**CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

**BROOKLYN COLLEGE**

**WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES PROGRAM – SPRING 2025**

**WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES 3405**

**WOMEN’S SEXUALITIES**

Professor: Red Washburn, Ph.D.

Name: Professor Washburn or Dr. Washburn

Pronouns: They/He

E-mail: red.washburn@kbcc.cuny.edu

Site: www.redwashburn.com

Office: 1207 Ingersoll Hall (Women’s and Gender Studies)

Phone: 718-951-5476 (Women’s and Gender Studies)

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-4:30PM

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**Women’s and Gender Studies Program**

According to the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, “Our interdisciplinary Women’s and Gender Studies Program will provide you the skills to examine and critique cultural, economic, historical, political, social, and sexual issues using feminist and queer philosophical paradigms. Aside from learning about a cross section of feminist and queer thinkers, places and events, you will explore ideas such as how one's gender affects access to power and whether or not the idea of power itself is an inherently problematic arrangement. You will also have the opportunity to study how other factors such as race, class, sexuality, and ability further impact one’s feminist identification. A degree in women’s and gender studies opens up the door for careers in activism, education, law, medicine, nonprofit, politics, psychology, and more. We also offer a minor in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) studies, which investigates many of the same issues from the perspectives of queer theory and queer thinkers.”

**Catalog Description:**

Interdisciplinary study of women's sexualities, women's lives and strategies of lesbian survival, bisexual and transgendered people's survival, primarily in male dominated societies. Struggle for lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered self-expression in historical and cultural context. Past and present views of women's sexualities. Interrelationship of feminist, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered movements. Materials drawn from history, psychology, sociology, literature, and the arts.  
  
Prerequisite: Women’s and Gender Studies 1001 [12] or permission of the program coordinator.

**Required Texts:**

All texts are on Blackboard.

**Course Objectives:**

• You will do close readings of texts, including summarizing and annotating, and understand social, political, cultural, and historical issues, contexts, and terms.

• You will create central arguments that include a clear topic, a solid stance, and provide support for your main ideas by quoting, paraphrasing, and analyzing passages from texts.

• You will recognize your writing processes, receive feedback from your peers, conference with me, and revise your major writing assignments.

• You will engage in rigorous discussion that fosters critical reflection about gender in your lives, the world, and the texts through collaborative interaction.

• You will write grammatically and mechanically correct papers and cite in MLA (or some other academic) format.

**Requirements:**

• An analytical paper, reflecting on a theme we discussed in class (i.e., queer performances and sanctions), using at least three texts we read in class, totaling approximately six to eight pages

•An argumentative research paper, researching a queer issue or movement of your choice (i.e., homonationalism and queer assimilation) that includes three scholarly peer-reviewed articles, goes through a revision process, & is approximately eight to ten pages

•An individual or group presentation/ handout on a text of approximately 10-15 minutes, which should introduce information about the text and pose questions for discussion

• Class attendance, freewrites, participation, and conferences

•All written assignments should be handed into me and posted on Blackboard

**Grade Distribution:**

Analytical Paper 40%

Argumentative Research Paper 40%

Presentation 10%

Participation (Discussions, Freewrites, and Conferences) 10%

**Writing Procedures:**

• You will engage in a process of composing (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) for all writing assignments.

• You will receive a wealth of feedback on your essays from your peers. You also will conference with me. Before you submit your final drafts, you will produce several drafts for each essay, including for peer review and professor review. You will present your papers to the class during writing workshops once during the semester for feedback.

• You will have the opportunity to revise your essays after your initial grade is recorded so long as you discuss your writing in informal conferences with me. Revisions have the possibility of replacing the previous grade, but only if substantial improvement is evident. In other words, simply changing mechanical errors (i.e., commas) in essays will not raise grades.

• You will be given ample feedback on each essay before the next essay is due. This feedback will allow you to learn from the comments and apply the comments to the next essay.

**Discussion Procedures:**

• You will be well-prepared for all class discussions by doing all the assigned reading and writing.

• You will demonstrate your understanding and analysis of the readings by being fully engaged in class discussions.

• You will be respectful of your peers’ ideas and my ideas. (Being respectful also includes turning off cell phones and refraining from other disrespectful behaviors, such as sleeping, doing homework, and leaving class for food, coffee, or phone calls.) You will be expected to turn off your cell phones.

•Those of you who are not prepared, not engaged, and/or not respectful will be asked to leave class.

**Gender Pronoun and Name:** I affirm all forms of gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to inform me on your preferred gender pronoun or if you do not have a pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Attendance:**

Attendance and participation are also inextricably linked. In order to participate, you need to attend class. Attending class is imperative, for that is when much of the discussing, writing, and critiquing will take place. Please come to class and participate. Participation is part of your grade. If you must be absent, please email me.

**Academic Integrity:**

According to the Academic Integrity Policy, “The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.”

**Artificial Intelligence/ Chat GPT**

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly prohibited in all coursework and assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of AI-generated text, speech, or images, as well as the use of AI tools or software to complete any portion of a project or assignment. Any violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including a failing grade for the assignment or course. Our goal is to encourage critical thinking and creativity, and the use of AI detracts from this objective. Students are expected to use their own knowledge, research and analysis to complete coursework.

If you are not yet familiar with ChatGPT or its capabilities, you are now: this policy statement was generated by the ChatGPT AI engine based on the prompt “write a syllabus policy statement forbidding the use of AI.”

**Sexual and Gender-based Harassment, Discrimination, and Title IX**

According to Sexual and Gender-based Harassment, Discrimination, and Title IX, “Brooklyn College is committed to fostering a safe, equitable and productive learning environment. Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment on or off campus can find information about the reporting process, their rights, specific details about confidentiality of information, and reporting obligations of Brooklyn College employees on the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs website. Reports of sexual misconduct or discrimination may be made to Public Safety (719.951.5511), the New York City Police Department (911 or a local NYPD precinct), Patricio Jimenez, Senior Investigator and Title IX Coordinator (718.951.5000, ext. 3602), or Michelle Vargas, Assistant Director of Judicial Affairs, Division of Student Affairs (718.951.5352).” For more information please visit:

**Disability Services:**

According to Disability Services, “In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at (718) 951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her.”

**Bereavement:**

According to the Student Bereavement Policy, “Upon approval from the Division of Student Affairs, the student is allowed one week, commencing from the day of the death of the loved one, of excused absence. Should the student feel that he or she needs additional days, these should be discussed with individual course instructors and/or the Division of Student Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs will contact the student's faculty and academic staff of the student's courses. Faculty and academic staff will be advised that extensions must be granted to the student for the period of one week of excused absence. Further extensions may be negotiated with the student when he or she returns to campus. Students are encouraged to discuss options with their instructors.”

**Religious Observances:**

According to Consideration of Religious Observances, “Please bear in mind that due to religious holidays and related religious observances, a number of students will not be able to attend classes or take examinations. New York State Education Law (Title I, Article 5, Section 224-a) requires that we “make available to each student who is absent from school, because of his [or her] religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which he [or she] may have missed because of such absence on any particular day or days.”

**Schedule of Assignments:**

**Please note:** The following schedule is tentative and may change based on the needs of the class.

**Week One (1/27): Introductions**

M: Syllabus Distribution and Introductions

W: No class

**Week Two (2/3 & 2/5):** Erotic as Power and **Constructionism and Essentialism**

M: “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” and “A Litany for Survival,” Audre Lorde

W: “The Social Construction of Sexuality,” Mimi Marinucci and “Thinking about Homosexuality,” Anne Fausto-Sterling

**Week Three (2/10): Sexual Histories**

M: *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, Parts I and II, Michel Foucault and “History of Technosexuality” Paul Preciado

W: No class

**Week Four (2/18 & 2/19): Contracts, Difference, and Queries of Sex/ Gender**

M: No Class

TU: “On the Social Contract,” Monique Wittiq and “Transgender Mirrors Queering

Sexual Difference,” Chris Straayer (Monday schedule)

W: “An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts,” Susan Stryker,

“17 Things You Don’t Say to a Transsexual,” Riki Wilchins, and

“Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come,” Leslie Feinberg

**Week Five (2/24 & 2/26): Ideology, Control, and Trauma**

M: “The Invention of Heterosexuality,” Jonathan Ned Katzand

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” Adrienne Rich

W: “Sexual Orientation,” Sara Ahmed and “The Everyday Life of Queer Trauma,”

Ann Cvetkovich

**Week Six (3/3, 3/5, and 3/6): Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and Globalization**

M: “A Question of Class,” Dorothy Allison and “Capitalism and Gay Identity,”

John D’Emilio

W: “Downsizing Democracy” and “Equality, Inc.,” Lisa Duggan

TH: Writing Workshop – **Rough Draft of Analytical Paper Due**

**Week Seven (3/10 & 3/12): Analytical Writing**

W: Writing Workshop – Peer and Professor Review

M: Writing Workshop – Peer and Professor Review

**Week Eight (3/17-3/19): Analytical Writing, Film, and Field Trip**

M: Writing Workshop – **Final Draft of Analytical Paper Due**

*Out in the Night*, Dir. Blair Doroschwalther (film, watch in class)

– **Final Draft of Analytical Paper Due**

W: Field Trip to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, 484 14th Street Brooklyn, NY 11215

**Week Nine (3/24 & 3/26): Herstory, History, and Theirstory**

M: “Butch-Femme Relationships: Sexual Courage in the 1950s,” Joan Nestle,

“‘They Was No One to Mess with’: The Construction of the Butch Role in the Lesbian Community of the 1940s and 1950s,” Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy & Madeline Davis, and “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance,” Cheryl Clarke

W: “What We’re Rolling around in Bed with: Sexual Silences in Feminism,”

Amber Hollibaugh and Cherrie Moraga, “Times Square Blue,” Samuel Delany, and

“Queens in Exile: The Forgotten Ones,” Sylvia Rivera

**Week Ten (4/2): Manifestos and Collectives**

M: No class

W: “The Woman-Identified Woman,” Radicalesbians, “A Black Feminist Statement,”

The Combahee River Collective, “What We Want, What We Believe,” Third World Gay Liberation, “Queers Read This,” Queer Nation, “Living a Feminist Lifestyle:

The Intersection of Theory and Action in a Lesbian Feminist Collective,” Anne M. Valk, “Femme Shark Manifesto” (QZAP), “The ‘Empire’ Strikes Back: A Posttransexual Manifesto,” Sandy Stone, and “The Transfeminist Manifesto,” Emi Koyama

**Week Eleven (4/7 & 4/9): Performances, Sanctions, and Shame**

M: “Acting in Concert” and “Subjects of Sex/ Gender/ Desire,” Judith Butler and

*My New Gender Workbook*, Kate Bornstein (quizzes, share in class)

W: “The Ethics of Sexual Shame,” Michael Warner and “Resisting Shame:

Making Our Bodies Home,” Eli Claire

**Argumentative Research Project Proposal Due**

**Week Twelve (4/21 & 4/23): Queer of Color Critique and Spectrums of Difference**

M: “Queer of Color Critique, Historical Materialism, and Canonical Sociology,” Roderick Ferguson, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens:

The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?,” Cathy Cohen

W: “Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body,”

Siobhan Somerville and “‘Cultural Practice’ or ‘Reconstructive Surgery?’ U.S. Genital Cutting, the Intersex Movement, and Medical Double Standards,” Cheryl Chase

**Argumentative Research Paper Sources Due**

**Week Thirteen (4/28 & 4/30): Silences, Borders, and Nations**

M: “The Value of Silence,” David L. Eng and “Securitizing Gender: Identity, Biometrics, and Transgender Bodies at the Airport,” Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen

W: “Power and Sexuality at the Border,” Eithne Luibheid, “The Sexuality of Terrorism,” Jasbir K. Puar, and “*La Conciencia de la Mestiza*: Towards a New Consciousness,” Gloria Anzaldúa

**Week Fourteen (5/5 & 5/7): Failures, Futures, and Film**

M: “The Queer Art of Failure,” Jack Halberstam, “Feeling Utopia,” Jose Munoz, and “Imagined Futures,” AlisonKafer

W: **Rough Draft of Argumentative Research Paper Due**

Film: *The Watermelon Woman*, Cheryl Dunye

**Week Fifteen (5/12-5/14): Argumentative Research Paper and Course Wrap Up**

M: Writing Workshop – **Peer and Professor Review**

W: **Final Argumentative Research Paper Due**

**Analytical Paper**

**Due 3/6 (Rough Draft) & 3/17 (Final Draft)**

**Overview**

The purpose of analytical writing is to argue your interpretation, perspective, point of view, or slant on particular works. It should lure people to your way of thinking or, at the very least, to make them aware of your views. You should not include summaries or personal experiences. Instead, you should show your own critical understanding of at least three texts we read in class—what you think of them. These texts should provide a contextual framework for your essay on a feminist theme. You should shape your subject matter in a sophisticated and persuasive way. You should consider subject, occasion, and point of view as readers and writers for a general audience. You should narrow down your topics by a theme. Then you must make a solid argument that contains several main ideas that support your purpose. For instance, you might explore the theme of gender and queerness in relation to terrorism. You might decide to discuss the rise of homonationalism and queer assimilation. What are the connections between theories of gender, sexuality, race, and nation under colonialism? Why is there more queer acceptance in capitalist countries that are subservient to imperial ideologies and practices? Why were queer people not allowed into the country until 1990? You could discuss the politics of reproducing the nation in terms of racial purity, heteronormativity, and patriarchal norms. One of these ideas could be your focus and argument. However, then you must find specific passages from the texts that show this argument. You must use specific textual evidence--quote and/ or paraphrase--to support your central arguments. You must explain and analyze why you are using the passages to build your arguments in all paragraphs. For this reason, you should not under-quote or over-quote material. All of your citations for passages should be cited according to MLA format (see the citation guide in the argumentative research paper assignment for further assistance).You should organize your essay in a way that shows your introduction, purpose, point of view, audience, central argument and main ideas, forms of supporting evidence, and conclusion. You should check for coherence within and between paragraphs, as well as proofread your work for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling. You should think hard, think deep, and write an analytical essay of approximately six to eight pages. You should submit all drafts and peer reviews. This essay comprises 40% of your grade. Your paper should be double-spaced, typed, and stapled, have one-inch margins all around, be 12 point Times New Roman font, and have a proper heading with your full name, my full name, the full course title and section, date, and a title.

**Reading and Drafting Guide**

• You should check the passages you highlighted, underlined, and or annotated while reading.

• You should refer to specific realizations you have come across while reading.

• You should record the passages that you find intellectually stimulating.

• You should demonstrate why passages are essential to your interpretation by providing your own critical insights/ reasons.

• You should ask yourself the following questions: “what,” “how,” and “why”—what something is, how something happens or should happen, and why something exists or occurs. What is your topic? How can you argue your stances on the topics by giving examples and using the texts? Why are you arguing for this stance, and are you analyzing the reasons you provide?

**Argumentative Research Paper**

**Paper Due: 5/7 (Rough Draft) & 5/14 (Final Draft)**

**Overview**

Research is not a type of essay on its own. Research merely assistsin supporting a central argument. Many of you might feel overwhelmed by information and allow it to outweigh your own ideas. However, you should not rely exclusively on quoted passages. Instead, you should develop your own ideas and reasons. Your goal is not to string information together, but rather to write a coherent, argumentative essay—one that embodies your ideas about three scholarly peer-reviewed articles you find independently to support your ideas. You may wish to write an initial draft before you incorporate research, and then supplement your ideas with the information you have found and synthesized. You should research a queer issue or movement in a country or region of your choice. You can define “queer” in any way you want across the LGBTQQIA spectrum so long as it involves challenges to normative gender and sexuality (i.e., misgendering, bathroom politics, chosen families, nonbinary identities, biphobia, corrective rape, lesbian parenting, communes, etc.). Pick a topic that interests you about which you wish to know more. If you care about your topic, your essay will be easier for you to write. Your data should come from the library journals or databases. Your sources should have an author, journal title, volume, issue, and year. You should not use newspaper articles or magazine articles, unless they are supplemental and related to current events. You also can use books and documentaries as supplemental sources. You must be able to examine scholarly journal articles and determine their relevance to your paper. You must develop your own ideas and topics, follow your beliefs and passions, and strengthen your ideas with outside sources. You may pick any queer issue or movement to research so long as you three scholarly peer-reviewed articles, make your own arguments, and provide several reasons for your arguments. You should get assistance from librarians and come to me for help as you begin to work on your projects. All projects must be revised and proofread before handed in.If you plagiarize, the project will receive a failing grade. Your project must be eight to ten pages. You should submit all drafts and peer reviews. It comprises 40% of your grade. Your paper should be double-spaced, typed and stapled, have one-inch margins all around, be 12 point Times New Roman font, and have a proper heading with your full name, my full name, the title and section of the course, the date, and a title.

**Grading Checklist**

•This project has a clear argumentative statement. Each body paragraph raises a supporting point. Each body paragraph has a topic sentence that clearly encapsulates the point of the paragraph and connects it to the central argument.

•The research is smoothly incorporated into your project. Nothing seems to have been forced in arbitrarily. All quotes need to be introduced, explained, and connected to support the topic.

•Every piece of information has a clear citation within the text. You have not plagiarized.

•There is a Works Cited page that is formatted according to MLA or other citation rules.

•The project has been proofread for errors.

You should submit all drafts and peer reviews.

**Grading Checklist**

•You should write an introduction that has a strong hook or captivating opening (i.e., quote, anecdote, or question).

• You should synthesize your central arguments and main ideas.

• You should write in a professional tone by removing or revising personal experiences and reflections. Instead, you should focus on social and cultural commentary about the texts for your body/ middle paragraphs.

• You should save passages from the texts you enjoyed and used in your journals, yet locate additional passages that further support your critical insights.

• You should explain and analyze why the passages you chose are important. You should support your claims by adding additional topic paragraphs.

•You should smoothly incorporate the article into your critical analysis. All quotes need to be introduced, explained, and connected to support the topic.

•You should have a clear citation within the text. You should not have plagiarized.

•You should have a Works Cited page that is in MLA for another citation format.

• You should include a conclusion that neither summarizes your introduction nor includes topics that you did not discuss in your essay.

•You should develop and organize your sentences and paragraphs coherently, with clear topic sentences, a clear focus, and strong examples.

•You should revise your essay and eliminate any grammatical and mechanical errors.

**Citation­­ Guide**

•Remember to include all drafts.

•Remember to include a proper heading.

•Remember to craft a creative title. (i.e., “Argumentative Research Paper” and “Lesbian Parenting” are not creative).

•Remember to do parenthetical references in MLA format. For instance, according to MLA format, all references should have the author and the page from which you are citing in parentheses followed by a period. For instance, Jane says,

“. . .” (Doe 56). If “Doe” is in a sentence, just write the page number. For instance, Doe writes, “. . .” (56).

•Remember a passage that is more than four lines long needs to be indented.

•Remember that periods and commas always go in quotes and that only quotes within quotes have single quotes.

•Remember to do a Works Cited page. No secondary sources are required, but if you wish to use them, you can do so.

For a book, the MLA citation is:

Brady, Evelyn et al. *In the Footsteps of Anne: Stories of Republican Women*

*Ex-Prisoners*. Belfast: Shanway Press, 2011.

For an article in a book, the MLA citation is:

James, Joy. “Framing the Panther: Assata Shakur and Black Female Agency.”

*Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*. Ed. David F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard. New York: New York University Press, 2009. 138-160.

For a journal article, the MLA citation is:

Butler, Judith. “Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity.” *Critical Inquiry*. 35.4. (Summer

2009): 773-795.

For a website, the MLA citation is:

Goodman, Amy. “Deportations Continue Despite Review of Immigrants with

Family Ties.” *Democracy Now!* 7 June 2012. Headlines. <www.democracynow.org>.