


In-class: audio on GID and children

Wednesday, Oct 23: The Law
- Dean Spade (2011), “Preface” and “Administrating Gender” in Normal Life

Workshop: Legal Sex/Gender

Monday, Oct 28: Knowledge / Naming
- David Valentine (2007), “I Know What I am” on Imagining Transgender

Wednesday, Oct. 30: Community and History
- Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), The End of San Francisco (pp. 9-105)

Presentations on The End of San Francisco

Monday, Nov 4: The End of San Francisco
- Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore (2013), The End of San Francisco (pp. 107-186)

Presentations on The End of San Francisco

Paper 3 due

IV. Body Politics:

Biopolitics, Nationalism, Citizenship

Wednesday, Nov. 6: Biopolitics

Monday, Nov 11: Eugenics

Workshop: Eugenics

Wednesday, Nov 13: AIDS Body Politics
- Catherine Waldby (2004), excerpt of AIDS and the Body Politic: Biomedicine and Sexual
Difference

--or--


**In-class**: HIV ban and US immigration; criminalization of HIV

**Monday, Nov. 18: Public Sex**


**Tuesday, Nov. 19: Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore reading, 4:30pm**

**Wednesday, Nov 20: Pervert / Citizen**

- Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai (2002), “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” *Social Text*
- Margot Weiss (2009), “Consensual BDSM and ‘Sadomasochistic’ Torture at Abu Ghraib,” *Out in Public*

**Conclusions:**

*Narrating and Resisting Oppression*

**Monday Nov 25: Exile and Pride**

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

**Presentations on Exile and Pride**

*Thanksgiving Break*

**Monday, Dec. 2: Exile and Pride**

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

**Presentations on Exile and Pride**

**Paper 4 Due**

**Wednesday, Dec. 4: wrap-up**

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

**Final Paper due: Wednesday, 12/11 by 5pm by email (please send as a .pdf).**