

INTRODUCTION TO LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES

JONATHAN D. KATZ
Yale University

(If there are no academic Departments of Heterosexual Studies, even in more liberal universities, that is not only because all branches of the human sciences are already, to a greater or lesser degree, departments of heterosexual studies but also because heterosexuality has thus far largely escaped becoming a problem that needs to be studied and understood.) By constituting homosexuality as an object of knowledge, heterosexuality also constitutes itself as a privileged stance of subjectivity—as the very condition of knowing—and thereby avoids becoming an object of knowledge itself, the target of a possible critique.

David Halperin in *Saint Foucault*, 47.

Silence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* Vol. 1

This course explores that mode of difference which today is commonly called lesbian/gay/ bisexual/transgendered and/or just queer, but which in other historical periods could have been called Uranian, inversion, sodomitical, Sapphic, butch, Wildean, homosexual, homophile and a host of other terms. More often than not, as Foucault suggests above, it was simply not called anything at all. Given the peculiar and particular array of pressures—political, religious, juridical among others—governing the social manifestation of queerness, an investigation into its historical past can open a window onto a range of broader ideological investments seemingly far removed from sexuality.

Using a range of works that have as their theme gay and lesbian experience and identity in, largely, the twentieth-century United States and Europe, we will attempt to tease out the theoretical assumptions that undergird queer studies, from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. These works include fiction and autobiographical texts, historical and sociological materials, texts on queer theory, and films, focusing on modes of representing sexuality and on the intersections between sexuality and race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nationality.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Duberman, Chauncey, Vicinus, eds. *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* available at Book Haven (aka HFH)
2. Abelow, Barale, and Halperin, eds. *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* available at Book Haven (aka LGS Reader)
3. Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* available at Book Haven (aka Odd)
4. Course Packet available at Tyco (aka CP)

COURSE ORGANIZATION

The organization is largely chronological and entirely interdisciplinary. We will shift our attention fluidly between various forms of representation towards an historical consideration of queer depictions and their significance. Throughout the course, in every respect, we will be attentive to the ways race, gender and social class cross-cut the story of sexuality and its representations.

THE PROBLEMATICS OF QUEER REPRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

Jonathan Ned Katz, "'Homosexual' and 'Heterosexual': Questioning the Terms" (handout)
Tobias Smollett, *Roderick Random* (1763)-selections (handout)
Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855)—selections (handout)
Robert K. Martin, *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry* (handout)
Michel Foucault, *The Perverse Implantation* (handout)

IDENTITY: ESSENTIALISM & CONSTRUCTION

Halperin, "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens" in *HFH*
Boswell, "Categories, Experience, and Sexuality" in CP
Gayle Rubin "Thinking Sex" in *LGS Reader*
Jonathan Dollimore, "Different Desires" in *LGS Reader*
Oscar Wilde, "Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young" (1894) in CP
Diana Fuss, "Lesbian and Gay Theory: The Question of Identity Politics" in CP
Martin Duberman, "'Writhing Bedfellows' in Antebellum South Carolina" in *HFH*

SOCIAL CLASS AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

Eve Sedgwick "Epistemology of the Closet" in *LGS Reader*
Gertrude Stein "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" in CP
Lillian Faderman, *Odd*: 11-36, 62-67.
Shari Benstock "Paris Lesbianism and the Politics of Reaction, 1900-1940" in *HFH*
George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion: Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War 1 Era" in *HFH*
Faderman, *Odd*: 37-61

RACE AND SEXUAL IDENTITY 1

Garber, Eric. "A Spectacle in Color", in *HFH*
Lillian Faderman, *Odd*: 68-88
listen to *AC/DC Blues* (queer blues by Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey and others)

GENDERED SEXUALITIES

Esther Newton, "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman" in *HFH*
Leslie Feinberg, "Butch to Butch: A Love Song" and "Letter to a Fifties Femme from a Stone Butch" in CP
Faderman, *Odd*: 159-187.
Sue-Ellen Case. "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic" in *LGS Reader*

CAMP RESISTANCE

Patrick Dennis, *Little Me* (1962)—selections in CP
Michael Bronski, *Judy Garland and Others* in CP
"Gay party at Police Station" *Mattachine Newsletter*, 1969.
Moe Meyers, "Introduction: Reclaiming the Discourse of Camp" in CP
Jack Babuscio, "Camp and the Gay Sensibility"
In section see *Andy Warhol's Bike Boy*

POLITICAL RESISTANCE

Martin Duberman, "The Night They Raided Stonewall" in CP
John Knoebel, "Somewhere in the Right Direction" in CP
Allen Ginsberg—selected poems in CP
Jonathan Katz, Allen Ginsberg interviewed (1989) in CP
Esther Newton, "Just One of the Boys: Lesbian in Cherry Grove"
in *LGS Reader*

SEPARATISMS

Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman," in CP
Marilyn Frye, "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power" in *LGS Reader*
Faderman: 215-245.
Cowrie. (Dec. 1973)1-18 (you may skim) in CP
Jill Johnston *Lesbian Nation* (1973)—selections in CP
In section see *A Question of Equality*
Mark Thompson, "This Gay Tribe" and "The Evolution of a Fairie" in CP
Harry Hay, "A Separate People" in CP

RADICALLY SEXED

Thom Magister, "One Among Many" in CP
John Preston, "What Happened" in CP
Dorothy Allison, "Her Body, Mine, and His" in CP
Carol Truscott, "S/M: Some Questions and a Few Answers" in CP
Patricia Duncan, "Identity, Power, and Difference: Negotiating Conflict in an S/M Dyke Community" in CP

TRANSPOLITICS

Judy Shapiro, "Transexualism" in CP
Sandy Stone "The Empire Strikes Back: A Post Transexual Manifesto"
(1991) in CP
Marjorie Garber, "Spare Parts: The Surgical Construction of Gender"
in *LGS Reader*

RACE AND SEXUAL IDENTITY 2

John L. Peterson, "Black Men and Their Same-Sex Desires and Behaviors"
in CP
Greg Conerly, "The Politics of Black Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identity"
in CP
Tomas Almaguer. "Chicano Men" in *LGS Reader*
Barbara Smith, "Homophobia: Why Bring it Up?" in *LGS Reader*
Biddy Martin, "Lesbian Identity and Autobiographical Difference(s)" in *LGS Reader*
in section: See *Tongues Untied*

ACT-UP TYPES AND QUEER NATIONALS

Simon Watney, "The Spectacle of AIDS" in *LGS Reader*
Steven Seidman, "AIDS and The Homosexual Question" in CP
Douglas Crimp, *AIDS Cultural Analyses/ Cultural Activism* in CP
Paul Monette *Love Alone: Eighteen Elegies for Rog* in CP
David Wojnarowicz *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*
—selections in CP
Simon Watney. "Queer Epistemology: Activism, 'Outing' and the Politics of
Sexual Identities" in CP
Phyllis Burke, *Family Values*—selections in CP
Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience" in *LGS Reader*

A FINAL NOTE

Your individual identity and/or sexuality is entirely your business. You will never be asked about it, though of course you are free to self-identify. Equally, being queer or not being queer is no guarantee of success or failure in this class. This is an academic course requiring considerable reading and hard work and grading will employ traditional academic standards.