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# Queering Health: Research, Activism, and Intervention in LGBTQIA+ Health

GWS 538

Spring 2024

Class Meetings: TR 11:00 – 12:15 with Dr. Cabell Gathman  
“Cabell” rhymes with “Scrabble”

**Sewell Social Sciences 4308**

**OR**

**Live via Zoom (backup):**

<http://tinyurl.com/GWS538SPR24>

**Passcode:** 661176

Class is typically taught in-person as scheduled, but in some circumstances may be moved online (watch Canvas Announcements for notifications).

Please do not attend class if you are ill. We appreciate your consideration for disabled and other vulnerable members of our community, as well as those in close contact with elders, children too young to be vaccinated, and members of other high-risk groups.

## **Course Description**

LGBTQIA+ people experience disparities in both access to and appropriateness of healthcare. Sub-groups within the "LGBTQ+ community" have particular health concerns and needs that are often not well-addressed by current healthcare systems. In recent years, transgender and gender non-conforming people have additionally faced legislative attacks on their access to care. All of these problems may be further exacerbated by other forms of marginalization based in race, ability, class, etc., and they may also shed light on broader issues in healthcare for the general population. This course begins with a general exploration of LGBTQIA+ marginalization and medicalization, their effects on healthcare research, access, and outcomes, and the scope and role of patient autonomy, and then applies these concepts to a number of specific issues in LGBTQIA+ health such as differences of sex development or intersex, violence, mental illness, and disability, sexual health and fertility, and aging.

## **Course Objectives**

- 1) Develop an understanding of marginalization, specifically the concept of "minority stress" and its impact on the health of LGBTQIA+ populations, as well as other sources for LGBTQIA+ health disparities and the nature of those disparities.
- 2) Review current research funding and programs to better understand where and how LGBTQIA+ people, particularly sub-groups like bisexual or asexual people, are under-studied, and consider the consequences of the resulting gaps in knowledge.
- 3) Consider the importance of patient autonomy and healthcare access for LGBTQIA+ people as well as the general population.
- 4) Analyze processes of medicalization and their effects, both positive and negative, on the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people.
- 5) Identify forms of interpersonal and institutional violence that particularly affect LGBTQIA+ people, how they may be exacerbated by other marginalized identities, and consider how they affect both physical and mental health, with a particular focus on the role of disability.
- 6) Learn about current and proposed programs to improve healthcare and health education for LGBTQIA+ people.

## Contact information: Dr. Cabell Gathman

**Office:** 7133 Sewell Social Sciences  
Zoom Personal Meeting Room: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/my/cabell>

**Office hours:** R 1-3pm; by appt

**Email:** [chgathman@wisc.edu](mailto:chgathman@wisc.edu)

## Communication

I welcome student email, but I ask that you follow these basic guidelines:

Please email:

- Requests for minor clarifications regarding course materials and assignments
- Requests to meet outside of normally scheduled office hours (I may or may not be able to accommodate these)
- More complicated questions, with the understanding that we may need to address them in class or with a one-on-one meeting—giving us lead time allows us to provide you with the best, most complete answer

Please do NOT email:

- Questions answered on the syllabus (check the syllabus before emailing)
- Questions answered in emails sent to class lists (make sure you save class list email for future reference)
- Questions about grades (we should discuss these in person)

I do my best to answer email in a timely fashion, which means **within 48 weekday hours**. Response times over the weekend may be longer. Please do NOT send follow-up emails less than 48 hours after your initial email; this does not make me respond faster, but it does make it more difficult for me to prioritize student communications effectively. If it has been over 48 weekday hours since you emailed me and I have not responded, please reply to your original email to bump it up in my Inbox.

Please be sure to set your Canvas notifications such that you will see any Course Announcements I post in Canvas; this is my primary mode of communication with students. Please do NOT send me Canvas messages if you need to get in touch with me; Outlook tends to filter these out of the main Inbox and it's very easy for me to miss them.

## Format

This course meets for 75 minutes twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am to 12:15pm. It will be a mixture of lecture, small and large group discussions, and possible guest speakers as available.

Lectures will cover general concepts that are also addressed in the assigned readings, but they will NOT be a simple repetition of the readings; they will introduce new information and may also include related videos and other multimedia material.

## Policy on Children in Class

Caregivers deserve access to education. Many people are adversely affected by unpredictable school closings and gaps in childcare, and virtual participation is not always available or possible. Children who are reasonably believed to be non-contagious are welcome in our classroom spaces. You may wish to provide them with a device and headphones to keep them entertained, but they are also welcome to listen and participate in class to the extent of their ability.

If you anticipate that a child might become disruptive, please just try to sit near an exit so that you can step out with them if necessary.

## Accessibility

The policy of the Board of Regents of the UW System is to ensure that no qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated in the UW System. Each qualified person shall receive reasonable accommodations needed to ensure access to educational opportunities, programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate.

If you have official accommodations through the McBurney Center, please contact your TA ASAP to discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you do not have official accommodations, but there are conditions or life circumstances that interfere with your ability to fulfill your responsibilities for this course, we still encourage you to meet with your TA ASAP to discuss how best to accommodate you. In some cases, we may recommend that you consult with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (263-2742), but we recognize that official channels are not equally accessible to all students, and we want to support you in doing your best work for this course.

“Disability” is a broad category that includes physical, cognitive, and psychological issues, including chronic or mental illness. **Disabled people have the right to an education.**

## Attendance & Participation

This course is heavily discussion-based, and your participation in class is necessary to develop a nuanced understanding of assigned materials and support your classmates' learning with your questions and contributions. After each class meeting, you will submit a brief reflection (really just a few sentences is all you need) in Canvas, due no later than 12:30pm (15 minutes after the end of class). This will be graded pass/fail for thoughtful completion and should NOT be a long write-up; the extra time before the assignment officially closes is just to reduce the likelihood that folks will miss the cut-off. In your reflection you will list:

- 1) One thing that a classmate said (include their name if you can!) that helped you understand or think more deeply about course concepts/materials
- 2) One thing that YOU said or thought about during class that you want to think or learn more about
- 3) One thing I said that you found interesting, important, useful, confusing, or wrong

We have 28 class sessions scheduled for the semester. Four (4) zeroes for absence will be dropped; each of the remaining 24 sessions will be worth 1.5 percentage points on your final grade, for a total of **36% of your final grade for the category**.

### Participation Make-Ups

There are FOUR (4) drops in the participation category. If you are unable to participate in a particular live class session, you can either use a drop or complete a make-up no later than 11:59pm Friday of the following week.

I encourage you to complete make-ups for absences early on in the semester if you are able, to preserve some of your drops as a buffer. There is no limit on the number of make-ups that you may complete.

To make up participation for a missed class session, you will post a response to a classmate's Reading Memo for that week (this is why the Memos are submitted via a Canvas Discussion). Your reply should be at least 200 words and substantively reference at least one assigned reading for the week. Further instructions are available in the Reading Memo Discussions in Canvas.

For weeks 1 & 2, when we have no discussion memo forums, you can make up an absence by writing a set of five (5) discussion questions about the assigned readings (at least three of them; for Week 1 you can refer to the supplementary readings to meet this minimum). You should email it to me as an attached file no later than Friday of the following week.

## Reading Memos

For this course, you will submit TWO (2) reading memos in which you concisely synthesize, critique, and extend multiple assigned readings. This is a necessary skill across professions and especially useful when working with research and reports from a variety of disciplines/fields OR varying personal accounts on a particular topic or experience. This will also help you better understand and retain the material, and apply it in other academic work and potentially your personal or professional life in the future.

All students will submit one memo in Block 1 (Weeks 3-8) and one memo in Block 2 (Weeks 9-14). You will sign up for your Block 1 memo week via a Google spreadsheet in Week 2 and your Block 2 memo via a Google spreadsheet in Week 7.

**Students who sign up for Week 3 will receive 5 bonus points on their Block 1 Memo.**

In no more than 500 words, you should:

- Summarize the main prevalence and trends of the topic (if applicable)
- Summarize or engage with the socio-cultural context of the issue—that is, the lived experience of this health phenomenon in the real world
- Comment on any relevant policy or program implications of the combined texts
- Comment on any problems you perceive with the assigned readings (flaws in research, interpretation of findings, etc.)
- Touch on as many of the readings for that day as possible (at least two assigned readings and a third source from assigned or supplementary readings for the week OR an outside source that you located on the topic with a date of 2018 or more recent)

Questions to consider (this is just a brainstorming guide!):

- What epidemiologic or empirical information do the readings provide about the topic at hand (e.g., rates, trends, disparities, etc.)?
- What do the readings indicate, if anything, about the evolution of this concept or changes in this issue over time?
- How do the readings agree with and speak to each other? Disagree with each other?
- How do the readings tie into larger themes of the course?

You may also allude to other literature we have read for the course, as long as you are primarily engaged with the readings for that particular week.

Memos will be graded out of 100 points with expectations of:

- Good structure (e.g., thesis statement, supporting evidence, smooth transition sentences between paragraphs if the memo includes more than one paragraph--no "introduction" or "conclusion" necessary)
- Precise synthesis of the points you are highlighting from your sources
  - Example of poor work: "The articles for this week discuss various aspects of bisexual erasure."
  - Example of more thoughtful, precise writing: "Common forms of bisexual erasure include A, B, and C, which contribute to negative consequences such as X, Y, and Z."
- Original analysis of the sources you are using—explaining how they relate to each other, assessing methodology or the researchers' conclusions, discussing the implications of their findings for patient experience, public policy, professional practice, etc.
- Properly labeled (i.e., with your name, date, and the week number)
- No more than 500 words—**seriously, I will take a point off for every 10 words over!**
- Appropriate citations: Provide in-text citations as footnotes or end notes so that they do not contribute to the word count. Make sure that they are consistently formatted and include, at minimum, the author's surname and the page number for direct quotes or specific information that has been paraphrased

Memos are posted in a Canvas discussion so that students can respond to them to make up absences as needed. Memos are due 11:59pm Monday of the relevant week, BEFORE any class meetings, so for example, Week 3 memos are due by 11:59pm, Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Each memo is worth 15% of your final grade, for a total of **30% of your final grade for the category.**

## Peer Education Handout

All students will sign up for a week between Weeks 5-14 for which to prepare an informational handout on the week's topic using additional sources from an independent literature search. Your handout should be in a flyer or brochure format and two pages total (so it could be printed on one physical sheet of paper). See Canvas for example handouts.

Prior to your assigned class meeting, you will independently seek out at least four (4) additional sources (at least two of these must be peer-reviewed journal articles; remaining sources may be peer-reviewed OR relevant activist or personal sources) related to the topic specified for the week and use these to prepare a "Key Points, Problems & Solutions" overview handout for the class. Unless pre-approved by the instructor, all sources should have a publication year of 2018 or more recent.

Your handout should be 2 pages (so it could be printed front & back on a single sheet of paper) and highlight relevant important points from the assigned materials as well as the additional information that you found in your own research. Complete citations for all sources used should be included in the handout, formatted as footnotes/endnotes. Your handout should include (but is not necessarily limited to):

- At least three (3) major “key points”/issues related to the topic of the week
  - This should include information from assigned readings, but should also introduce new information from your independent research. You could use additional sources to elaborate on main issues identified in the assigned readings for the week OR introduce new specific issues related to the week’s content but not covered in our assigned readings (for example: lack of access to **dental care** as an issue related to the general topic of “Resources & Access”)
- Information about how to address related problems
  - This could take the form of information about organizations serving affected groups, particular strategies/practices for healthcare providers and institutions to improve care/outcomes for a group, “mythbusting” to educate people about common harmful misperceptions, or whatever makes the most sense in the context of the issues you’re focusing on. **Note: Although you may include some patient education information, you should not make this the entire focus of your handout. Most individual patients have very limited power within healthcare institutions.**

You will submit your handout electronically via Canvas (due by 11:59pm on Wednesday of the assigned week); I will post all of them under “CLASS MATERIALS” in the relevant weekly module on Thursday morning so that your classmates can access them.

### Course Grading Scheme

Course intro survey	4%
Attendance & participation	36%
Block 1 Discussion Memo	15%
Block 2 Discussion Memo	15%
Peer Education Handout	25%
Peer Education Presentation	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>



**IMPORTANT note on grades:** Grades in this course are not negotiable, but I am happy to discuss course content and strategies for improvement in the future. I do require a 24-hour waiting period between receipt of a grade and discussion thereof so that you can fully read and consider all related feedback. If you have questions about graded work, feel free to stop by my drop-in office hours or email me to set up an appointment if you're unable to make that window.

## **Grading Scale**

A	92.5+
AB	87.5 – 92.49
B	82.5 – 87.49
BC	76.5 – 82.49
C	69.5 – 76.49
D	57.5 – 69.49
F	<57.5

### **Statement on academic dishonesty**

**TL;DR: Life is short; this course has been designed to be extremely hard to fail; please don't cheat. Seriously: You could get a 50% on every graded assignment in this class, and as long as you did all the pass/fail assignments, you would still earn a C!**

If you are unsure how to paraphrase or cite appropriately, I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center on campus or to meet with me in office hours. Cases of intentional plagiarism will be assigned a zero for the assignment and reported to the Dean of Students to prevent a continuing pattern of behavior.

For the university's policy on academic dishonesty and misconduct, see:

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>

**Please note: A score of "0" received for academic dishonesty CANNOT BE DROPPED OR REPLACED, regardless of the normal mechanisms for the grade category.**

## Semester Schedule

*ALL READINGS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY TUESDAY OF THE WEEK FOR WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF WEEK 1*

*ALL READINGS ARE AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY VIA CANVAS—WE HAVE NO REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS*

<b>Week 1 (1/23 – 1/25):</b>	<b>Course Intro</b>
<b>Week 2 (1/30 – 2/1):</b>	<b>Pathologization of Queerness</b>
<b>Week 3 (2/6 – 2/8):</b>	<b>Research &amp; Training</b>
<b>Week 4 (2/13 – 2/15):</b>	<b>Health Disparities</b>
<b>Week 5 (2/20 – 2/22):</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Access</b>
<b>Week 6 (2/27 – 2/29):</b>	<b>Standardization of Bodies</b>
<b>Week 7 (3/5 – 3/7):</b>	<b>Medicalization &amp; Gatekeeping</b>
<b>Week 8 (3/12 – 3/14):</b>	<b>Sexual Health &amp; HIV/AIDS</b>
<b>Week 9 (3/19 – 3/21):</b>	<b>Fertility &amp; Reproductive Health</b>
<b>Week 10 (4/2 – 4/4):</b>	<b>Pediatrics &amp; Primary Care</b>
<b>Week 11 (4/9 – 4/11):</b>	<b>Violence &amp; Trauma</b>
<b>Week 12 (4/16 – 4/18):</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>
<b>Week 13 (4/23 – 4/25):</b>	<b>Chronic Illness &amp; Disability</b>
<b>Week 14 (4/30 – 5/2):</b>	<b>Aging</b>