

Theory and Application of Feminist, LGBTQI, and Queer Studies

GEND 3000 (3 credits)

The Netherlands: International Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Description

Queer theory developed in the 1990s, mostly in the US, as an outgrowth of feminist and gender studies. Building on the work of the structuralists (particularly linguistic structuralism), the post-structuralist deconstructionists, and scholars from all fields, turned intellectual lenses onto understudied populations. It has grown from what was essentially the study of hetero- and homosexuality into a more far reaching theoretical expression of liminal spaces and what can be considered abnormal. This course, suitable for students who are new to queer and feminist theory, examines the crucial principles of queer theory, particularly as they play out in the Dutch and broader European context. We will engage with fundamental queer and feminist ideas, and explore how they relate to our city, our country, and our continent.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding regarding the social and political debates around issues of sexuality and gender in the Netherlands;
- Interpret cultural variations regarding gender, sexuality, and queer issues as they apply to the unique Dutch and Moroccan contexts;
- Analyze and critique Judith Butler's theory of performativity as it applies to trans and queer bodies;
- Synthesize arguments regarding the key themes in queer and feminist theories in the Netherlands and the Global South.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English. A limited number of guests may speak Dutch, but translation will be provided in those cases.

Course Schedule Course Schedule

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

WEEK ONE: QUEER THEORY IN THE NETHERLANDS

During this week, students are introduced to the key concepts of gender and sexuality into the context of the Netherlands. We begin many of the discussions we will be having throughout the semester, particularly the way the Dutch view themselves and their position as the gay capital of the world.

Sessions May Include:

- The Polder Model
- Introduction to Homonationalism
- Current Legislation

Required Readings:

Mak, G. (1994). *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*. London: Vintage.

Roodsaz, R. & Jansen, W. (2019). Enabling sexual self-fashioning: embracing, rejecting and transgressing modernity among the Iranian Dutch. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(1), 1988-2005.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1435993>

Government of the Netherlands. (2018). Gender & LGBTI Equality Policy Plan 2018-2021. Putting principles into practice. Retrieved from:

<https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2018/06/01/gender--lgbti-equality-policy-plan-2018-2021>

WEEK TWO: WHAT ARE FEMINIST AND QUEER CONCERNS?

This week we explore gender and feminism, both in order to understand the link between feminist and queer theories and activism, but also to give us some basics regarding the climate in which we are living and learning.

Sessions May Include:

- What is Gender and what is Queer?
- What do we mean when we talk about gender in the north and the south?
- Simone Zeefuik Queers the Museum: Field assignment with activist and author of #decolonizethemusuem leads students on a tour of the Afterlives of Slavery exhibit at the Tropenmuseum (The Museum of the Tropics)

Required Readings:

Connell, R. (2014). Rethinking Gender from the South. *Feminist Studies* 40.3, 518 – 39.

Wittig, M. (1992). One is Not Born a Woman. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, 1-32. Boston: Beacon Press.

Students will also read and present on one of the following:

- Rachel Alsop, et alia, *Theorizing Gender*;
- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*;
- Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*;
- Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*;
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*;
- Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*;
- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*;
- Bell Hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*;
- Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*;
- Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*;
- Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*;
- Toril Moi, *What is a Woman?*

- Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, *This Bridge Called My Back*;
- Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*;
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*;
- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*.

WEEK THREE: FEMINISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Feminism develops in what we sometimes call the 'global south' around the same time it develops in Europe and the US, often as part of contemporary resistance against colonial powers. Feminism in the 'global south' in general, focuses on decolonization, emancipation, and economic justice.

Sessions May Include:

- Theory vs. practice?
- What is postcolonial feminism?
- The future of transnational feminism
- Axmed Maxamed Dances with Pride: Field Assignment with the founder of Dance With Pride.

Required Readings:

- Lorde, A. (1984). The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House. In: ed., *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 110-114. Berkeley: Crossing Press.
- Hale, S. (2009). Transnational Gender Studies and the Migrating concept of Gender in the Middle East and North Africa. *Cultural Dynamics* 21.2, 133-5.
- Mohanty, C. (1984). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Boundary 2*(12/13), 333-358. <https://doi.org/10.2307/302821>

WEEK FOUR: THE BIRTH OF QUEER THEORY

This week we trace the cultural and political climate that contributed to the creation and development of queer theory (and queer activism) and that continues to influence queer theory. This week stresses the importance of the contested and dangerous territory that gave birth to the Gay Rights Movements.

Sessions May Include:

- Sedgwick, Edelman, and the Closet
- AIDS and Death

Required Readings:

- Edelman, L. (1994). Tearooms and Sympathy, or The Epistemology of the Water Closet. *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*, 148-170. New York: Routledge.
- Sedgwick, E. (1990). Epistemology of the Closet. *Epistemology of the Closet*, 67-90. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Watney, S. (1987). The Spectacle of AIDS. *October* 42, 71-86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3397565>

WEEKS FIVE AND SIX: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN A MUSLIM CONTEXT

Students take a two-week excursion to Morocco to study gender and sexuality in a Muslim environment. With stops in Casablanca or Tangiers, Rabat, Essaouira, and Marrakech, we attend lectures, workshops, do participant and non-participant observation.

Sessions May Include:

- Lecture on Moroccan Art & Urban History of Tetouan, with Dr. Nadia Erzini
- Moroccan 101, with Mr. Nabil Akbli

- Gender Roles in Morocco, with Mrs. Farah Cherif
- Land Rights, with Dr. Rachid Touhtouh
- Democratization, with Dr. Boutaina Bensalem
- Homosexuality, with Dr. Abdessalam Dialmy
- Visit NIMAR, lecture on Moroccan-Dutch Historical Ties, Director & Cultural Attaché Dutch Embassy in Rabat, with prof. Leon Buskens
- Field activity at Amal in Marrakesh
- Field activity at Marjane Cooperative
- Field activity at Association Insat
- Field activity at Solidarite Femminile

WEEK SEVEN: SEX WORK AND TRAFFICKING

Amsterdam, home to the famous Red Light District, is famous for its liberal laws on sex work. The truth is much more complex. There are issues with the problem of sex tourism, concerns about human trafficking, and a city government intent on replacing every working window in de Wallen with a Starbucks. We will debate the issues of agency versus coercion in class, hear from sex workers, take a tour of the Red Light District, and meet with the NGO people who believe they are fighting sex trafficking through their outreach.

Sessions May Include:

- Talk with a sex worker
- The Bridge2Hope
- Field assignment in the Red Light District
- Coercion versus Agency

Required Readings:

Aalbers, M. B. & Deinema, M. (2012). Placing Prostitution: The Spatial-sexual Order of Amsterdam and its Growth Coalition. *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, 16(1-2), 129-145.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.662370>

Comte, J. (2014). Decriminalization of Sex Work: Feminist Discourses in Light of Research. *Sexuality & Culture* 18(1), 196-217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-013-9174-5>

WEEK EIGHT: IDENTITIES AND PERFORMATIVITY

The notion that not only gender, but also sex, is culturally constructed sits at the very foundations of queer theory. This week we study the mother of the discipline and the myriad responses to her.

Sessions May Include:

- Judith Butler and Performativity
- Critiques of Butler
- The “Reality” of Performativity
- Cliteracy

Required Readings:

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist Performativity: Toward and Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(3), 801-831. <https://doi.org/10.1086/345321>

Salih, S. (2002). “On Judith Butler and Performativity,” in Lovaas, ed. *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life*. Sussex: University of Sussex Press.

WEEK NINE: EMBODIMENT

Discussion of trans issues, and the physical embodiment of gender, has driven theoretical discourse in the past decade. This week we read some classic work and think about the complexities of physically embodying identities.

Sessions May Include:

- Feminist and Queer Discourse on Embodiment
- Trans
- The 'failure' of queer theory

Required Readings:

Cromwell, J. (1999). Queering the Binaries: Transsituated Identities, Bodies, and Sexualities. *Transmen and FTMs: Identities, Bodies, Genders, and Sexualities*, 122-134. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Feldman, S. (2009). Reclaiming Sexual Difference: What Queer Theory Can't Tell Us About Sexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 259-278.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316562>

Stryker, S. (2006). My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamonix: Performing Transgender Rage. In: Stryker & Whittle, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader*, 244-246. London: Routledge.

WEEK TEN: QUEER FAMILIES

This week we visit the intersection of queer and the personal as it plays out in the domestic sphere. We have a strong understanding of the 'traditional' family as a cis, het, normative nuclear situation with clear paternal and maternal figures. This hierarchical understanding is very, very new and rarely fits the lived experience of queer people.

Sessions May Include:

- The welfare queen is queer
- Queer family construction, or Which one of you is the dad?
- Poly, romantic and non-romantic

Required Readings:

Allen, S. and Mendez, S. (2018). Hegemonic Heteronormativity: Toward a New Era of Queer Family Theory *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 10, 70 – 86.

Dahl, U. (2018). Becoming Fertile in the Land of Organic Milk: Lesbian and Queer Reproductions of Femininity and Motherhood in Sweden *Sexualities* 21.7, 1021 – 28.

Kathleen (2011). *Queers, Families, and the Squat Community*. [Zine].

Moreira, L. (2018). Queer Motherhood: Challenging Heteronormative Rules Beyond the Assimilationist/Radical Binary. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 19.2, 12- 37.

WEEK ELEVEN - FOURTEEN: INDEPENDENT STUDY

Intellectual Salon Monday afternoons: We share how our queer theory is affecting and shaping, and being affected and shaped by, our research.

WEEK FIFTEEN: END ISP, FINAL PRESENTATIONS, WRAP-UP, RE-ENTRY AND EVALUATION

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Journals (25%):

Students keep a journal for the semester.

- **Part One:** Students will make an entry for each of the required readings that simply notes the thesis of the argument and lists any questions
- **Part Two:** Students will be asked on a regular basis to reflect in writing – intellectually and analytically, as well as creatively – to class materials and the new worlds they encounter. This work will usually take place in class.

Gender or Queer Theory Paper (25%):

Students write a 1200 – 1500 word essay on a topic of gender or queer theory in which you apply LGBTQI theory to the analysis of queer families, sex work or embodiment. Details can be found in the assignment section on Moodle and will be discussed in class. This paper should feed into your final project’s literature review.

Gender and Sexuality in Morocco (25%):

Students write a 1200-1500 word essay using field notes and observations from the excursion to Morocco in which they analyze cultural variations in the interpretation of gender and sexuality in the context of the Netherlands and Morocco.

Book Presentation (15%):

Students present on an important book in feminist, gender or sexuality theory. Details can be found in the assignment section on Moodle and will be discussed in class. Book presentation should provide a synthesis of arguments regarding the key themes in queer and feminist theories in the Netherlands and the Global South

Participation: (10%):

Participation includes:

- Attendance – promptness to class, and positive presence in class. Attendance is necessary but not sufficient.
- Active listening – paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes
- Self-directed learning – reading the local paper and other materials to see the Dutch perspective on relevant issues, discussing issues with host families and others
- Involvement in-class discussions – either in small or large groups
- Group accountability during field excursions and classes
- Taking leadership roles – leading and guiding discussions in a productive direction

Assessment:

Journal	25%
Gender or Theory Paper	25%
Gender and Sexuality in Morocco Paper	25%
Book Presentation	15%
Participation	10%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average

80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak....
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook given to you at Orientation.

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