

# POL3095: Queer Politics in the US

**Instructor: Dr. Samuel Galloway**  
**Office: Social Science 1033**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday 2.30 – 4p**

**Class Location: Social Science 1006**  
**Class Meeting Times: 4:30-6:10**  
**Class Meeting Days: Tuesday, Friday**

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## 1. Course Description:

What makes a politics “queer”? Is it the political issues and concerns particular to an identity group, such as confronting civil rights inequalities, disproportionate exposure to violence, and under-funded treatments for sexually transmitted infections? Or, does it denote a style, manner, habit of, or disposition toward conducting politics? In tracking the shape queer politics has taken in the United States since in the post-War period we will explore how liberal policy issues of employment, privacy, and marital recognition have interacted with living legacies of militant politics such as conspiracy, rioting, direct action, and bash-back that have confrontationally challenged the state and eschewed its prerogative in seeking safety, redress, and life-affirming community. In the process we will tarry with reactionary backlash that have always shadowed the assertion of queer political claims.

## 2. Course Objectives:

Completion of this course will provide a survey of post-War American queer politics. It will also introduce you to debates, issues, key voices and exclusions that shaped this plural tradition. In so doing, it will equip you with a theoretical and conceptual basis for analyzing competing claims to essentially contested histories and legacies of queer politics. Completion will grant a sustained reflection on the persist deployment of sexuality in American political life. Finally, skills such as critical reading, analytical writing, and collaborative discussion will be developed, reinforced, and expanded.

## 3. Required Texts:

All required texts are available on Perusall, accessible on the course Moodle page.

## 4. Grading (see below for details):

You cannot pass this class without submitting the assigned papers and Perusall annotations

Attendance & Class Participation: 25%.  
Perusall Annotation: 25%

First Paper: 15%  
Final Paper: 35%

### 5. Attendance and Class Participation:

This class will be a discussion-driven exploration of our topics of study. Your attendance and participation is essential to the success of this experiment in learning. Attendance means being present in class, having read the assigned course materials that you also have with you to reference. Participation means verbal contributions to class discussion that refers us to a passage in the text, a concept or idea that is under discussion, and/or a question regarding the aforementioned. You are expected to participate every class.

#### Absences

18 - 22-year-olds are not the most health-conscious cohort. However, now is the time to err on the side of caution. If you have a cough, runny nose, sore throat, a tickle in your throat, "allergies," or just feel "off," then **STAY HOME and GET TESTED**. You will **NOT** be penalized for prioritizing the health and wellness of your peers. **PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK OR HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID; ONLY RETURN ONCE YOU HAVE A NEGATIVE TEST.**

### 6. Perusall Annotations and Book Responses:

Reading the assigned course materials is essential to a successful course. To this end, you are required to do the readings on Perusall, where you are expected to make at least four (4) *substantive annotations* per reading. **Perusall annotations are due on the night before class, by 11:59pm.**

A substantive annotation can take many forms:

1) Asks a deep question, i.e., "When X says 'y,' do they they mean 'x' or 'z'. If 'x,' then I think that 'a,b,c' follows. If 'z,' then I think that 'd,e,f' follows."

Not: "What does this mean?"

2) Makes a deep connection to a previous text or author, i.e., "This reminds me of X, where they argue 'a,b,c,' only here the claim is 'x,y,z.' I think this formulation is better because '1,2,3.'"

Not: "This reminds me of 'x'."

3) Poses a hypothetical reply to a passage informed by previous readings or the text's on premises, i.e., "When X claims 'a,b,c,' they do so on the basis of positing '1,' but if we instead take '2' to be our beginning premise, then we see that 'd,e,f' follows, which better explains the phenomenon X theorizes."

Not: "But what about 'x'?"

4) Extends the argument, i.e., "When X argues 'a,b,c,' they do so by addressing phenomenon no. 1. If we apply this argument to phenomenon no. 2, then we can see how 'a,b,c' provides a way of understanding 'x,y,z' about it that otherwise we would not notice or appreciate."

Not: "This is old and dated and doesn't apply to our world anymore."

5) Puts a complex and possibly unclear portion of the argument in more accessible language, i.e., "When X says, 'a,b,c,' they are saying 'a1,b1,c1.'"

Not: "'a' means 'a'."

### 7 (a). First Paper: Critical Reconstruction of an Argument

The second written assignment will be 1000 – 1500 words in length (approximately 4 – 6 double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, **margins justified** pages). Papers either over or under this range will not receive full consideration. The goal of this essay shares with the first in being to reconstruct an argument encountered in the readings on ideology and to conclude with a critical evaluation of the argument thus reconstructed. However, you are also expected to incorporate any feedback given in the first paper. The format of this essay is 75% reconstruction, 25% critical evaluation. To explain the argument here means to reconstruct the argument by clearly stating in your own words its explicit and implicit premises and conclusions. To evaluate the argument means to assess the validity of its premises as well as whether the conclusions follow from its premises. Specific paper prompts will be released in advance.

### 7 (b). Final Paper: Critical Construction of an Original Argument

The objective of the final paper assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to construct an original argument using the materials from this course. The final written assignment will 1750 – 2250 words in length (approximately 7 – 9 double-spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman font, and **margins justified** pages). Papers either over or under this range will not receive full consideration. The goal of this essay is to critically construct an original argument informed by engagement with readings in the class. Specific paper prompts will be released in advance.

### 8. Academic Integrity:

Simply: *do not* plagiarize. If there are any questions whatsoever about the proper way to cite a source, please consult me or the resources provided by the Learning Center. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure of the course and will be referred to the College administration for additional sanction.

#### Learning Center Resources:

Political Science Tutor: Sophia Dimopoulos.

You can sign-up for tutoring through the course Moodle page.

<https://www.purchase.edu/offices/learning-center/handouts-and-links/>

### 9. Unwavering Expectations for Respectful Discourse and Conduct:

Under no circumstances will disrespectful discourse or conduct be welcome in our classroom. We will treat one another with respect, patience, and understanding. Learning inherently involves the risk of allowing knowledge to change your life, and this requires courage. We will all exercise an unwavering commitment to encouraging one another in this process.

#### Mask Policy

The best line of defense we have against transmission is proper masking.

**Not all masks are created equal.**

**TIME IT TAKES TO TRANSMIT AN INFECTIOUS DOSE OF COVID-19**

PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING	PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING			
	NOTHING	CLOTH MASK	SURGICAL MASK	N95 MASK
NOTHING	15 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	2.5 hours
CLOTH MASK	20 minutes	27 minutes	40 minutes	3.3 hours
SURGICAL MASK	30 minutes	40 minutes	1 hour	5 hours
N95 MASK	2.5 hours	3.3 hours	5 hours	25 hours

To this end, I will ask that the freely-provided N-95 masks be properly worn at all times, fully covering nose and mouth, all semester.

Please consult this video for how to properly wear an N-95 mask:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNkdHbYu6Mw>

You may, of course, step out of the classroom as necessary.

#### 10. Accessibility Statement:

The Office of Disability Resources collaborates directly with students who identify documented disabilities to create accommodation plans, including testing accommodations, in order for students to access course content and validly demonstrate learning. For those students who may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible, 914-251-6035, ODR@purchase.edu (Student Services Building, #316A), [www.purchase.edu/odr](http://www.purchase.edu/odr).

#### 11. Schedule:

### Week One

#### *Theme — Introductions*

#### Fri Jan 20 2023

- Opening Remarks on “Queer Politics” in the US.
- “We Aren’t Here to Learn What We Already Know,” By Kyla Wazana Tompkins. September 13, 2016. <https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/>

### Week Two—Pre-World War II:

#### *Theme—Origin Stories*

#### Tue Jan 24 2023

#### Reading:

- Plato, *Symposium*, “Aristophanes’ Speech,” pp. 472 – 476 (189a – 194a: 4 pages).
- Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, “on Inversion,” pp. 1 – 14 (14 pages).

Fri Jan 27 2023

Reading:

- Foucault: *History of Sexuality Vol. 1.*, "Method," pp. 92 – 102 (10 pages).

**Week Three—1950s and 1960s:**  
***Theme: Lavender Scare and Mattachine***

Tue Jan 31 2023

Reading:

- Shibusawa, Naoko. "The lavender scare and empire: Rethinking Cold War antigay politics." *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (2012): 723-752.

Fri Feb 03 2023

Reading:

- Charles, Douglas M. "Communist and Homosexual: The FBI, Harry Hay, and the Secret Side of the Lavender Scare, 1943–1961." *American Communist History* 11, no. 1 (2012): 101-124.
  - o *J. Edgar* (2011), dir. Clint Eastwood.

**Week Four—1970s**  
***Theme: Sexuality against Oppression***

Tue Feb 07 2023

Reading:

- Wittman, Carl. *Refugees from Amerika*.
- Devall, B. (1973). "Gay Liberation: An Overview." *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, 2(1), 24–35. doi:10.1177/089976407300200103
- Harry Hay, "Our Goal is Total Liberation," pp. 175 – 178.
  - o **Optional:** Stewart, Chuck. *Documents of the LGBT Movement*. ABC-CLIO, 2018. <http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440855023>

Fri Feb 10 2023

Reading:

- Hanhardt, C.B., 2008. "Butterflies, whistles, and fists: Gay safe streets patrols and the new gay ghetto, 1976-1981." *Radical History Review*, 2008(100), pp.61-85.
  - o *Stonewall* (2015), dr. Roland Emmerich.

**Week Five—1970s:**  
***Erotics Against Oppression***

Tue Feb 14 2023

Reading:

- The Furies Collective, *The Furies: Lesbian/Feminist Monthly*, January 1972, Vol. 1.
  - o **Optional:** Stewart, Chuck. *Documents of the LGBT Movement*. ABC-CLIO, 2018. <http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440855023>

Fri Feb 17 2023

Reading:

- Lorde, Audre. "The Erotic as Power" and "The Uses of Anger," in *Sister Outsider*.

### **Week Six–1970s**

***Theme — "Come out! Come out! Wherever you are!"***

Tue Feb 21 2023

Reading:

- Harvey Milk, *An Archive of Hope*, pp. 197 – 241. (This reading consists of 10 short pieces averaging less than 4 pages each; the first one is the longest: give it the most attention.)
  - o *Times of Harvey Milk* (31:20 – 49:00).

Fri Feb 24 2023

Reading:

- Smith-Silverman, Sara. 2020. "'Gay Teachers Fight Back!': Rank-and-File Gay and Lesbian Teachers' Activism Against the Briggs Initiative, 1977–1978." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 29 (1) (01): 79-107.
  - o *Milk* (2008), dir. Gus van Sant.

### **Week Seven – 1971 – 1981**

***Theme — Counter-publics***

Tue Feb 28 2023 – *First Paper Dues*

Reading:

- Cohen, Stephan. *The Gay Liberation Youth Movement in New York- 'An Army of Lovers Cannot Fail'*, Ch. 5: Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (S.T.A.R.), pp. 89 – 163.
  - o *The Death and Life of Marsha P Johnson* (2017), dir. David France.

Fri Mar 03 2023 – Screening *Cruising* (1980).

Reading:

- Brodsky, J. I. (1993). "The Mineshaft: a Retrospective Ethnography" *Journal of Homosexuality*, 24(3-4), 233–252. doi:10.1300/j082v24n03\_16
  - o *Cruising* (1980) dir. William Friedkin.

### **Week Eight: 1981 - 1996**

***Theme: AIDS — Militancy and Care***

Tue Mar 07 2023

Reading:

- Carroll, Tamar W. (2015). *Mobilizing New York : AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press), "Ch. 3: Turn Anger, Fear, Grief into Action: ACT-UP New York." (31 pages).

- **Optional:** Stewart, Chuck. *Documents of the LGBT Movement*. ABC-CLIO, 2018. <http://publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440855023>

Fri Mar 10 2023

Reading:

- Cvetkovich, Ann. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Ch. 6: “Legacies of Trauma, Legacies of Activism: Mourning and Militancy Revisited.” (33 pages).
  - Schulman, Sarah and Jim Hubbard. *United in Anger: A History of ACT-UP* (2012) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrAzU79PBVM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrAzU79PBVM)

## **Week Nine: 1994 - 2011**

***Theme — Military, or: “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”***

Tue Mar 14 2023

Reading:

- Belkin, Aaron. “The Pentagon’s Gay Ban Is Not Based on Military Necessity.” *Journal of Homosexuality* 41, no. 1 (February 2001): 103. doi:10.1300/J082v41n01\_03.

Fri Mar 17 2023

Reading:

- Montegary, Liz. “Militarizing US Homonormativities: The Making of ‘Ready, Willing, and Able’ Gay Citizens.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 40, no. 4 (Summer 2015): 891–915. doi:10.1086/680333.
  - *The Inspection* (2022), dir. Elegance Bratton.

## **Week Ten: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS**

## **Week Eleven – 1990s**

***Theme — Marriage***

Tue Mar 28 2023

Reading:

- Kaplan, Morris B. *Sexual Justice*, Ch. 7: “Intimacy and Equality: The Question of Lesbian and Gay Marriage,” pp. 207 – 238 (32 pages).

Fri Mar 31 2023

Reading:

- Warner, M. (1999). “Normal and Normaller: Beyond Gay Marriage.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 5(2).

## **Week Twelve— NO CLASS**

**Week Thirteen—1990s:**  
***Theme — Queer Nation***

Tue Apr 11 2023

Reading:

- Berlant, Lauren, and Elizabeth Freeman. "Queer Nationality." *boundary 2* 19, no. 1 (1992): 149-180.

Fri Apr 14 2023

Reading:

- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay" in *Fear of a Queer Planet*, pp. 69 – 81.
  - o *The Living End* (1992), dir. Gregg Araki.

**Week Fourteen—2000:**  
***Theme — Respectability and the Margins***

Tue Apr 18 2023

Reading:

- Doyle, Vincent A. *Making Out in the Mainstream: GLAAD and the Politics of Respectability*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 2016, pp. 77 – 123.

Fri Apr 21 2023

Reading:

- Cathy J. Cohen. 1997. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* 3 (4): 437–465.
  - o *Moonlight* (2016), dir. Barry Jenkins.

**Week Fifteen—2010 to the Present**  
***Theme — Transversals and Panics***

Tue Apr 25 2023

Reading:

- Marquis Bey. 2022. "Notes on (Trans)Gender," *Cis-tem Failure: Essays on Blackness and Cisgender* (Durham: Duke University Press), pp. 61 – 85.

Fri Apr 28 2023

Reading:

- Max Fox, "The Traffic in Children," *Parapraxis*, Vol. 1 (2022). <https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/the-traffic-in-children>
- LibsOfTikTok, Matt Walsh, Gays Against Groomers.
  - o *Tangerine* (2015), dir. Sean Baker.

**Week Sixteen—Final Paper Due: Friday May 05, 2023**