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| Dr. Dejan Kuzmanovic  dkuzmano@uwsp.edu CCC 427, 346-4719 | **English 287:**  **Gay and Lesbian Literature**  Wed 6:00-8:30 pm, CCC206 | Office Hours:  Tue 5:00-6:00, Wed 12:00-2:00 and by appointment |

**This course satisfies the Humanities and US Diversity GEP requirement.**

**It may also count for the future LGBTQ Studies Certificate, with appropriate approvals.**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

We will analyze representations of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) individuals and relationships in literary texts belonging to different genres and historical periods. Through a mixture of lectures and discussions, we will observe how the meanings and values that societies assign to such relationships vary culturally and historically. Our focus will be on twentieth-century British and American texts because “homosexuality” as we know it today is largely a modern, Western concept. We will address diverse ethical, political, psychological, and other issues related to homosexual -- and other sexual -- identities and experiences. Our premise is that studying homosexuality implies also exploring the changing meanings of heterosexuality and sexuality in general. This approach questions the monolithic conception of a single LGBTQ community and emphasizes gender, racial, class, generational, and ideological diversity within it.

**SAFE SPACE:**

**The classroom must be a safe space for all students**, requiring appropriate classroom conduct. Showing respect for every individual – regardless of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, religious or political opinions, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other forms of difference – is essential for everyone’s success and wellbeing. The Golden Rule: treat others as you expect to be treated.

We will not avoid controversial or uncomfortable topics. Instead, we will ask ourselves and each other why certain topics offend us or make us uncomfortable. And we will always be respectful and mindful of other people’s opinions and feelings. We can certainly disagree with each other, but dismissive or insulting attitudes toward another person or his/her views will not be tolerated.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

**Purchase**: E. M. Forster, *Maurice* (written in 1917; published in 1971)

Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973)

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2007)

Kim Fu, *For Today I Am a Boy* (2014)

**Rental:** Keith Hale (ed.), *Ode to Boy: An Anthology of Same-Sex Attraction in Literature from Antiquity through the First World War* (2013)

**Handouts:** Selections of stories, poems, and essays distributed throughout the semester.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Upon the completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze literary and historical representations of LGBTQ individuals and communities

- Explain how gender/sexual identities are changing social and historical constructions

- Examine intersectionality of gender and sexuality with race/ethnicity, religion, class, nationality, and other significant identity categories

- Describe how social and cultural institutions and discourses influence attitudes toward gender and sexual identities, including through literary and media representations

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICY:** % of the course grade

**Two Exams (Midterm & Final)** 40% (20% per exam)

**Three Short Papers** 30% (10% per paper)

**Daily Work Grade**  20%

**Team Work** 10%

**EXAMS (Midterm: October 25; Final: December 20):**

The exams are likely to have **in-class and take-home components**. The in-class part will test your factual knowledge of the texts, concepts, and ideas covered in each half of the semester. The take-home part will test your in-depth comprehension of the themes and issues addressed in the readings. You will receive detailed guidelines for each exam two weeks in advance. If you read all assignments and engage in class discussions, you should be able to do well on the exams.

**SHORT PAPERS:**

You will write three short papers (3 pages each) in response to one of several suggested topics. Some will be standard topics for literary analysis; others will be more unusual, such as to imagine a dialogue between characters from two different texts, to rewrite a scene from another character’s point of view, or two imagine how a character from the past might behave if he/she lived in America today. The last paper will emphasize personal reflection based on the readings.

All papers should have titles, be double spaced, printed in a regular font (size 10-12) with a one-inch margin, and turned in on time. I will deduct half a letter grade for each day a paper is late.

**DAILY WORK GRADE:**

In order to encourage consistent engagement with the readings and class activities, I will assign **nine homework assignments** (short informal writings to post in D2L by 11:30 pm on specific Mondays) and **ten in-class assignments** (pop-up reading quizzes and end-of-class summaries).

You can earn 4 points for each D2L assignment. Eight of them will count for a total of 32 points.

You can earn 2 points for each in-class assignment. Nine will count for a total of 18 points.

Therefore, you can accumulate 50 points (8x4 + 9x2) toward your Daily Work Grade.

At the end of the semester your Daily Work Grade will be determined as follows:

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| A = 47-50 pts | A- = 44-46 pts | B+ = 41-43 pts | B = 38-40 pts | B- = 35-37 pts |
| C+ = 32-34 pts | C = 29-31 pts | C- = 26-28 pts | D+ = 23-25 pts | D = 20-22 pts |

**D2L Homework Assignments Rubric:**

*4 points: Exceptionally good work.* You fully understood the reading and responded to the prompt thoughtfully and clearly. Your work could serve as a model for other students.

*3 points: Good work,* on par with most students in the class. You understood the reading well and responded to the prompt with some insight and few confusing or vague statements.

*2 points: Below average work.* You understood the reading partially and responded to the prompt with some good ideas, but also with substantial confusion and/or vagueness.

*1 point: Barely acceptable work* -- sketchy, very vague or confusing, or largely inaccurate

*0 points:* Failure to turn in a report, plagiarism, or complete misunderstanding of the task

**In-class Assignments Rubric:**

*2 points:* You obviously did the readings, paid attention, and understood key issues and ideas.

*1 point:* Your reading was incomplete or you missed some key ideas in the text or discussion.

*0 points:* You either did not read or not carefully enough, or you did not pay attention in class.

As a way to encourage **participation in class discussions**, I will award **up to 5 extra points** to those students who consistently and productively contribute to our conversations. That could move your Daily Work Grade up two notches, for example from B to A-. I might call on students who are always silent and appear unengaged. However, I hope that will not be necessary.

We will spend 2.5 hours together every Wednesday evening. If we are all prepared and all contribute energy and ideas, that time will be spent productively, interestingly, and pleasantly.

**TEAM WORK:**

Throughout the semester, **you will work in teams of two**, both on various in-class activities and on two major tasks you will prepare outside of class.

**Your** **first task** is to be in charge of class for about 30 minutes on a specific date. You will first present some background information relevant for the reading of the day. Then you will lead class discussion about that reading. You will sign up for a specific date by mid-September.

**The second task** is to prepare a brief presentation (15-20 minutes) for our last session (Dec. 13) on an issue that you feel is important for LGBTQ studies, but it was not sufficiently represented (or perhaps it was completely overlooked) in our readings and discussions. The choice is entirely yours, and you should consider thoughtfully and creatively what issues matter in this context. You may discuss your ideas with me at any time. The presentation may focus on a particular text or person, but with the purpose of raising your classmates’ awareness of the chosen issue.

You will receive detailed guidelines for both of these tasks later on. **Both members of the group will receive the same grade**, so work collaboratively and play off each other’s strengths.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

This discussion-based class can be effective only if you are both physically and mentally present. When you are absent, you are not contributing to your classmates’ learning and exploration.

I can excuse only documented absences caused by serious illness or official university business.

**There is no penalty for one unexcused absence.** Save it for real needs, whether planned (travel, doctor’s appointment, etc.) or unplanned (emergencies, personal issues, not feeling well, etc.).

Additional absences will have an impact on your grades:

* For 2nd unexcused absence, your Daily Work Grade will be lowered one full letter grade.
* For 3rd such absence, your Daily Work Grade will be lowered another full letter grade.
* For 4th such absence, your Course Grade will be lowered one full letter grade.
* For 5th such absence, your Course Grade will be lowered another full letter grade.

**No student will pass the course with more than five absences.** Students who accumulate three or more absences by mid-semester will be strongly encouraged to drop the course.

**ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS:**

**Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct are serious violations.** Read more about academic misconduct: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx> and academic integrity: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>. When unsure whether certain action is appropriate or not, please feel free to talk to me about it.

**Freedom from physical or verbal harassment:** Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at UWSP, and it is your right and duty to report it. You may want to be aware of UWSPCommunity Bill of Rights and Responsibilities: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf> and our Bias/Hate Incident Reporting (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Bias-Hate-Incident.aspx>). You can report (anonymously, if preferred) any bias/hate incidents you experience or witness, such as sexual assault and blatantly racist or homophobic behavior.

**UWSP is committed to providing appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities** and temporary impairments. Please do not hesitate to talk to me if you need special arrangements of any kind. If you have a disability or a condition requiring assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6th floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible.  DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or [DATC@uwsp.edu](mailto:DATC@uwsp.edu). For more information, see <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/toQualifyForDisabilityServices.aspx>.

**Please turn off all electronic devices** unless you use them for the sole purpose of taking notes. Texting, emailing, or Web browsing in class is not allowed because it will distract both you and others from class activities. Being inattentive will adversely affect your Daily Work Grade.

The English Department policy is that students may not make audio, video, or photographic recordings of lectures or other class activities without written permission from the instructor.

**READING SCHEDULE** (changes are possible, but you will be notified in advance):

**Please come to class prepared and be engaged in class activities.** Read everything assigned for the day and **bring the readings to class**. Prepare some comments or questions about the readings that you might share during discussion. We are all here to learn and exchange ideas in an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity and mutual respect, so feel free to express yourself. There is no need to be brilliant in order to speak up. Any relevant comment or question is valuable.

**Sept. 6 LGBTQ+ Future / LGBTQ+ Identities**

**Sept. 13 Alluring and Appalling Heteronormativity**

Read: Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case” (*Ode to Boy*, pp. 458-75)

E. M. Forster, *Maurice*, Part One

**Sept. 20 Same-Sex Love before “Homosexuality”**

Read: E. M. Forster, *Maurice*, Part Two

Plato, from *Symposium* (*Ode to Boy*, pp. 41-47)

Mary E. Wilkins, “Two Friends” (handout)

**Sept. 27 Sin? Crime? Disease? Love that Dare Not Speak Its Name**

Read: E. M. Forster, *Maurice*, Part Three

Gertrude Stein, “Miss Furr and Miss Skeene” (*Ode to Boy*, pp. 478-83)

Sexology and Psychoanalysis (handout)

**Oct. 4 Homoeroticism across Class Boundaries**

Read: E. M. Forster, *Maurice*, Part Four

E. M. Forster, “The Story of a Panic” (*Ode to Boy*, pp. 493-511)

**Friday, Oct. 6: Short Paper 1 due in D2L**

**Oct. 11 Gay and Lesbian Lives before Stonewall**

Read: Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle*, Parts I & II

Randall Kenan, “Run, Mourner, Run” (handout)

**Oct. 18 Stonewall Riots & Gay/Lesbian Visibility**

Read: Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle*, Parts III & IV

**Oct. 25 Midterm Exam**

(After the exam we will probably watch a film.)

**Nov. 1 Gender as Performance**

Read: Kim Fu, *For Today I Am a Boy*, Chapters I-V

A. M. Homes, “A Real Doll” (handout)

**Nov. 8 Transgender Identities and Community Building**

Read: Kim Fu, *For Today I Am a Boy*, Chapters VI-X

Sarah Schulman, “The Penis Story” (handout) ??

Kate Bornstein, from *Gender Outlaw* (handout)

**Friday, Nov. 10: Short Paper 2 due in D2L**

**Nov. 15 Special Event: An Evening with UWSP Alum Alan Semrow**

Read: Alan Semrow, *Briefs* (Excerpts – handout)

**Nov. 22** **NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVIING!**

**Nov. 29 Generational Differences: Changes and Continuities**

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

**Dec. 6 Queer Theory and Activism**

Readings will be announced later.

**Friday, Dec. 8: Short Paper 3 due in D2L**

**Dec. 13 Tell Me Something I Don't Know: Group Presentations**

**Dec. 20, 7:15 p.m. Final exam & celebration!**

*“Education is an admirable thing. But it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.”* – Oscar Wilde

(My interpretation: Teaching is about facilitating *your* active learning. You should not be passive recipients of teachers’ efforts. Take advantage of the opportunity and *you* make the most of it!)