

FYSM 168 *Gender Outlaws: Our Culture War over Gender Identity* **Course Syllabus – Spring, 2012**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-12:00; Thursday 3:00-5:00; and by appointment.

Required Texts:

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body* (Basic Books, 2000)

Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (Alyson Books, 2003; Firebrand Books, 1993)

Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl* (Seal Press, 2007)

Various articles and book excerpts posted to OAKS <[listed in blue in reading schedule below](#)>

Course Description:

Among western cultures, Americans have been especially worried about an alleged distinction between good and bad sexual identities. Why the furor? This question will be explored through an examination of the origin of the concepts of heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality, the significance of the existence of transgendered persons, and the continuing evolution of moral & scientific attitudes in our culture concerning these concepts, relying on a broad interdisciplinary selection of academic work: historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological, and religious, together with some literary and cinematic treatments of sexual identity.

Course Requirements:

Reading Quizzes: When the spirit moves me (which will be pretty often), I will administer a short (5 minute) quiz governing issues covered in the assigned reading on the current day. I'll often include a couple of questions from the previous day's material. Each of these quizzes will consist of half a dozen multiple choice and (very) short answer questions. I will drop two quizzes (your two lowest grades, if you haven't missed two or more quizzes) at the end of the semester. Because I drop quizzes, I do not allow make-ups for missed quizzes, except *documented* medical or family emergencies. Quizzes are usually administered *at the beginning of class*. (I.e., if you show up late, you're just out of luck.)

There are four purposes for this exercise: (1) to encourage you to attend class regularly & punctually, and do the assigned reading on time; (2) to encourage you to read carefully and thoughtfully; (3) to encourage you to review what you learned after each class; (4) to reward you for taking (1) – (3) seriously. You'll get more out of the class this way, and you'll be able to participate more effectively in class discussions.

Reading Response Papers: You will be required to write *three* response papers throughout the semester. At least one must be handed in during each of the first two-thirds of the semester (marked by the exams). These are due no later than the beginning of the class during which we are discussing that particular reading. (I.e., I want the response papers *before*, not *after*, the reading in question is discussed in class. The goal of the response paper is to identify a pertinent issue raised by the reading, and to offer some kind of critical or comparative analysis of that issue. These are not intended to be lengthy. Each paper should run to about two pages, double-spaced. These exercises are to help you develop active critical reading skills, and your analytic writing skills.

Library Research Exercise: In addition, you will be required to write a short quasi-research paper during the second half of the semester (discussed below). In aid of this, you will also have a short graded library research exercise beforehand, to help you prepare for this project.

Research Paper: Using at least one, but no more than two academically respectable outside resources, compose a short critical research paper on a topic of your choice. We'll talk about what "academically respectable" means, and library data base search techniques (above exercise), before you have to embark on this project. And I will provide you with more detailed instructions about the nature of critical research papers later in the semester. This paper, due April 18th, should be roughly five double-spaced pages in length.

Exams: Three in-class essay exams (one during finals period). Dates are noted in the reading assignment calendar below. Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice & matching Qs, quotation ID short essay Qs, and a mid-length essay Q (i.e., roughly six paragraphs), with most of the weight on the quotation and essay questions. You will have some choice among the quotation and essay questions. For each exam, the focus will be on material covered since the previous exam, although there may be some comparative questions involving earlier topics. I will provide you with a set of exam study questions a week prior to each exam, and schedule an optional review session outside of our regular class hours.

Cultural Events: This requirement, which will contribute to your class participation grade below, is not really tied to the course subject matter. But an important part of college life involves taking advantage of the variety of culture opportunities you have available to you as a member of a college community. Therefore I will expect each of you to attend a minimum of three cultural events over the course of the semester, either here at the College or in town, and submit a one-page commentary on any aspect of the event that you wish. (It doesn't have to be profound; this is mainly to serve for me as evidence that you attended, and to encourage you to develop the habit of taking advantage of some of these opportunities early on.) Cultural events might include theatrical productions, concerts, art exhibits, guest lectures in any discipline, visiting performances brought to campus, etc.

Class Attendance/Class Participation: I don't take class attendance, but I do expect you to be in class regularly. (Many faculty have quite specific attendance policies.) I do notice chronic absenteeism (obvious in a class this size), and that can affect your class participation grade—doubly so, via your quiz average, if you also miss very many quizzes as a result. (Conversely, many missed quizzes also make poor attendance more obvious.) Your class participation grade will depend in part on the regularity of your attendance (broadly speaking), in part on your submitting three cultural event commentaries, and in part on my perception of how well prepared you appear to be on a day-to-day basis. My perception of your level of preparation is influenced by a variety of things, including, but not limited to, your (relevant) contributions to class discussions, the overall quality of your graded work, especially quiz performances, and my sense of your general level of attentiveness in class.

Grading:

Reading Quizzes: 10%
 Reading Response Papers: 15% (3 @ 5% each)
 Library Research Exercise: 5%
 Research Paper: 15%
 Exams: 15% each (45% total)
 Class Participation: 10%

Grading Scale:

A	91 or better	C+	75-77.9
A-	88-90.9	C	71-74.9
B+	85-87.9	C-	68-70.9
B	81-84.9	D+	65-67.9
B-	78-80.9	D	61-64.9
D-	58-60.9		

Honor Code:

The College of Charleston has an Honor Code, and you are expected to adhere to it, in this and all your courses. You can learn about its details at:

<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/index.php>

Reading Calendar (material should be read *before* class date indicated)

Gender Identity in Historical Perspective

- 1/9 *Gender Outlaws* Course Introduction: *A Florida Enchantment* (Sidney Drew, 1914)
- 1/11 <Brasell, “The Engenderment of *A Florida Enchantment*”>
<Alison Bechdel, “I.D. fixe?” & transitioning sequence>
Q for discussion: What does “Liberal Arts Education” mean to you?
(Friday 1/13 is the last day to add a course &/or drop one without a ‘W’)
- 1/16 **Martin Luther King Holiday—no class**
- 1/18 Radclyffe Hall, *Well of Loneliness*—excerpts
- 1/23 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 1, “Dueling Dualisms” (1-16, 257-267)
- 1/25 <Katz, *Invention of Heterosexuality*, Chs. 2 & 3>
- 1/30 Film discussion: *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Oliver Parker, 2002; 97 minutes)
- 2/1 Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (5-73)
- 2/6 Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (75-153)
- 2/8 Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (155-226)
- 2/13 Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (227-301)
- 2/15 **Exam #1**

Dominance of Psychological Theories about Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation

- 2/20 <Katz, *Invention of Heterosexuality*, Vidal’s Forward & Ch. 4>
- 2/22 Film Discussion: *One Nation Under God* (Rzeznik & Maniaci, 1993; 83 minutes)
<Nunan, “Catholics & Evangelical Protestants on Homoerotic Desire”>
- 2/27 Bem, “The Exotic-Becomes-Erotic Theory of Sexual Orientation”
- 2/29 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 1, “Dueling Dualisms” (16-29)
- 3/5-7 **Spring Break**
- 3/12 Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*
- 3/14 Library Research Orientation

The Conundrum of Intersexed Gender Identity

- 3/19 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 2, “That Sexe Which Prevaieth” (30-44)
(Monday, 3/19 = last day to withdraw from a full-semester course with a ‘W’ & 1st day of Fall 2012 Registration)

- 3/21 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 3, “Of Gender and Genitals” (45-66)
- 3/26 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 3, “Of Gender and Genitals” (66-77)
- 3/28 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 4, “Should There Be Only Two Sexes?” (78-95)
- 4/2 *Sexing the Body*, Ch. 4, “Should There Be Only Two Sexes?” (96-114)
- 4/4 **Exam #2**

Transgendered Identity

- 4/9 Film discussion: *Boy I Am* (Sam Feder & Julie Hollar, 2006; 72 minutes)
- 4/11 *Whipping Girl*, Intro, Trans Woman Manifesto, & Ch. 1, “Coming to Terms” (1-34)
- 4/16 Discussion of *The Crying Game* (Neil Jordan, 1992; 112 minutes)
Whipping Girl, Ch 2 & 3, “Skirt-Chasers:...Media...” & (35-52)
- 4/18 *Whipping Girl*, Chs. 3 & 4, “Before/After” & “Hormones” (53-76)
- 4/23 *Whipping Girl*, Chs. 5 & 6, “Gender Entitlement” & “Intrinsic Inclinations” (77-113)
- 04/25 **Final Exam (Wednesday, 12:00-3:00)**