

QUEER ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTHROPOLOGY 252A, COURSE CODE 60845, WINTER 2020

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Meets Tuesdays, 2:00–4:50pm, SBSG 3323

Office Hours: see online signup (tinyurl.com/9eff6uc)

First Meeting: Tuesday, January 7, 2:00pm, SBSG 3323

NOTE: there are readings for the first day of class!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will explore scholarship addressing sexuality and culture. The focus is on an engagement with queer anthropology and specifically queer ethnography, but we will engage with queer studies work in other disciplines (e.g., history, literary criticism), as well as ethnographic work in other disciplines (e.g., sociology). There is extensive attention to contexts both within and outside the United States. We will be meeting many of the authors via online chat, using those opportunities to further our methodological, substantive, and theoretical conversations.

You do not need to have queer studies as a focus or even significant element in your own research to take this course. The goal of the course is to provide you with an expanded set of theoretical and methodological tools for developing your work. In that regard the collegial community we build will provide a powerful resource for your own scholarship and activism, and I will be happy to advise you in any way I can. My purpose in this course is to serve you in your scholarly development, and to learn from you as I advance my own work.

Given the rich interdisciplinary literatures making up queer anthropology, we will focus the course around the following five themes, each of which will be the focus of two seminar meetings. The order does not indicate a ranking; it is simply a way to move through and link the themes. Through these themes we will explore other domains of queer anthropological inquiry, including but not limited to activism, coloniality, the digital, disability, ethnicity, gender, globalization, immigration, labor, race, and religion.

(1) *Language & Categories*. We will explore scholarship addressing questions of terms, names, labels, categories, and discourses. Earlier research on these topics can help inform current debates.

(2) *Body & Movement*. Queer anthropological scholarship has, from the outset, examined relationships between embodiment and emplacement. Such work touches on (and entangles) everything from globalization and migration to trans selfhood.

(3) *Kinship & Household*. Kinship is one of the foundational aspects of human cultures, as are forms of domestic life. What kinship and household mean in differing places and times has been a key topic of anthropological scholarship, including how forms of heteronormativity shape cultural logics of relation and community.

(4) *Nationalism & Belonging*. The nation-state is the dominant form of sovereignty in the modern era, and is taking new exclusionary populist forms in many contexts around the world. We will explore scholarship addressing how nationalisms are articulated through specific logics of heterosexism, and queer responses to them.

(5) *Intimacy & Exchange*. Sex and exchange (including but not limited to monetary exchange) have a longstanding and multivalent relationship that is imbricated with all of the themes above. We will explore how forms of pleasure, affect, and commerce shape and are shaped by sexual discourses and practices.

COURSE READINGS

The course is designed to provide practice in different reading styles, an invaluable scholarly skill. It is also designed to provide practice in collaborative reading.

The course schedule lists a number of readings for each week. You will select and focus on two of these readings. Every week save Week 1 and Week 2 there is an ethnography assigned, marked with an asterisk (*). You must select the ethnography as one of your two readings in those weeks. In Week 4 there are six short texts, marked with a vertical bar (|) (Astorino, Fuentes, Meredith & Schmit, Smith & Archer, Smith & Bolnick, and Tallbear); these count as one reading if you select them. Similarly, in Weeks 3 and 10 there are two texts marked that count as one reading (the two Newton books in Week 3, and Pravattiyagul and Wilson in Week 10).

You will focus on your selected texts for your précis (see below). You are expected to spend 15–20 minutes reading briefly through the other texts so you can participate in the overall class discussion. Your colleagues in the class will help you explore the other texts. If you do not do a précis in a particular week, I recommend you still choose two readings to focus on for that week.

COURSE GUIDELINES

Seminar discussions will follow three basic guidelines:

Generosity. With a ten-week course there simply is not time for substandard texts. All readings selected for the syllabus are insightful and theoretically innovative. Critiquing aspects of the readings is fine, but if you find yourself rejecting an argument in toto, this indicates your reading is insufficiently generous.

Provisionality. You are allowed (indeed, encouraged) to think out loud, say something and then take it back, and generally speak in a provisional manner, knowing that

those around you will be patient, supportive, and slow to take offense. You do not need to be polished or “brilliant” in this course. We will be working together as an intellectual community to advance our thinking; this requires collaboration, kindness, and good cheer.

Community. Some individuals are comfortable speaking at length: this is desirable, but I reserve the right to ask persons to wrap up their comments, or to solicit comments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) *Six précis* (goo.gl/vttStV)

The primary requirement of the course is that you do six (6) précis, which we will share with each other. This means you can choose four weeks (including Week 1) in which you do not have to do a précis. Each précis should be 2,500–3,500 characters in length. This is approximately 400–500 words, or 1.5–2 double-spaced pages, but you will be assessed based on character count. Each précis should take the form of critical questions, commentary, and analysis for two of the week’s readings. A précis can link the readings for a particular week to earlier course readings or readings from outside the course, but particularly the latter of these is discouraged. I discourage negative critiques; focus on generous engagement, linking texts to our discussions.

A précis must be uploaded onto the course’s Google Forms website before the beginning of class. A précis can never be turned in late. If you do not attend class, or leave class early, any précis you submit that day will not be counted. Each précis counts for 10 percent of your overall grade, so the six précis together constitute 60% of the overall grade. Please note that falling even one précis short will thus severely impact your grade. You will receive only partial credit for a précis that does not meet the minimum requirements discussed above. Plan ahead and do not find yourself in a situation where you fail to complete six précis.

I encourage you to do additional précis beyond the six required: it is a nice way to participate in class discussion, build up an archive of notes on the course, and practice scholarly commentary. If you do any additional précis, they can replace an earlier précis that only received partial credit.

2) *The final paper*

You must write a course paper, which will be 40% of your overall grade. It must be emailed by the deadline as a single Word document (not PDF) to tboellst@uci.edu. Due to the emphasis on reading and précis, the final paper is relatively short. It should be 4,000–5,000 words long, inclusive of title, endnotes, and references (I will use the word count function of Word to confirm this). The paper can be on any topic that relates to the course, so long as you obtain my approval and so long as you cite and draw upon course texts and discussions in an extensive manner. I encourage you to engage in some way with your own interests, but the paper does not need to focus directly on your research project. You may use Chicago Style (used by the American Anthropological Association) or some other style you prefer (e.g., MLA style), so

long as you are consistent. You must include full bibliographic references to course texts as they are used. You may bring in outside readings, but it is not necessary to do so and they should not overwhelm or substitute for course readings.

Your final paper should almost certainly have sections (including an introduction and conclusion), with a clear overall thesis and structure. I strongly suggest you work with me to develop your paper's argument.

The course grade will thus be calculated as follows:

Six précis times ten points per précis	= 60 points
Final paper	= 40 points
Total	= 100 points

You will then be assigned a letter grade as follows: A+ 96.7–100; A 93.4–96.6; A- 90–93.3; B+ 86.7–89.9; B 83.4–86.6; B- 80–83.3; C+ 76.7–79.9; C 73.4–76.6; C- 70–73.3; D 65–69.9; F 64.9 and below.

Students with disabilities: to quote from my colleague Karen Nakamura's syllabus, "If you need a reasonable (or even unreasonable) accommodation, please let me know and I'll make it happen. This goes triply for folks with non-visible disabilities or who pass or mask or compensate. No need to do that here." The Disabilities Services Center has many resources; registering with them can help ensure appropriate arrangements in all your courses (see www.disability.uci.edu/).

COURSE BOOKS & ARTICLES

BOOKS: The following books are available at the bookstore, online, or on reserve.

Boellstorff, Tom. 2005. *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton University Press.

Brainer, Amy. 2019. *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan*. Rutgers U. Press.

Camminga, B. 2019. *Transgender Refugees and the Imagined South Africa: Bodies over Borders and Borders over Bodies*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Foucault, Michel. 1978. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Vintage Books.

Gill, Lyndon K. 2018. *Erotic Islands: Art and Activism in the Queer Caribbean*. Duke University Press.

Mieu, George Paul. 2017. *Ethno-erotic Economies: Sexuality, Money, and Belonging in Kenya*. University of Chicago Press.

Moore, Mignon. 2011. *Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Plemons, Eric. 2017. *The Look of a Woman: Facial Feminization Surgery and the Aims of Trans- Medicine*. Duke University Press.

Stout, Noelle M. 2014. *After Love: Queer Intimacy and Erotic Economies in Post-Soviet Cuba*. Durham: Duke University Press.

ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS: Most of these texts are available online: I will provide you access to the remaining texts (I will get you the Hacking reading for Week 1 ahead of our first meeting).

Aizura, Aren Z. 2010. "Feminine Transformations: Gender Reassignment Surgical Tourism in Thailand." *Medical Anthropology* 29 (4): 424–43. doi:10.1080/01459740.2010.501314.

Allen, Jafari. 2016. "One View from a Deterritorialized Realm: How Black/Queer Renarrativizes Anthropological Analysis." *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (4): 617–26. doi:10.14506/ca31.4.10.

Atienza, Paul Michael Leonardo. 2018. "Censoring the Sexual Self: Reflections from an Ethnographic Study of Gay Filipinos on Mobile Dating Apps in Manila." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 19 (3): 231–44. doi: 10.1080/14442213.2018.1454503.

Atshan, Sa'ed. 2020. *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique*. Stanford Univ. Press.

Astorino, Claudia M. 2019. "Beyond Dimorphism: Sexual Polymorphism and Research Bias in Biological Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 489–90. doi: 10.1111/aman.13224.

Boellstorff, Tom. 2007. "Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36: 1–19. doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.36.081406.094421.

Boellstorff, Tom. 2007. "When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time." *GLQ* 13 (2/3): 227–48. doi:10.1215/10642684-2006-032.

Boellstorff, Tom. 2011. "But Do Not Identify as Gay: A Proleptic Genealogy of the MSM Category." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 287–312. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01100.x.

- Boswell, John. 1990. "Categories, Experience, and Sexuality." In *Forms of Desire: Sexual Orientation and the Social Constructionist Controversy*, edited by Edward Stein, 133–73. Routledge.
- Cohen, Cathy. 1997. "Punks, Bulldaggers, & Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics." *GLQ* 3 (4): 437–65. doi: 10.1215/10642684-3-4-437.
- David, Emmanuel. 2018. "Transgender Archipelagos." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5 (3): 332–54. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-6900724>.
- Eriksen, Annelin, & Christine M. Jacobsen. 2019. "On Feminist Critique and How the Ontological Turn is Queering Anthropology." In *Queering. Knowledge: Analytics, Devices, and Investments after Marilyn Strathern*, edited by Paul Boyce, E.J. Gonzalez-Polledo, and Silvia Posocco, 148–67. Routledge.
- Fuentes, Agustín. 2019. "Identities, Experiences, and Beliefs: On Challenging Normativities in Biological Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 467–69. doi: 10.1111/aman.13227.
- Hacking, Ian. 1990. "Making Up People." In *Forms of Desire: Sexual Orientation and the Social Constructionist Controversy*, edited by Edward Stein, 69–88. Routledge.
- Kulick, Don. 1997. "A Man in the House: The Boyfriends of Brazilian *Travesti* Prostitutes." *Social Text* 15 (3–4): 133–60.
- Lewin, Ellen. 2016. "Who's Queer? What's Queer? Queer Anthropology through the Lens of Ethnography." *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (4): 598–606. doi:10.14506/ca31.4.08.
- Meredith, Stephanie L., and Christopher A. Schmitt. 2019. "The Outliers Are In: Queer Perspectives on Investigating Variation in Biological Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 487–89. doi: 10.1111/aman.13223.
- Murray, David A.B. 2014. "The (Not So) Straight Story: Queering Migration Narratives of Sexual Orientation and Gendered Identity Refugee Claimants." *Sexualities* 17 (4): 451–71. doi: 10.1177/1363460714524767.
- Newton, Esther. 1979. *Selections from Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Newton, Esther. 2018. *My Butch Career: A Memoir*. Duke University Press.
- Perez, Justin. 2019. "Global LGBT Politics at Scale: Memory and Rights in Early Twenty-First Century Peru." In *The Oxford Handbook of Global LGBT and*

- Sexual Diversity Politics*, edited by Michael J. Bosia, Sandra M. McEvoy, and Momin Rahman. Oxford University Press.
- Pravattiyagul, Jutathorn. 2018. "Male Clients of Thai Transgender Sex Workers in Europe." *Anthropology Today* 34 (3): 19–21. doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12435.
- Rubin, Gayle. 1975. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna R. Reiter, 157–210. Monthly Review Press.
- Smith, Rick W. A., and Samantha M. Archer. 2019. "Bisexual Science." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 491–92. doi: 10.1111/aman.13225.
- Smith, Rick W. A., and Deborah A. Bolnick. 2019. "Situating Science: Doing Biological Anthropology as a View from Somewhere." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 465–67. doi: 10.1111/aman.13213.
- Tallbear, Kim. 2019. "Feminist, Queer, and Indigenous Thinking as an Antidote to Masculinist Objectivity and Binary Thinking in Biological Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 494–96. doi: 10.1111/aman.13229.
- Yanagisako, Sylvia and Carol Delaney. 1995. "Naturalizing Power." In their edited *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*, 1–22. London: Routledge.
- Zengin, Asli. 2019. "The Afterlife of Gender: Sovereignty, Intimacy, and Muslim Funerals of Transgender People in Turkey." *Cultural Anthropology* 34 (1): 78–102. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca34.1.09>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

week one (Language & Categories)

Jafari Allen, One View from a Deterritorialized Realm.
 Tom Boellstorff, Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology.
 Cathy Cohen, Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens.
 Ian Hacking, Making Up People.

week two (Language & Categories)

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Pt. I; Pt. II, Ch. 1; Pt. III; Pt. IV, Chs. 1 & 2).
 Tom Boellstorff, But Do Not Identify as Gay.
 John Boswell, Categories, Experience, and Sexuality.
 Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney, Naturalizing Power.

week three (Body & Movement)

* Eric Plemons, *The Look of a Woman*.

Aren Aizura, *Feminine Transformations*.

| Esther Newton, *Mother Camp* (Preface, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2).

| Esther Newton, *My Butch Career* (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6).

week four (Body & Movement)

* B Camminga, *Transgender Refugees and the Imagined South Africa*.

| Claudia M. Astorino, *Beyond Dimorphism*.

| Agustín Fuentes, *Identities, Experiences, and Beliefs*.

| Stephanie L. Meredith and Christopher A. Schmit, *The Outliers Are In*.

| Rick Smith and Samantha Archer, *Bisexual Science*.

| Rick Smith and Deborah Bolnick, *Situating Science*.

| Kim Tallbear, *Feminist, Queer, and Indigenous Thinking*.

David Murray, *The (Not So) Straight Story*.

week five (Kinship & Household)

* Mignon Moore, *Invisible Families*.

Ellen Lewin, *Who's Queer?*

Asli Zengin, *The Afterlife of Gender*.

week six (Kinship & Household)

* Amy Brainer, *Queer Kinship and Family Change in Taiwan*.

Tom Boellstorff, *When Marriage Falls*.

Annelin Eriksen & Christine M. Jacobsen, *On Feminist Critique*.

week seven (Nationalism & Belonging)

* Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago*.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

Sa'ed Atshan, *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique* (Introduction and Chapter 5).

week eight (Nationalism & Belonging)

* Lyndon K. Gill, *Erotic Islands*.

Emmanuel David, *Transgender Archipelagos*.

Justin Perez, *Global LGBT Politics at Scale*.

week nine (Intimacy & Exchange)

* Noelle Stout, *After Love*.

Gayle Rubin, *The Traffic in Women*.

Don Kulick, *A Man in the House*.

week ten (Intimacy & Exchange)

*George Paul Meiu, *Ethno-erotic Economies*.

Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza, *Censoring the Sexual Self*.

| Jutathorn Pravattiyagul, *Male Clients of Thai Transgender Sex Workers in Europe*.

| Ara Wilson, *The Intimate Economies of Bangkok* (Chapter 5).

Course paper due Friday, March 20, 5pm PST, emailed to me as a Word file (not PDF).