

The University of Texas at Austin – Department of Anthropology

Summer 2021

ANT S324L 45 / WGS S340 58-QUEER ETHNOGRAPHIES-Web-Based

Unique	Day	Time
79360 / 84065	M. T. W. TH. F.	10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Instructor: Sofian Merabet

Email: sofian.merabet@austin.utexas.edu

Office Hours on Zoom and by appointment

SYLLABUS:

This syllabus is a detailed description of course activities and expectations. Please read this syllabus carefully, including the sections at the end on University Policies and Resources. Be sure to bring any questions you may have to class or office hours as early in the session as possible.

Course Description:

This upper-level undergraduate writing course deals with the anthropological analysis of queer gender and sexuality. Its aim is to critically evaluate formative concepts and theories that have been subject to recent debates within Anthropology, Gender Studies, and Queer Theory. Through the reading of a variety of ethnographies, we will partly explore how terms such as “women” and “men,” “femininity” and “masculinity,” as well as “non-binary identities,” “queer sexualities,” and “transness” structure people’s experiences, and also how culturally specific terminologies inform sexual identity formations in their various translations across the globe. In this vein, the course focuses on local-level social and cultural processes that challenge a wide range of heteronormativities within a regional and global framework. The basic theme of the material for this course concerns the extent to which both realities and the ways in which they are perceived are in part socio-cultural constructs that are subject to constant change. The course will include open lectures by the instructor that students are welcome to interrupt with questions and comments, and general and small class discussions among students that are based on the assigned readings.

This course carries the **Writing Flag**. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write and, if need be, re-write regularly during the session and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to go to the **University Writing Center**, and you will be asked to read and discuss your peers’ work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Because students fulfill three hours of their Core Communication requirement with a Writing Flag course, courses flagged for writing address the following new “core objectives”:
Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. **Communication Skills:** to include effective

development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. **Teamwork:** to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. **Personal Responsibility:** to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Most Important Aspects of Content Mastery and Disciplinary Awareness:

- Writer shows increasing confidence in scholarly debate, approaching problems in the field creatively, interrogating and expanding disciplinary boundaries.
- Writing demonstrates some/increasing ability to apply personal experience in constructing disciplinary arguments. Experiences introduced in the writing are relevant and involve adequate reflection, as appropriate for ethnographic or participant observer inquiry.
- Writing engages with the course texts in a substantive way, demonstrating understanding of key concepts, and offering critical responses.
- Writer demonstrates growing confidence in vocabulary; disciplinary terms are the subject of critical engagement and some risks are taken to expand the language of the discipline and explore new ways of seeing.
- Writer shows an increased awareness of global and cross-cultural approaches to the course material.

Facility with college-level writing:

- Argumentation, claims and reasons are logical and grounded in experience and evidence. The writer extrapolates/infers/draws conclusions in ways that are logical and appropriate to disciplinary custom—understanding also that Anthropology as a discipline is concerned with scrutinizing received meanings.
- Key terms such as “women/men,” “femininity/masculinity,” “non-binary identities,” “homosexuality/heterosexuality/bisexuality/transness,” etc., are used appropriately in the disciplinary context. The writer is also willing to reimagine the use of disciplinary terms, and experiment with terminology that may bring new perspectives to the discipline.
- The writer is able to select noteworthy elements of gender and identity to discuss, and provides context to explain why they are focusing on one element or another. When appropriate, the writer conveys a sense of why these points were chosen to discuss, and why they are interesting and relevant.
- Writer demonstrates increased accuracy, clarity, and confidence in their summaries of others’ work, and as the semester progresses, makes connections with previous readings.
- Description and discussion are increasingly relevant and productive. There is less repetition of ideas and more forward movement; details are well-chosen, illustrative, and helpful to the reader’s comprehension.
- Increasing control of vocabulary over time; ideally, language also exhibits elasticity, pushing the boundaries of disciplinary terms in creative ways. Extraneous or incorrectly used words are reduced in frequency.

Required Texts: (in alphabetical order)

Books (ordered at the *University Co-op*, www.universitycoop.com, 2246 Guadalupe St, Austin, (512) 476-7211):

1. Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures & Technologies in Movement*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.
2. Jen Jack Giesecking, *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*: New York: NYU Press, 2020.
3. José Esteban Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.
4. Evren Savci, *Queer in Translation: Sexual Politics under Neoliberal Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.
5. Ricky Varghese, *Raw: PrEP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking*, Regina/New York: University of Regina Press/NYU Press/Zed Books, 2019. (**Recommended Reading:** Tim Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

Course Requirements for Registered Students:

The class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. It will be run primarily as general discussions with lectures based on the assigned readings. In order for the course to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed, have their posts on Canvas (see below for details), and be ready for in-depth discussion before each class. Regular **attendance on Zoom is required in this synchronous class**. While class is in session, your **camera needs to be turned on**. *Mere Zoom attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation and a turned-off camera is not accepted.*

For class, you must have read carefully all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes during class Zoom sessions on themes, key terms, and debates we discuss. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your response papers. In short:

- Attend all classes.

- Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in class.
- **Post on Canvas (under “Discussions”)** the day before we meet a paragraph based on your reactions to the assigned readings followed by one question you want to be answered during class. These posts are intended to launch the general discussions.
- Three Take-Home Exams to be uploaded on Canvas under “Assignments” **before class on Wednesday, July 21st, Wednesday, July 28th, and Wednesday, August 4th** [the assignment should be exactly 3 full pages of text (Microsoft Word, double-spaced/12 points)], plus one cover page indicating your name and the prompt question. The prompt will be posted on Canvas and sent to you via email the Friday before it is due and will cover a theoretical question based on the assigned readings.
- One Two-page reflection paper based on your personal experiences with the class. What motivated you to take it? What have you learned? The paper is to be posted on Canvas before class on **Thursday, August 13th**.

Throughout the term, we will have three **“Checking-in” Sessions** and one **“Checking-out” Session** that will coincide with the days the written assignments are due. These sessions are intended to assess our individual and collective whereabouts in the class and discuss some encountered challenges in and outside the virtual classroom.

The **three papers** are designed to develop critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of thought, ability to synthesize readings and class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it. **A virtual visit to the [University Writing Center](#) is *highly encouraged!* Students who consult with the Writing Center and have the instructor officially notified by email will earn additional 2 points on their respective papers (*Make sure to sign up for a consultation with the UWC ahead of time!*).**

To sum up:

Style, organization, and citation:

- Overall style is clear and precise, avoiding vagueness, overly generic and unsupported claims. Wordiness and excessive jargon are avoided. Experimental uses of language do not impede reader comprehension. Grammar, mechanics, and syntax actively assist the reader to understand complex ideas in the writing.
- Tone is appropriate for a college-level audience.
- Paper follows a logical format from start to finish, with no extraneous sections, no conspicuous gaps, and with ideas presented in an order that is logical and facilitates the reader's progress through them.
- At the paragraph level, the writer provides a controlling idea/topic sentence, around which the paragraph is organized.
- Introductions provide readers an entrance to the project, preparing them for what the writer will cover.
- Conclusions provide summation and connections.
- All text is carefully edited and proofread, and the paper is neatly formatted.

- In-text citations are appropriate to the disciplinary style. They actively assist the reader in following the professional controversy being written about. Attributive tags and framing allow the writer's voice and ideas to be easily distinguished from those of outside sources.
- Quoted material is quoted exactly or, if elided/altereD, appropriate bracketing and notes make these changes clear.
- Paraphrased material is also correctly cited and is paraphrased accurately, without altering the original meaning of the source.
- The number and variety of sources reflect a solid research effort, which may take an ethnographic or participant-observer approach.

The Student Honor Code states: "As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity."

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

This course is graded on a scale that includes pluses and minuses. Success in the course depends on timely completion of the reading and writing assignments; attentive, active and respectful participation in class discussions; and thoughtful consideration of the issues considered in the course. The final letter grade will be based on the components listed below.

- Regular attendance/participation/Canvas Posts: 30%
- 3 individual response papers: 60% (20% each)
- Final individual reflection paper: 10%

Grading Distribution (Letter Grade: Points):

A: 100-95 A-: 94-90 B+: 89-87 B: 86-83 B-: 82-80 C+: 79-77 C: 76-73
C-: 72-70 D+: 69-67 D: 66-63 D-: 62-60 F: 59 and below.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

This schedule is subject to change and possible revision if necessary to meet learning objectives, although due dates for assignments will not change. You are responsible for any changes posted on the Canvas website at <https://utexas.instructure.com>. Be sure to check both Canvas and your email regularly so that you are aware of any course announcements.

Week 1:

- Monday, July 12th Introduction and Orientation
- Tuesday, July 13th “1. The Brown Commons” and “2. Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s *The Sweetest Hangover (and Other STD’s)*” in José Esteban Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 1-23.
- Wednesday, July 14th “3. The Onus of Seeing Cuba: Nilo Cruz’s *Cubanía*,” “4. Meandering South: Isaac Julien and *The Long Road to Mazatlán*,” and “5. ‘Chico, What Does It Feel Like to Be a Problem?’: The Transmission of Brownness” in José Esteban Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 24-46.
- Thursday, July 15th “6. The Vulnerability Artist: Nao Bustamante and the Sad Beauty of Reparation” and “7. Queer Theater, Queer Theory: Luis Alfaro’s *Cuerpo Politizado*” in José Esteban Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 47-77.
- Friday, July 16th “8. Performing the Bestiary: Carmelita Tropicana’s *With What Ass Does the Cockroach Sit?/Con Qué Culo se Sienta la Cucaracha?*” and “9. Performing Greater Cuba: Tania Bruguera and the Burden of Guilt” José Esteban Muñoz, *The Sense of Brown*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2020, pp. 78-99.

Week 2:

- Monday, July 19th “ONE. Cultures: Performing Racial Trans Senses” in Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures & Technologies in Movement*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019, pp. 30-58.
- Tuesday, July 20th “TWO. Networks: TRANScoding Biogenetics and Orgasm in the Transnational Digital Economy” in Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures & Technologies in Movement*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019, pp. 59-75.
- Wednesday, July 21st **“Check-in Session” and First Take-Home Exam due!**
- Thursday, July 22nd “THREE. Memory: The Times and Territories of Trans Woman of Color Becoming” in Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures & Technologies in Movement*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019, pp. 76-100.

- Friday, July 23rd "FOUR. Movement: Trans and Gender Nonconforming Digital Activisms and U.S. Transnational Empire" in Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures & Technologies in Movement*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2019, pp. 101-134.

Week 3:

- Monday, July 26th "1. Subjects of Rights and Subjects of Cruelty" in Evren Savci, *Queer in Translation: Sexual Politics under Neoliberal Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 29-52.
- Tuesday, July 27th "2. Who Killed Ahmet Yıldız?" in Evren Savci, *Queer in Translation: Sexual Politics under Neoliberal Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 53-79.
- Wednesday, July 28th **"Check-in Session" and Second Take-Home Exam due!**
- Thursday, July 29th "3. Trans Terror, Deep Citizenship, and the Politics of Hate" in Evren Savci, *Queer in Translation: Sexual Politics under Neoliberal Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 80-108.
- Friday, July 30th "4. Critique and Commons under Neoliberal Islam" in Evren Savci, *Queer in Translation: Sexual Politics under Neoliberal Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021, pp. 109-141.

Week 4:

- Monday, August 2nd "1. Is the Foreskin a Grave?—Jonathan A. Allan" in Ricky Varghese, *Raw: PrEP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking*, Regina/New York: University of Regina Press/NYU Press/Zed Books, 2019, pp. 3-26.
- Tuesday, August 3rd "2. HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), 'The Truvada Whore,' and the New Gay Sexual Revolution—Octavio R. González" in Ricky Varghese, *Raw: PrEP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking*, Regina/New York: University of Regina Press/NYU Press/Zed Books, 2019, pp. 27-48.
- Wednesday, August 4th **"Check-in Session" and Third Take-Home Exam due!**
- Thursday, August 5th "3. Heterosexuality, Men, and Narratives of Virility and Virality—Frank G. Karioris" in Ricky Varghese, *Raw: PrEP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking*, Regina/New York:

University of Regina Press/NYU Press/Zed Books, 2019, pp. 49-68.

- Friday, August 6th "4. Black Cumjoy: Pleasure and a Racist Virus—*Rinaldo Walcott*" in Ricky Varghese, *Raw: PrEP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking*, Regina/New York: University of Regina Press/NYU Press/Zed Books, 2019, pp. 71-89.

Week 5:

- Monday, August 9th "1. Navigating A *Queer New York*" in Jen Jack Giesecking, *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*: New York: NYU Press, 2020, pp. 1-46.
- Tuesday, August 10th "2. Belonging in Greenwich Village and Gay Manhattan" in Jen Jack Giesecking, *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*: New York: NYU Press, 2020, pp. 47-98.
- Wednesday, August 11th "5. Constellating a Queer Map of the Lesbian City" in Jen Jack Giesecking, *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*: New York: NYU Press, 2020, pp. 197-232.
- Thursday, August 12th "**Check-out Session**" *and Reflection paper due!*

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS CLASS:

COVID-19 Update: You are encouraged to stay up-to-date on the latest news as related to

the student experience. <https://coronavirus.utexas.edu/students>

“Keep Learning” Resources

This course may be offered in a format to which you are unaccustomed. If you are looking for ideas and strategies to help you feel more comfortable participating in our class, please explore the resources available here: <https://onestop.utexas.edu/keep-learning/>

Zoom Etiquette

- Be mindful of your surroundings when on camera. We want to make sure we avoid as much distraction as possible.
- Mute yourself unless you are speaking. This will cut down on background noise and limit any distractions.
- Use the “raise hand” button to indicate a desire to speak.
- Use the chat only to initiate or participate in classroom-related discussions.
- You can turn off your camera if you need to leave the meeting temporarily.
- If the video or audio is choppy, try turning off your video. Please try to use reliable WiFi.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University’s Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings

There are no class recordings in this class.

Communicating with the Professor

It is important that you remain in good communication with the instructor. Please attend office hours during the semester. It is important to inform the instructor personally or by Canvas email if illness, an emergency, a disability, or an unavoidable conflict is affecting your work in this course.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are **learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility**. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through **integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community**.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT Austin. Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources.

Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code which can be found at the following web address: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsconduct.php>

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

University E-mail

It is your responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in your e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily.

FURTHER UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Services for Students with Disabilities

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. For more information, visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by following public health recommendations.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support:

<http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html>

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are

welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center’s classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc>.

The University Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Libraries: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Instructional Technology Services: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

BeVocal

BeVocal is a university-wide initiative to promote the idea that individual students have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm. At UT Austin, all students have the power to intervene and reduce harm. To learn more about BeVocal and how you can help to build a culture of care on campus, go to: <https://wellnessnetwork.utexas.edu/BeVocal>.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Behavior Concerns Advice Line

If you have warranted concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn’t feel right – it probably isn’t. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university’s [relevant policies](https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/) (<https://titleix.utexas.edu/relevant-policies/>).

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. **I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one.** Before talking with me,

or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit <http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/>, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.