SYLLABUS – THEATRE TOPICS: QUEER PERFORMANCE

Instructor: Dr. Inga Meier
Email: meieri@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: T, TH 12:30pm-2:30pm, W 4:00-5:00 pm, + By Appointment
Office Location: GFA 222
Mailbox: GFA 212B

Semester: Fall 2019
Course Number: 471.002
Meeting Time: M, W 1:00 pm-2:15 pm
Meeting Room: GFA 300

I. Course Description

This course takes as its premise that the term “queer” is not fixed, but constantly changing and evolving in its efforts to encompass multivalent identities, both in relation to one another and in relation to heteronormativity. As such, we will be exploring the range and genealogies of queerness in a variety of political, social, and cultural contexts. Further, this course construes “performance” broadly, including theatre, fashion, film, photography, and music. Themes, concepts, and moments that will be addressed include, but are not limited to: “camp”, cross-gender casting, drag, hate crimes, “lesbian death syndrome”, activism, and the AIDS crisis. Above all, this class will be framed as a series of questions: What is queerness? Is it an identity or action? How does queerness intersect with race, class, and gender? What constitutes queer performance? Where, when, for whom, and by whom is queer performance staged? Is queer performance inherently radical?

II. Course Objectives

Program Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will have achieved mastery of the following Program Learning Outcomes as identified by the School of Theatre:

- The student will be able to analyze a script in ways that are necessary to a theatre practitioner or scholar/critic. (All degree plans.)
- The student will be able to form and articulate a critical analysis and evaluation of a work of theatre. (BA, BA with Teacher Certification.)
- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the component areas of theatrical creation, process, production, performance, and study, and their interrelationships. (All degree plans.)

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and discuss the salient differences and relationships between various modes of cultural production including film, theatre, and photography.

1 You may refer to me as “Inga,” “Dr. Meier,” or “Ms. Meier.” Please do not refer to me as “Prof,” “Professor Inga,” or “Doctor Inga.” If you insist on doing so, I ask that you follow this awkward wording with an acceptable title (e.g. “Yellow-Haired Warrior” or “Mother of Dragons”).
2 Emails are NOT an instantaneous form of communication. In other words, please do not send me an email 20 minutes before class and then approach me in class, asking if I received your email. On average, expect a 24-hour turnaround time, which may be longer on weekends and holidays. Also, emails sent through D2L will NOT be answered. Please use only the SFA address.
3 There is a sign up sheet for 15-minute slots on my door. If you wish to meet with me, please sign up. As long as you sign up in advance, you need not email me to inform me that you will be coming to office hours. If you are not available during office hours due to co-curricular conflicts, you may make an appointment outside of regular office hours, which we can set up after class or over email. In other words, please don’t tell me, “I didn’t meet with you because I had class during your office hours.”
- Evaluate and apply a variety of critical and theoretical approaches to the study of queer performance.
- Critically analyze and comprehend significant methodologies, histories, and language related to queer performance and theory
- Demonstrate familiarity with a range of queer performance modalities.

### III. Texts + Materials

- *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son (DPS, 1999) ISBN: 9780822217312

The books are available at the campus Barnes and Noble in the student center. It has not been ordered through other bookstores. You may procure the book however you choose (campus bookstore, online, textbook rental, locally owned bookstores, sharing with a friend, etc.). However, it is your responsibility to have completed the required reading by the due date.

### IV. Class Procedures and Policies

**School of Theatre Attendance Policy:** A career in the fine arts demands dedication and discipline; preparation for this career (or any career, for that matter) requires conscientious development of effective work habits. To this end, regular and punctual attendance is expected for all classes, laboratories and other activities for which a student is registered or assigned.

**Further:**

- It is University policy to excuse students from class attendance for certain reasons related to health, family emergencies, or student participation in approved university-sponsored events. Excused absences from theatre classes will only be granted upon presentation of written documentation from the teacher, sponsor, or physician involved upon the first day of the student’s return. In the case of absences caused by university-sponsored events, inclusion in the university's public listing of such absences will constitute an official excuse. **It is the student's responsibility** to inform the instructor that he/she has scheduled the planned official absence, in advance when possible.
- Students missing classes, other than university-sponsored trips, may contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) and request that an absence notification be sent to the instructor(s). The notification is not an excuse, and is not evaluated by OSRR. The notification is only provided as a courtesy to the student and the student's instructor(s). Students remain responsible for providing documentation in a timely manner to the instructor for each absence. The instructor determines whether such documentation is satisfactory.
- In the case of missed classes, you will be held responsible for the successful completion of assigned work and/or projects. **It is your responsibility to seek out the materials and**
information you missed, including lecture notes, screenings, and announcements. “I didn’t know” will not be considered an excuse.

- A total of 8 excused and/or unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade.
- Unexcused absences above 2 will result in a deduction of 10 points each off the participation grade (1% each off the final grade).
- Arriving to class after attendance has been completed or leaving prior to the end of class will be considered ½ an absence (which counts towards the maximum allowed of 7) and will be deducted from your grade accordingly. If you are consistently arriving from another class at the other end of campus, please inform me of this on the first day of class, so I can provide you with a 5-minute allowance.
- If at any point in the semester, you wish to know where you are at in terms of attendance, please approach me before or after class, during office hours, or email me.
- It is your responsibility to be aware of both the attendance policy and your attendance count.

V. Requirements

This is an upper level university course, taken mostly by theatre majors. It involves a good deal of reading. Expect to spend 2-3 hours of work outside class for every hour in class. Part of the expectation of this course is that your writing level be appropriate to a university-level course in the humanities. If you are not confident regarding your writing ability, make arrangements now to take advantage of the university’s various writing assistance programs. Start with the Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) on the first floor of Steen Library.

Research Paper: The central project for the duration of the semester will be a 15 page research paper on a topic of your choosing related to material covered in class. The actual writing process will be divided into multiple steps with separate due dates: topic / proposal, abstract, initial bibliography, annotated bibliography, rough draft and final draft. Your final grade for the paper will not be based solely on your final draft, but rather be determined by the accumulation of points via successful completion of the individual portions. The breakdown of these portions is as follows:

- topic / proposal: 25 points
- abstract: 50 points
- initial bibliography: 75 points
- annotated bibliography: 75 points
- rough draft: 100 points
- final draft: 175 points

In other words, you will be working on this project for the entirety of the semester and its grading will be calculated accordingly. (In other words, you won’t be able to pull an all-nighter the day before the paper is due.) Due dates are final dates by which you may hand in the necessary portion of the paper. A late penalty of 5 points will be applied for every day that a component is late. (Exceptions may be made in particular cases in accordance with the attendance policy.) You may however, hand in any portions earlier (and I encourage you to do so.) Further, you may hand in a revision of any portion (with the exception of the final draft, for which a revision will not be allowed) with the necessary adjustments at any point prior to the due date for the next portion or ask for additional feedback at any point during the process. Please note that if one of the components you hand in does not meet the minimum requirements for that component, you will forfeit the right to improve your grade through revision for that component. (For example, if your abstract is required to be 350 words and you hand in 100 words, you will not only receive a low grade for that component, but you will also not be allowed to improve upon that grade for
revision.) Should you perform a revision, and should your revision reflect actual improvement, I will re-grade that particular portion.

500 points

Discussion Questions: Each week you will be expected to respond to discussion questions following the guidelines on D2L by noon of that Friday. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure analysis and discussion beyond the limitations of our meetings. You will not be able to respond to discussion questions after the deadline. Once you have posted your response, you will be expected to engage at least two of your classmates’ responses, beyond those to your own post. The initial post should consist of at least 500 words addressing your critical responses to that week’s material. Subsequent responses should be at least 100 words each and must be posted by Sunday at noon. There are a total of 11 discussion questions. To allow for the fact that you may be sick one week, you are only accountable for 10. However, no allowances will be made beyond that. Conversely, if you do all 11, you may use the opportunity as extra credit. No other extra credit will be offered.

10 discussions x 40 points each = 400 points

Participation / Effort: You are expected to come to class prepared and to be fully engaged during class discussions. This means that you are both physically and mentally present. As long as you meet both of these conditions, you will receive the full 100 points. However, absences (as outlined under the attendance policy) and disruptive behavior will lead to deductions.

100 points

(Please note: more extensive guidelines for each component will be provided in class and on D2L, over the course of the semester. It is your responsibility to remain aware of deadlines.)

VI. Grading Policies

Grading Scale:

Final Grades are assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>800-899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>less than 600</td>
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Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54): Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
VII. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This class engages material covering a diverse range of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, and disability. While I encourage you to formulate and express your thoughts and opinions throughout the semester, discriminatory remarks will not be tolerated and may constitute disruptive behavior under the student code of conduct.

VIII. Academic Integrity

**Academic dishonesty** includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student_academic_dishonesty.pdf.

You are expected to be in **full** compliance with both the SFA policy and the School of Theatre policy:

**SFA policy:** Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**School of Theatre policy:** The School of Theatre expects students to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Misrepresenting someone else's work as your own or knowingly allowing someone else to represent your work as his/hers constitutes academic dishonesty. Such behavior is antithetical to our work as scholars, as artists, and as members of a community founded on trust and mutual respect. It is an insult to faculty and an affront to honest students. Penalties for academic dishonesty may range from failure of a specific project to failure of the course, suspension from the production season for up to one year, and referral to university authorities for further action, which may include suspension or expulsion from the university.

**Please Note:** You are expected to be familiar with and able to demonstrate proper procedures for citations (including in text), following either MLA or Chicago Style guidelines, both of which are available online. Failure to cite sources is a form of academic dishonesty and will be treated accordingly. Further, turning in an assignment that you have turned in elsewhere is considered self-plagiarism and will be considered a form of academic dishonesty. I will trust that you are invested in your own education and will not cheat. However, this trust should not be confused for a lack of vigilance on my part. If you are caught, I will consider it a violation of personal trust and will not hesitate to penalize you to the fullest extent possible. I guarantee that the penalty you may incur for a late assignment will be less than the penalty for academic dishonesty.

IX. Student Code of Conduct

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or
other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Please note: Cell phone use during class is highly distracting, both to me, and the classmates seated behind you. It is also rude. I have teacher eyes and can see you, even when you think you are staging a covert operation by placing the phone on your lap, and even if you are seated in the last row. I will not waste class time policing your cell phone habits. Please do not mistake this for the acceptability of such behavior. Similarly, I will not waste time repeating material because you were busy checking Facebook the first time the material was covered. However, I will deduct points from your participation grade for cell phone use at the end of the semester.

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X. Concealed Carry

The law states that any institution of higher learning “… may not adopt any rule, regulation, or other provision prohibiting license holders from carrying handguns on the campus of the institution.” As such, I cannot ban lethal weapons in the classroom, since none of our department’s spaces have been approved for any kind of prohibition. However, I request that you use your best judgment and consider the importance of preserving a safe classroom environment for all students, in accordance with the student code of conduct, which remains in effect. If you are licensed to carry a handgun and choose to do so on campus, it is requested that you consider refraining from doing so in the classroom. Should you choose to carry, your weapon must be concealed and in your possession (on your body or secured in a backpack or other type of bag) at all times. Should your weapon be visible at any time, you may be referred to campus security and your grade may be affected.
XI. Additional Information

If you have a disability: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities MUST contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Religious observance: If your observance of a religious holiday will prevent you from attending class, please contact me immediately so we can make appropriate arrangements.

XII. Course Outline (Subject to Change!)4

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASS TOPIC</th>
<th>READING DUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>WK 1: INTRODUCTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MON, 9/2</td>
<td>Introduction and Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED, 9/4</td>
<td>What’s in a Name?: Pronouns and Identities</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>WK 2: CAMP</strong></td>
<td>“Notes on Camp” PDF</td>
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<tr>
<td>MON, 9/9</td>
<td>“Notes on Camp”</td>
<td>“Notes on Camp” PDF</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED, 9/11</td>
<td>The Met Gala</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRI, 9/13</td>
<td>Noon: <em><strong>Discussion Post 1 Due</strong></em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SUN, 9/15</td>
<td>Noon: <em><strong>Discussion Responses 1 Due</strong></em></td>
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<td><strong>WK 3: GENDER PERFORMANCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>WED, 9/18</td>
<td>Cloud Nine</td>
<td>Cloud Nine</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em><strong>TOPIC / PROPOSAL DUE</strong></em></td>
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<tr>
<td>FRI, 9/20</td>
<td>Noon: <em><strong>Discussion Post 2 Due</strong></em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SUN, 9/22</td>
<td>Noon: <em><strong>Discussion Responses 2 Due</strong></em></td>
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<td><strong>WK 4: DRAG / TRANSGENDERISM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>MON, 9/23</td>
<td>Screening: Paris is Burning (Livingston, 1991)</td>
<td>QS, 464-487</td>
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<tr>
<td>WED, 9/25</td>
<td>RuPaul’s Drag Race / “You’ve Got to Calm Down”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4 Due to a variety of circumstances, the course outline may change. This may include changes to the screening titles and changes to dates on which certain topics are covered or reading is due. It is your responsibility to remain abreast of any changes to the course outline.
FRI, 9/27  Noon: ***Discussion Post 3 Due***
SUN, 9/29  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 3 Due***

**WK 5: AIDS PT. 1**

MON, 9/30  Screening: *And the Band Played On* (Spottiswoode, 1993)  “Silence = Death” (PDF)
WED, 10/2  Screening: *And the Band Played On* (cont’d)  Spottiswoode, 1993  ***ABSTRACT DUE***
FRI, 10/4  Noon: ***Discussion Post 4 Due***
SUN, 10/6  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 4 Due***

**WK 6: AIDS PT. 2**

MON, 10/7  *The Baltimore Waltz*  *The Baltimore Waltz*  QSR, 373-397
WED, 10/9  *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*  *Angels in America*  ***INITIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE***
FRI, 10/11 Noon: ***Discussion Post 5 Due***
SUN, 10/13 Noon: ***Discussion Responses 5 Due***

**WK 7: HATE CRIMES**

MON, 10/14  *Stop Kiss*  *Stop Kiss*
WED, 10/16  *The Laramie Project*  *The Laramie Project*  “The Humboldt Murders”  (PDF)
FRI, 10/18 Noon: ***Discussion Post 6 Due***
SUN, 10/20 Noon: ***Discussion Responses 6 Due***

**WK 8: MEMORIALIZATION**

MON, 10/21  Queer Museums  Reading TBD
WED, 10/23  AIDS Quilt, Pulse Memorial, and others  Reading TBD  ***ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE***
FRI, 10/25 Noon: ***Discussion Post 7 Due***
SUN, 10/27 Noon: ***Discussion Responses 7 Due***
**WK 9: COMING OUT**

MON, 10/28  Screening: *Ellen* – “The Puppy Episode”  
“Twenty Years After…” (PDF)

WED, 10/30  *Fun Home*  
Fun Home (both versions)

FRI, 11/1  Noon: ***Discussion Post 8 Due***

SUN, 11/3  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 8 Due***

**WK 10: NARRATIVE AUTHORITY**

MON, 11/4  At-Home Screening: *Bohemian Rhapsody*  
*QSR*, 422-441

***ROUGH DRAFT DUE***

WED, 11/6  At-Home Screening: *Rocketman* (Fletcher, 19)

FRI, 11/8  Noon: ***Discussion Post 9 Due***

SUN, 11/10  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 9 Due***

**WEEK 11: ACTIVISM**

MON, 11/11  Stonewall, ACT UP, and others  
*QSR*, 74-95,

WED, 11/13  Angel Network and others  
Reading TBD

FRI, 11/15  Noon: ***Discussion Post 10 Due***

SUN, 11/17  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 10 Due***

**WEEK 12: FAMILY MATTERS**

MON, 11/18  *The Argonauts*  
*The Argonauts*  
*QSR*, 96-118

WED, 11/20  *Hir*  
*Hir*

FRI, 11/22  Noon: ***Discussion Post 11 Due***

SUN, 11/24  Noon: ***Discussion Responses 11 Due***

MON, 11/25  ***NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK***

WED, 11/27  ***NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK***

**WEEK 13: QUESTIONS**

MON, 12/2  Straight Allies  
Reading TBD

WED, 12/4  Summaries  
***FINAL DRAFT DUE***