

Key Concepts for LGBTQ+ Studies | Brooklyn College

Class Time

Weds., 3:40-6:25 via Zoom

Instructor

B Lee-Harrison Aultman, Ph.D.

Email

baultman@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Office Hours

Weds., 2-3 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of the critical vocabular and forms of life that comprise the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit (LGBTQ+) communities. Although the course will be typically referred to in shorthand as critical queer or critical trans studies, the aim of the coursework (readings and lectures) is broadly construed. We will aim to elaborate the variety of ways that Euro-American culture has constituted the basis for certain racialized and sexualized norms that govern being human. These constitutive features include settler-colonialism and over four centuries what Cedric Robinson called the “primitive accumulation” of labor power generated by and through chattel slavery. To meet the challenges raised by these issues we will investigate the meaning of terms like power, sexuality, racialization, gendered embodiment, logical binarism, gay, lesbian, Blackness, transness, queerness, coalitional feminism, and the flaws with progress narratives of many mainstream or liberal social movements for queer rights (to name just a few of many). This is ambitious. But with an emphasis on class discussion and close reading practices, as well as an eye toward everyday life, our ambitions will yield impressive epistemic dividends. This class will fulfill the following learning objectives per the Brooklyn College General Education Pathways Requirements:

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, history, political science, psychology, public affairs, sociology, and U.S. literature.
- Analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.

ACCOMMODATIONS

To receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented visible or nonvisible 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 me with the course accommodation form. In any case, please consult with me.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a scholar and as students we must acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Lenape. We, the Brooklyn College community, must therefore acknowledge: that academic institutions and the nation-state itself was founded upon and continues to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to the ethical, epistemic, and pedagogical process of working to dismantle ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, and to recognize the hundreds of Indigenous Nations who continue to resist, live, and uphold their sacred relations across their lands. We also pay our respect to Indigenous elders past, present, and future and to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. I urge students to familiarize themselves with the Indigenous Studies Program at Brooklyn:

<https://libguides.brooklyn.cuny.edu/indigenoustudies>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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. Students should be aware that faculty may use plagiarism detection software.

STUDENT BEREAVEMENT

Students who experience the death of an immediate family member must contact the Division of Student Affairs, 2113 Boylan Hall, (718) 951-5352, or by email at studentaffairs@brooklyn.cuny.edu, if they wish to implement either the Standard Bereavement Procedure or the Leave of Absence Bereavement Procedure (see below). The Division of Student Affairs has the right to request a document that verifies the death (e.g., a funeral program or death notice).

REQUIRED TEXTS

On Blackboard

All reading materials are available as PDFs on *Blackboard*.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Attendance (5%)

Attendance and preparedness are expected. The course is designed around both lecture and discussion. Students should have completed the reading assignment a given week before the class session that Friday.

Weekly Journals (25%)

Students are expected to write weekly (250 – 300 word minimum) journal entries answering the following questions:

- What was the key theme of the week's reading?
- What were the main takeaways of the text and/or in-class discussion?

- Did this reading provide a different perspective on the issue?

Monthly Quizzes (25%)

Near the end of each month students will be expected to complete an online quiz. Each quiz will cover only the content for its preceding month, e.g., quizzes are not cumulative. These should be completed by their deadlines via the appropriate modules on *Blackboard*.

Final Exam / Final Aesthetic Project (45%)

There will be two options for a “final.” Students may take a traditional exam. Access to the final will be similar to the method of accessing monthly quizzes. Students will complete the written exam (essay-based and short answer) online in a time-monitored format. Students will have the option of saving their exam and returning to it at a later point. Alternatively, students may choose to write a media review. The expectations and rubric for this option are located at the end of the syllabus.

Grade Distribution (Weighted)

97-99 A+ | 93-96 A | 90-92 A-

87-89 B+ | 83-86 B | 80-82 B-

77-79 C+ | 73-77 C | 70- 72 C-

67-69 D+ | 63-66 D | 60-62 D-

0-59 F

Incompletes/Make-Up Assignments

I no longer assign INC (incomplete) grades. If a student cannot complete the required work for the semester and meets the Brooklyn College Registrar’s Office policy, they must reach out to the WGST Program Chair, Professor Florence, who will provide advisement on the matter. Additionally, I will not accept work that is one week passed the deadline.

COURSE AND READING SCHEDULE

Week	Text	Major Themes
Weds., Aug. 31	Syllabus & Lecture: General Overview of Women’s and Gender Studies and Queer Theory.	Course Expectations, Graded Assignments, Important Deadlines, Resources, and Keywords. Question: What brought you to this course?
Weds., Sept. 7 [JOURNAL ENTRY 1 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Foucault, M. <i>History of Sexuality Vol. 1</i> “The Power of Life and Death”	Power and Sexuality, The Body, Discourse, History, Sex, Political Power

Week	Text	Major Themes
Weds., Sept. 11 [JOURNAL ENTRY 2 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Sedgwick, E. <i>Epistemology of the Closet</i> , “Introduction: Axiomatic”	Woman, Femininity, Gender Difference, Feminist Phenomenology, Existentialism, Philosophy of Gender
Weds., Sept 21	Chauncey, G. <i>Gay New York</i> , “The Fairy as Intermediate Sex” ASSIGNMENT: QUIZ ONE DUE ON BLACKBOARD	Histories of Gay Urban Life, Queerness, Queer Masculinity
Weds., Sept. 28 [JOURNAL ENTRY 3 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Rubin, G. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex”	Lesbian Feminism, Women’s Queer Object Status, Role in LGBTQ Movements
Weds., Oct. 5 [JOURNAL ENTRY 4 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Smith, B. “Interview on LGBTQ Rights” & Combahee River Collective Statement	Progress Narratives, State-Issued Violence, Protest Politics
Weds., Oct. 12	PANEL ON MARLON RIGGS in honor of the Wolfe Institute’s 2022-2023 Hess Fellow: Barbara Smith	HIV-AIDS, Race and Violence, Gender and Race, Sexuality, Film and Representation
Weds., Oct. 19 [JOURNAL ENTRY 5 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Various, “Woman-Identified Women”	Normativity and Sexuality, Lesbian Feminism, Radical Lesbian Politics
Weds., Oct. 26	Butler, J. <i>Bodies that Matter</i> , “Radically Queer” & Keeling, K. “The Black Femme” from <i>The Witch’s Flight</i> ASSIGNMENT: QUIZ TWO DUE ON BLACKBOARD	Performativity, Woman as the Subject of Feminism, Queer Feminism, Gender and Desire
Weds., Nov. 2 [JOURNAL ENTRY 6 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Spillers, H. “An Order of Constancy”	Black Feminism, Femininity and Black Literary Culture, Queerness and Blackness
Weds., Nov. 9 [JOURNAL ENTRY 7 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Snorton, C. Riley. “Anatomically Speaking” from <i>Black on Both Sides</i> & Beemyn, G. “Transgender History”	Critical Trans Studies, Transness and Cisness, Disciplining Trans
Weds., Nov. 16	Heaney, E. “Introduction” and “The Triumphant Plural” from <i>The New Woman</i>	Transfeminism, Blackness and Transness, Abolitionist Feminism, Intimate Protest, Coalition Building
Weds., Nov. 23	NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	
Weds., Nov. 30	Hartman, S. “Anarchy of Colored Girls” ASSIGNMENT: QUIZ THREE DUE ON BLACKBOARD	New Directions of Queer and Black Feminist Writing, Black Women’s Histories, Narrative, Voice, Affectivity
Weds., Dec. 7 [JOURNAL ENTRY 9 DUE ON BLACKBOARD]	Berlant, L. “Introduction,” in <i>The Inconvenience of Other People</i>	Phenomenology of Activism, Writing and the Self, Queer Life Practices, Poetics of Social Infrastructure

Week	Text	Major Themes
Weds., Dec. 14	FINAL EXAM REVIEW/READING DAY	
TBD	FINAL EXAM WILL BE ONLINE. FINAL PROJECTS WILL BE SUBMITTED ONLINE.	

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND LINKS PROVIDED BY THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE LIBRARY

The Body and Embodiment

- Andueza, Luis, Archie Davies, Alex Loftus, and Hannah Schling. 2021. "The Body as Infrastructure." *EPE: Nature and Space* 4 (3): 799–817.
- Awkward-Rich, Cameron. 2017. "Trans, Feminism: Or , Reading like a Depressed Transsexual." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42 (4): 819–41.
- Berlant, Lauren. 1998. "Intimacy: A Special Issue." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (2): 281–88.
- . 2018. "Genre Flailing." *Capacious: Journal for Emerging Affect Inquiry* 1 (2): 156–62.
- Chu, Andrea Long. 2017a. "Study in Blue: Trauma, Affect, Event." *Women & Performance* 27 (3): No Pagination.
- Enke, Finn. 2018. "Collective Memory and the Transfeminist 1970s." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5 (1): 9–29. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-4291502>.
- Lugones, María. 1987. "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia* 2 (2): 3–19.
- Ochoa, Marcia. 2016. "Los Huecos Negros: Cannibalism, Sodomy and the Failure of Modernity in Tierra Firme." *Genders* 1 (1). <https://www.colorado.edu/genders/2016/05/19/los-huecos-negros-cannibalism-sodomy-and-failure-modernity-tierra-firme>
- Silva, Denise Ferreira da. 2014. "Toward a Black Feminist Poethics: The Quest(Ion) of Blackness Toward the End of the World." *The Black Scholar* 44 (2): 81–97.
- Hartman, Saidiya. 2008. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe* 12 (2): 1–14.
- Wilson, Ara. 2016. "The Infrastructure of Intimacy." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 4 (2): 247–80.

Queer and Trans Studies

- Amin, Kadji. 2022. "We Are All Nonbinary: A Brief History of Accidents." *Representations, Proximities: Reading with Judith Butler*, 158: 106–19. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2022.158.11.106>.
- Aultman, B Lee. 2014. "Cisgender." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Postposttranssexual: Key Concepts for a 21st Century Trans Studies, 1 (1–2): 61–62. <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399614>.
- Bradway, Tyler. 2021. "Queer Narrative Theory and the Relationality of Form." *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 136 (5): 711–27.
- Gill-Peterson, Jules. 2018. "Trans of Color Critique before Transsexuality." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5 (4): 606–20.
- Rubin, Henry S. 1998. "Phenomenology as Method in Trans Studies." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4 (2): 263–81.
- Stone, Sandy. 1992. "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto." *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 10 (2): 150–76.
- Stryker, Susan, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore. 2008. "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36 (3/4): 11–22.

Online Documentary Resources

- Academic and Student Achievement Resources for Students. Brooklyn College.
<http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/academics/library.php>
- Association of College and Research Libraries: Women's and Gender Studies Collection.
<https://acrl.libguides.com/WGSScollections/collectionsandplatforms>

KEYWORDS

Affect: The state or condition of being affected. Usually indicates sensation before emotional intelligibility.

Alienation: Refers to a psychic condition first advanced by Karl Marx in his *1844 Manuscripts* whereby human beings are stripped of their otherwise natural relationship with either: (1) the biological and metabolic conditions assigned to labor (*see* Embodiment); or (2) the products thereof.

Binary Logic: The ordering of reality (or ontology) into two essentially diametrically opposite groups. The binary itself is often loosely held together by historical consolidation and social taboo. The first term is often understood to be the “normative” term that conditions the second, or subordinate, term. The most notable binaries discussed in this class include:

Male/Female: Refers to the (biological) sexual differentiation of the human body usually assigned at birth and is dependent upon the intelligible presence of genitalia. Males typically have the visible signs of reproductive organs such as the penis, testes, and scrotum. Females typically have the visible signs of reproductive organs associated with the vulva: the clitoris, labia, and vaginal canal.

Man/Woman: Refers to the social functions assigned to the sexual differentiations accorded to a person birth-assigned sex. Social functions tend to follow a logic according primacy of the phallus: assertive/passive; penetrative/receptive; dominant/subservient; subject/object.

Unmarked/Marked: Refers to the conditional states associated with privileged or unprivileged status. The marked category is understood within a cultural imaginary as difference, is always seen or implied, and carries stigma. The unmarked category is understood as the very reproduction of the cultural imaginary itself. Hence man/woman follows the logic of marked/unmarked, so too does Black/white.

Masculinity/Femininity: Refers to the various expressions of gender’s social functionality that follow a similar logic assigned to the man/woman binary. Masculine traits are usually ascribed to male bodies and used to identify normative manly behaviors such as activity, productivity, and aggressivity. Feminine traits are usually ascribed to female bodies and are used to identify normative womanly behaviors such as passivity, reproductivity, and caregiving.

Public/Private: Refers to the general difference accorded to everyday life associated with Aristotle’s *Politics* that accord public life a primacy of relations (political in nature) assumed by property holders. The private is the domain of individual property holders whose ownership extended, for Aristotle, over the entirety of the domain. As property holders were limited to men this relation of dominance subsumed wives, children, concubines, and slaves.

Sameness/Difference: Refers to the philosophical relations of identity associated with John Locke and the European Enlightenment. Sameness is the basis for the consolidation of the self-identity of a subject, a human being accorded with rational faculties and civility. Difference is the basis for constructing the other or non-identity of an object, a (sometimes) human being denied rational faculties and civility. It should be noted that sameness as well as identity are founded on the presence of its binary opposite, difference.

Subject/Object: Refers to the European Enlightenment’s elaboration of the status of an agent or self-sufficient being (subject) and its passive non-agentive being (object) upon which the former exercises control over the latter. Subjects tend to reflect the privileges accorded to their relation within a cultural system or symbolic economy that has

consolidated subjectivity (manhood or selfhood) and objectivity (womanhood or otherness). *See* Subjectivity or Object Relations.

Blackness: The ante-ontological movement of a (what is before the bodies, flesh, or pigmentation) cultural whole associated Black American lifeworlds. Associated with the Radical Black Tradition and the works of Fred Moten, Cedric Robinson, and Hortense Spillers.

Body, the: The ontological (what is assigned real or existent) entity consisting of a whole organism with visible enclosures of flesh, internal structures that may include skeleton and muscle.

Chattel Slavery: Refers to the institutional designs of human servitude lasting between the 16th and 19th centuries as a global and, more particularly, an American economy. Characterized by the total abjection and objectification of the human-in-servitude (hence chattel) and the total loss of legal and social standing as a human being.

Cis, *see* Trans: Refers to a normativity that defines the so-called coherence between a subject's gender and their birth-assigned sex. Recent criticisms have shown that cis (gender, sexual) tends to naturalize this "coherence" and normalize transness as pathologically "incoherent."

Color Line, the: Refers to W. E. B. DuBois's term first elaborated in *The Souls of Black Folks* wherein he named racial difference a matter of socially constructed and historically consolidated value placed on the color of the flesh. Usually denotes a racial difference in binary distinction between Black and white.

Commodity Fetish: Refers to the theory first advanced by Karl Marx most famously in the first volume of *Das Kapital* holding that capitalism and its free markets alienate human labor from the products of that labor (commodity) to such an extent that the commodity's meaningfulness outstrips its actual worth.

Community: Community is a singular-plural noun referring to a group of individual members possessing a similar psychic, historical, or affective bond. May also refer to an "imaginal bond" such as the nation.

Communities, of Color: Refers to the multiple and sometimes overlapping groups consisting of a singular community-plural characterized by non-whiteness (*see* Racialization). Criticized for its lumping together of otherwise disparate communities, such as Black American communities, whose histories and contemporary social relations are radically divergent.

Disability: A term coined in during the late-20th century activists to describe the conditional (long-term or short-term, chronic or episodic) incapacity to interact with so-called normalized standards of society/culture. The terms is often criticized for its reduction of a person to a single or series of difference of embodiments that mark them redundantly as not able-bodied. A more capacious definition refers the ways that normative accounts of the so-called able body (bipedally mobile, heterosexually reproductive, economically productive) have become coherent thereby rendering the constructed world's normativity invisible. Visible and non-visible disabilities are typically included with the latter having only recently been added.

Discourse: The term typically refers to the exchange of communication between two or more people. Its importance to critical theory changed when Michel Foucault contended that discourse consists of a domain of knowledge affirming or disaffirming conditional statements consolidated into a field or branch of science. Importantly, the term links the production of both nature and culture, holding that nature is as much a product of domains of knowability within the frameworks historically defined within culture.

Discursive: The adjectival form of discourse. Refers to the way that an object or subject is formed under the conditions particular to a discourse (e.g., biology historically produced racial differences that have been largely criticized as discursive and, therefore, not part of any natural order).

Embodiment, *see* Body: The condition or phenomenological sensation assigned to having or living within a body.

Enfleshment: A term associated with Hortense Spillers in “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe,” referring to the way that the body is first visualized and understood through the interface of the flesh; it is, in her argument, the first body with which slavers and colonists came in contact.

Essentialism: The philosophical or moral belief associated with medieval Christian humanists like St. Augustine who argued that God created a fixed core that is universal and prior to any constituent part of a larger whole. Essentialism holds that an essence of a thing is the eternal cause of actions, behaviors, and the production or destruction of lifeworlds. It is summed up by the Latin motto *essentia prior ad actio*.

Existentialism: The philosophy or moral belief most associated with Jean-Paul Sartre who argued that human life is an ongoing product (an accumulation of action and agency) that cannot be ascribed to an essential feature. Human life is therefore open to radical free will which is only constrained by social conditions (such as class, race, gender, ableism). Often associated with later “anti-humanist” schools of thought arguing that the term “human” is corrupted by its history with humanism. It is summed up by the Latin motto *actio prior ad essentia*.

Feminism: A heterogenous (or pluralized) collection of philosophical and social beliefs, programs, and (sometimes) political identities. Feminist theory holds that most Western models of democracy (indeed its very history) is based on a male-sex dominated social arrangement privileging the status of men as a social group. Criticism of this arrangement, or patriarchy, has been recently revised to include heteronormative reproduction, cisnormative (or nontrans) ableism, and racial exclusivity. Criticisms internal to the most recent iterations of feminism include the cisnormativity and racially exclusivity of feminism itself, including its Euro-American (or Western) centrism.

Fugitivity: A term associated with decolonial thinker Edouard Glissant that has been recently been taken up within Black Studies and Critical Race Theory. Glissant refers to fugitivity as meaningfulness particular to a historical or cultural community or set of communities which remains outside the capacity of Western thought to conceptualize. *See* Blackness and its ante-ontological status.

Gender: One part of an often tripartite description of the reproductive body (sex/gender/gender identity) that refers to the social function associated with a person’s birth-assigned sex. *See* Sex, Gender Identity.

Gender Identity: On part of an often tripartite description of the reproductive body (sex/gender/gender identity) that refers to the internal relation between (or identity of) a person’s gender and their birth-assigned sex. *See* Gender, Sex.

Historical Materialism: A philosophical model associated with the collected works of Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels in their co-authored *Communist Manifesto*. This model elaborates the development and subsequent identity of a given social, political, and economic totality through a rigorous focus on the productive means and modes particular to moments within an historically conditioned time. Materialism is the underlying theoretical component positing the indispensable need to understand the actually existing modes of everyday life through focus on technologies, media, and human sensoria.

Intersectionality: A mode of analysis coined in the early 1990s by Kimberlé Crenshaw. Crenshaw developed the approach to illustrate and address how socio-economic inequalities affect Black women at disproportionately higher rates and under the specific circumstances these rates emerge. Crenshaw has described the origination of intersectionality as a prism through which feminism and other kinds of social justice advocacy can identify the situated antagonisms that race and gender coincide and condition life chances. It is part of the anti-racism labor that feminist approaches to social justice must incorporate.

Intersex: Refers to the often medicalized histories and narratives that mark “ambiguities” in newborn infants’ genitalia as pathological in condition and, often, argued to require medical intervention. These medicalized standards have been heavily criticized through decades of activism. Intersex is often discussed as a birth-attributable condition; but, as many have with the Intersex Society of North America have pointed out, intersex traits may not emerge until well after infancy.

Nonbinary, or Genderqueer: A social kind formed out of a relation of non-identity between a person's birth-assigned sex and socially elaborated genders. Nonbinary communities may identify between the binary poles of man/woman or entirely outside, invoking a different set of cultural and historical markers that are claimed over and beyond Western notions of gender.

Normativity: Refers to the interlocking set of social and historical imaginaries setting the framework for what constitutes regular, ordinary, or "normal" kinds or genres of being, behavior, and action.

Object Relations, *see* Subjectivity: Refers to the imaginary (but not fictional) relationships formed out of the integration of normative subjects and subjectivities within a larger cultural totality.

Ontological, or Ontology: Refers to a theory or conventional belief underwriting what constitutes reality and real objects. Often referred to by the philosophical branch of Metaphysics.

Phenomenology: Refers to the philosophical study of experience as a process through which the experience and phenomena are registered *as experience*. This philosophy breaks with existentialism's emphasis on the primacy of human consciousness. Phenomenology emphasizes a de-centered or non-centrality of consciousness as such and opens the field of thought to the importance of affect and the unconscious. The motto most often associated with phenomenology is "to the things themselves."

Power, or Relations: Typically refers to the capacity of one subject to exercise their will over another. Usually one agent can possess power and another cannot. This concept is attributed to the sociological vernacular of Max Weber. More recent scholarship has tended to adopt Michel Foucault's concept of power as being dispersed, non-possessable, and a product of a series of interlocking relations that produce different forms of coercion in the guise of non-oppressive "knowledge." Thus, power and knowledge become mutual expressions of one another when knowledge about the body enables prison wardens more exacting disciplinary measures to restrict movement and bodily mobility for punishment.

Productive Labor: Attributed to the work and industry of a person or class of persons whose metabolic energies (or labor) produce economically viable (or profitably) goods/commodities.

Property Relations: Refers to the kinds of relationships that emerge as a result of legal and social restrictions on who and how property (defined loosely as both land and material object) is distributed within civil society.

Race/Racialization, *see* Color Line: Refers to the socially assignment of value placed upon the human condition based on physiological differences. These racial divisions, or analytic as Denise Ferreira da Silva names it, took place over the course of centuries (racialization) and consolidated what is contemporarily the "vision" as color difference as racial difference. No scientific evidence exists that hasn't been summarily discarded proving the existence of biologically significant differences for "race" as a human distinction. Its continued influence over contemporary politics and social sciences (and some natural sciences) reproduces the power-as-knowledge relation. *See* Power.

Reproductive Labor: Attributed to the work and industry of those social subjects usually restricted to the private domain and excluded from the productive labor of market economies. These include, historically, women (wives) and domestic workers (hired outside the protections of the state), or slaves and indentured servants (the former lacking the conditional status of "human" granted to the latter). Each participated under relations that favored men (husbands) as workers. Wives, domestic workers, daughters, or other-mothers were responsible for the reproduction of and well-being of children and therefore the growth of the economy's labor force; the reproduction of everyday tasks that allowed men to enter the labor force; or the upkeep of the household so as to reduce the stress that enabled the daily operations of otherwise laboring men.

Sex, or Sexual Difference: Refers to the primary reproductive characteristics assigned to a newborn infant on the basis of male or female genitalia. Sex has become the site of ongoing criticism as the standards for

what constitutes adult sex in a meaningful or universal way has been adopted. For example, some U.S. states regard sex as genital-based while others refer to the chromosomal differences at the genetic level. Each elaboration of sex merely reaffirms the social functionality of a gender to which the latter is eventually assigned.

Sexuality: Refers to the erotic desires of a social subject that has too often been reduced to a heteronormative trope of sex-opposite attraction often presupposing a monogamous intention. Reproductive heterosexuality is generally used to ascribe what is socially understood as the “drive” or “instinct” to procreate. This has had direct effects on non-heterosexual sexualities that include dismissing same-gender eroticism (homophobia) to the legitimation of only the two-person monogamous couple (homonormative).

Social Construction: Refers to the theory that reality and its objects are constituted as “real” by and through the interdependencies of shared knowledge among peoples across history, culture, and material production. Social constructionists hold that everything is constructed to the extent that knowledge about a thing (as in *everything*) requires moving through the processes of historical and cultural meaning.

Social Reproduction, see Reproductive Labor: Refers to the labor required to keep the infrastructure of a civil society and its constituent parts (social subjects) alive and productive.

Subjectivity, see Subject/Object under Binary Logic: Refers to the capacity of a person to possess an interior psychic life in and through which feeling is expressed, explored, and enjoyed.

Trans, see Cis: Refers to the umbrella term that describes a variety of subjectivities. Some experience their normatively ascribed gender and birth-assigned sex at odds. Others describe their them in completely different vernaculars. Recent criticism among trans theorists hold that there is rarely “match” between any gender and sex and therefore push back against the “normalizing” form of dysphoria.

Whiteness: Refers to a cultural ontology that ascribes privilege to light-skin and otherwise visually “Euro-American” white social subjects. Whiteness does not depend on white populations or individual white people. It refers to the discursive and material system of rewards and punishments that includes an anti-Black racism (and classism) immanent to it which diminishes the life chances of Black and non-white people while enhancing those of ascribed as white.

EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNMENTS AWARDED FULL POINTS

The following examples were taken from recent semesters and demonstrate the following for Journals: (1) A review of the material; (2) a regularity of reference to the material; (3) critical themes of import for the student. For Quizzes: (1), (2), and (3) elaboration of particular theme for which the question asked. Answers were edited “[...].”

Journal Entries [Simone de Beauvoir and becoming “woman”]:

This idea that one isn’t born a woman yet becomes one rings true to me and my own understanding of gender in itself personally I believe that gender isn’t a real thing but rather a social construct that is taught and we learn through being socialized. Femininity is not inherent but rather constructed. De Beauvoir states in the second sex that women have been treated as inferior and as “secondary ” due to the fact of society programming women to fulfill the needs of men and exist only in relation to men thus not being whole or developed but rather existing to please or serve, constantly seek validation from men inherently teaching women that their worth is connected to the way men perceive them enforcing the beliefs that being “pretty” or “desirable” is the utmost achievement of a woman, and, the historic imbalance of rights and political power or public influence. [...] De Beauvoir argues that a woman is taught from childhood to merely be an accessory rather than a full fledge person.

Quiz Answer [Hortense Spillers, the “flesh,” and motherhood denied]:

The meaning of assigning a "female" form to the social position of "gender" is another nod to Black women being marked that label female to Black women speaks to how black women are gatekept from a lot of traditional "womanly" things reserved only for white women. [...] The figure of the Black woman, while she is valued for being able to procreate the status of mother is stripped away from her due to her not being able to care for, protect, or even claim her children because of the legal condition *partus sequitur ventrum*, or that which is born follows the womb. The Flesh stands before the body because the Black woman’s gender is undone. The theft of the body becomes a displacement from social identities and the undoing of the Black female gender as a symbolically dense power. It is not the same as her white counterpart because it is complicated and subverted by her race. The body is stolen or disposed of. Spillers argues that the Black female gender, that of female subjectivity, because it is written out of cultural power, gives the woman-subject a unique position to name herself, to be insurgent.

FINAL OPTION 1: EXAMINATION QUESTION EXAMPLE/INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: You must provide answers as indicated for each part. Please read the instructions carefully. You may choose to answer any 3 of the 5 “short answer” questions in PART ONE, but you must additionally answer 2 of the 4 “essay answers” from PART TWO.

PART ONE

Short Answers: Answer ONLY three in any order. You should answer any three as distinct questions. A 200-250 word paragraph for each answer should suffice. Please double space your answers in 12 pt. font. Reference the reading material if given the chance/prompt.

1. 200-250 words. [X]

2. 200-250 words.

3. 200-250 words.

4. 500-750 WORDS. [X]

5. 500-750 WORDS. [X]

PART TWO

Essay Answers: Answer two, and no more than two, from the following. Please provide your answers in essay format, i.e., 500 -750 words, double-spaced, and in 12 pt. font. These answers are not unlike your quiz responses. Again, each question should be treated separately. You should have two distinct answers that address their respective questions. For these answers, reference the reading material when and where you can. Each question is stand alone. They SHOULD NOT relate to one another.

1. 500-750 WORDS.

2. 500-750 WORDS. [X]

3. 500-750 WORDS. [X]

4. 500-750 WORDS.

5. 500-750 WORDS.

FINAL OPTION 2: AESTHETIC PROJECT

I. Overall Scope/Aim of the Project:

Your “Aesthetic Project” will be an artistically rendered creation based upon a topic/issue of your choosing from the syllabus. You may choose the medium, process, action, and final form (interdisciplinary, socially-engaged, web-based, music, installation, etc.). But your project must be public-facing. By that I mean it is based in time and space. Aesthetic objects are *dynamic in nature*. You will find that it is best to document *both* your process *and* your final outcome. Keep a journal/diary—even if its entries cover only the range of a few days. **Helpful Tips/Questions for Consideration:** The following are points of reference to enable you to hone your project’s aim. Consider them while you are completing/thinking about how to conclude your project.

1. Consider your THEME. What topic/challenge/issue/problem do you want to explore and why? How does your topic connect to a specific idea in critical theory? What is your message?
2. Think about relations of TIME/HISTORY. Are you looking at the past, the present and/or the future? How can you make it dynamic in time? Also consider SCALE. Is your medium/message intended for a local or a larger, more global audience?
3. Think about issues of SPACE/ARTISTIC HOME. Where do you want your work to live, e.g., a museum, an archive, a library, a gallery? Does the space/location change over time? During the project did this element change in relation to the scope of your aim?
4. What is the intended AUDIENCE. Who do you want to engage in this work? (Local communities? Decision- and policy-makers? Art and/or aesthetes?) What do you think their various points of view on this issue/topic would be? Could you foresee any resistance from communities on this project, or at least the topic it is broaching?

II. Project Expectations:

The following components must be assembled for each project regardless of the medium:

1. Your project *must* connect to at least one idea from any of the critical themes we examined throughout the semester. You must clearly state which theory or theorist you are arguing is pertinent to your work. This means making a direct reference to the thinker and his/her/their theoretical insights.
2. You should answer the following questions within your summary as they are reflected in your aesthetic work:
 - a. Why and how is this theory pertinent to your work?
 - b. To what extent does this theory inform or attend to your medium?
 - c. Were you to present this project to a larger public/audience, how would you go about defining why this work matters to

the everyday lives of the communities represented in your subject matter?

3. Your aesthetic representation/object can be any medium. But each project must be accompanied by a short written summary. If your project is entirely textual you can provide a shortened executive summary of your work. Typically the summary should be a typed essay, between 3-5 double-spaced pages (2-3 if accompanying textual work) and in 12 pt. font. You may choose a citation style if reference material is needed. Choose one with which you are most comfortable and with which you will remain consistent throughout the paper.

III. Grading Rubric:

1. Idea/Concept: 20%
 - a. Have you come up with a nuanced, layered idea to address this issue and make a change? Have you defined your theory/thematic? Have you articulated your idea/concept in a concise, clear way through your writing?
2. Process: 30%
 - a. Have you detailed the process of how to get to the final form of your idea/concept? Have you addressed all the questions posed Section II above (Project Expectations):
 - i. A developed theme from the syllabus.
 - ii. A defined connection (implicit within the art/object, explicit within the summary) between the final form and the theme you have chosen.
 - iii. A relatively well-defined social, political, or economic (i.e., a practical or everyday) consideration in your work.
 - iv. You have documented your process well while you have worked on the project, however short the documentation might be.
3. Course Theme: 30%
 - a. Explained and developed in both your work and, more specifically, in your written summary.
4. Execution: 20%
 - a. Have you executed your idea/concept to the best of your ability at this moment in time? Have you made choices about your final form that work well with your idea?