2014

370-01 570-01 Writings by Sexual Minorities

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What materials do I need?

six texts to purchase:

• *Fun Home*, Alison Bechdel
• *Lips Together, Teeth Apart*, Terrence McNally
• *What the Butler Saw*, Joe Orton
• *Equus*, Peter Shaffer
• *Suddenly Last Summer*, Tennessee Williams
• *Cleanness*, by the Gawain-Poet, translated by Kevin Gustafson

Additional materials are available online through our Canvas course, in “Reading list texts” Page

Please bring to class the text(s) required by the daily reading schedule, or as directed. The reading schedule also lists additional works (both primary and secondary) that will be made available as handouts or online.

What are the goals for this course?

This course will focus on literature (including classical, medieval, modern, and post-modern pieces) in three major categories: works by authors who are part of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (lgbt) community, works that depict characters from the lgbt community, and works that have been read as queer or have served as rallying cries for lgbt readers. These categories often overlap, and their borders are typically not clearly marked (we retroactively assign homosexual identities to authors for whom the term might have been meaningless, for example). Novels, plays, short stories, and film clips will be supplemented with articles on queer literary theory as well as texts on lgbt studies.

Student writing will consist largely of two main essays: literary criticism on the primary sources that incorporates research from secondary works. Students will also produce a small number of short writing pieces (including a presentation to the class for the graduate students).

How (and why) will topics of gender and diversity enter the course?

ENGL 370/570 will use literary works as a way of exploring the relationship of queer (individuals, groups, texts, readings, actions) to mainstream society. This exploration will necessarily overlap with questions related to the subcultural status of a range of disenfranchised groups—those who sit outside the dominant culture for a variety of reasons. Queer, we will see, serves as a useful starting point for considering two large spheres: literary theory and lgbt studies. The lexicons of these spheres inevitably inform explorations of race, class, and gender, all of which will be raised in the class; these terms include ideology, hegemony, power, closets, coming out, drag, camp, identity politics, and heterosexism. Class discussions will open up the work of queer texts in society (through imagery, metaphors, and other tropes that allow for a text's “queer sensibility”), and will also allow for an exploration of queer connections to numerous other topics: politics, sexuality, religion, science, disease, perversion, and narrative.
What assignments will I complete this semester?
For English 370:
A student’s grade in this class will be based on the successful completion of the following assignments:

- essay 1        15%
- essay 2        20%
- final exam       15%
- short writing exercises       30%
- quizzes        10%
- participation       10%

For English 570:
A student’s grade in this class will be based on the successful completion of the following assignments:

- essay 1        15%
- essay 2        15%
- annotated bibliography for essay 2    5%
- final exam       15%
- short writing exercises      25%
- presentation of a theory article     10%
- quizzes        10%
- participation       5%

What policies should I follow for written work?
All assignments are due according to the reading list’s scheduled day. Any work turned in after this time will be considered late and will be lowered by 1/3rd of a letter grade. For each additional day late, assignments will continue to be lowered by 1/3rd of a letter grade. Completion of all formal essays, the short writing exercises, and the exam is required for a student to pass the course successfully. Formal essays should be typed and double-spaced.

How will essays be graded?
Formal essays will be graded according to these six criteria:

- strength of thesis claim
- clarity of writing style
- organization
- depth of analysis
- textual evidence
- technical accuracy

How will attendance affect my final grade?
Attendance is expected by all students for all classes. If you find that you need to miss a class due to what we could both agree is an emergency, contact me via email or by phone as soon as possible. You will still be responsible for all assigned work and material covered during class, so it is important that we are both clear on how you will meet these responsibilities. One absence is set aside for individual emergencies (that is, one week of classes), and this will not count against your grade. A second absence will result in your entire final grade being lowered by a third of a letter grade, and each additional absence will result in your final grade being lowered by an additional third of a letter grade. Be aware that excessive absenteeism will result in a student failing the course. Excessive lateness to class may also result in an absence being recorded.
What does participation mean for this class?
Participation in this class, especially discussions, requires active contributions on your part. Much of our work will be collaborative in nature, and each student is expected to have completed all readings and writing assignments before class. Completion of readings means having engaged the material carefully and thoughtfully enough to participate meaningfully in class activities. You should come to class having formed questions about and reactions to the texts, as well as having prepared analytical comments to offer.

What will the exam in the course cover?
Occasional in-class quizzes will allow you to show your mastery of the assigned readings (characters, places, and plot points), as well as the historical and literary information we have covered. The final exam will cover similar material, along with essay questions that ask you to engage our class texts critically and in conversation with one another. Questions on the exams may also include identification and discussion of passages, multiple choice and short answers related to characters, places, and plot points, and definitions of terms. Some textual material on the exams may not have been discussed explicitly in class, so it is important to complete all readings for the assigned days.

What do grades mean in this class?
Assignments will be graded with the following letter grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A work shows exceptional mastery of course materials and exemplary analytical and presentation skills.
B work shows good, thoughtful understanding of course materials and above-average analytical work.
C work shows adequate, though not distinctive, understanding of course materials and average analytical work.
D work shows poor understanding of course materials and incompetent critical analysis.
F work shows no serious engagement with course materials or analytical tasks.

Why should I be aware of the university’s plagiarism policies?
Presenting others’ writing as your own will result in an F for the course as well as notification of the dean. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of any written or electronic material or service in any way. Most of the writing in this class asks you to analyze texts without the use of secondary sources (your own analysis), and other writing may require you to bring in (and to cite) outside sources. We will discuss methods of citing sources in class, but if you have any questions concerning the university’s policy on plagiarism, please see me. Building on others’ ideas is fundamental to effective academic scholarship, but providing clear acknowledgment of those ideas is crucial. If you have any questions concerning the university’s policy on plagiarism, please see me and take advantage of the “Preventing Plagiarism” tutorial available at the xututor website.

What other resources are available to aid my success in 370/570?
I am happy to meet with you to discuss your work and the course in general, whether this is regarding your ideas, the readings, or the writing you are doing. If my office hours are not convenient for you, please email me and we will set up another time to meet. I also encourage students to make use of the resources at the Writing Center located in CLC 400. The Center offers free tutors who can help you at any stage of the writing process. They will not, nor will I, simply proofread an essay, however. If there are questions you have concerning grammar or technical presentation of your writing, you are welcome to ask me; I can review key points and direct you to effective handbooks. You can call 745-2875 to set up an appointment with the Writing Center.