

GENDER & WOMEN'S STUDIES 446: QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursdays, 1:00pm-2:15pm, Vilas Hall 4008

Instructor: Dr. Elaine Cannell (she/her) – cannell@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00pm-4:00pm, via Zoom; Tuesdays, 9:30am-11:30am, in person, Sterling Hall 3434; or by appointment

Canvas Course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/449044>

3 Credit Course: This intermediate-level humanities or social science course contributes to the GWS major & certificate program requirements through the race/ethnicity or sexuality issue areas, as well as the LGBTQ+ Studies certificate. The class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of classroom time for every class period. This syllabus includes further information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

QUEER OF COLOR CRITIQUE is a mode of critical inquiry that emerges from intersecting theorizations of race, gender, sexuality, nation, class, and other sites of lived experience. While queer theory and activism have previously faced charges of insufficiently reckoning with race, activism and scholarship that take up race as their primary focus have a similar history of presumed heteronormativity. Queer of color critique, a term often credited to Roderick Ferguson, resists this divide and centers the intellectual traditions of queer thinkers of color to interrogate the mutual constitution of race, gender, and sexuality. In this seminar, we will collectively grapple with some of queer of color critique's key texts, concepts, and legacies from the 1970s to the present. We will also engage media representations—including film, poetry, drama, literary fiction, and performance art—that themselves a) invent intersectional methods for reckoning with racial, sexual, national, ethnic, and gendered identity, and b) imagine alternative, more capacious forms for expressing embodiment, kinship, pleasure, and resistance.

In José Esteban Muñoz's seminal work *Cruising Utopia*, he calls for a reorientation of queer theory towards such imaginative invention. Muñoz writes, "The here and now is a prison house... we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds." This session of GWS 446 asks: what does it look like to transcend single-identity frameworks and think beyond "the prison house" of "the here and now?" At the intersection of theory, culture, and everyday life, how might queer of color critique help us both "dream and enact" a better world?

Required Texts: There is only one required text for purchase. All other texts will be provided digitally. *Sula* can be purchased at the University Bookstore or elsewhere; the listed edition is preferred but not required.

- *Sula* (1973), Toni Morrison, 2004; ISBN 9781400033430

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- apprehend the intellectual field known as "queer of color critique," including its primary interventions, lineages, methods, & recent developments.
- develop skills in reading, interpreting, and making theoretical arguments.

- cultivate intersectional understandings of racial, economic, gender, & sexual justice.
- examine the historical, theoretical, and philosophical links between seemingly disparate issues relating to heteronormativity, patriarchy, capitalism, neoliberalism, imperialism, and more.
- practice genuine interlocution, intellectual collaboration, and productive disagreement within a community of thinkers.
- apply queer of color critical analysis to a wide variety of objects from the media, the arts, and everyday life.

Regular & Substantive Interaction:

This course provides regular and substantive interaction by:

- Providing direct instruction twice weekly in seminar discussion on the scheduled and assigned weekly content.
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework throughout the semester based on the expectations of the learning activities described in this syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Participation, Engagement, Attendance, 150 points: 15%**
 - 75 points at midterm (15 point reflection + 60 point evaluation)
 - 75 points at conclusion (15 point reflection + 60 point evaluation)
- **Discussion Posts** (5 posts, 20 points each), *100 points: 10%*
- **Midterm-Exam** (passage identification, fill-in-the-blank, + short essay), *150 points: 15%*
- **Comprehensive Project:**
 - Proposal Draft (Completion) + Writing Fellow Meeting 1, *50 points: 5%*
 - Proposal, *100 points: 10%*
 - Final Essay Draft (Completion) + Writing Fellow Meeting 2, *50 points: 5%*
 - Final Essay, *250 points: 25%*
- **Final Exam** (passage identification, fill-in-the-blank, + short essay), *150 points: 15%*
- **Extra Credit #1:** Autotheory Assignment, *up to +25 points.*
- **Extra Credit #2:** Recommended Reading Reflection, *up to +25 points*

GRADING SCALE: *grades are not curved*

- 93-100% = A
- 88-92% = AB
- 83-87% = B
- 78-82% = BC
- 73-77% = C
- 68-72% = D

Final Grades (Out of 1000 Points)

930-1000 (A)	880-929 (AB)	830-879 (B)
780-829 (BC)	730-779 (C)	680-729 (D)
	Below 680 (F)	

Honors: Students pursuing an Honors degree may take this course for [Honors Optional credit](#). Students should add or drop the Honors Option by following the steps outlined on the Honors Program website as soon as possible. To earn Honors credit in this course, students will be required to complete two supplemental activities: **1)** beyond what is assigned in class, they will be required to read one additional reading from the field of queer of color critique and write a 500 word reflection (in the spirit of an extended discussion post) that summarizes the essay’s main ideas and draws at least two connections to

other course readings. Before completing this reading, students must receive instructor approval (I am also happy to offer suggestions!) on the selection; I recommend you do this before **week 4 of the semester**. The final reflection will be due **Sunday, April 6 by midnight. 2)** Honors designated students will also complete an **extended annotated bibliography** for the comprehensive project. While all students will be required to complete a 3-source annotated bibliography alongside the proposal assignment that is due between weeks 8 and 9, honors students will also submit an additional **5 sources in an annotated bibliography along with their final essays April 27th**.

COURSE POLICIES

Rules, Rights, & Responsibilities:

See: <https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#rulesrightsandresponsibilitiestext>

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances

See: <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>

Readings and Assignments

- **Course Readings:** Follow the reading schedule as it appears at the end of this document (and on Canvas); the material assigned should be read before the class meeting in which it will be discussed.
- **Assignments:** As listed above, you will sign up for 4 weekly discussion posts (+1 additional one that will be required for everyone), complete two exams, and develop a multi-part comprehensive assignment for this course. In addition to a final analytical essay that puts queer of color critical theory into conversation with an object of your choice, this scaffolded project will include a proposal with a mini annotated bibliography and several drafted components. You are required to meet with a course writing fellow for these drafts. Each of these assignments will be submitted and graded on Canvas. You can find the overview for this multi-part assignment at the end of this document and on Canvas under “Course Modules” □ “Assignments, Rubrics, and Descriptions.”
 - **You will receive additional descriptive assignment sheets and rubrics outlining my expectations for each component assignment, and we will discuss forthcoming assignments during class meetings.**
 - There is also an opportunity to receive extra credit in this class: you can find this supplemental assignment on Canvas (under “Assignments”).

Communication, Participation, & Attendance

- **Drop by my office hours.** I strongly encourage you to stop by my office hours or arrange an appointment. You can come by for any reason: to discuss course material, brainstorm assignment ideas, or even just to say hello. I am truly excited to get to know you and want to act as a resource for your success in the course. On that note:
- **Keep me informed** of concerns, questions, or issues related to this class that come up during the semester. If you are confused or struggling with any aspect of the course, communicate with me. I cannot help you succeed if you do not share your needs.
- **Attend course meetings and actively participate in discussion.**

- **150 points or 15% of your course grade will be determined by attendance, participation, and engagement.** Succeeding in this course--and understanding its difficult content--requires that you attend and engage in both small and large group discussion. Per [the participation rubric](#) (which you will have the opportunity to contribute to in the first week of class), this does not *have* to mean regularly speaking out in front of the entire group, but it does mean collaborating with your peers, taking notes, and being present.
- Together with short "exit ticket" reflections, your presence and engagement in class is worth 5 points for every class session. Students may miss up to 3 (three) class meetings for any reason without penalty. However, when you are absent, you should still notify me, come to office hours, and/or communicate with a peer about the material you miss to succeed on the exams and the comprehensive project. For every class session beyond 3 that you are absent, you will [lose points](#) from your participation and engagement grade. However, I am a human and recognize the human in you. Please communicate with me if extenuating circumstances that impact your attendance arise, and know that the extra credit opportunities in this course are a great way to make up for a few additional absences.
- Per the note below on accommodations, plans for attendance accommodations must be drafted in the first few weeks of the semester.
- **Always be respectful and considerate to your peers.** In and beyond our classroom, I expect absolute respect, kindness, and courtesy. Personal attacks, offensive language, or rudeness to your peers will not be tolerated. It is our goal to create an **inclusive** and safe learning community; we will establish shared guidelines and vocabularies for inclusivity and social and intellectual generosity. Relatedly:
- **A further note on diversity & inclusion:** In this course, we will be navigating difficult discussions on race, class, gender, sexuality, and other facets of identity as they relate to lived experience on a weekly basis. This means that as a community, we must expressly value one another's diversity and enact a daily commitment to collaboration and inclusivity in our classroom.
 - **UW Institutional statement on diversity:** "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals."
- **Use technology appropriately.** During class time, please only use technology for course-related materials and tasks. If improper use of technology becomes a repeated issue, after a first warning, you may lose participation points or be marked absent.
- **Follow university guidelines—and common sense/consideration—for health and safety.** The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing; while masks are not currently required, we will be following university policy regarding masking, prevention, and quarantining as such policy is updated. You are required to follow the guidelines as listed [here](#). Please do not come to class if you are seriously ill. Communicate with me & we can work together to ensure that your absences will not pose a threat to your success in the course.

Accessibility, Late Work, and Academic Integrity

- **Late Work:** For major assignments, in circumstances where you need an extension (which I reserve the right to grant on a case-by-case basis), please reach out a minimum 24 hours before the assignment is due to request the extension. Basically, if you are behind or struggling, COMMUNICATE! If I do **not** hear from you, you will lose 1/2 starting letter grade on the assignment for each day it is late, with a maximum of **four days** allotted before the grade is a zero. If you receive an extension, the policy starts on the new deadline. This late work policy applies to all major written assignments including:
 - Proposal Draft
 - Project Proposal
 - Final Essay Draft
 - Final Essay
- Students are responsible for communicating about missing the midterm or final exam. Barring severe illness, a missed midterm exam must be made up within one week of the exam date in Dr. Cannell's office or with Testing and Evaluation Services. A missed final exam must be made up before the grading deadline on May 12th.
- Discussion posts are meant to lay the groundwork for seminar with your initial ideas. For this reason, **discussion board posts will not be accepted late without advance notice. In other words, you should request extensions on discussion posts *before* they are due.**
- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Please meet with me within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss necessary accommodations. For example, if you have attendance accommodations, **we must make a plan for how absences will be accounted for.** Plans, of course, can change, but it is imperative that we remain in communication about them. Even if you do not have a disability documented with the [McBurney Center](#), if you need accommodations, communicate with me and I will work with you to help you succeed.
- **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism—meaning taking credit for words or ideas that are not your own or re-using work from previous classes without prior approval—will not be tolerated. It is always better to seek help and/or to ask for an extension than to plagiarize. See the university's statement on academic misconduct [here](#).
- **Note on use of AI:** ChatGPT and other AI software has particular uses in the college learning environment. However, this course considers the use of AI software to compose graded written assignments or discussion posts **academic dishonesty**. One of the key learning outcomes for this course is growing your analytical skills and expressing them through writing, a goal which hinges on you doing the writing. At its current level, it is far easier to identify AI-generated writing than you may think; further, AI often fails to account for the nuances of theoretical texts/assignments about them. If you have any questions about this, please reach out to Dr. Cannell.

Sexual Harassment & Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct

- As an instructor, scholar, and ally, I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and

sexual exploitation. UW–Madison offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual misconduct.

- If you wish to seek out free, confidential support, there are a number of [services](#) available on campus and in the community.
- If you would like to report sexual misconduct to the campus, a number of [reporting options](#) are available. In addition, each department has staff members, known as Responsible Employees, who can assist you. If you are an undergraduate student, most of the academic and career advisors you work with are designated Responsible Employees. Please note that Responsible Employees are required to report specific disclosures that you share about sexual misconduct to UW-Madison’s [Title IX Office](#). The Department of Gender & Women’s Studies has the following Responsible Employees:
 - Department Chair, Dr. Judy Houck (jahouck@wisc.edu)
 - Department Administrator, Jamie Gratrix (jamie.gratrix@wisc.edu)
 - Graduate Coordinator, Duachi Yang (duachi.yang@wisc.edu)
 - Undergraduate Advisor, Lachrista Greco (lachrista.greco@wisc.edu).

Privacy of Student Records & The Use of Audio Recorded Lectures

- Materials for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to course materials without my permission—please communicate if you need to for an accommodation. Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission.

Course Evaluations

- Students will be provided with several opportunities to evaluate this course and your learning experience, both formally and informally. In addition to 1-2 anonymous, mid-semester surveys that will track your experiences and changing needs in our course, we will also be using UW-Madison’s course evaluation survey tool called [HELIOCAMPUS](#) at the end of the semester. For this course, you will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester, notifying you that your course evaluation is available and providing a link to complete it. Your feedback is important to me and I strongly encourage you to participate in the course evaluation.

OVERVIEW: READINGS & DEADLINES

WEEK 1: (Re)Visiting Queer Theory

- **Tues, 1/21:** Class Overview & Introductions; Kyla Wazana Tompkins, excerpts from “[We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know](#),” Jennifer Miller, “[Chapter 1: Thirty Years of Queer Theory](#),” (Excerpted) from *Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies: A Cross Disciplinary Approach*
- **Thurs, 1/23:** Cathy J. Cohen, “[Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?](#)” + Susan Stryker, “[Contexts, Concepts, and Terms](#)” (excerpt) from *Transgender History*
 - **Come to class prepared to sign up for 4 discussion posts** (in addition to week 3’s)

WEEK 2: Intersectional Genealogies

- **Tues, 1/28:** The Combahee River Collective, “[The Combahee River Collective Statement](#),” Cherrie Moraga, “[La Guera](#),” Merle Woo, “[Letter to Ma](#),” Gloria Anzaldúa, “[To\(o\) Queer the Writer—Loca, escritora y chicana](#)” (pp 163-175 only) + *Introduction to [Comprehensive Assignment](#)*
- **Discussion post #1 (due by Wednesday, 1/29 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 1/30:** Audre Lorde, “[Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference](#)” & “[Poetry is Not a Luxury](#)” + Barbara Christian, “[The Race for Theory](#)”

WEEK 3: Toward a Queer Black Feminist Criticism

- **Tues, 2/4:** Toni Morrison, *Sula*, Foreword & Part 1 (through “1927”), pp xi-85
- **Discussion post #2 (due by Wednesday, 2/5 at 11:59pm)****
 - **This discussion post is required for everyone**
- **Thurs, 2/6:** *no in-person class meeting* Toni Morrison, *Sula* (“1937”-“1939), pp 89-137

WEEK 4: Toward a Queer Black Feminist Criticism II

- **Tues, 2/11:** Finish Toni Morrison, *Sula* (“1940”-end), pp 138-174; Barbara Smith, “[Toward a Black Feminist Criticism](#)” + *Introduction to Proposal Assignment*
- **Discussion post #3 (due by Wednesday, 2/12 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 2/13:** Sydney Fonteyn Lewis, “[Everything I know about being femme I learned from Sula](#)’ or [Toward a Black Femme-inist Criticism](#)”

WEEK 5: Quare and Disidentificatory Performances

- **Tues, 2/18:** José Esteban Muñoz, “[The White to Be Angry’: Vaginal Davis's Terrorist Drag](#),” + Media: Document & Video Clip: Adrian Piper, “[Mythic Being](#).” **Come to class with a tentative definition for “disidentification” in your own words.**
- **Discussion post #4 (due by Wednesday, 2/19 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 2/20:** E. Patrick Johnson, “[Quare’ Studies, or \(Almost\) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother](#)”

WEEK 6: Historicizing/Theorizing a Queer of Color Critique

This week, watch [Paris is Burning \(YouTube\)](#)

- **Tues, 2/25:** Roderick Ferguson, "[Of Our Normative Strivings](#)"
- **Discussion post #5 (due by Wednesday, 2/26 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 2/27:** Roderick Ferguson, "[Something Else to Be: Sula, The Moynihan Report, and the Negations of Black Lesbian Feminism](#)" from *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*

Proposal Drafts Due to Writing Fellow by Sunday, March 2nd at 11:59pm

WEEK 7: Queering Home

- **Tues, 3/4:** [Paris is Burning \(YouTube\)](#). Chandan Reddy, "[Home, Houses, Non-Identity: Paris Is Burning](#)," from *Burning Down the House* + David L. Eng, "[Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora in Asian American Studies](#)" (excerpt)
- **Thurs, 3/6: MIDTERM EXAM**

Midterm Participation Reflection Due Sunday, March 9 by 11:59PM

WEEK 8: Queer (Trans)Nationalisms

- **Tues, 3/11:** Gayatri Gopinath (Excerpt), "[Introduction](#)," from *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*
- **Discussion post #6 (due by Wednesday, 3/12 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 3/14:** Mejdulene Bernard Shomali, excerpt, "[sahq: Queer Femme Futures](#)," from *Between Banat: Queer Arab Critique and Transnational Arab Archives* + Media: "[A Woman's Voice is a Revolution](#)" by Lina Habazi; "[Love & Death Series](#)" by Aya Krisht; & "[It's not nice for a girl to...](#)" series by Christina Atik

Proposals Due by Sunday, March 16th at 11:59pm

WEEK 9: Homonationalisms

- **Tues, 3/18:** Jasbir K. Puar, "[Mapping US Homonormativities](#)"
- **Discussion post #7 (due by Wednesday, 3/19 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 3/20:** Scott Lauria Morgensen, "[Settler Homonationalism: Theorizing Settler Colonialism Within Queer Modernities](#)" + Daniel Heath Justice, Bethany Schneider, & Mark Rifkin, "[Heaven and Earth](#)"

WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11: Indigenous and Decolonial Critiques

- **Tues, 4/1:** Jodi Byrd, "[What's Normative Got to Do with It?: Toward Indigenous Queer Relationality](#)" + Billy-Ray Belcourt, "[God Must Be an Indian](#)" (poem) + Arielle Twist, "[Brother](#)." (poem) + Féi Hernandez, "[Reason Men Build Walls](#)." (poem)
- **Discussion post #8 (due by Wednesday, 4/2 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 4/3:** Cherrie Moraga, [Playwright Note & Setting](#) + "[The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea](#)" (play), **Act I only** from *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance*

WEEK 12: From Dystopian to Utopian (?) Gestures

- **Tues, 4/8:** finish Cherrie Moraga, "[The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea](#)" (play), Act II from *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theatre and Performance*
 - **Recommended reading:** Gloria Anzaldúa, "[La herencia de Coatlicue/The Coatlicue State](#)" from *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* - this essay is very short if interested
- **Discussion post #9 (due by Wednesday, 4/9 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 4/10:** José Esteban Muñoz, "[Gesture, Ephemera, and Queer Feeling: Approaching Kevin Aviance](#)," from *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity + Media: Kevin Aviance*, "[Cunty](#)" (YouTube)
 - **Recommended reading:** Juana María Rodríguez, "[Introduction](#)" from *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings*

Final Essay Drafts Due to Writing Fellows + Canvas by Sunday, April 13th at 11:59pm

WEEK 13: Toward a Trans of Color Critique

- **Tues, 4/15:** Kai M. Green & Marquis Bey, "[Where Black Feminist Thought and Trans* Feminism Meet: A Conversation](#)"
- **Discussion post #10 (due by Wednesday, 4/16 at 11:59pm)**
- **Thurs, 4/17:** content warning: descriptions of violence against trans P.O.C.: C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, "[Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife](#)" from the *Transgender Studies Reader Remix*
 - Start reading L.H. Stallings, Excerpt, "[Introduction](#)" + from *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* - **this second reading is in preparation for **Tuesday****

WEEK 14: Toward a Trans of Color Critique II

- **Tues, 4/22:** L.H. Stallings, Excerpt, "[Introduction](#)" + Excerpt, "[Black Trans Narratives, Sex Work, and the Illusive Flesh](#)," from *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* + Toni Newman "[Sissy Boy](#)," from autobiography *I Rise: The Transformation of Toni Newman*
- **Thurs, 4/24:** Eriqie Zhang, Julian Kevon Glover, Ava L. J. Kim, Tamsin Kimoto, Nathan Alexander Moore, Aeryka Jourdain Hollis O'Neill, & Lavelle Ridley, "[A Tranifesto for the Dolls: Toward a Trans Femme of Color Theory](#)"

Final Essays Due Sunday, April 27th at 11:59pm

WEEK 15: Coalition, Abolition, Solidarity Now!

- **Tues, 4/29:** Karma Chávez, "[Introduction](#)" from *Queer Migration Politics* + Marquis Bey & Jesse A. Goldberg, "[Queer as in Abolition Now!](#)"
- **Thurs, 5/1:** Roderick A. Ferguson, Gayatri Gopinath, Kara Keeling, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Chandan Reddy, "[Queer of Color Critique in a Moment of Danger: Envisioning Solidarities](#)"

Final Exam Date and Time TBD; Final Participation Reflection Due Sunday, May 4 by 11:59PM; "Recommended Reading" Extra Credit Assignment Due Friday, May 9th at 11:59pm; Autotheory Extra Credit Assignment Due Friday, May 9th at 11:59pm