

**History 938: Queer History, Queer Theory**  
**Professor Finn Enke**  
**Thursday, 11:00-12:55; synchronous meetings via zoom**  
**Office Hours: Thurs 1:00-1:30 and by appointment**

**Seminar Description**

Over the last five decades, historians have broken intellectual ground by introducing sexuality, sex, and gender as categories of and for historical analysis, often in transnational perspective. Employing interdisciplinary methods and theoretical approaches, historians have produced a vibrant literature on sex/gender generating new questions in historiographic method and theory. Such scholarship has opened critical vantage points for understanding the place of sex/gender in all aspects of the past.

From the groundwork of some foundations in the history of sexuality, this seminar will from the start emphasize the interdisciplinary historiographic, methodological and theoretical insights offered by queer, feminist, trans, BIPOC and decolonial critique. Readings analyze sex and gender heuristically and simultaneously shed light on their emergence within historical processes of urbanization, nationalism, citizenship, imperialism, white supremacy, settler colonialism, racialization, disability, class distinction, incarceration and law. Our examination of critical methodological and theoretical foundations of the field will take up the meaning of archive, evidence, memory, narration, history, and epistemology.

**This moment in time:**

Aware of the global pandemic and intensification of structural inequities, white supremacist violences, and social and environmental justice movements, the seminar gives us an opportunity to deepen our understanding of feminist and queer pedagogies in practice. Ideally, we will find ever more meaningful ways to connect theory and practice. Our shared project is to create a seminar that supports everyone's well-being in seminar and beyond.

**Our first collective endeavor** is to orient ourselves to creating virtual seminar spaces that are accessible, inviting, sustainable and supportive. As a first step in that process, please consider what kinds of structures might be most supportive to you, what you see as your priorities in this seminar, and how you see this seminar relating to other commitments in your life. As a multi- and inter-disciplinary community, we can modify our reading schedule and potentially reading list, assignment structure, and seminar process according to interests and needs. We will develop a bibliography of supplemental or additional readings and resources, and I encourage everyone to contribute to it.

**Accessibility:**

Everyone is welcome in this seminar and I am happy to make accommodations, adjustments, and alternatives, and in general whatever I can do to support your engagement and learning. The McBurney Center provides useful documentation and resource support related to disabilities but I do not require McBurney documentation to make the course and seminar participation more accessible to you.

### **Learning Goals and Outcomes:**

#### **We will further hone the skills appropriate to MA/Ph.D. in History and Interdisciplines to gain:**

- \*deeper sense of the historiographic trajectory and transformations that have contributed to the history of gender and sexuality including queer theory;
- \*skills of critical analysis using historiographic method and insights;
- \*discernment of the epistemological foundations on which varied research rests;
- \*collaborative process, listening and respect for questions and differing perspectives;
- \*initiative and confidence in articulating your own research and its relation to scholarship;
- \*increased facility with contextually appropriate vocabularies and textual production;
- \*creative synthesis and original expression.

**3 credit course expectations.** The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), reading, writing, and projects as described in the syllabus.

### **Reading List**

**Books** avail via UW Libraries, A Room of One's Own bookstore, and online booksellers.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1

Qwo-Li Driskill, *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two Spirit Memory*

Zeb Tortorici, *Sins Against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial Spain*

Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women w/ Mustaches and Men w/o Beards: Gender and Sxl Anxieties of Iranian M*

T. J. Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal: Indigeneity and the Violence of Belonging in Southern Africa*

Amanda Lock Swarr, *Sex in Transition: Remaking Gender and Race in South Africa*

Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the No Am West*

Anita Kurimay, *Queer Budapest: 1863-1961*

Julian Gill Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*

Dan Royles, *To Make the Wounded Whole: The African American Struggle Against HIV/AIDS*

Ghassan Moussawi, *Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer Strategies in Beirut*

**Articles** will be provided electronically to the Files tab of your Canvas site.

### **Seminar Requirements:**

The two most important requirements of this seminar are that you pursue what you need to be pursuing in a way that is sustainable and illuminating for you, and that you help support everyone else in their process of learning what they want to learn. Beyond that, there are four formal assignment components briefly described below. Assignment guidelines and suggestions are detailed on pp. 5-6 of this syllabus.

#### **1. Seminar Discussion and Participation, Collaborative co-facilitation. (10%)**

A crucial portion of the learning for the semester takes place through dialogue with everyone in seminar to collectively build greater insight. Ideally, the seminar will be maximally responsive to what is of the moment and of concern in our readings and beyond.

Everyone's perspectives are essential to our learning. I especially encourage you to share your questions, interests and concerns, and also be a co-caretaker of seminar dynamics. Every person comes

here with immeasurable and unique insight and experience, and it is up to each individual to help nourish everyone's presence.

With that in mind, I encourage you to speak in the first person singular from your own experience (for example: avoid using "we" statements such as "we grow up learning x" and instead try, "I grew up learning x"). Practice refraining from making assumptions about people's backgrounds, avoid generalizing about communities, increase awareness of your biases, and approach our sources and each other with openness. We each arrive here with a unique intellectual background and we have no common knowledge nor vocabulary. Thus, if you discuss something that we have not read together, please be prepared to explain the work and why it has been useful to you. With concepts, we can work together to discern their contextual origins and utility.

On Zoom, feel free to use the "chat" function to ask for a pause, share resources, or facilitate communication. As a learning community, it's awesome to be mindful of everyone's well-being, and help each other participate and be here as fully as possible. *This is at the heart of our work as seminar participants and beings living in a challenging world.*

## **2. Keywords and Questions. (10%)**

For each work on the syllabus: A. develop one or two **keywords** that best signal what for you are the most compelling or central aspects in the reading, and a sentence or two about why. B. What do you perceive is the **author's guiding question**? (Articulate this as a question in one sentence.) C. In relation to this work, what is **your guiding question**, in one sentence? D. I encourage you to write a quick (or not) reflection about what in this work is compelling or useful to you, given your interests. Make the reading work for you!

You are not required to hand this in, but I strongly encourage you to write it out and **bring it to seminar; I will ask each person to share one or more of these items as we launch each seminar.**

## **3. Weekly Topic, Thesis, Method, and Conversation Statements. (30%)**

Prior to seminar, for each reading: write out a) a succinct statement of the book's **topic**; b) succinct statement of the author's **thesis**, c) a succinct description of **method**, and c) a note about the **conversation to which this book contributes**. Bring these to seminar each week. These are required but not graded. (1-2 pages max)

**We will work with these each week during seminar**, using collaborative google docs and discussion. The diversity of our reading approaches will help us collectively hone in on the core argument and method of the work in question, also improve our analytical and reading skills and increase our understanding of historiography and the ways that academic fields grow and transform.

**4. Five Historical Analysis Papers (4-5 pages) (50%).** These should be focused on a single week's readings but may draw other readings if useful to you. You may do these on any weeks you choose, but everyone must do one by Feb 18, and one by March 11. These are *due the day we discuss the readings* you are writing about. You do not need to do a separate Thesis and Method statement if you are doing an analysis paper. Post these to the Assignments Tab on Canvas.

## Seminar Schedule

### January 28 INTRODUCTION

Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive"

### Unit One: Constituting Sexuality and Gender

Feb. 4 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1. Especially focus on Parts II and III.  
Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive"

Feb. 11 Qwo-Li Driskill, *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory*

Feb. 18 Zeb Tortorici, *Sins Against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial Spain*  
Jennifer Morgan, "'Some could suckle over their shoulders:'"

Feb. 25 Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women w/ Mustaches and Men w/o Beards*

Mar. 4 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*. Focus on "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire;" "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions;" "Conclusion;" and "Preface to 1999 Edition"  
Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto"

### Unit Two: Queer Discursive Proliferation

Mar. 11 Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the No Am West*

Mar. 18 Anita Kurimay, *Queer Budapest: 1863-1961*

Mar. 25\* Anita Kurimay will be presenting at 4pm! (no new reading, no seminar meet)

Apr. 1 Ghassan Moussawi, *Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer... Beirut*

### Unit Three: Settler Colonies, the Nation, and Queer Transnational Stories

Apr. 8 T. J. Tallie, *Queering Colonial Natal*

Apr. 15 Amanda Lock Swarr, *Sex in Transition: Remaking Gender and Race in South Africa*

Apr. 22 Julian Gill Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*

Apr. 29 Dan Royles, *To Make the Wounded Whole: The African Am. Struggle Against HIV/AIDS*

## Assignment Guidelines and Suggestions:

You will be submitting written work to our Canvas page, on the Assignments tab.

I care most of all that you make the seminar and every assignment useful to you. Therefore, page lengths are guidelines only. Alternate forms of engaging readings are welcome; feel free to experiment with different voices, styles, formats, and mediums.

### Three General Considerations:

\*I always suggest that you *begin* your intellectual engagement, whether with readings, talks, or conversations, *with attention to the contributions* that the reading, person, or conversation offers. That is, the first question is, “*what is here, and what does it offer that is important?*” rather than, “*what is wrong with this piece?*” We’ll talk more about this in seminar.

\**Creating Questions:* One of the key aspects of critical analysis is asking questions that inspire and guide yourself and others to discover and engage critical issues in the readings and also in your own research. Some questions are historical (what happened in the past), and some are historiographic (how has the conversation in the field developed over time or, more specifically, how is this author offering something new to existing scholarship). There are many different kinds of questions; make note of what is coming up for you, what are you wondering, and what does that tell you?

\**When we have more than one reading,* and also as our seminar develops a body of common readings, consider what the readings *together* offer? What is gained by putting different readings in dialogue with one another?

### Tips for topic, thesis, method, conversation:

**Topic:** “**This book is about...**” in one sentence, articulate the subject to reflect the uniqueness of the work. (e.g., “This book is about the Civil War in the United States” is true of a zillion books. What is this particular Civil War book about, or offering, that is unique?)

**What’s a thesis?** *It is the core argument of the work.* Usually, an author will announce their thesis within the first few pages of an article, or within the first 10 pages of a book. Sometimes they’ll use explicit language like, “**In this article I argue that...**” That’s a good clue that the thesis will follow. However, occasionally people use that phrase and what follows is not their thesis, while at the same time they write their thesis in a more obscure way. *So, once you think you have a thesis statement, you then want to think about the entire work and ask yourself if the statement you have come up with is actually reflected in the content and design of the book.* If it isn’t, try again. Be aware that there are books that lack an *explicitly* stated thesis. Be aware also that some works have multiple theses, or a thesis with 2 or 3 parts.

**A thesis statement:** you may write this in the author’s words, or in your own words. It should be a statement that reflects the unique scope of this work—that is, not so general that it could be about any number of books—while also being succinct.

**Method:** reflect on the author's sources, how the sources were used and the analytical framework the author advances.

**Conversation:** What intellectual or historiographic conventions or conversations is the author drawing on and extending? What contributions or interventions does the author make? Authors usually discuss this explicitly.

**Analysis Papers:**

Due on the day we discuss the works you are focusing on.

You may do these any weeks, but everyone must do one by February 18, and one by March 11.

**Considerations:**

\*4-5 pages (flexible; again, make it useful for you. I am happy to read any amount!)

\*Begin with the author's topic and **thesis**. Be sure that you accurately represent the author's work.

\*Discuss the **contributions** of the work(s): What conversations is the work participating in? How do the method, sources, scope, framing, etc., allow this book to make useful and unique contributions to those conversations? Are there broader contributions, such that the book would be useful beyond its own disciplinary scope?

\*If you want to discuss **limitations** of the work, it is still necessary to take the work on its own terms. E.g., given *this* book, do the sources/frame limit its perspective? Given *this* book and this author's intentions, are there other ways the author might have analyzed the sources to make it better? (Refrain from writing critiques that essentially ask for a different book.)

\*Discuss some aspect of this work that has particular **bearing on your own research and/or projects**. This may be an intuitive glimmer, an inspiration, or a significant challenge. Feel free to discuss your own work and/or questions with as much detail as is useful to you. I will be interested to read any amount!

Additional Recommended Texts (a tiny beginning to which we will add much):

J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Paradoxes of Hawaiian Sovereignty: Land, Sex and the Politics of State Nationalism*  
Scott Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*  
Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex," "Blood Under the Bridge," and "Geologies of Queer Studies"