

ENG 434: Queer Theory, #TSUQueerTheory

When & where: TR, 9:00- 10:20 am, VH 1144

Instructor: Dr. Summer Pennell, Assistant Professor of English Education.

You can call me Summer or Dr. Pennell (no Miss, Mrs., or Ms. please).

Contact: email, spennell@truman.edu; Twitter, @summerpennell

Office hours: McClain 326, Tuesday & Thursday 10:30- 12:30, and by appointment.

Course Description:

From catalogue: The study of representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people in the arts, humanities, and critical theory. In juxtaposing traditional categories and canons with the perspectives of people marginalized as "queer," the course explores how knowledge is constructed and norms are established.

Prerequisite: ENG 209 Minimum Grade of C.

Credits: 4

Updated description: The study of queer theory (a form of critical theory) in relation to the arts and humanities. This course explores how knowledge is constructed and norms are established, especially in regards to heteronormativity and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and otherwise under the queer umbrella (LGBTQ+).

Course Attributes

- English Major: Criticism
- Honors Scholar
- Liberal Arts & Sciences Hours

Course Goals: Through this course, I hope that we will:

- Read and understand a variety of works by queer theorists in several disciplines
- Analyze a Young Adult novel using queer theory
- Create and complete an individualized final project showcasing knowledge of queer theory

Required Course Materials:

Required texts:

- Hall, D. E., & Jagose, A. (Eds.). (2012). *The Routledge queer studies reader*. Routledge.
- Linville, D. & Carlson, D. E. (Eds.). (2016). *Beyond Borders: Queer Eros and Ethos (Ethics) in LGBTQ Young Adult Literature*
- YA novel of your choosing
- Other readings on Blackboard

Twitter #TSUQueerTheory:

- Public twitter account to tweet your classmates, me, and the authors we read
- You must follow your classmates (we'll post these on Blackboard) &@summerpennell (yours truly)
- If you find more accounts we should be following (such as the authors we're reading), please let me/the class know!

Attendance Policy: The success of this class depends on your participation and attendance. Everyone is allowed two “free” absences; any more will affect your grade. Required university events (such as athletic competitions or required conference attendance) will be excused and do not count against your two allowed absences. Two late arrivals or leaving early also count as an absence. You do not need to bring any doctor’s notes for these two allowed absences. You do, however, still need to abide by assignment deadlines. If you have an emergency where this is not possible, talk to me, but emailing me right before class to say you’re ill and don’t have the assignment finished won’t work. If you do have an illness or other emergency that requires you to miss more than two classes, please bring me a doctor’s note or other appropriate documentation so your absences can be excused and we can come up with a plan for you to make up any missed work. Otherwise, **your grade is lowered by 2% for each missed class beyond two**. When you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes from your classmates and to keep up with assignments as posted in the syllabus.

Participation and Classroom Environment: This is a discussion-based class. As such, everyone is expected to participate. To be fully prepared, you should complete assigned readings before class and come with questions and comments. Bring your readings to class. I trust you to be prepared, but if discussions lag I reserve the right to require daily reading journals. I expect everyone to actively participate by listening carefully and respectfully, offering comments and questions, and working collegially with each other. We will also participate by taking daily selfies (due at the start of class) in response to our readings and posting them to Blackboard.

I am entering this classroom under the assumption that everyone wants to be here and is excited about our topic. We will debate and argue over queer theory, but we will not debate and argue over people’s identities. I expect us to treat everyone with respect. I have completed Safe Zone training, which focuses on LGBTQ+ identities and expressions, and my classroom is a welcoming environment for everyone inclusive of disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Technology: Laptops may be used for note-taking, posting to Blackboard, and during activities as needed, but I ask you to be respectful of the class and not check your email or non-class related social media during class. Cell phones may be kept on silent and used **ONLY** to participate in activities. Please be respectful and refrain from texting or other non-class-related activities on your cell phone during class.

Grading Policy:

- Late work is not accepted, except in the case of a documented emergency.
- Assignments will be graded using different criteria, which will be posted to Blackboard well in advance of the due date. I STRONGLY suggest you consult these before, and while, completing your assignment.
- Completion does not equal a grade. If you do not turn in quality work, you may get a zero.
- Papers should be written in Times New Roman, 12 font, standard margins, in the style of your home discipline (MLA, APA, or Chicago).

Grading Scale: Grades will be posted on Blackboard

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70- 70
- D = 60- 69
- F = 59 and below

Academic Integrity:

- All students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.truman.edu/conduct/>) which includes avoiding plagiarism.
- The student handbook defines plagiarism as: “Intentional representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work or sections of a work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials, including material taken from or ordered through the Internet; and/or (c) the unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced.”
- See the conduct code for more information: <http://www.truman.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CHAPTER-8-REVISED-August-1-2015.pdf>.
- All **written assignments** should use either MLA or APA standards (use whatever your major uses; ask me or your academic advisor if you aren’t sure). Always, always cite sources even if you’re just using a sentence, or an idea. Each time you quote a novel from class in a paper, you should include a parenthetical citation. For example, if you’re using APA, it would look like: My brilliant point on X is shown when the main character “quote about main character supporting your point” (Author last name, p. 48). As a former journal editor, I am a stickler for properly cited sources and I’ll help you when you’re unsure. Purdue OWL is a great source for all things writing and citation.

Writing Center

I encourage you to use the university’s Writing Center for your writing projects. However, remember that it is not a proofreading service. The writing consultants will read your work and give you feedback, letting you know what is working well (and why) and what might not be working so well (and why). They can help you understand and better your writing craft. They can also help with brainstorming if you’re having a hard time beginning. They have an online scheduler, so making an appointment is easy. Go here: <http://writingcenter.truman.edu>.

ADA Accommodations and Student Health:

- The university is committed to making every possible effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Disability Services office (x. 4478) as soon as possible.

- More and more college students are experiencing symptoms of severe depression. If you are struggling emotionally, please let me know. I urge you to set up an appointment at the Counseling Center, 660-785-4014, or ucs@truman.edu. The after-hours crisis hotline is 660-665-5621; ask the public safety representative who answers to connect you with a Truman counselor.

Title IX and Student Sexual Misconduct

Truman State University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment that is free from bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g., sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member is a “mandated reporter” and must notify Truman State University’s Title IX Coordinator, Jamie Ball (McClain Hall, 101, jball@truman.edu, 785-4354) and share the basic fact of your experience with her.

The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all your options and in connecting you with resources both on and off campus. If you would prefer to have a confidential conversation about an experience, the counselors at University Counseling Services are NOT mandated reporters and they can be reached at 660-785-4014. For after-hours crisis counseling, call 660-665-5621.

For more information regarding Truman’s policies and procedures relating to any form of gender discrimination, please see <http://eoaa.truman.edu/university-nondiscrimination-policy/> and <http://eoaa.truman.edu/complaint-reporting-resolutionprocedure/>.

FERPA

Education records are protected by the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result course grades, assignments, advising records, etc. cannot be released to third parties (including your parents, even if they’re paying your tuition) without your permission. If you want them to see your grades, you need to visit the Registrar’s office and sign a form- only official written permission counts as permission.

There are, however, several exceptions about which you should be aware. For example, education records can be disclosed to employees or offices at Truman who have an “educational need to know”. These employees and offices may include your academic advisor, the Institutional Compliance Officer, the Registrar’s Office, or Student Affairs depending on the type of information. For more information about FERPA, see <http://www.truman.edu/registrar/ferpa/>.

Assignments: Detailed descriptions are on Blackboard. **All assignments should be turned in on Blackboard by the start of class on the due date.** I do not accept late work.

Assignment	Brief Description	% of Final Grade	Due Date(s)
Tweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweet twice a week (28 tweets total, minimum) using our class hashtag #TSUQueerTheory. [see handout on tweeting posted under "Assignments" on Blackboard]. These tweets can be in response to a classmate's tweet, or an original thought, and can be posted in class. • Tweets should be substantive and thought provoking, just like questions and comments in class. • Your tweets may include images/GIFs, etc. • Make sure you use our hashtag as that is how I will find your tweets for class and assign you a grade. 	10	Ongoing, starting week 2
Memes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a series of memes throughout the semester in response to one of the readings for the week. • Each Thursday, you will submit 1 meme with a short (1 paragraph) explanation. • Memes should help break down the theoretical text for a more general audience. 	25	Thursdays, starting week 2
Group discussion leading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a group, you will lead discussion for one class period (plan for 45-60 minutes) on one of readings. Be as creative as you like as you lead us through a discussion of the article's main points, connection to other readings, controversies, etc. Sign-ups week 2. 	15	Varies
YA novel analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a YA novel (it does not have to include queer characters) to analyze using queer theory. Do not choose a novel already analyzed in our text. • Use any of the queer theorists/theories- inside or outside of our course readings. Do NOT try to analyze the novel using more than 1 theory. 	20	3/9
Final project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because queer theory is about breaking boundaries, you will propose (turn in on Blackboard by 3/21) a final project that showcases your ability to use queer theory to analyze a text (defined broadly). Specifics of the assignment are up to you- this does not mean you can choose not to do a project. 	30	Thursday May 11, 8:30- 9:20

Course Calendar (subject to change) **Assignments are due the date listed on calendar, at the start of class.**

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due	Assignments Due
1	T 1/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview • What is queer theory? 		
1	R 1/19	Foundations	Reader: Ch. 1, Sedgwick, <i>Queer and Now</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meme • Create your twitter account, post to Blackboard
2	T 1/24	Foundations	Reader: Ch. 2, Butler, <i>Critically Queer</i>	Start tweeting! #TSUQueerTheory
2	R 1/26	Foundations	Attend the Women and Gender Studies Conference on campus.	Meme
3	T 1/31	Foundations	Reader: Ch. 8, Hennessy, <i>The Material of Sex</i>	
3	R 2/2	Foundations	Reader: Ch. 17, Edelman <i>The future is kid stuff: Queer theory, disidentification, and the death drive</i>	Meme
4	T 2/7	Foundations	Beyond Borders: Ch. 1, Haertling Thein & Kedley, <i>Out of the closet and all grown up...</i>	
4	R 2/9	Foundations	Beyond Borders: Ch. 2, Carlson, <i>Queer recognition and interdependence</i>	Meme Group 1
5	T 2/14	Queer literature analysis	Beyond Borders: Ch. 11, Helmer, <i>Queer literacies: A multidimensional approach to reading LGBTQ-themed literature</i>	

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due	Assignments Due
5	R 2/16	Intersections of Race	Reader: Ch. 7, Ferguson, <i>Queer of color critique...</i>	Meme
6	T 2/21	Intersections of Race	Reader: Ch. 24, Munoz, <i>Feeling brown, feeling down...</i>	Group 2
6	R 2/23	Intersections of Race	Beyond Borders: Ch. 5, Durand, <i>At the intersections of identity...</i>	Meme
7	T 2/28	Homonormativity	Beyond Borders: Ch. 6, Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, <i>Destabilizing homonormative for young readers</i>	Group 3
7	R 3/2	Affect	Reader: Ch. 25 Ahmed, <i>Queer Feelings</i>	Meme
8	T 3/7	Gender	Beyond Borders: Ch. 8, Linville, <i>Creating spaces of freedom for gender and sexuality for queer girls...</i>	Group 4
8	R 3/9	Crafting of history	Reader: Ch. 16, Halperin, <i>How to do the history of male homosexuality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YA paper • Meme
3/13- 3/17 Spring Break!				
10	T 3/21	Bodies	Reader: Ch. 26, Morland, <i>What can queer theory do for intersex?</i>	Detailed plan & description of your final project
10	R 3/23	Bodies	Reader: Ch. 27, Halberstam, <i>Transgender butch: Buth/FTM border wars and the masculine continuum</i>	Meme

Week	Date	Topics/ Discipline	Readings Due	Assignments Due
11	T 3/28	Sex and Desire	Reader: Ch. 10, Berlant & Werner, <i>Sex in Public</i>	
11	R 3/30	Sex and Desire	Reader: Ch. 12, Grosz, <i>Experimental desire: Rethinking queer subjectivity</i>	Meme Group 5
12	T 4/4	Disability	Reader: Ch. 28, McRuer, <i>Compulsory able-bodiedness and queer/disabled existence</i>	
12	R 4/6	Disability	Excerpts from Kafer's <i>Queer Crip</i> (on Blackboard)	Meme Group 6
13	T 4/11	Kinship & friendship	Beyond Borders: Ch. 4, Burke & Greteman, <i>Friendship as/and shared enmity</i>	
13	R 4/13	Kinship & friendship	Reader: Ch. 19, Rodriguez, Making queer familia	Meme Group 7
14	T 4/18	Sociology, education	Pennell, <i>Queer cultural capital: Implications for education</i> (Blackboard)	
14	R 4/20	No class- Student research conference		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meme • Go to the conference and tweet about your favorite research project – or how they can be queered!

Week	Date	Topics/ Discipline	Readings Due	Assignments Due
15	T 4/25	Race, critique	Reader: Ch. 6, Johnson, <i>"Quare" Studies ..</i>	
15	Thursday 4/27 Class canceled for English senior seminars. No meme due.			
16	T 5/2	Activism	Reader: Ch. 22, Cvetkovich, <i>AIDS activism and public feelings: Documenting act up's lesbians</i>	
16	R 5/4	Activism, critique	Reader: Ch. 5, Cohen, <i>Punks, Bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics?</i>	
FINAL	Thurs. 5/11, 8:30- 9:20			Final project presentation in groups