

ANTH 166B-QUEER ANTHROPOLOGY (Fall 2021)

Brandeis University, Department of Anthropology
Golding Judaica 101, Tues/Thurs 2 – 3:30 PM (In Person, synchronous)
Zoom Link and Password on Latte



Left: Mussalman Musclemen, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Jr.; Center: Portrait of Andries Stille, Kehinde Wiley; Right: Tritya Prakriti, Sandeep Dhopate

Professor Horton | bhorton@brandeis.edu | Brown 205 | OH Tuesday 4-6 PM, or By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class brings together Queer + Anthropology, sitting with the gaps, resonances, and irreconcilable differences that these words might conjure. “Queer,” is a vexing term. It nourishes our most intimate political desires, names the manifold ways we can experience embodiment, hails utopic ideas of community, and expresses the immanent possibilities of words, bodies, and ideas to do things differently. And yet, it is also insufficient to fully hold the complexities of our bodies and the expansiveness of our desires, dreams, and possibilities. Once a slur and now and now a term of art (hyper specialized and technical) to name something akin to our bodies, our parts, our hearts, and what we do with all the above, queer vexes because we think we know it. And yet it evades us. “Anthropology,” the other term of this course, is no less vexing. While it names a systematic and ostensibly “scientific” way of studying human cultures, societies, and behaviors through intimate research methods like participant observation and interviews, it also has its baggage. To speak the name anthropology is also to conjure words like colonialism, race(ism), racist science, culture, the human, and a whole host of problematic terms that are neither universal nor transhistorical (true across time and history; eternal). When held together, “Queer Anthropology” might name something akin to a systematic way of cross-culturally studying human sexuality, gender, and desire that runs against the grain of dominant, socially held beliefs of normalcy (or what we now call normative/heteronormative). Sitting with this definition, we will chart the different worlds that Queer Anthropology might enable us to see and imagine. From transfeminine women who claim to experience pregnancy to sex between straight white Frat brothers to lesbian women finding community through anonymous love letters, this course moves between different scales and registers for talking about sexuality, gender, bodies, and difference. These terms are of course interlinked and are also dependent on their moorings to race, class, caste, ability, nation, and a range of other categories. In trying to sit with Queer Anthropology as a field and subdiscipline, we will trace its

origins, some of its present moments, and speculate on its potential futures throughout this semester. The goal and objective here is not to come to a concrete and definite meaning of what Queer Anthropology IS but rather to learn differently by staging an encounter between queer and anthropology. What might queer, as a set of possibilities (particularly around sex, gender, and embodiment) do for anthropology and how might it challenge us to think of the discipline differently?

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop and apply skills in cultural analysis, relying on queer anthropology as a lens for thinking about social, political, religious, economic, and cultural phenomena.
2. Become familiar with the essential concepts, paradigms, and debates that have shaped scholarly understandings of sexuality and gender, race, class, caste and various social positionalities within anthropology, social theory, and social scientific research more broadly.
3. Develop strong oral presentation skills through weekly class participation and engaged seminar discussions.
4. Be able to write cogent and succinct critical reflections and responses to course readings and material and succinctly describe the main points of complex/dense theoretical texts and concepts through infographics or short word limits.

Required Materials

All course readings will be available on the course LATTE page. Students will also need:

- Wifi-enabled Computer/Tablet/Phone with camera and microphone capabilities
- Zoom Account

*Please email me if there are any issues regarding access to these materials. I ask that you maintain an active and consistent relationship with LATTE because course assignments, readings, and announcements will be made there.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Structure

This course will meet **Tuesday & Thursday, from 2 – 3:30 PM** in Person and Occasionally on Zoom. Around the halfway point of each class meeting, we will take a 10-minute break to reduce Zoom fatigue. Each week, students will be assigned a set of required readings, which you will be expected to have finished reading by Thursday's discussion-based class meeting. With the exception of select weeks (marked in the course schedule), Tuesday classes will be primarily lecture-based, with options for occasional large-group participation. Thursday classes will be focused on discussion in small groups organized either randomly or by readings. These initial groups for discussion will be provisional and subject to updating, pending student feedback. Thursday discussions will primarily be student led, with students working through a list of discussion questions circulated each week, in advance of Thursday discussions. **Professor Horton and the TA will be using these weekly discussion groups to track your participation. Slow discussions, lackluster participation, and silence will be both noted and accounted for (and reflected in participation grades).**

Communication and Office Hours

Each week, I will hold office hours **Tuesdays 4 – 6 PM (EST)** in my office, **Brown Social Science Center 205**. **The TA**, will also hold office hours each week on **Thursdays 12 – 2PM (EST) in Brown 322a**. These hours are an opportunity to check in with us, to discuss issues you are having, to clarify assignments or readings, talk about grades/grading, etc. These hours are designed for you,

please take advantage of them as needed. To sign up for our office hours, please use the link to the appointment pages on our calendars. Signing up there will automatically create a calendar invitation that we can accept and you should accept as well, so that it is on your calendar and you do not miss the meeting

I cannot reiterate enough how important it is to remain in constant communication. I recognize that we are in unpredictable times between the state of race/race relations, a global pandemic, and an economic crisis, alongside everything happening in the world. I also understand that at times one may want to withdraw or may not be able to be fully present. While I want to hold space for the kinds of stress, grief, and crisis, that we are facing, I also urge you to remain in constant contact with me, especially about your feelings of stress, anxiety, grief, or otherwise, should these fillings impinge upon your ability to fully participate in the course. I commit to maintaining regular communication and checking in as much as possible, but I also expect you to take ownership of your work and participation in the course by maintaining clear and open lines of communication.

Email and Communication Etiquette/Tips

1. **Use a clear greeting with my name and title:** Tempted to use sup? Or Hey? Or What's good? Don't. Please address me appropriately with "Hi," "Hello," "Dear," or some other greeting followed by Dr. Horton or Professor Horton.
2. **Include a subject line:** As tempting as "SOS", "HELP", or "HAALLP, GURL DOWN," might be. Again, Don't. Please use a clear subject line that offers me some indication about what exactly the email is about (ex "Question about Midterm", "Rescheduling Office Hours," or something else specific and to the point).
3. **Use standard grammar, punctuation, and capitalization:** Approach email like formal, professional communication. If you would not write it in a paper you are handing in for a grade, to your boss, or to put in print for a wider audience beyond your social media following, do not include it in an email.
4. **Use your lifelines (the syllabus, Latte, and your peers):** If you are sending an email that is a question (for instance about deadlines, assignment formatting, readings for the week, etc), check to see if your question can be answered by the syllabus, Latte, or even a peer. This is not me telling you NOT to email me. Rather it is me telling you that sometimes the thing you are curious about might be more quickly answered by one of your lifelines.
5. **Think before you send:** Please remember that what you write in an email is in text and semi-permanent (and in some contexts can be subpoenaed). Write in a way that is direct, respectful, and reads generously.

For more email tips, please see here <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>

Seminar Room Culture

This is a class that deals with issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, caste, nationality, ability, power, identity, and a range of other topics. We bring to our seminar room different relationships and perspectives that will shape both what we think and how we may relate to course materials and class discussion. I recognize that some issues may be triggering, uncomfortable, or frustrating for many students and that discussions can heighten anxieties or feelings of discomfort. Given these concerns, please consider some of the following suggested rules which we will also amend at the beginning of the semester and continue to shape as the semester progresses:

1. **Respect Names, Pronouns, and Experiences:** Please take time to learn and internalize the pronouns of your peers and use the appropriate names and pronouns when addressing one another. It is entirely likely that we (myself included) will misrecognize and misuse pronouns. Please hold one another accountable and correct when possible. And when you have been corrected, say “Thank You” instead of “Sorry.”
2. **Reflect Before Speaking:** While academic freedom is a cornerstone of a liberal arts education, that freedom is not synonymous with discriminatory remarks or hateful speech. In this course, we will not use language that discriminates on the basis of race, sex, gender identity/expression, religion, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, caste, ability, medical status, or age. That being said, while we may not intend to injure, things happen. As the instructor, I will consider these moments as teachable and commit to work to unpack them as well as offer students ample opportunities to raise concerns in class or privately.
3. **The Devil Does Not Need an Advocate:** When discussing social experiences, particularly those that center injury (racism, sexism, assault, violence, and so on) phrases like “just to play the devil’s advocate” are often counterproductive. Rather than actually doing the rigorous, intellectual labor of counterargument, deconstruction, or crafting alternate causality, “playing Devil’s advocate” often names an impulse towards false equivalence (all arguments have two sides). Moreover, one can consider alternate causality or counterarguments without the denial of others’ experiences, which devil’s advocate statements often do. I encourage you to resist the urge to advocate for the devil. Rather, think and ask yourself why you might be eager to speak on behalf of the devil. Even the devil himself cannot shield you from criticism. Instead, if it is something you honestly think, speak with an I statement and own your ideas.
4. **Use I Statements:** I strongly discourage generalizing and totalizing statements about groups of people. Though these statements might feel true they might be further complicated when inflected with the experiences of those other than yourself. Instead, use “I” statements to make claims that are not totalizing but rather are grounded in your own subjective experiences of the world. I statements will help us unpack and examine experiences critically rather than through sweeping generalizations.
5. **Do Not Just “Hear,” But Actively Listen:** As participants in this seminar, it is important to remember that our work is dialogic—conversational—and collaborative. We will be each other’s interlocutors, discussion partners, and teachers. To this end we must create an intellectual space that is predicated on listening, rather than just hearing. To listen is not just to hear other people’s voices, but to internalize, to reflect, to witness, and to acknowledge what your peers have said. Help create a respectful listening and speaking space by waiting for others to finish speaking, acknowledging what others have said, and giving all students access to the discussion space.
6. **It’s about you even if it is not “about you.”** We will encounter a range of texts, images, films, and other pedagogical objects this semester that come from a range of racial, gender, sexual, class, caste, national, ability, and/or other positions. Just because a text does not center your particular experiences and/or identities does not excuse you from being present in discussion. While this is not an invitation to dominate or monopolize conversations at the

expense of voices from marginalized perspectives, it is a provocation. My expectation is that you productively contribute to discussion via response, engagement, questioning, clarification, or other modes of healthy discussion regardless of your standpoint, but with that standpoint in mind as a way of navigating whether to center yourself or not and how to approach the conversation.

7. **Confidentiality:** Please respect that the seminar room is a semi-private space. While class discussions take place in the context of a large university through an online app, the experiences, feelings, and ideas shared by peers in class may not be things folks want to share outside of class. Please respect the confidentiality of others by *doing your best to leave what others share in class, but to take away from class what you learn.*

Zoom and Online Logistics

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this course could shift to zoom at any time. Some classes we will require meeting on zoom because I might be travelling. All of the links and password information for Zoom will be made available on our LATTE page. ***Office Hours will also take place via zoom on weeks when I am unavailable.*** To make our time on zoom productive and to help class run as smoothly as possible please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Rename:** Zoom enables you to rename yourself for each class. To do so, click on the participants tab, highlight your name, choose the more option and select rename. Given that we are quite a large class and meeting virtually, it will be a challenge to learn every name and pronoun by heart. Please use the naming feature to include both your name and the pronouns people should use to refer to you.
2. **Time zones:** Please let me know if you might happen to be in a time zone where regularly making classes might be a challenge. You will not be penalized for being in a different time zone, but please be in touch with me in advance about any time issues, so that we can come up with a solution to address them.
3. **Video/Microphone Use:** You are encouraged but not required to use your videos during class. It will help make it easier to see who is speaking and to make the class feel a bit more like normal. However, it is understandable if that is not possible. Please mute your microphone when not in use.
4. **Zoom Chat:** The zoom chat is your space. Please use it to ask questions, post links, comment and converse with one another. The chat is a relaxed space for you to express yourselves in relation to course material. Keep in mind our ground rules, but feel free to use the chat. Please note that at times, especially during lecture, I may miss things in the chat so please be patient, or if it is urgent feel free to unmute and remind me.
5. **Privacy:** In the event we are virtual, I will do my best to record any lectures to upload and keep on Latte. **These recordings will be for the use of ANTH 166B Students ONLY.** These are not for public circulation. Please respect both my privacy and the larger privacy of fellow students in the class.
6. **Hand Raise:** Since we are a large class, please use the hand raise function to ask questions, comment, and participate when we are in large group. It will help me and the TA keep track of speaking order, and it will also help avoid the awkward pauses and interruptions as people attempt to figure out if someone is done speaking. For smaller groups/discussions we can test out more conversational approaches.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

You and you alone are responsible for your work in this course. Cheating, lying, stealing, and sabotaging the learning of others are unacceptable behaviors. Facilitating the abilities of others to engage in this behavior is also equally unacceptable. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this (or any other) course. In the instance of any violations, the University's Codes of Student and Academic Conduct will be followed. For more information please consult [Brandeis University's Rights and Responsibilities \(Section 4 on Maintenance of Academic Integrity\)](#).

Accommodations

We all enter the seminar room with different learning needs and I will do my best to make sure that those needs are met and that our classroom is a safe, supportive space for all students. Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support at 781-736-3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

I also understand that the current situation regarding Covid-19 is unprecedented and will cause unforeseen challenges that may arise during the course of the semester. I am also particularly sensitive to the fact that the course could end up online and may pose challenges in terms of access to technology, safe spaces to participate in discussion, and zoom fatigue. If you are having issues at any point throughout the course that you feel will affect your ability to participate, please be in communication with us so that we can come up with solutions to help you succeed and continue to participate. Brandeis also has some resources available in an emergency for assisting in purchasing technology to assist students in need. The form is here: <https://www.brandeis.edu/student-financial-services/financial-aid/emergency-funding.html> and the email is emergencyfund@brandeis.edu.

Assignment Expectations

Written assignments must be turned in by the deadlines established in the syllabus or in class. In the event of any extensions or postponements, I will announce via email or in class any adjustments to the schedule. **In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as illness, requiring an extension, I must be contacted at least 24 hours prior to the deadline in order to make necessary adjustments to the deadline.**

Assignment Formatting

All written assignments must include the following:

- 11 or 12-point font (Choose something easily legible and sensible. Curlz is not your friend!).
- One-inch Margins on all sides
- Double spacing
- Last name and page number in the top right header
- Files should be uploaded as Word Docs (PDFs acceptable for Final Submission)
- Files should be named First Name Last Name_Assignment Name [Brian Horton_Midterm]

All quotes, paraphrasing, citations and bibliographies should rely on APA style, which must include the author name, year, and page number in parenthesis, Ex. (Horton, 2014, p. 234). All assignments will be submitted on LATTE unless otherwise specified. Bibliographies will only be needed for the final project submission and the project prospectus.

ASSIGNMENTS

Grading and Evaluation

Success in this 4-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time in preparation for this course (readings, papers, assignments, studying for exams, etc.). Scale:

A+ 97-100.00	B- 80-83.99	D 64-66.99
A 94-96.99	C+ 77-79.99	D- 60-63.99
A- 90-93.99	C 74-76.99	F 0-59.99
B+ 87-89.99	C- 70-73.99	
B 84-86.99	D+ 67-69.99	

Your grade will be based on the following components, described in further detail below:

Participation and Attendance (20%): Your participation grade in this course will come from your regular attendance in class meetings, participation in class discussions. This is a place where I will reward excellence. Rather than start at 100%, you work your way up through exceptional participation, constant presence, and showing up for your discussion groups both intellectually and literally, showing up. Come to class.

Tips on Participation: I understand that, given the current circumstances (from the pandemic to the racial reckoning taking place in the United States and beyond right now), class “participation” may look and feel radically different and at times challenging. For this reason, I welcome you to participate however you feel most comfortable: this can be through **writing in the Zoom chat, posting on the class LATTE page, speaking up in small group discussions, speaking in the large group, or thoughtfully completing any assignments or responses.** Your participation and attendance “grade” will be assessed holistically at the end of the semester, and will take into account any and all external factors that I am made aware of. I should add here that if I comment on how you have said little or nothing at all throughout the course of the semester, consider that a warning that your participation grade is in danger of being lowered because I have little evidence of your active participation in course conversations.

Policy on Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and is a significant component of your final grade (it is factored into 20% of your final grade). Please contact me ahead of class via email if you are going to be absent. Maintaining consistent, clear, and open lines of communication is the best way to ensure that you do not miss class. A note: your participation grade is calculated on how often you are physically (or virtually) present in class, missed classes without a clear reason or prior instructor or TA notice, could jeopardize your participation grade.

Fabstagram (10%): As a class we will maintain an Instagram account @BrandeisQueerAnthro. **You must make 5 posts throughout the semester, at least one per unit.** Your posts may be memes based on class readings; excerpts of course readings as texts to caption GIFs, images, videos, music, sound; historical references that add further context to readings; pop culture that draws on course themes; photos from your favorite musical artist (*including but not limited to any image of Beyoncé that might*

send our wigs into orbit); screenshots from last season's RuPaul's Drag Race (*Miss Vanjie was set up and Brooke Lynn should have gone home*); that GIF of Tyra Banks screaming "We Were Rooting for You" (*we really were*); a picture of your cat (*be warned I hate cats but won't hold it against you*); a mashup of Daenerys Targaryen burning King's Landing to the Ground (*and I ooop...spoiler alert*) the choice is yours. The point is that this is your version of a "weekly reading response" where in lieu of writing a response (don't worry there will be other writing assignments) you demonstrate your understanding of the material by decontextualizing it and giving it new life in a medium of your choosing. There should be an obvious connection to the assigned readings and viewings. That connection can be made clearer with hashtags and a smart caption. This is also a chance for you to begin our class materials out of the ivory tower so please do follow, share, and encourage others to follow along. In the last week of class you will be expected to upload five screen shots (one for each post) including the date, so that we can attribute your posts to you and give you credit. You will make them all a single PDF, word, powerpoint, or other document that will make it easy for us to see your work.

Midterm (20%): You will have a take home midterm exam. The midterm will consist of a few essay questions, based on course readings. The questions will be straight forward, not surprises, and if you have been putting in the work throughout the course and participating, then there will be nothing to throw you off. You will be allowed to use all notes and course materials to help you answer the exam questions. The only thing you may not use is one another (i.e. this is an individual assignment). The midterm, when released will include a grading rubric. You may use the Brandeis writing center if you would like to have your midterm proof-read in advance.

Writing Center Appointments Available here: <https://www.brandeis.edu/writing-program/center/>

Final Group Project (50%): Instead of a final exam or final paper your final assignment for this class will be a group project. This will be the largest component of your final grade and you will begin working on the project by **October 12th**, when groups are assigned. The project will be an opportunity for you and your classmates to work collaboratively on something of your choosing that reflects your collective interests. This final project will also enable you to develop a collaborative project that you can use as part of your larger academic portfolio when applying for graduate education or for employment. **Every member of the group will receive the same grade on the prospectus, presentation, and final submission.** You and your group members will have the opportunity to decide what topics, issues, debates, or ideas to explore in further depth. The project will be broken up into smaller components that will form the basis of your grade.

Peer Evaluations (10%): At three different points in the semester, you will hand in a peer evaluation form (Posted on Latte). This form will be used by your fellow group members to evaluate your contributions to the group. This will also be a way for the TA and myself to check in about your group's progress and to ensure that everyone is equally contributing. Please use this form honestly (and confidentially) as a place for you to register any issues that you might be having. **Remember that we cannot help if we do not know.**

Project Prospectus (10%): The project prospectus (see form on latte) is basically a research proposal where you and your group will outline the topic idea, the work plan, and the responsibilities that each member will take on to complete the project. Think of the research plan as basically the guide that you all will use to complete the tasks needed to finish the group project.

Group Presentation (10%): During the last week of classes, we will have group presentations where each group will present their project to the class. This will be a chance to present any findings, talk about your ideas, etc. Part of this grade will also come from asking questions of other groups as well. Whether or not these presentations will be virtual or pre-recorded and circulated will be determined based on COVID and class size.

Final Group Project Submission (20%): This will be the final deliverable that you and your group make. This will look slightly different for different groups based on whatever the project prospectus outlines as the research objectives/plan. But this will be a writeup that includes the different components of your project prospectus.

A Note About Group Work: Yes, I hear the groans and eyerolls already about a group project. That being said, group work is part and parcel of the world outside of the academy. Also, given the massive challenges (and loneliness) of the pandemic, this might be a good opportunity both to share in work collectively and interact with other students more consistently. Group projects are **not** a chance for you to shirk responsibility but rather to share the labor and work collectively. Please approach your assignment like you are part of a team and not relying on others to do the work for you. I cannot stress this enough: should you not pull your own weight in the final project, it will not go unnoticed. I will find out. And it will be reflected in your participation grade. Don't be that person. Please do your part.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES			
Assignment	Assigned	DUE	Feedback By
Fabstagram	Weekly (5 total)	Fridays by 5pm Final Portfolio due 12/7	End of Semester Submission
Midterm	October 1	October 8th	October 22 nd
Groups Assigned	October 12 th	-	-
Project Prospectus	October 12 th	October 22nd	November 5 th
Peer Review 1	October 12 th	October 22nd	-
Peer Review 2	October 12 th	November 12th	-
Final Presentation	November 5 th	December 7th	December 9 th
Final Project/Paper	November 5 th	December 7th	December 9 th
Peer Review 3	October 12 th	December 7th	-
NO CLASS	September 7 th , 16 th , 21 st , 28 th ; October 5 th & 7 th ; November 25 th		

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: SYLLABUS (August 26th Lecture, Discussion, and Introductions)

Overview: This week we will spend most of our time together going over the syllabus and talking about where the semester is headed. There is little that you need to do this week other than read the three assigned pieces, which offer some passing introductions into the themes of the course as well as help frame and orient us in terms of how we might read, think, and ask questions of the materials coming in the following weeks. This week's readings ought to orient us towards our work throughout the semester. Weiss's piece "Always After" sets the stage for what queer anthropology has meant and could mean moving forward. Offering up three distinct eras of queer anthropological thought Identity, Normativity/Transgression, and Desire, Weiss's essay helps us make sense of the buckets that this semester's readings will fit into.

Questions to think about?

- What are the breakdowns of your grade throughout the semester?
- When are our (Professor Horton and the TA) office hours? How do you sign up?
- What are the major deadlines for the course?
- What do you understand to be the major cultural expectations of this seminar? Can you abide by the rules laid out? Are there things that are missing or you feel like should be added to our classroom norms and expectations?

Thursday August 26th Syllabus

Required Readings

Margot Weiss (2016) "Always After: Desiring Queerness, Desiring Anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (no 4), pp. 627 – 638

Kyla Wazana Tompkins (2016). "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know." *Avidly: LA Review of Books*, pp. 1-17. <https://avidly.lareviewofbooks.org/2016/09/13/we-arent-here-to-learn-what-we-know-we-already-know/>

Jack Halberstam-"You Are Triggering Me! The Neoliberal Rhetoric of Harm, Danger, and Trauma." *Bullybloggers* 1 - 12 <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2014/07/05/you-are-triggering-me-the-neo-liberal-rhetoric-of-harm-danger-and-trauma/>

Hargraves, Hunter (2015). Teaching Irresponsibly and Uncomfortably: The Role of Theory in the Neoliberal University. *Journal of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies*, pp. 1-5.

UNIT 1: IDENTITY

WEEK 2: ANTHROPOLOGY (August 31st Lecture and September 2nd Zoom Discussion)

Overview: Anthropology as a discipline has a complicated relationship with sexuality. Though sexuality has been central to the discipline's history from Malinowski to Meade to Morgan, that history is also tainted by legacies of imperialism, racist science, and settler colonialism. This week's readings take us through the dominant history of the discipline particularly in relation to sexuality. In thinking about the searches for global "sexual difference" or what Weston calls "ethnocartography," our job this week is to think about what the scientific study of sexuality in anthropology has made possible, such as new vocabularies, refusals of essential (inherently natural or true) ideas of sex and gender. Bringing Allen and Macharia (as well as Morgensen) into the conversation, we might also consider

how anthropology's legacies, particularly when it comes to the study of sex, reproduce anti-indigenous and anti-black forms of violence. Moreover, how might (according to Macharia) the anthropologist's primary tool "ethnography" (writing about a particular people or culture) perpetuate uneven and unequal power dynamics between West and Non-West/Researcher and Research "subject." Ultimately our goal this week is to situate anthropology's engagement with studies of sexuality and to understand the baggage and possibilities that come with a systematic study of sexuality.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- What comes to mind when you think about anthropology/anthropologists. What's the mental image/sketch you have?
- How does one even begin to study sexuality? What does one look for?
- What are the power dynamics involved in the study of sexuality? How does the researcher occupy a particular position of power vis-à-vis their participants/subjects of study?
- How has the idea of "sexual difference" shaped the emergence of gay and lesbian anthropology? And does the search for "difference" assume a norm/normal sexuality?
- Can the study of sexuality be separated from other social identities like race, gender, class, location, caste, ability, etc? If not, then how should those different identities inform how we think about sexuality?

Required Readings (92 Pages)

- Scott Morgensen. "Conversations on Berdache: Anthropology, Counterculturalism, and Two Spirit Organizing." *The Space Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 55 – 87. [Intro included for context]
- Jafari Allen (2016). "One View from A Deterritorialized Realm: How Black/Queer Renarrativizes Anthropological Analysis." *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (no. 4), pp 617 – 626.
- Keguro Macharia (2016). "On Being Area-Studied: A Litany of Complaint". *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 22(2): 183-189.

Supplemental

- Gayle Rubin (2011). "Studying Sexual Subcultures: Excavating the Ethnography of Gay Communities in Urban North America." *Deviations*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 310 -346
- Carole Vance (2005). "Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality: A Theoretical Commitment," in Jennifer Robertson (ed.) *Same-Sex Cultures and Sexualities: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 13 – 32.
- Kath Weston (1998). "The Bubble, The Burn, and The Simmer. Introduction: Locating Sexuality in Social Science." *The Long Slow Burn: Sexuality and Social Science*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1 – 28.
- (1993). Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 339–367.
- Ara Wilson (2019). "Queer Anthropology." *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. pp 1-20
<https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/queer-anthropology>

WEEK 3: SEXUALITY (No Class September 7th & Lecture & Discussion September 9th)
Overview: Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* is considered a foundational text in Queer Studies (among

many other fields). Foucault's text tracks the emergence of sexuality as an idea, specifically an identity. Through references to sexual deviants, specifically the figure of the homosexual, Foucault offers a history of how sexuality has come to matter and have meaning in recent history. Rather than an inherent or essential category, Foucault shows us how what we understand as sexuality is constructed, a byproduct of specific moments in history and specific acts of power (discipline). But as Roderick Ferguson will show us, this "history" is not unitary. There are many histories of sexuality. Tracking events from chattel slavery through the Reconstruction Era, Ferguson problematizes not just Foucault's narrow (white and European) history of sexuality but also the prominence of Foucault in American academia, specifically Queer Studies. **Note:** Foucault can be particularly challenging, so be patient. Read slowly, give yourself time and walk away and return from the text as needed. Start with him before moving to Ferguson. Ferguson is also similarly challenging. Use Foucault to help anchor you in what Ferguson is trying to critique/pull apart.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- If Foucault is saying that sexuality is not an essential (timeless and transcultural) concept, but something that has a specific history and is constructed, what does this mean for you?
- What is the repressive hypothesis and how does it relate to discourse?
- What are *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica*? What do these terms mean and how are they
- In thinking with Ferguson's examples regarding racism in the US, how might we understand sexuality as an operation of power?
- **Hot Take:** In skimming the Bragg piece, consider the backlash and outrage over the 2020 song of the summer, WAP. What might "WAPGate" teach us (a la Foucault and Ferguson) about the ways sexuality is weaponized, used as a technique for censure, control, and surveillance?

Required Readings (57 Pages)

Michel Foucault (1990). *The History of Sexuality Vol 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 3-13; 17-25; 55-73; 135-141

Roderick Ferguson (2005). "Of Our Normative Strivings: African American Studies and the Histories of Sexuality." *Social Text* 23 (no 3-4), pp. 85 – 100

Skim: Ko Bragg (2021). "WAP and the Politics of Black Women's Bodies." *The 19th News*
<https://19thnews.org/2021/03/wap-and-the-politics-of-black-womens-bodies/>

WEEK 4: (SEX)WARS (Lecture & Discussion September 14th & No Class September 16th)

Overview: What we now know as Queer Anthropology is indebted to decades of feminist scholarship. Specifically, queer concerns emerge out of the feminist sex wars, a period of feminist critique in the 1980s marked by debates over sex, specifically pornography and its relationship to violence against women and patriarchy. In making a demand for thinking about sex, Gayle Rubin's formative essay *Thinking*, advances a call for studying sexuality in singularity, to isolate it from other categories like gender (and as we will see, race). Hailed as a "classic" Rubin's piece offers a feminist history of sexuality that culminates in her famous "charmed circle" the visual representation of good and bad sex. Though often cited, Rubin's text forecloses many of the questions central to Black Feminist concerns, specifically the intersections of sexuality, race, gender, and other social categories. Where Rubin celebrates and calls for sexuality's entrance into the larger world of academic study, Spillers is much more cautious and critical. As Spillers argues, sexuality has often been a term for the privileged, for primarily European and American white women. But for those who are the descendants of the enslaved and/or the colonized, sexuality is an ambivalent term, one that cannot be dislodged from particular forms of power and domination. Thus the end goal is not simply to have a sexuality, but that sexuality "becomes one of several active predicates" in a global redistribution of power. Read together, Rubin and Spillers compel us to think about the possibilities and limitations of sexuality studies; how it might liberate some and yet do little for others. Visweswaran gives us a solid history of feminist anthropology, exploring how questions around

women, gender, and the discipline have transpired throughout anthropology's history.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- What do you think of when you hear/see the word sexuality? What is your relationship to this word? Does it feel freeing, constraining, something else?
- What do you notice as the different ways that Rubin and Spillers frame the value/importance of "sexuality?"

Required Readings (67 Pages)

Gayle Rubin (2011). "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." *Deviations*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 137-181 **[READ ONLY 145 – 155]**

Hortense Spillers (1984). "Interstices: A Small Drama of Words", in Carole Vance (ed.) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. Boston: Routledge Press, pp 73 - 100

Kamala Visweswaran (1997). "Histories of Feminist Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 591–621

WEEK 5: PERFORMATIVITY (No Class Sept 21st & Lecture/Discussion September 23rd)

Overview: One of the critical interventions in queer studies has centered around the concept of gender performativity. First proposed in Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, gender performativity suggests there is no inherent or stable idea of woman (or man), but rather that the naturalness of these terms is culturally reinforced through "stylized repetition of acts" or through ordinary acts that we ascribe gendered meaning to, such as the ways we dress, the ways we feel, talk, etc. Butler's text builds on decades of feminist and anthropological research that suggests the culturally constructed nature of categories like man, woman, straight, and so on. Esther Newton's *Mother Camp*, which served as inspiration for Butler's work, explores the world of drag queens and female impersonators to teach us about how gender is performative, reinforced through acts and discourses rather than being some innate truth within us. Building on this, Shange and Livingston both remind us that the category of gender, even in its social construction, is still illusive to black femmes. It intersects with categories of race and class to take on different performative meanings.

Thought Prompts While Reading

- Can you think of a time or place where/when you were corrected for not correctly performing a gender ascribed to you? Ruminant on that memory. What were you doing, where you were, how you were corrected, how you felt?
- According to Butler, gender is not who we are, but what we do. What are some of the things that you "do" to speak to the world about your relationship to gender?
- If you are still struggling with performativity, it is closely related to ideas like "performative activism," "performative wokeness," and "virtue signaling. What do these words mean to you? What might be reinforced or gained by being woke or activist in a certain way, like posting a black square on your IG, etc?

Required Reading and Viewing (48 Pages)

Judith Butler (1999). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999 Preface (vii - xxvi; 3-10; 177-180)

Esther Newton (1972). "Role Models." *Mother Camp Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 97 -112.

Savannah Shange (2019) "Play Aunties and Dyke Bitches: Gender, Generation, and the Ethics of

Black Queer Kinship.” *The Black Scholar* 49 (no 1), pp. 40 – 54.
Watch Jennie Livingston’s *Paris is Burning*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xrwoYSNFbg>

Supplemental

Marlon Bailey (2013). “Ain’t Nothing Like a Butch Queen: The Gender System in Ballroom Culture.” *Butch Queen Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 29 – 76.

See Judith Butler Explained with Cats for help. <https://binarythis.com/2013/05/23/judith-butler-explained-with-cats/>

WEEK 6: CLOSETS (Lecture MONDAY September 27th & Discussion September 30th)

Overview: This week’s readings begin our larger project of unravelling the idea of the universal gay subject. If, as discussed in the last few weeks, categories like gender and sexuality are socially constructed, then it is possible that different places will have different relationships to categories like LGBTQ+. Perhaps one of the areas where this difference is the most apparent is in the thresholds between gay and straight. Jane Ward reminds us of the close relationship between these two worlds in her studies of straight white men who have sex with each other in frat houses, the military, and porn. Ward’s text teaches us that heterosexuality is not opposed to homosexuality, but engages in it and relies on it as a way to stabilize categories like whiteness and masculinity. On the flip side, homosexuality is not always so distinct or foreign that it requires the drama of coming out. Decena and Horton teach us that the closet is a collaborative project where different ways of disclosing or not disclosing queerness are about maintaining forms of familial intimacy. Refusing the act of coming out or subverting it, reminds us that being gay and the impulse to come out not universal and inflected with different norms for different people. Finally, Nish Saran’s *Summer in My Veins* reminds us that even when some folks do decide to come out, the meanings of those words (I am X) are not always clear, do not always land the same, and open new chasms of questions, conflicts, and confusions that have to be worked out.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- When was the first time that you saw/heard someone (either close to you or famous) “come out”? What did you take away from that experience or what did you understand from it?
- What is a closet and how does one come out of it? Is the closet always opaque or are things we do or say short of “coming out” that reveal that we might be closeted?

Required Readings and Viewings (98 Pages)

Jane Ward (2015). “Nowhere without It: The Homosexual Ingredient in the Making of Straight, White Men.” *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight, White Men*. New York: NYU, pp 1 – 42.

Brian A. Horton (2018). “What’s So Queer About Coming Out?: Theorizing Kinship Agonisitcally in Mumbai.” *Sexualities* 21 (no 7): 1059–1074.

Carlos Decena (2008). Tacit Subjects. *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (2-3): 339–359

WATCH Nish Saran’s *Summer in My Veins* [https://video-alexanderstreet-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/watch/summer-in-my-veins-director-s-cut?context=channel:lgbt-studies](https://video-alexanderstreet.com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/watch/summer-in-my-veins-director-s-cut?context=channel:lgbt-studies)

*September 30th is the last day to drop or change grading options

UNIT II. (ANTI)NORMATIVITY

WEEK 7: MIDTERMS (NO CLASS OCTOBER 5th OR 7th)

WEEK 8: QUEER (Lecture October 12th and Discussion October 14th)

Overview: As we discussed in week 1, when reading Weiss’s piece, queer signals an “open mesh of

possibilities.” As Morgensen reminds us, queer draws our attention to excesses, to the things, people, places, and ideas that unravel what we take as givens or as normal. This week’s readings help us move from a Gay and Lesbian anthropology to a Queer one. This move was facilitated by the birth of Queer Theory in the early 1990s. Moving from simple questions of representation, finding gays and lesbians in history, in literature, art, and the world more broadly, queer theory provoked scholars to understand how norms (or normativity) shaped the world. Marcus offers us a survey of queer theory’s history from feminism to lesbian and gay studies to its present. In this history, Marcus gives us solid context for the emergence of queer as a radical form of scholarly inquiry, invested in exploring the norms placed around bodies, sex, and desire. Johnson and Cohen, offer cogent responses to Marcus’ celebration of queer, by reminding us that queer’s radical capacities are limited when the focus is only on sexuality, cut off from race, gender, class, or other social positions. Cohen in particular, suggests that queer often leaves out the most vulnerable people who could benefit from a radical overhaul of norms, such as black women, poor folks, and disabled folks. Finally Morgensen brings queer to anthropology, asking us to think about how a queer anthropology HAS to critically engage with the colonial roots of the discipline.

Thought Prompts while Reading:

- How have you understood the word queer? Think of & maybe gather some images/examples of what queer means to you. What about these images activates how you understand queer?
- How does queerness intersect (or not) with various aspects of your being: eg. Race, gender, sexuality, religion, class, caste, nationality, ethnicity etc.
- What makes you uneasy about the word queer (if anything)?

Required Reading (63 Pages):

Sharon Marcus (2005). “Queer Theory is for Everyone: A Review Essay.” *Signs* 31 (no. 1), pp. 191-218

E. Patrick Johnson (2001). "'Quare' Studies Or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned From My Grandmother." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 21, 1-25.

Cathy Cohen (1997). "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: the Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 3(4), 437-465 [**Start on Page 452, Heterosexuals on the Outside of Heteronormativity**].

Scott Morgensen (2016). “Encountering Indeterminacy: Colonial Contexts and Queer Imagining.” *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (no 4), pp. 607 – 616.

Supplemental

Tom Boellstorff (2007). Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36:1–19.

(2007). Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36:1–19.

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1995). What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X? *PMLA* 110, 343- 349.

Teresa De Lauretis (1991) "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3(2), iii-xviii

Annamarie Jagose, "Introduction," "Theorizing Same Sex Desire," and "Queer," *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 1-21; 72-100; 133-135.

WEEK 9: KINSHIP (Lecture October 19th and Discussion October 21st)

Overview: Kinship refers to the webs of social relations that intersect individuals together into larger communities. Within the history of anthropology, kinship has been a central concept for understanding social

relations of a given society. From explorations of rituals surrounding marriage to reproduction to religious customs and beyond, kinship studies have emphasized the patterns of affinity (marriage), consanguinity (blood relation), descent, and fictiveness (made up). Queer Kinship has been an emerging field of study that endeavors to understand how gender and sexually diverse people experience kinship as well as how they might produce new modes of doing kinship. Kath Weston's *Families We Choose* has been formative in this respect, offering up "chosen families" or models of queer kinship that emphasize individuals choosing and building their own kinship systems and networks. Weston's text builds on queer anthropology's interests in anti-normativity by exploring how some people seek to queer kinship by repurposing it to make room for those folks (here gays and lesbians) who have been exiled from it. Saria and Dean take up ideas of queer kinship in their respective texts by exploring different iterations of queer relations to kinship. For Saria, they consider how the figure of the hijra (transfeminine members of a guru-disciple system based in South Asia) makes normative kinship possible. In their chapter on hijras, playfulness, and pregnancy, they consider how hijras anchor and stabilize normative meanings of kinship. In a related but divergent tangent, Tim Dean explores the subcultures of men who have unprotected sex with other men (barebacking) and those men who seek intentional seroconversion or contraction of the HIV/AIDS virus. Within these subcultures, Dean posits that some of these men, particularly through the transmission of semen and HIV have figured out ways of producing queer kinship and troubling what kinship means.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- Have you encountered the word chosen family? What does it mean to you?
- Do you have a chosen family? Describe who/or what might be in that family. What is the substance of that kinship, what is it (love, respect, trauma, obligation, experience, blood, etc) that holds you and your chosen family together?
- What is the value of family for you? What does being in kinship with others offer?

Required Readings (87 Pages):

Vaibhav Saria. "A Prodigious Birth of Love." *Hijras, Lovers, Brothers: Surviving Sex and Poverty in Rural India*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp 23 – 61.

Tim Dean (2009). "Breeding Culture." *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 48-97.

Watch: Louise Hogarth's *The Gift* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oN4w8e432_o

Supplemental

Kath Weston (1994). "Exiles from Kinship" and "Families We Choose". *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, and Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press, 21-41, 103-136.

WEEK 10: NATION (Lecture October 26th and Discussion October 28th)

Overview: How do we talk about place and queerness? Specifically, how do we talk about queer places outside of America and Europe? Often, we (those of us sitting in North America and Europe) look towards Africa, the Middle East, and Asia as places that are terrible for being gay. For instance? Otu's essay on the BBC Documentary, *The World's Worst Place to Be Gay* challenges us to refuse depictions of Africa and Africans as inherently homophobic. Focusing on Uganda, Otu reminds us that the so-called "homophobic wave" in Africa is an effect of centuries of colonialism, missionary work, and empire that have taken Christian mores of homophobia and spread them throughout Africa. On the flip-side, Atshan invites us to consider what it means when Western scholars critique nascent queer movements as not being political or progressive enough. Exploring the ongoing debates about Queer Palestine, Atshan cautions Western scholars against freighting their own interests onto vulnerable people navigating multiple forms of oppression. Finally, Vanessa Agard-Jones' "What the Sands Remember," sits in a productive tension between refusing the universalizing of white, Western

histories of queerness while also refusing to disappear queerness from the Caribbean. By offering us the metaphor of sand, which is ubiquitous in her field sites in Martinique, she models ways of thinking about same-sex desire and gender transgression as “diffuse yet omnipresent.” Agard-Jones reminds us to think about queerness in the language of ephemera (impermanent gestures, words, spaces, places, and even people). Like sand slipping through our fingers, Agard-Jones shows us ways of engaging gender and sexual difference cross-culturally, as complicated, hard to pin down, and evasive. These qualities should compel us to not think of queerness in its different locations around the world as “absent” or “missing:” but as necessitating different vocabularies, metaphors, and ways of seeing: to shift our ga(y)ze.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- Where do you imagine queerness as being located? As in, what are the places imagined as safe for queers? What places are thought of as dangerous?
- Have you been to or experienced places that have different ways of engaging/dealing with LGBTQ+ issues? How were they different?

Required Readings (74 Pages)

Vanessa Agard Jones (2012). What the Sands Remember. *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18 (no 2-3), pp. 325 – 346.

Kwame Edwin Otu (2017). “LGBT Human Rights Expeditions in Homophobic Safaris: Racialized Neoliberalism and Post- Traumatic White Disorder in the BBC's The World's Worst Place to Be Gay.” *Critical Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 126-150

For Context: World’s Worst Place to Be Gay <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fV0tS6G8NNU>

Sa’ed Atshan (2020). “Critique of Empire and the Politics of Academia.” *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 183 – 212.

WEEK 11: EXCESS (Lecture November 2nd and Discussion November 4th)

Overview: Queer and trans people are often chided for being messy, or extra, or too much. But on the flip side, why be basic? This week tackles the question of excess, whether it is fashion or fatness, we will think about the relationships between excess and queerness. In Moore’s chapter, that queer excess might be called fabulousness, which comes—for queer and trans people—as a vulnerable response to a world that often violates gender and sexually non-conforming people. Glamour and excess are ways of weaponizing injury and turning it into something, well fabulous. For Hernandez, excess is often a racial project, where Black and Latinx femmes in particular, are policed for being too much or too extra or too over the top. Hernandez reminds us that “too much” often centers whiteness as the threshold between over the top and the ceiling. In reading about the figure of the chonga, usually the working class, over the top, excessive, and sassy Latin@, Hernandez reminds us of the fraughtness of excess, the ways it can simultaneously liberate and constrain. In Luna, we move into nightclubs to think about the excesses of flesh. In their poignant reflection on dressing their fat body for a night out, they ask us to consider how excesses of the flesh, fatness, should not be sources of apology, but divinity. In thinking about the divine, fat body, dressed in crop-tops, short-shorts, and even a jockstrap, Luna invites us to think about the pleasures of bodily excess, of refusing the narrow limits placed on fat bodies by a skinny-centered world that does not know what to do with its excesses.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- Have you ever been called or called someone too much or over the top? What exactly was the thing that was over the top or too much? According to whom?

- Who or what are we trying to police when we call something over the top or too much?
- What is your own relationship to style, beauty, and other aesthetic practices? Why do you choose to adorn and dress yourself the way that you do?
- How would you describe what you're giving/serving us?

Required Readings (89 Pages)

- Madison Moore. "The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric," *Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. [1-45]
- Jillian Hernandez (2020). *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 63 – 97.
- Caleb Luna (2021). "Jockstraps and Crop Tops: Fat Queer Femmes Dressing for the Night." in Kemi Adeyemi, Kareem Khubchandani, Ramón H. Rivera-Servera (eds), *Queer Nightlife*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: pp. 31 - 42.

UNIT III. DESIRE

WEEK 12: AFFECT (Lecture November 9th & Discussion November 11th)

Overview: Have you ever walked into a room where people were clearly talking about you and felt the energy shift? No one said anything. You have no proof. But the air feels different. You know in your bones, something is not right. Some scholars, might refer to that sensation that lacks a precise language as "affect." A challenging and slippery concept, affect is an umbrella term that can refer to feeling, sensation, and at times even emotions. Affect is embodied, it is personal, and it is also ephemeral (here and then gone). As an object of study, affect is often referred to as queer feeling, a mode of sensation that does not conform easily to our scientific preoccupations with visibility or concrete evidence. But for queer and transgender people affect is sometimes all we have, whether it is in sensing the interest of a lover, the potential danger of a situation, or the fact that the stranger across the way may also be "family" or "community." This week's readings remind us that in times and places where we lack an organized language for describing sexual and gender difference, affect might be all that remains. For Dave these queer feelings structure the ways that lesbians in India in the 1980s and 1990s found one another. Often, far beyond nightlife or sophisticated language for talking about sexuality, letters, turns of phrases, and other small, ephemeral, and coded moments helped organize queer women who often lacked a universal language to name their queerness. For Hammers, affect can be a reparative project: an unspoken way of healing a body that has been traumatized. Sitting with women who play with affect in the context of sexual rape play, Hammers invites us to think about how rechanneling bad affect into positive affect might enable a body to feel pleasure once more. And finally, Munoz reminds us that to study queer and trans lives, is to inhabit realms that are often ephemeral. Queers have a vexed relationship to proof. In thinking about the slipperiness of affect as a concept, Munoz challenges us (as researchers and scholars) to reframe how we think about proof and evidence. Might affect, the feeling that something is amiss, to return to the opening example, be proof enough?

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- Recall a situation where you felt a strong feeling but lacked a precise language or identifiable emotion to describe that situation. Think about the context of that scene.

Required Readings (61 pages)

- Ann Cvetkovich (2014). Affect. *Keywords in American Cultural Studies*. New York: New York University Press, pp. 3 – 5.
- Naisargi Dave (2012). Rendering the Real Imagined. *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 34 – 60.

Corrie Hammers (2014). "Corporeality, Sodomasochism and Sexual Trauma". *Body and Society*. 20(2) 68-90.

José Esteban Muñoz (1996) Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts, Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, 8:2, 5-16.

*November 12th is the last day to Drop Semester Courses.

WEEK 13: EROTICS (Lecture November 16th and Discussion November 18th)

Overview: Audre Lorde's classic, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic As Power" was initially part of a lecture she gave at Mount Holyoke in 1978. In these 20 minute remarks, Lorde makes a crucial and field changing proposition: that among the many kinds of power that are out there, the erotic is one, particularly one that we can tap into as a mode of expressing the overlooked and unrecognized parts of our being. As Lorde notes, for women in particular, the erotic has been subdued by patriarchy because of its potency, because of the ways that it threatens a male oriented world. Lorde's essay compels us to think about what this erotic power means beyond just something we do but rather "how acutely we can feel in the doing." Building on Lorde, Bailey, Khubchandani, and Rodríguez invite us into the different ways that disparate subjects develop different forms of erotic power. In Bailey, black gay men who seek unprotected (raw) sex, the erotic forms a way of subverting the limitations placed on black gay men's sexual habits in a regime of uneven responsiveness to the threats of HIV. Inside bars and parties in Bangalore, Khubchandani examines the erotic power of *Dappankoothu* music. Drawing on a critical reading of the dances associated with *koothu*, Khubchandani explores the ways that the dance appropriates as well as makes room for Dalit erotics within the space of Indian Gay Nightlife. Finally, Rodríguez asks us what we ought to do with our most problematic and troubling sexual fantasies? In thinking with the category of fantasy, Rodríguez shows us how we can push back against worlds that seek our erasures.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- What are some instances or examples of erotic power that align with Lorde's framing?
- What do you understand as the difference/similarity between the erotic and sexuality?
- Are there forms of erotic power that exceed sex? What might that look like?

Required Readings (68 Pages)

Audre Lorde (1978). "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic As Power." 1 - 7

Listen to it Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFHwg6aNKy0&t=18s>

Marlon Bailey (2016). "Black Raw (Gay) Sex." In E Patrick Johnson and Jafari Allen (eds) *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 239 – 261.

Kareem Khubchandani (2020). "Raw and Uncouth" *Ishtyle Accenting Gay Indian Nightlife*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, pp. 159 – 182.

Juana María Rodríguez (2011). "Queer Sociality and Other Sexual Fantasies," *GLQ: Lesbian and Gay Studies* 17 (no. 2-3), pp. 331 – 348.

WEEK 14: BECOMING (Zoom Lecture Tuesday November 23rd and No Class Thursday)

Overview: Crip, which is a slang term for "crippled," has a life similar to queer. Once a term to injure, it has been reappropriated as a term to signal empowerment for disabled people. Part of a larger political project within disability studies, crip theory questions any unitary or singular understanding of normal/healthy bodies. This question is about trying to counteract the violences done to disabled people in the name of "compulsory able-bodiedness." Central to Mccruer's text is a

trenchant critique of the presumed “normal” able body. His turn to a crip theory is to offer a way of rethinking the emphasis on a compulsorily “normal” body and to probe the ways that (much like compulsory heterosexuality does for queers) disabled people are stifled by ideas of normalcy. Central to normalcy are ideas of productivity, such as the seamless participation in capitalism via labor and sexual reproduction. Building on Mcier, Puar demonstrates how the bodies of transgender people are equally burdened by ableist expectations for productivity. Her essay highlights the productive resonances between transgender studies and disability, compelling us to see the ways that gender, sexuality, and ability intersect in crucial ways.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- What images come to mind when you hear the word able-bodied? Do you think there is a centralized definition for what this word means? If so, who decides?
- How have you come to understand your own body’s relationship to categories like able-bodied and disabled?
- Have you ever felt (or do you ever feel) the pressures to be productive? What do those pressures look like for you and towards what kinds of productivity?

Required Readings (70 pages)

Robert Mcier (2006). “Coming Out Crip.” *Cultural Signs of Disability and Queerness*. New York: NYU Press: p. 33 – 76.

Jasbir Puar (2015). Bodies With New Organs: Becoming Trans, Becoming Disabled. *Social Text* 33 (no. 3), pp. 45 – 73.

Watch *My Gimp Life* The Complete Series. (9 Episodes or 1hr 20 min total)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLF15zjb8W3z8zV8GkkMD6QPnHLhH6GTzY>

WEEK 15: (NON)HUMAN (Lecture November 30th and Discussion December 2nd)

Overview: Recent scholarship has examined what might be called the Post-human/inhuman/ more than human turn. This turn, which has come from a range of different disciplinary perspectives, asks us to think about the attachments we have had to the category of the human, and perhaps the ways that that attachment has impeded us. But for many minoritarian subjects the category of the human is elusive precisely because minorities have been excluded from its reaches. As Luciano and Chen ask in this week’s essay, “has the queer ever been human.” Their ambivalent response to the question (yes and no) takes us through queer theory and various scholarship that troubles the rigid boundaries between Human and Non-Human. They challenge us to think about the different political, ethical, social, and aesthetic possibilities that lie beyond a narrow attachment to humanity. They also ask us to sit with the provocation that some groups of people have never been able to be fully human. Govindrajan’s chapter extends the questions raised by Luciano and Chen to think about the stories women in the Central Himalayas tell about being abducted and taken as lovers by bears. Are these stories merely fire in the heads? Metaphors? Or rubrics for rethinking the rigid boundaries between human and non-human? Govindrajan’s thrilling ethnography illustrates the ways that non-human animals have become central parts of our ethical and moral worlds.

Thought Prompts While Reading:

- What comes to mind when you think of the inhuman? Are those thoughts inherently negative, bad, violent images?

- Is it possible that there may be something freeing about abandoning the idea of the human? What might be freeing?
- How do nonhuman animals form part of your own moral and ethical world? How do you interact/relate to them?

Required Readings and Viewings (63 Pages)

Dana Luciano and Mel Chen (2015). Has the Queer Ever Been Human? *GLQ: Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 21 (no 2-3), pp. 182 – 207

Radhika Govindrajan (2018) *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-13; 146-172.

Watch Vice (2017). *The Truth About Furrries: Fandom Not Fetish*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2XeOxWW2oY>

View Xandra Ibarra (2014 – 2015) *Spic Ecdysis*. <http://www.xandraibarra.com/spic-ecdysis/>

WEEK 16: PRESENTATIONS AND WRAP UP (Final Group Presentations December 17th)

Tuesday December 7th LAST DAY OF CLASS