

The University of Texas at Austin – Department of Anthropology

Fall 2019

ANT 324L 45 and WGS 340 58 QUEER ETHNOGRAPHIES

Unique	Day	Time	Location
31130 44840	TTH	11:00 - 12:30	SAC 4.118

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Office Hours in SAC 5.156: Thursday 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. or by appointment

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 from the Americas and the Asian Diasporas, we will partly explore how terms like “women” and “men,” “femininity” and “masculinity,” as well as “homosexuality,” “heterosexuality,” “bisexuality,” and “transsexuality” structure people’s experiences, but also how local terminologies inform sexual identity formations around 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 socio-cultural constructs that are subject to constant change. Next to regular class discussions based on the assigned readings, students will benefit from a guided tour of the art exhibit “Jeffrey Gibson: This Is the Day” at the Blanton Museum, visit the University Gender and Sexuality Center as well as the Benson Latin American Collection and the Perry-Castañeda Library. Exceptionally, this semester, the class will welcome artist Sean Dorsey for an in-class conversation on dance and transsexuality. This conversation will be followed by a performance of *Boys in Trouble* at the McCullough Theatre.

This course carries the **Writing Flag**. Throughout the semester, the class will closely work with the **Center for the Skills & Experience Flags** along with the **University Writing Center (UWC)**. This collaboration will include a class visit of a staff member of the UWC. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write and 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 may 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," "homosexuality/heterosexuality/bisexuality/transsexuality," 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/Audio-Visuals: (in alphabetical order)

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

Gutiérrez, Laura G. (2010) *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Ochoa, Marcia (2014) *Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*. Durham: Duke University Press.

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

Weiss, Margot D. (2011) *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Gopinath, Gayatri (2018) *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Film Screening:

- *Bad Hair* (2013) *Pelo malo* (original title) 1h 33min

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 some lectures based on the assigned reading. In order for the course to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion before each class. Regular attendance is required. *Mere attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation.* You must come to class having carefully read 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 in class 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.
- Regular two 10-minute presentations (by two students, based on turn-taking) on the assigned readings. The presentations are intended to launch the general seminar discussions. These presentations can be brief summaries of the materials read and should end with one or two questions the presenters want the class to engage with during the session.
- Three Take-Home Exams to be handed in during class on **Tuesday, September 24th, Tuesday, October 22nd, and Tuesday, November 12th** [the assignment should be ***exactly*** 3 full pages of text (double-spaced/12 points/Times Roman)], plus one cover page indicating your name and the prompt question. The prompt will be posted on Canvas the Thursday before it is due. It will cover a theoretical question based on the assigned readings.

THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!

- One Three-page paper based on a joint/group project that is based on observation and deals with a topic focusing on queer life on and around the UT Austin campus to be handed in during the **final week of the semester**. The Project will be first discussed with and approved by the instructor. Groups will be constituted by an average of three individuals. There is *one joint paper for each group* and every member of the group will receive the same grade.
- 10-minute presentations on the respective final group project during the last week of the semester. Every group member needs to present on one aspect of the joint project.

The **three take-home exams** 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 visit to the University Writing Center in The Perry-Castaneda Library, 101 E 21st St #2.330 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.**

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/altere d, 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."

PLAGIARISM/CHEATING:

Anyone plagiarizing and/or cheating will first be given an "F" (Fail) and a report will be forwarded to the appropriate university authorities.

Notice regarding academic dishonesty (e.g. Plagiarism)

- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
 - **University of Texas Honor Code:** Each member of the university is expected to uphold The University of Texas Honor Code through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to “plagiarize” means

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own.
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source.
- to commit literary theft.
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own.
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation.
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules).

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your readers with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

- Web site for more information:
- <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

Grading Procedure:

- Regular attendance/participation: 10%
- Regular individual presentations of the reading material: 10%
- 3 Take-Home Exams: 60% (20% each)
- Final Group Project (presentation and paper): 20%

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.

Documented Disability Statement:

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. Students need to inform the instructor and the teaching assistant(s) about their disability right at the beginning of the semester.

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.

Reading Schedule: (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

Week 1: Queer Ethnographies

- Thursday, August 29th Introduction and Orientation

Week 2:

- Tuesday, September 3rd "CHAPTER 1. Sexing Guadalupe in Transnational Double Crossings" in Gutiérrez, Laura G. (2010) *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, pp. 31-63.

- Thursday, September 5th "CHAPTER 2. Gender Parody, Political Satire, and Postmodern Rancheras : Astrid Hadad's "Heavy Nopal " Aesthetics" in Gutiérrez, Laura G. (2010) *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, pp. 64-100.

Week 3:

- Tuesday, September 10th "CHAPTER 3. Fue en un cabaret : Nation, Melodrama, Gender, and Sexuality in Contemporary Mexican Performance " in Gutiérrez, Laura G. (2010) *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, pp. 101-131.

"Writing in Process" Class visit of a staff member of the Undergraduate Writing Center | FAC 211 | 1 University Station (G3000), Austin, TX 78712-3000 | Phone: 512.471.6222

- Thursday, September 12th "CHAPTER 4. Nao Bustamante's "Bad-Girl" Aesthetics" and "CHAPTER 5. Ximena Cuevas's Critical Collages" in Gutiérrez, Laura G. (2010) *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, pp. 135-166.

Week 4:

- Tuesday, September 17th **Visit of the art exhibit “Jeffrey Gibson: This Is the Day”** (<https://blantonmuseum.org/exhibition/jeffrey-gibson-this-is-the-day/>) at **the Blanton Museum | 200 E Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Austin, TX 78701 | (512) 471-7324 (class will meet at the Blanton!)**
- Thursday, September 19th “1. *Belleza Venezolana: Media, Race, Modernity, and Nation in the Twentieth-Century Venezuelan Beauty Contest*” in Ochoa, Marcia (2014) *Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 21-58.

Week 5:

- Tuesday, September 24th “2. *La Moda Nace en Paris y Muere en Caracas: Fashion, Beauty, and Consumption on the (Trans)National*” in Ochoa, Marcia (2014) *Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 59-94.
1st Take-Home Exam to be handed in!
- Thursday, September 26th In-class **Conversation with Sean Dorsey** (students will come to class prepared with questions for our guest).
- Friday, September 27th **Dance Performance:** Trans choreographer Sean Dorsey and his company, **Sean Dorsey Dance**, will perform *Boys in Trouble* at the McCullough Theatre on Friday 27 September at 7:30 PM (<https://texasperformingarts.org/season/sean-dorsey-dance-mccullough-theatre-2019>).

Week 6:

- Tuesday, October 1st “3. *La Reina de la Noche: Performance, Sexual Subjectivity, and the Form of the Beauty Pageant in Venezuela*” in Ochoa, Marcia (2014) *Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 97-126.
- Thursday, October 3rd “4. *Pasarelas y Perolones: Transformista Mediations on Avenida Libertador in Caracas*” in Ochoa, Marcia (2014)

Queen for a Day: Transformistas, Beauty Queens, and the Performance of Femininity in Venezuela. Durham: Duke University Press., pp. 127-153.

Visit of the Gender and Sexuality Center, Student Activity Center, Room 2.112 (2201 Speedway)

Week 7:

- Tuesday, October 8th

“Interlude I. From Far Afield: A Queer Travelogue (Part I)/Chapters 1 and 2” in Gill, Lyndon K. (2018) *Erotic Islands: Art and Activism in the Queer Caribbean.* Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 19-76.

- Thursday, October 10th

“Interlude II. From Far Afield: A Queer Travelogue (Part II)/Chapters 3 and 4” in Gill, Lyndon K. (2018) *Erotic Islands: Art and Activism in the Queer Caribbean.* Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 77-125.

Week 8:

- Tuesday, October 15th

“Interlude III. From Far Afield: A Queer Travelogue (Part III)/Chapters 5 and 6” in Gill, Lyndon K. (2018) *Erotic Islands: Art and Activism in the Queer Caribbean.* Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 127-185.

- Thursday, October 17th

“Interlude IV. From Far Afield: A Queer Travelogue (Part IV) and Conclusion” in Gill, Lyndon K. (2018) *Erotic Islands: Art and Activism in the Queer Caribbean.* Durham: Duke University Press, pp 187-216.

Week 9:

- Tuesday, October 22nd

Visit of the Benson Latin American Collection in Sid Richardson Hall at 2300 Red River Street (class will meet at the Benson!)

2nd Take-Home Exam to be handed in!

- Thursday, October 24th

“1. Setting the Scene: SM Communities in the San Francisco Bay Area” in Weiss, Margot D. (2011) *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality.* Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 34-60.

Week 10:

- Tuesday, October 29th

“2. Becoming a Practitioner: Self-Mastery, Social Control, and the Biopolitics of SM” in Weiss, Margot D. (2011) *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits*

of Sexuality. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 61-100.

- Thursday, October 31st

“3. The Toy Bag: Exchange Economies and the Body at Play” in Weiss, Margot D. (2011) *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 101-142.

Week 11:

- Tuesday, November 5th

“4. Beyond Vanilla: Public Politics and Private Selves” in Weiss, Margot D. (2011) *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 143-186.

- Thursday, November 7th

Film Screening/Discussion

Bad Hair (2013) *Pelo malo* (original title) 1h 33min

Week 12:

- Tuesday, November 12th

“Chapter 1 Queer Regions: Imagining Kerala from the Diaspora” in Gopinath, Gayatri (2018) *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 19-58.

Third Take-Home Exam due!

- Thursday, November 14th

“Chapter 2 Queer Disorientations, States of Suspension” in Gopinath, Gayatri (2018) *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 59-86.

Visit of the Perry Castañeda Library (PCL 1.124)

Week 13:

- Tuesday, November 19th

“Chapter 3 Diaspora, Indigeneity, Queer Critique” in Gopinath, Gayatri (2018) *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 87-124.

- Thursday, November 21st

AAA Meeting

Week 14:

- Tuesday, November 26th

Group Project Meetings

- Thursday, November 28th

Thanksgiving

Week 15: Student Group Presentations

- Tuesday, December 3rd Final Group Project Presentations
- Thursday, December 5th Final Group Project Presentations

Paper version of the final Group Project due on Thursday, December 5th!