

GSW 201: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

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Gender Pronouns:

they, them, theirs & she, her, hers

Office Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00-11:30 a.m. by appointment (email/message me to schedule an appointment)



Course Description

This course will provide an introduction into Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Studies. Considering LGBTQ Studies as an interdisciplinary field, this course will focus on how the central concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity work within history, politics, literature, technology, art, music, philosophy, education, and psychology. Throughout this course, students will work towards a deep understanding of the intersectional dynamics of privilege and oppression as they relate to LGBTQ individuals and culture by exploring the lived experiences of LGBTQ individuals and their families.

Learning Objectives

- Critically read, discuss, analyze, and write about the assigned readings and central course themes. A key part of this process will be the application of course concepts to current cultural conversations and, potentially, students' lived experiences.
- Build both a specific and general knowledge of the history and current dialogues regarding LGBTQ issues across multiple disciplines and across multiple forms of media concerning a variety of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., journal articles, online resources, textbook readings, film, and literature, and music).
- Understand the concepts of gender and sexuality [unpacking foundational social concepts that structure how we move in the world and understand ourselves] as intersecting with other categories of identity through the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills, which in turn are necessary skills for interacting with and responding to diverse groups of people, particularly in LGBTQ communities

A Note Before We Begin

When asked about the main difference between college and high school, I respond that college is where students choose to continue their education rather than being forced to attend by the law or parents. While the faculty and staff of UW-Waukesha, myself included, genuinely want all of our students to succeed and will go to great lengths to foster that success, your academic performance is closely tied to *your* commitment to *your* education.

College is what you make of it. Yes, you can skate by in this (and other) class(es) by putting in a minimum amount of effort and not caring about it in the least. However, as a former student myself, I can tell you that you will need the writing skills, strategies, and processes that you can gain in this class in order for you to progress in any field of study, be it astronomy or business or forestry. To get the most out of this class, you must put forth genuine effort and take ownership of your college career.

Course Schedule

The schedule of assignments for this course is available online through Canvas.

Though the assignments for the next few weeks are pretty much set, be aware that I will revise the rest of the schedule extensively throughout the semester in order to respond to how the class is progressing. Thus, the schedule, as it currently stands, is more of a guide than a “written in stone” guarantee of what will be happening in this class. I will always notify you when I make changes.

Required Texts and Materials

[Click here to view the class' books on eCampus](#)

- Deborah T. Meem and Jonathan Alexander, Key Beck, Michelle A. Gibson. *Finding Out: An Introduction to LGBT Studies*. 4th Edition. Sage, 2022.
ISBN: 1071848038 / 978-1071848036
- Andreyko, Marc. *Love is Love*. IDW Publishing, 2017.
ISBN: 1631409395 / 978-1631409394
- Gold, Rachel. *Being Emily*. Anniversary Ed. Bella Books, 2018.
ISBN: 159493598X / 978-1594935985
- Johnson, George M. *All Boys Aren't Blue*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020.
ISBN: 0241515033 / 978-0241515037
- 2 Course Packets (print out and put in a three-ring binder)

Grade Breakdown

You are also responsible for keeping track of your grades in the Canvas gradebook (click on “Grades” in the navigation bar). I will respond to emails asking for “progress reports” by telling you to consult your grades on Canvas. It is your responsibility to check you grades periodically to make sure that they are correct.

As mentioned on the first page of this syllabus, your grade will be largely determined by your commitment to this class. If you are unsatisfied with a grade on an essay, put forth the effort to revise that paper (see revision policy below). Work to improve your grade throughout the semester and meet with me whenever you have problems or questions. You have a far greater chance of earning the grade you want by working diligently over the long term rather than trying to pull it together at the end of the term.

Category	Percentage	Point Value
Advocacy Project	30	150
Current Events Analysis Essay	20	100
Course Concept Essay	15	75
Discussion Posts	20	100
Daily Grades (reading note worksheets and other short assignments)	10	50
Participation	5	25
Total	100	500

Grade Scale

Percentages	Letter Grade
100 – 97	A+
96 – 94	A
93 - 90	A-
87 - 89	B+
86 – 84	B
83 - 80	B-
79 - 77	C+
76 – 74	C
73 - 70	C-
69 - 67	D+
66 – 64	D
60 - 63	D-
59 – 00	F

Explanation of Letter Grades

Below is the general meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers. You should use the statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade):

- A** You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
- B** You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, well organized, and effective stylistically.
- C** You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
- D** You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.
- F** An F is usually reserved for people who do not do the work or do not come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Assignments and Other Requirements

Advocacy Project & Self-Assessment Essay (4-5 pages)

30% (150 points)

Over the course of the semester, you will work with a small group to develop your own social justice project that addresses concerns of LGBTQ Community. Your project will be an intervention plan that can take place on a community, department, disciplinary, college, university, state, or national level. This plan can take many forms, and I encourage you to relate it to your major field of study. Examples of projects include but are not limited to the following: a multi-session lesson plan, a computer program, an original work of art, an analysis of trends in popular culture or literature, creation of a web resource, a concrete political action plan for a particular issue, a historical analysis of LGBTQ history, a reflection on and analysis of one's work with a LGBTQ organization or publication, and an original work of queer theory.

You will also complete a 4-5 page essay in which you explain your intervention, demonstrate how it builds from at least three course texts, and assess its efficacy in accomplishing its goal. I encourage you to acknowledge the limits of your intervention and suggest avenues for further work in this area.

Current Events Analysis Paper (4-5 pages)**20% (100 points)**

In this assignment, you will write a 4-5 page paper on a specific topic related to current events in the context of the overall LGBTQ Rights Movement. In your paper, you will identify the historical and global context of the issue, what obstacles/barriers are in place in relation to forward movement, a critical analysis of how this issue has been covered by the media, and what gains have been made and what still needs to occur to create more equitable conditions for LGBTQ individuals.

Course Concept Essay**(3-4 pages)****15% (75 points)**

This assignment is designed to help you to develop insight into course terminology. For this assignment, you will write an essay in which you explain a course concept to a person who you know (friend, family member, romantic partner). You will use both course texts and examples from your life and/or popular culture to help this person understand what you have learned thus far in this class.

Discussion Posts**15% (75 points)**

Since this class is an online and face-to-face hybrid, a significant portion of our class discussions will take place online via Canvas' Discussions tool. There will be assigned reading and a post prompt for each discussion. In addition to writing your own post, you will also be required to comment on at least two of your classmates' posts. Responses will be graded out of ten, with a ten being equivalent to a check for completion. Each post will be no less than 300 words.

Reading Note Worksheets**10 points each****Part of Daily Grades Category 5% (25 points)**

As part of completing your reading assignments for this class, you will complete reading note worksheets for many of the scholarly essays and book chapters that we will read. I will hand out the worksheets in class, and they will also be available outside my office and on Canvas (on each Reading Note Worksheet Assignment page).

Class Policies**Student-Teacher Conferences**

I strongly encourage you to see me during office hours (or through appointment) via Teams to discuss specific questions about any paper (preferably after peer workshop). While I will read sections of any paper before the final due date, I will only give feedback as directed by a specific question from the concerned student (i.e. "Is my thesis clear enough?" "Does this paragraph do a good job of supporting my thesis?" etc).

Additional Help with Assignments

You are strongly encouraged to make use of the writing tutors in the Academic Success Center (, who will gladly read a draft of your essay and give you helpful feedback. You can also work with a writing tutor via e-mail through the UWM at Waukesha Online Writing Lab; instructions are located at <https://uwm.edu/waukesha/tutoring/>.

For Students Re-Taking this Class

If you are retaking this class because you did not pass or complete the course the previous time that you took it with me, you must write entirely new essays for each of the major writing assignments. Resubmission of essays from your previous class is not allowed.

Submission of Work

Major assignments are accepted late with a five-point-per-day-late penalty.
Daily Grade assignments are accepted late for half credit (5/10).

If you will be absent on a day that an assignment is due for whatever reason, you must still submit your work to the appropriate Canvas Assignment by the deadline.

All assignments must meet the length requirements indicated on this syllabus and assignment pages. Failure to fulfill this requirement will result in **5 points** per missing page (300 words) being deducted from your grade on the assignment.

Failure to complete any of the major writing assignments listed above without discussing your missing assignment with me within **seven** calendar days of the due date will **result in an automatic F in the course**.

All submissions should be **MS Word documents** unless otherwise specified in an assignment. Please note that I generally set up the Canvas Assignments to accept only Word Documents.

Note: computers are notorious for failing just before an assignment is due. I strongly encourage you to keep copies of all work in multiple locations!

Participation and Classroom Etiquette

This is a class in communication, so your participation is essential. Get involved. Volunteer. Question. Probe. Share relevant ideas and observations. Offer your own experiences. Make connections between what we're discussing in this class and what you hear elsewhere. I will evaluate your participation throughout the term.

Revisions

You may choose to revise any of your major assignments in order to earn a higher grade. If you revise your paper, your grade will either stay the same or be replaced entirely with the higher new grade that you have earned. Your grade will not go down if your revised paper receives a lower grade than your original paper—your grade will stay the same. In order to revise your paper, you must meet with me to discuss the revision. Revisions must be submitted by the announced deadline and cannot be made up unless you have an excused absence.

In order to earn a higher grade on your revised essay, you must revise your paper as whole, not just fix the marginal comments that I have written. This revision should be global rather than local. However, that being said, failure to address any of my marginal comments or grammar errors will result in your grade remaining the same.

Format of Essays

Drafts must be typed and in MLA format, unless otherwise directed. The paper should be double-spaced (with no additional spacing between paragraphs) with one-inch margins using 12 point Times New Roman font. Each paper should have in the upper left-hand corner of the first page your name, my name, the course number, and the date. Your last name should also appear next to the page number in the upper right corner of each page. Give each of your formal papers a descriptive title. Papers must be turned in to the Canvas dropbox by midnight on the day they are due.

COVID-19 Policies

College in the time of COVID-19 (based on the policy of Dr. Jessica Van Slooten)

There is no way to know how “normal” this semester will be because we’re still dealing with a global pandemic. I want to acknowledge that none of us know how this might impact our lives in the coming months, so being flexible and communicating often is important. Please know that I recognize that the pandemic impacts us all—you, your families, me, my family—in a wide range of ways, from caregiving responsibilities, job changes, mental and physical health challenges, etc. I can help connect you to campus resources that might help you manage the challenges you’re facing; you can also look at the [UWM COVID-19 Information website](#).

My goal is to help you be successful in the class no matter what challenges you’re facing—we can work together to develop a plan that works for you if your situation changes. The plan for the class may need to change as our collective situations change. I am committed to providing you with a meaningful educational experience that is flexible and geared toward your success. Reach out to me via email, office hours, or Teams chat, and we’ll work to move forward together.

Policy on Children in the Classroom (based on the policies by Dr. Melissa Cheyney & Dr. Elizabeth Horn)

Caregivers deserve access to education. At all times, I strive to be inclusive of parents and other caregivers. In our classroom, we can expect children to be present in class from time to time since many schools & daycares will be facing periodic sudden closures. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in caregiving status. I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-caregiving balance so that you can meet the expectations of this class.

University Policies

UWM Panther Community Health and Safety Standards

UWM has implemented health and safety protocols, taking into account recommendations by local, state, and national public health authorities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our campus community, you are expected to abide by the [Panther Interim COVID-Related Health & Safety Policy](#), which was developed in accordance with public health guidelines. These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, UWM grounds, or participating in a UWM-sponsored activity:

- UWM recommends that all individuals visiting UWM facilities wear face coverings while indoors.
- UWM recommends getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and getting the most recent booster shot available to you.
- UWM requires that you check daily for COVID-19 symptoms and not come to campus if you are feeling sick. If you are feeling sick, get tested for COVID-19 and quarantine until symptoms subside. Use the [CDC Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#) to determine next steps.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, UWM requires that you self-report at the [Dean of Students Reporting Form](#). Use the [CDC Quarantine and Isolation Calculator](#) to determine next steps.

Additional details about student and employee expectations can be found on the [UWM COVID-19 webpage](#).

UWM Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

UWM supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the Accessibility Resource Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. Visit <http://uwm.edu/arc/> for more information. If you need accommodations or have a disability but do not have an official accommodation plan, you can apply for accommodations with ARC's online application: [Apply for Accommodations](#)

UWM at Waukesha Title IX Syllabus Statement

Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: <https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>. If you would like to speak with someone who is not required to report to the Title IX Deputy Coordinator, the campus counselor is a confidential resource for you. You can contact the counselor by calling (262) 521-5480 or emailing wak-counseling@uwm.edu.

UWM at Waukesha Inclusive Learning Statement

The UWM at Waukesha are committed to building diverse and inclusive learning, living, and working environments. We value mutual respect for all and do not tolerate discrimination on our campuses or within our programs and activities. We view this as both a moral imperative consistent with an intellectual community that celebrates individual differences and diversity, as well as a matter of law. If you encounter discrimination or harassment based on your age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, marital status, medical status, military status, national origin, pregnant or parenting status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, please contact the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at <http://inclusion.uwex.uwc.edu/> or file a report a report at <http://uwc.edu/students/report-bias>.

UWM at Waukesha Academic Integrity Statement

Academic Integrity is an expectation of each UWM at Waukesha student. Our campus community members are responsible for fostering and upholding an environment in which student learning is fair, just, and honest. Through your studies as a UWM at Waukesha student, it is essential to exhibit the highest level of personal honesty and respect for the intellectual property of others. Academic misconduct is unacceptable. It compromises and disrespects the integrity of our university and those who study here. To maintain academic integrity, a student must only claim work which is the authentic work solely of their own, providing correct citations and credit to others as needed. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and/or helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. Failure to understand what constitutes academic misconduct does not exempt responsibility from engaging in it. For more information, please read the Academic Misconduct Guide located here: https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/conduct_procedures/academic-misconduct/

UWM at Waukesha BIT Syllabus Statement

UWM at Waukesha is committed to the safety and success of all members of the campus community. To support this initiative, the UWM at Waukesha campus has a Behavioral Intervention Team which works to support campus community members, including students, by reaching out and providing resources in areas where an individual may be struggling or experiencing barriers to their success. The program allows faculty to be proactive, supportive, and involved in facilitating the success of our students through early detection, reporting, and intervention. As your faculty member, I may contact the Behavioral Intervention Team if I sense you are in need of additional support that I may not be able to provide. You may also contact the Behavioral Intervention Team if you or another member of our campus community needs support, is distressed, or exhibits concerning behavior that is interfering with the academic or personal success or the safety of others, by reporting here: <https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/report-it/>.

UWM at Waukesha Assessment Statement

CGS assesses the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs, and services of the college. As a course in the UW Milwaukee Associate Degree of Arts and Sciences, the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for this course are aligned with the UW System shared learning goal of Effective Communication (EC) which focuses on students' development of reading, listening, speaking, information literacy, and/or writing proficiencies. Therefore, as part of the UW Milwaukee College of General Studies assessment processes, student progress in fulfilling the EC SLOs will be evaluated by using the EC assessment rubrics for written communication or oral communication. Assessment will be part of a regular assignment or activity in the class but is not a grade and does not become part of your transcript.