

SPRING 24
ENGL 1042 / GWSS 1042 / GLBT 1042
ENGAGING QUEER CINEMA
English Department
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
3 credits

Course Meeting Dates and Location

Tuesday 4:00-6:30 p.m.

Classroom tbd

Instructor Information

Prof. Siobhan Craig

Email: craig026@umn.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Catalog Description

What codes are at work that make a film Queer? In Queer Cinema you will be an interpretive artist and active spectator as we analyze and consider subversive cinema from across nations and historical periods. Sometimes these films will be obviously queer or trans. However, queer and trans film is often coded or distorted, especially in response to legal or societal censorship or disapproval. As a result Queer directors and writers sometimes “speak” in a liberatory way to particular oppressed/silenced groups on the level of coded content, but if the content is consumed out of context of the code, the experience of a film may be contradictory, even offensive. Consequently we’ll be looking for the queer subversions within the distortions.

Course Overview

Because Queer Cinema introduced you to film, you will learn about the visual “language” of film through queer and trans content. We will focus on elements of cinematography, as well as mise-en-scene, editing, lighting etc. We will also engage with some of the theoretical, historical and political debates surrounding gender expression, race, sexuality, class and different kinds of embodiment. The goal of the course is to provide you with the artist tools you need to interpret queer and trans cinema—the interpretations are expected to be subjective, as any art is.

Unlike more general film courses, ENGL 1042 will focus on the multiple and contested ways in which gender and sexuality are engaged by cinema. We will consider the following questions, among others: how does film construct particular sexualities or gender identifications as “natural” and normative or “unnatural” and deviant? What are some of the cinematic codes and conventions that make the world of a film, and the identities proposed within it, seem “normal” and “real,” and what happens when these are challenged? Can the contravention of these codes cause us to think in new ways, destabilizing familiar concepts of gender or sexuality? What do we, as film spectators,

look for in cinema, and what kinds of sexualities and gendered subjectivities emerge in our dialogue with the screen?

This course will take an intersectional approach, considering the ways in which sexuality and gender interact with race, class, different bodies and other societal ways of classifying people. We will analyze films from a variety of national cinemas and historical periods, ranging from the 1910s to the present, and including both mainstream cinema and the avant-garde, situating them historically. Readings represent a wide range of points of view and theoretical agendas. We will explore different ways of “reading” cinema, the historical contexts surrounding particular films, and some of the theoretical debates that characterize the field of cinema studies.

Queer or trans content appears in different ways throughout cinema. Sometimes it is readily identifiable but often it is coded or distorted, in response to legal or societal censorship or disapproval. We will be watching several films that may, on the surface, appear to be trans and queer phobic, racist, sexist or otherwise offensive. Meaning in film can exist on many different levels, however. The intentions of the director, producer and other collaborators play a part, but in no way fully determine meaning. Films often contain contradictory or subversive elements, conscious or unconscious, that open them up to multiple, or even contradictory, interpretations. Many films, therefore, “speak” in a liberatory way to particular oppressed/silenced groups on the level of coded content. The subversive phenomenon of the queer “cult film” has been important because these movies can be read in multiple ways.

I encourage each of you to be an active spectator. As you watch the films, think about your responses. How do films manipulate us—emotionally, aesthetically, politically? How are our expectations satisfied or challenged? What codes are at work?

Student Learning Outcomes

Students in ENGL 1042 learn how to locate and critically evaluate as well as artistically interpret the visual texts of films. They learn to recognize queer-coded cinema, to interpret queer codes they may not recognize, and to analyze those queer codes against dominant representations. In Canvas posts, class participations, quizzes and the final paper, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to understand queer codes and to analyze them. The instructor evaluates students according to the accuracy of the interpretation of the codes and, in the case of papers, the overall elegance and concision with which students synthesize their knowledge.

Student Learning Outcomes

Locate and Critically Evaluate Information:

1. Please explain briefly how this outcome will be addressed in the course. Give brief examples of class work related to the outcome.

Students in ENGL 1042 learn how to locate and critically evaluate the visual texts of films. They learn to recognize queer-coded cinema, to interpret queer codes they may not recognize, and to analyze those queer codes against dominant representations.

2. How will you assess the students' learning related to this outcome? Give brief examples of how class work related to the outcome will be evaluated.

In Canvas posts, class participations, quizzes and the final paper, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to understand queer codes and to analyze them. The instructor evaluates students according to the accuracy of the interpretation of the codes and, in the case of papers, the overall elegance and concision with which students synthesize their knowledge.

Arts Core

Describe how the course meets the criteria required of all Liberal Education courses:

ENGL 1042 **helps students understand what liberal education is** by asking them to participate in the analysis of queer, visual texts (films) that inform their own lives, if they are queer or trans, or increase their awareness of others unlike them, if they are allies. They will interpret the meaning of various queer films from different nationalities and time periods, while they also build their vocabulary in cinematic terms.

ENGL 1042 **will be offered at least once a year.**

ENGL 1042 **is taught by regular faculty.**

ENGL 1042 **is 3 credits.**

Describe how the course meets the criteria required of all Core courses:

ENGL 1042 **employs teaching and learning strategies that engage students with doing the work of the field, not just reading about it.** While students in this class will actively watch films with an eye for coded meanings, they will also discuss what they see and think with each other. They will discuss their findings during in class discussions, in posts on Canvas and in conversations with their instructor. Due to the coded nature of some of these films, engaging with each other and reading a coded queer message is easier than doing so alone.

Small group work is a central feature of ENGL 1042. During each class meeting, the instructor breaks the students into small groups, which discuss that day's films, watched in advance of the class meeting. Depending on the material, the instructor may apply a light or strict framework for the group discussion. Alternatively, the instructor may allow a freeform discussion as a form of scaffolding to a whole class discussion.

ENGL 1042 **has no prerequisites.**

Describe how the course meets the objectives and criteria for the specific Core requirement (Arts Core) for which the course is being proposed:

In ENGL 1042 **Students create their own artistic efforts.** After engaged in artistic interpretation and consideration of films for the first half of the semesters, students devise their own paper topic and write a five to eight page paper, consisting of their own artistic interpretation of a film or films, until the end of the semester.

In ENGL 1042 **Students reflect on their artistic efforts in writing or in discussion that develops awareness of the considerations that guide artistic practice and response.** During online discussions, students share written artistic interpretations of the week's films and receive written feedback from their peers about their interpretations. During class meetings during the last half of the semester, students write a paper that develops their artistic interpretation of a film into a polished work of artistic criticism. In small groups the students work on their interpretations together and provide feedback to each other about their growing projects.

ENGL 1042 **Students become aware of why and how artists select their content, media, and method.** By decoding queer codes in films, students become aware of the reasons why queer and trans directors, filmmakers and writers make artistic choices in response to censorship and social nonacceptance. The online and class discussions help students to dig into these coded choices and help each other gain awareness of not only those choices, but also cultural and social sentiments that distort those choices.

ENGL 1042 **Students develop an understanding of the arts in relation to communities in and for which art is created.** By viewing and analyzing a diverse range of queer and trans film, further varied by national and historical period, students develop an understanding of the art of film in relation to queer and trans communities. In particular, film has been a liberatory art form for queer and trans communities. Simply recording lives and events that otherwise don't get recorded, remembered or passed down in families is hugely important to queer and trans communities. On the other hand, cinema is also revolutionary, and messages can be coded into films that, on one hand, escape view despite censors, and that, on the other hand, that openly agitate in ways that are hard to describe without interpretation.

ENGL 1042 **Students examine how the historical dimensions of time, place, and culture inform artistic practice.** Possessing an intersectional pedagogical approach, this course is devoted to interpreting and discussing film from different time periods, nationalities, races and ethnicities. Queer Cinema gives students the opportunity to learn the parallels and differences in queer and trans lives across different places, times and cultures, including the different words used to describe queer and trans people. Contemporary queer film techniques didn't leap from Zeus's head, but instead were formed and developed by queer and trans folks who grappled with these issues before. Likewise, artistic interpretations from previous generations laid the groundwork for today's artistic interpreters of queer film. Analyzing and reading deeply into these many sources, students receive an education in which interpretations of film are fresh today.

Films

All films are available online via the Digital Content Library. Direct links to each film will appear on the canvas module for the week in which the film is discussed. The general link for the DCL is <https://dcl.elevator.umn.edu/>

<i>Different from the Others</i> (1919, clips)	Richard Oswald
<i>Girls in Uniform</i> (1931)	Leontine Sagan
<i>Rope</i> (1948)	Alfred Hitchcock
<i>Death in Venice</i> (1971)	Luchino Visconti
<i>Fireworks</i> (1949)	Kenneth Anger
<i>Scorpio Rising</i> (1964)	Kenneth Anger
<i>Tongues Untied</i> (1989)	Marlon Riggs
<i>Some Like it Hot</i> (1959, clips)	Billy Wilder
<i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i> (1985)	Stephen Frears
<i>Daughters of the Dust</i> (1991)	Julie Dash
<i>The Crying Game</i> (1992)	Neil Jordan
<i>Orlando</i> (1992)	Sally Potter
<i>Watermelon Woman</i> (1996)	Cheryl Dunye
<i>Carol</i> (2016)	Todd Haynes
<i>All That Heaven Allows</i> (1955, clips)	Douglas Sirk
<i>Far From Heaven</i> (2002; clips)	Todd Haynes
<i>The Edge of Heaven</i> (2007)	Fatih Akin
<i>Moonlight</i> . (2016)	Barry Jenkins
Optional:	
<i>Boys Don't Cry</i> (1999)	Kimberly Pierce
<i>The Brandon Teena Story</i> (1998)	Muska, Olafsdottir

(The Pierce film contains scenes of extreme sexual violence that may be traumatic to watch. For this reason, I have made it optional.)

Website: Yale Film Analysis site <https://filmanalysis.yale.edu/>

Readings (all readings are available in the weekly modules on the course canvas page.)

The Queer Threat to Civilization in M	Javier Vendrell
Madchen in Uniform: from Repressive Tolerance	B. Ruby Rich
To Erotic Liberation	
The Production Code (Hays Code)	
https://productioncode.dhwritings.com/multipleframes_productioncode.php	
Anal Rope	D. A. Miller
Sex, Gender, Heteronormativity (Some like it Hot)	Terrell Carver
Interview with Kenneth Anger	Kate Haug
Interview with Marlon Riggs	
Capitalist Houses, Queer Homes	R. Gairola
Revisiting <i>Daughters of the Dust</i>	Jennifer Machiorlatti

It's Only a Piece of Meat
 Female Masculinities
 Performing Gender *Orlando/The Crying Game*
 Chasing Fae: *The Watermelon Woman*,
 Written on the Screen
 Rock Hudson's Body
 The Politics of Disappointment: Haynes, Sirk

Leighton Grist
 Jack Halberstam
 Peter Stokes
 Laura L. Sullivan
 Lynn Joyrich
 R. Meyer
 S. Willis

Yale Film Analysis website (located at <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/index.htm> 1
 Basic Terms 2 Mise-en-scene 3 Editing 4 Cinematography 5 Sound)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Canvas responses: You will post a short (150-250 words) weekly response to films and readings to the course Canvas site and you will provide three responses to your peers in Canvas as well. The responses should be informal discussions of the film and/or readings for that week. These responses are relatively unstructured; they are designed to allow you to explore your own artistic interpretations in an informal way. Lack of a formal structure, however, does not imply casualness or low expectations; the weekly responses, though brief, should show original thought and engagement with the course material. Weekly responses are due by 8:00 PM on Thursday, (One approach might be to briefly discuss a particular scene or a short sequence—even a single shot—from a film; alternatively, you could consider a point or two from the secondary readings or make a connection with other texts with which you are familiar.) The responses on Canvas will not be graded individually, but their completion will count toward 10% of your grade.
2. Oral participation/presentation: Each class meeting will include small group discussion as well as whole class discussion. I expect that you will regularly participate in both and present during small and whole group discussions. Decoding queer codes happens through listening and conversation (30% of your grade).
3. Quizzes: The largest portion of your grade, quizzes occur approximately every other week and each consists of 5% of your grade (total 40%). Any makeup quiz must be completed by 8:00 pm on Thursday of the following week or the grade converts to 0%.
4. Final paper: During the second half of the course, you will write one long paper (5-8 pages), consisting of 20% of your grade. This paper will consist of a close analysis of a queer or trans film in which you decode the visual text and synthesize an interpretation from the decoded meanings.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Canvas responses	10%
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Oral participation/presentation	30%
Quizzes	40%
Final Paper	20%

Grades will be based on the fulfillment of course requirements according to University standards as described in the College of Liberal Arts Handbook (a more detailed breakdown is included below).

- A *Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements. 3.334-4.0%*
- B *Achievement significantly above the level required to meet course requirements. 2.667%-3.333%*
- C *Achievement meets the base course requirements in every aspect. 1.667%-2.333%*
- D *Achievement worthy of credit despite failing to meet fully the course requirements. 1.0%-1.666%*
- F *Performance fails to meet the basic course requirements. 0%*

Class Schedule (subject to change)

- January 19: Introduction; Watch *M*, *Metropolis* (clips) *Different from the Others* (clips)
- January 26: Readings: Vendrell “The Queer Threat to Civilization in *M*;” “Yale Film Analysis site: “Basic Terms;” Watch: *Girls in Uniform* Quiz in Class
- February 2: Film Analysis site: “mise-en-scene;” Readings: B. Ruby Rich “Madchen in Uniform;” “The Production Code/Hay’s Code;” Watch: *Rope*;
- February 9: Readings: Readings: Yale Film Analysis site: “Editing;” Reading: Miller “Anal Rope;” Watch: *Death in Venice* Quiz in Class
- February 16: Yale Film Analysis site: “Cinematography;” reading: Watch: *Scorpio Rising*, *Tongues Untied*, *At Land*, *Fireworks*
- February 23: Readings: Yale Film Analysis site: “Sound;” “Interview with Kenneth Anger;” “Interview with Marlon Riggs;” Watch: *My Beautiful Laundrette*;

Quiz in Class

- March 2: Reading: “Sex, Gender and Performativity: Seeing Some Like it Hot as Heterosexual Dystopia;” Watch: *Scorpio Rising, Tongues Untied*;
- March 9: Spring break; no class.
- March 16: Readings: Kate Haug “An Interview with Kenneth Anger;” “Interview with Marlon Riggs;” Watch: *My Beautiful Laundrette*; **Final Paper ideas: discuss in small groups**
- March 23: Readings: Cairola “Capitalist Houses, Queer Homes;” Watch: *Daughters of the Dust*; **Complete draft of paper due for peer review**
Quiz in Class
- March 30: Reading: “*Daughters of the Dust* Revisited” Watch: *The Crying Game*
Final Paper ideas: due to instructor/TA
- April 6: Reading: Reading: Halberstam “Female Masculinities;” Grist “It’s Only a Piece of Meat;” Watch: *Far From Heaven; All That Heaven Allows* (clips;) *Carol* (clips;) **Complete draft of paper due, to be returned with comments**
Quiz in Class
- April 13: Readings: Meyer “Rock Hudson’s Body;” Watch: *Orlando*; **Final Paper drafts: due in class for peer group discussion**
- April 20: Readings: Stokes “Performing Gender in Orlando and The Crying Game” (start reading on p.347;) Watch: *Watermelon Woman*
Quiz in Class
- April 27: Readings: “Chasing Fae: The Watermelon Woman;” Watch: *The Edge of Heaven*
- April 28: Conclusions; **Final paper due**

Student Writing Support

Student Writing Support (SWS) offers free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants from across the disciplines help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies. Consulting is available by appointment online and in Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in Appleby Hall. For more information, call 612-625-1893 or go to writing.umn.edu/sws. In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as avoiding plagiarism, documenting sources, and planning and completing a writing project.

Additional information and departmental and college policies:

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

CLA Classroom Policies: <http://cla.umn.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/classroom-policies>

University Grading Policies

The grading policy in this course conforms to CLA guidelines. Therefore a “C” is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a “C” a student must perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

A	4.000	- Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to
		meet course requirements
A-	3.667	
B+	3.333	
B	3.000	- Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to
		meet
		course requirements
B-	2.667	
C+	2.333	
C	2.000	- Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every
		respect
C-	1.667	
D+	1.333	
D	1.000	- Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to
		meet
		fully the course requirements
S		Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

For additional information, please refer to:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html>.

Incompletes

A grade of incomplete ("I") is given only in a genuine emergency, and generally only for work which is due during the last two weeks of the course. The student must make arrangements with the instructor for an incomplete before the last day of class.

Make-up Work For Legitimate Absences

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections.

For complete information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Absence for Religious Observation

The University of Minnesota permits absences from class for participation in religious observances. Students who plan to miss class must inform instructors of anticipated absences at the beginning of the semester; meet with instructors to reschedule any missed labs or examinations; and obtain class notes from other students.

Student Academic Integrity & Scholastic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of

academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Plagiarism can include submitting a paper:

- written by means of inappropriate collaboration;
- written by you for another course, submitted without the permission of both instructors;
- purchased, downloaded, or cut and pasted from the Internet;
- or that fails to properly acknowledge its sources through standard citations.

For resources on how to appropriately use and cite sources, and to avoid plagiarism, see:

<http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quickhelp/sources.html>

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes & Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community.

Academic Freedom & Responsibility

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity

for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

Student Writing Support

Students can get one-to-one-consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall.

See <http://writing.umn.edu> for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

Disability Accommodations

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability

Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (UM Twin Cities - 612.626.1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.

- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your (access consultant/disability specialist).

Additional information is available on the DRC website:

<https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>

or email drc@umn.edu.

Mental Health Services

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities.

University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student

Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2020-01/policy_student_conduct_code.pdf

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means

“engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to

teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in

work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.”

Sexual Harassment

“Sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other

verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an

intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or

program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting.

For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

<https://policy.umn.edu/hr/sexharassassault>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender

expression.

For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: <https://eoaa.umn.edu>