

Course Information



Intro to Queer Studies (HU)

ENGL 2850-002

Fall 2025

Course Section Information

Our course is an online course.

Course Description

This course introduces students to a range of postmodern and queer theories of gender construction/sexuality as represented in literature, film, and a variety of other cultural texts. The course will begin with the history of heterosexism and question modern society's treatment of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people. This course welcomes everyone, whatever their identity.

Semester: All

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- Define and describe the evolution of cultural and literary theoretical perspectives and approaches that have developed LGBTQ+ Studies and the concept and applications of “queer” in its various forms as identity and relationship to society.
- Describe and explain key terms related to LGBTQ+ identity and experience, including sex, gender, sexual identity, and more.

- Apply course concepts (like intersectionality, queer, performativity, and more) to achieve better understanding of self and others in awareness of cultural diversity, including within queer communities.
- Examine, analyze, and critique a variety of cultural texts (literature, film, art, music, ads, digital media, etc.) and genre choices related to LGBTQ+ experience to explain the power they have in society and culture.
- Apply cultural and literary theories to critically examine and describe your evolving understanding of gender, sexuality, personal bias, power dynamics, and privilege within the contexts of literary and artistic representations of queer-ness.
- Contextualize diverse global experiences of gender, sexuality, and community to better explain the myriad of LGTBQ+ experiences and cultures in the U.S.
- Describe your own position and vision in relation to social and political action for greater equity in U.S. society.

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
8/27/25	Week 1- Discussion 1	Discussion	15
8/28/25	All Set Up in Canvas	Assignment	15
9/2/25	Week 2- Discussion 1	Discussion	15
9/4/25	Week 2- Discussion 2	Discussion	15
9/9/25	Week 3- Discussion 1	Discussion	15
9/11/25	Week 3- Discussion 2	Discussion	15

Coursework & Assignment Descriptions

A NOTE ABOUT "QUEER"

"Historically, the word queer was—and still can be—used as a pejorative term against members of the LGBT community. However, beginning in the 1960s in the wake of the LGBT rights movement, people in the community sought to reclaim the word queer as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual, non-cisgender identities. That's what the Q stands for in the acronym LGBTQ! Despite today's wide acceptance of the word queer, it is still important to recognize that not all members of the LGBTQ community identify as queer, and may still find the term offensive" --Indiana Libraries

REQUIRED TEXT

This is mostly an Open Educational Resources (OER) course, which means you do not need to purchase a textbook.

- All of the reading, watching, and listening homework can be found in the “Modules” section of our Canvas course site.

Grading Scale

94-100% = A

90-93.9%=A-

86-89.9% = B+

83-85.9%=B

80-82.9%=B-

76-79.9% = C+

73-75.9=C

70-72.9%=C-

60-69.9% = D

0-59.9% = F

Engagement Plan

- I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week.
- I will offer feedback on major assignments within 2 weeks.
- The best way to contact me is through the Canvas Inbox, as I will prioritize this method over other modes of communication.

Additional Materials

COURSE DESCRIPTION & TIME COMMITMENTS

Welcome to Intro to Queer Studies! This course provides an introduction to several cultural theories of sexuality and gender construction as explored and represented in literature, film, and other cultural texts, beginning with the history of heterosexism and questioning modern society's treatment of transgender, non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, and queer individuals and communities. This course welcomes everyone, whatever your identity.

This is a sophomore-level, three-credit-hour college class. Thus, you can expect about 4-6 hours of homework each week. NOTE: You will likely need more time for homework during weeks in which a major project is due. Please make sure that your schedule allows for the time commitment that this course will require from you.

COURSE CONTEXT

Two of the most divisive issues in modern US American culture have been gay and trans rights, specifically issues such as marriage equality, the military's former "don't ask, don't tell," gay adoption, trans individuals serving in the military, hate crimes legislation, and so forth. Such issues generate copious debate, often set up along religious or political lines without considering the questions that underpin the debate: Does gender really exist? Why are some genders privileged over others in society? How is gender decided? Biology? Psychology? Sociology? Are there only two distinct separate genders? What is the history of same-sex orientations and gender-variant/non-conforming identities? Who has the

authority to speak about these matters and how do they get that authority? Are literary and media representations of LGBTQ people accurate/helpful/harmful?

These questions are not easily answered, especially if one considers other times and other cultures. Homosexuality had an important place in ancient Greek and Roman societies, and was accepted throughout much of Japanese and Chinese history, though it was not known as "homosexuality." It flowered at certain times in early Islamic culture. Prior to European conquest of the Americas and the African continent, gender variation and same-sex behavior were widespread and accepted and tolerated. Those called "transvestites," "transsexuals," or "transgender" in the U.S. have different counterparts, representations, and terminology in other cultures: "waria" in Indonesia, "kathoey" in Thailand, "hassas" in Morocco, "bayot" in the Philippines, "kitesha" in parts of the Congo, "fa'afafine" in Samoa, "hijras" in India, and more. The "two spirit" gender in many Native American/American Indian/Indigenous cultures is not the same as transgender or non-binary. Those so identified receive varying levels of acceptance and even honor within their given cultures.

The larger point is that sexual and gender "otherness" has always existed and everywhere, but is constrained by binary (either/or) thinking in much of the world.

COURSE FOCUS

Overall, the course challenges the cultural norms of binary gender and sexual identity discourses using postmodern/post-structuralist concepts and theses. To challenge gender and sexual identity binary thinking, we will examine a variety of lenses that have been used to study/represent LGBTQ people:

- History
- Religion/Theology
- Sexology, Psychiatry, Psychology, Medicine
- Politics, Law, Judiciary
- Cultural texts/representations (literature, film, TV, music, fashion, etc.)
- Critical Cultural Theories with an emphasis on Queer Theory

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will have achieved the following course learning outcomes...

1. Define and describe the evolution of cultural and literary theoretical perspectives and approaches that have developed LGBTQ+ Studies and the concept and applications of “queer” in its various forms as identity and relationship to society.
2. Describe and explain key terms related to LGBTQ+ identity and experience, including sex, gender, sexual identity, and more.
3. Apply course concepts (like intersectionality, queer, performativity, and more) to achieve better understanding of self and others in awareness of cultural diversity, including within queer communities.
4. Examine, analyze, and critique a variety of cultural texts (literature, film, art, music, ads, digital media, etc.) and genre choices related to LGBTQ+ experience to explain the power they have in society and culture.
5. Apply cultural and literary theories to critically examine and describe your evolving understanding of gender, sexuality, personal bias, power dynamics, and privilege within the contexts of literary and artistic representations of queer-ness.
6. Contextualize the diverse global experiences of gender, sexuality, and community to better explain the myriad of LGTBQ+ experiences and cultures in the U.S.
7. Describe your own position and vision in relation to social and political action for greater equity in U.S. society.

We will take a question-posing approach to our readings, presentations, and discussions; for example:

- Why and how have heterosexual privilege and heteronormativity dominated human history?
- What exactly is queer theory and what can it do?
- How does one respond to ongoing sexual prejudice, heterosexism, and homophobia?
- Why does a culture that, on paper, believes “all Men are created equal” still allow open discrimination against some groups?

At the end of our course you should:

- Understand the history and roots of heterosexism and gender oppression in the U.S., and also in Western Culture, as well as various movements against oppression.
- Use queer theories in connection with other cultural theories to deconstruct socially constructed ideas of what constitutes “normal” sexual/gender identities as seen in cultural artifacts such as memoirs, novels, short stories, poetry, film and other media and be able to examine and critique texts to understand their power to shape societies and cultures.
- Practice critical-thinking skills both in classroom discussion and written work to understand diverse opinions and values while reevaluating and learning to support personal views.
- Understand what it means to be a gendered human and that we all embody the "other" to someone; develop the tools to express evolving understandings of personal bias and societal privilege; and critically examine ideas that could lead us towards being a more accepting, multicultural society.

COURSE CONTENT DISCLAIMER

This course is designed to expose students to a myriad of belief systems and diverse perspectives, thus, potentially challenging personal, political, and cultural values. Please be aware that challenging these values is intended to help us study important issues in context and to encourage more critical examination of our own lived experiences in connection with the lives, histories, and stories of people with whom we share this planet. We will delve into texts that contain the following content: profanities, descriptions of sex and sexuality, descriptions of various forms of violence, interrogations of gender "norms" and sexuality, making more complex our understanding of our individual and collective humanity.

I will not offer alternative materials/assignments because the histories, stories, voices, and experiences that we will engage with are part of the breadth and depth of our interrogations of gender, sexuality, and more. This intellectual experience is designed to allow us to better understand each other, ourselves, and the different experiences of gender and sexuality that comprise the complex, multicultural individualities and societies with which we identify with and/or misunderstand, or have never engaged with.

Trigger Warnings & Checking Egos

Our course materials and activities will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging issues of identity, power, privilege, inequality, and forgotten/erased American histories and experiences. As with any Diversity (DV) and Humanities (HU) course materials and activities are often political and personal. Materials and activities might trigger strong feelings and maybe even memories. You may experience feelings of frustration, empathy, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, trauma, and even boredom as part of the emotional fluidity in engaging with the course materials and activities. If you think a particular course text (video, film, reading, podcast episode) or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, email or text me early in the week so we can work through it together.

I expect everyone to engage with and participate in discussing course materials in mature and respectful ways. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read through the weekly homework requirements in advance so that you know what is coming up; watch and read all cultural theory texts; read all of the assigned literature; ask me for help if you need it; ask questions when you have them about the cultural theories or literature before you participate in discussions, assignments, etc.

Some of us will have emotional responses to the materials; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' interpretations of the materials; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree), be mindful of the ways in which our identities position us in the classroom, acknowledge that our experiences are valid but that they're not the only valid experiences that we'll be exploring and discussing in the classroom, be aware that our experiences and beliefs might be limited in scope/geography/diversity, check your egos—the literature, cultural theories, current events, cultural and pop cultural texts that ground this course invite us to step back from our egos so that we might consider the world that we share with others from different lenses and perspectives.

How to Navigate to Canvas

This course uses the Canvas course management system. All students must use Canvas to retrieve course readings, access web pages, upload

assignments, receive course announcements, and review the class section's syllabus.

General Education Information

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This course fulfills the above requirement for the General Education Program at Salt Lake Community College. It is designed not only to teach the information and skills required by the discipline, but also to develop vital workplace skills and to teach strategies and skills that can be used for life-long learning.

General Education courses teach basic skills as well as broaden a student's knowledge of a wide range of subjects. Education is much more than the acquisition of facts; it is being able to use information in meaningful ways in order to enrich one's life.

While the subject of each course is important and useful, we become truly educated through making connections of such varied information with the different methods of organizing human experience that are practiced by different disciplines. Therefore, this course, when combined with other General Education courses, will enable you to develop broader perspectives and deeper understandings of your community and the world, as well as challenge previously held assumptions about the world and its inhabitants.

Course Content Advisory

Please be advised that this course may include discussions, readings, and other content that some students might find distressing or triggering. Specifically, the course may cover topics such as:

- Violence or traumatic events
- Sensitive social and political issues
- Discussions of mental health, including depression and anxiety
- Graphic or explicit descriptions and imagery
- Any other specific content relevant to the course

Our aim is to explore these topics thoughtfully and respectfully, understanding their importance in our field of study. However, we recognize that such material can be challenging. If you have concerns about your ability to engage with certain course materials due to past experiences or personal reasons, please feel free to discuss this with me privately. We can explore alternative ways for you to engage with the material while ensuring your educational experience is not compromised.

Your well-being is important, and support services are available through the college's counseling support services should you need them.

Institutional Policies

As members of our academic community, we would like to invite you to review the Institutional Syllabus which covers important policies and procedures. This document contains important links for students on the code of student rights and responsibilities, academic integrity, and grading policies, Title IX and other important acknowledgements. By familiarizing yourself with this information, you can help us create a safe and respectful environment for everyone.

For more information, navigate to the Institutional Policies tab on the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another's work as your own. It also applies to the appropriation of a person's ideas, which you state are your own. Direct quotations and/or paraphrasing (including information taken from the Internet) must be documented. Plagiarism includes turning in a paper for which you plan to receive credit or for which you have already received credit in another course. Plagiarism is a serious breach of honesty and academic integrity; the penalties for plagiarism are serious, up to and including an "E" in this course.

Generative AI

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) software, such as ChatGPT, is a rapidly emerging tool that students may be interested in using. If doing so, SLCC students are expected to adhere to the same standards as the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities statement on plagiarism. Presenting generative AI software content as your own is a violation of academic integrity. If you use generative AI in your work, you must indicate that you have done so.

The library has created several helpful guides when using AI.

[Generative AI and Information Literacy](#)

[Generative AI and Citations](#)

Learning Support and Tutoring Services

We are pleased to offer a range of tutoring and learning support services to help you achieve your academic goals. Whether you need assistance with a specific subject or want to improve your study skills, you have many options for tutoring or other support.

To learn more about the services we offer and how to access them, visit the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page under the Tutoring and Learning Support tab. We encourage you to take advantage of these resources to help you succeed in your studies. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a tutoring session, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you in any way we can.

Online Tutoring

Students at SLCC have access to online tutoring through Canvas. From your Canvas course click Online Tutoring in the course navigation and follow the steps to set up an appointment. If this is your first time using the Online Tutoring we recommend you click "Take a Tour" to familiarize yourself with the service.

Note that students only receive 480 minutes of tutoring time each semester. After that we encourage you to use the resources found through this link:

<https://www.slcc.edu/tutoring/index.aspx>

If you have any additional questions reach out to elarningsupport@slcc.edu.

Advising and Counseling Support Services

At our institution, we are committed to supporting your academic and personal growth. That's why we offer a range of advising and counseling services to help you navigate the challenges of college life. To learn more about the resources available to you and how to access them, visit the [Institutional Syllabus](#) page under the Advising and Counseling Support Services tab. Our advising team and the support centers across campus are here to support you in achieving your goals and overcoming any obstacles you may face.

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Student Academic Calendar

As students you should be aware of all important dates in the semester, such as the day that courses begin and end, as well as the drop date and the last day to withdraw. To learn more about those dates, navigate to the Student Academic Calendar below:

[SLCC Student Academic Calendar](#)