

QUEER STUDIES (CONCENTRATION)

Program Guidelines & Mission

An evolving and expanding discipline, Queer Studies encompasses theories and thinkers from many fields: cultural studies, gay and lesbian studies, transgender studies, race studies, women's and gender studies, literature, history, film, media, postmodernism, post-colonialism, and more. By engaging with this diverse range of fields, the work of Queer Studies distinguishes itself in that it focuses on issues surrounding sexuality and gender (and other axes of marginalized identity) and the way(s) that the questions raised in these other arenas might be modulated through that central lens.

The Queer Studies Program seeks to legitimate academic inquiry into sexuality, sex, and gender, to pose questions of normativity and power, and to foster community with and for historically marginalized groups.

In queer studies courses, students will consider the lived experience and intersecting histories and identities of diverse populations of queer people. Students will examine critically the social, cultural, and scientific constructs of sexuality and gender as well as acquire a working knowledge of the history, issues, and theories of queer studies. Students will make connections between queer studies as an interdisciplinary program and the broader liberal arts curriculum. Queer Studies aims to empower and equip students to engage with communities—both local and global—as agents of social change.

Faculty

Director: Michael Mayne, Assistant Professor of English

Committee: Ron Abram (Studio Art), Barbara Fultner (Philosophy), Warren Hauk (Biology), Ching-chu Hu (Music), Clare Jen (Women's and Gender Studies/Biology), Michael Mayne (English), Zachery S. Meier (Music), Emily Nemeth (Education), K. Christine Pae (Religion), Fred Porcheddu-Engel (English), Sheilah Wilson Restack (Visual Arts), Charles St-Georges (Spanish), David Woodyard (Religion)

Academic Administrative Assistant

Liz Barringer-Smith

View faculty profiles and contact information (<https://denison.edu/academics/queer-studies/contacts/>)

Queer Studies Concentration

The Queer Studies concentration requires a total of six courses. Three of these are core requirements, and three are electives that typically are offered by other programs or departments and are cross-listed with Queer Studies.

Core Requirements

The required core courses are:

- QS 101 - Introduction to Queer Studies
- QS 227 - Queer Theory
- QS 400 - Senior Seminar

Electives

The Queer Studies concentration requires students to complete three elective courses from among those approved by the Queer Studies

Committee based on the following criteria, or through petition to the Committee:

At least two-thirds of the course should focus on: some aspect of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender experience, culture, and history; and/or relevant issues or themes (privilege, oppression, sexual behavior, identity, performance, social movements, etc.); and/or conceptual categories (gender, sexuality, etc.) central to the field of Queer Studies.

Any course in the concentration should address the relationship between the normative and the transgressive. Through these courses students should gain an understanding of, and respect for, differences in human identity such as age, ability, class, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexuality, race, and religion. Courses that already meet the criteria for Queer Studies electives, or that can be readily adapted to meet the above criteria through negotiations between instructor and student, include (but are not limited to) the following:

Code	Title
ARTS 213	Queer Graphix
ARTS 217	Photo as Gesture into Time; Past, Present, Future
BLST 235	Introduction to Black Studies
BLST 340	Social Movements
COMM 229	Mediating Gender and Sexuality
COMM 349	The Trouble with Normal: Normalization, Discourse and Power
EDUC 330	LGBTQ+ Identities In & Beyond Schools
ENGL 245	Queer Literature
ENGL 340	Contemporary Drama
MUS 332	Music and Sexuality
PHIL 275	Philosophy of Feminism
REL 101	Introduction to Theology
WGST 101	Issues in Feminism
WGST 311	Feminist Theory

Courses

QS 101 - Introduction to Queer Studies (4 Credit Hours)

A survey of the legal regulation of sexuality and gender in the 19th and 20th centuries and the emergence of modern civil rights movements of sexual minorities. This course will focus on the history, strategies, conflicts, and issues associated with these political and social movements.

QS 108 - Bible, Gender and Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)

This course is an introduction to the various and often conflicting ways in which gender and sexuality are represented in biblical texts as well as the range of interpretations of these texts over time. In this course, we will read ancient texts alongside contemporary theories of gender and sexuality. On the one hand, we will consider how biblical texts have been used to construct categories of "normal" and "natural" gender and sexuality and, on the other, how they might be read to undermine or subvert these frameworks. In addition to historically contextualizing ideas about gender and sexuality within biblical texts, we will also address contemporary uses of the Bible in public debates. This course fulfills the Power and Justice (P) GE requirement.

Crosslisting: WGST 108/REL 108.

QS 199 - Introductory Topics in Queer Studies (1-4 Credit Hours)

A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

QS 213 - Queer Graphix (4 Credit Hours)

Through a series of drawing and printmaking projects, this studio art course seeks to explore and creatively express queer culture, aesthetics and GLBT art history, as well as notions of identity, gender, orientation and sexuality. Art students will employ traditions of journalistic comics, collage, screen-printing, photo-copies, community collaborative artistic work (zines) and research presentation projects to not only celebrate queer artistic practices but also reveal the often damaging impact society and politics has on self identity and expression.

Crosslisting: ARTS 213.

QS 217 - Photograph as Gesture into time (Past/Present/Future) (4 Credit Hours)

This is an upper level photography course that asks students to consider the photograph as a disruptive force with potential energy for re-imagining relationship to self, history, document, and time. Using a specifically BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color), feminist and queer representation of artists and theorists, students will be asked to critically engage with the issues and possibilities of non-dominant story and document. Students will be encouraged and supported to find their own empowered creative and critical voice to speak back to traditionally white hetero-patriarchal power. Students will use digital cameras (DSLR's) to capture both still images and video. Students will further their knowledge of Lightroom, Photoshop, and learn basics of Adobe Premiere.

Crosslisting: ARTS 217, WGST 217.

QS 227 - Queer Theory (4 Credit Hours)

Queer Theory is an interdisciplinary course designed to introduce students to historical and theoretical treatments of topics such as the essentialism vs. constructionism debate; intersections of race/gender/class and sexual orientation; science and representation; performativity and normativity; and ethics, politics, and law.

QS 229 - Mediating Gender and Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)

In this class we will critically examine and evaluate the cultural construction and representation of gender and sexuality from an intersectional, transnational perspective. We will focus on a variety of media texts, platforms, and technologies. Although gender is the primary identity construction examined in this course, we will also pay close attention to how sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and geography interlock. Drawing from a broad range of academic literature, including critical/cultural studies, transnational feminism, and media studies, we will shift our focus from stable categories of identity to how gender and sexuality are produced through and around media.

Crosslisting: COMM 229, WGST 229.

QS 235 - Introduction to Black Studies (4 Credit Hours)

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary study of African American culture and experiences. The course surveys the field of Black Studies by introducing topics or issues relevant to Black American life from an interdisciplinary perspective. In this course, history, sociology, religion, literature and philosophy provide the foundation for exploring dimensions of Black Studies. Literary works, historical works, social science theory and contemporary issues will serve as texts for students to analyze. This course is taught from an interdisciplinary perspective which requires students to explore their own cultural frames of reference as a parallel process for studying Black cultures.

QS 240 - Special Topics in Dance (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course originating in the Dance Department. This course provides a venue in which to explore topics in Dance that meet the requirements of an elective course in the Queer Studies Concentration. Topics will vary according to the needs and interests of the teaching faculty offering the course. In some cases, this course may be repeated for credit.

QS 245 - Human Diversity Through Literature (4 Credit Hours)

A study of selected works by and about bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people.

QS 250 - Special Topics in Literature (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course originating in the English Department. This course provides a venue in which to explore topics in English that meet the requirements of an elective course in the Queer Studies Concentration. Topics will vary according to the needs and interests of the teaching faculty offering the course. In some cases, this course may be repeated for credit.

QS 268 - Topics in Queer Studies (4 Credit Hours)**QS 275 - Philosophy of Feminism (4 Credit Hours)**

Feminism and philosophy both make the invisible visible, the implicit explicit. Both make us aware of assumptions we make in our everyday lives and challenge us to justify them. This course examines ways in which feminist theory enriches philosophy and vice versa. Feminist criticism probes some of the most fundamental philosophical assumptions about our knowledge of and interaction with the world and other people. How does feminism destabilize philosophy and affect philosophical conceptions of knowledge, reality, metaphysics, agency, or morality? How does philosophy enrich feminist understandings of oppression, privilege, or equality? We will consider a range of forms of oppression and privilege, particularly as they affect women, and conceptions of sex, gender, and race in the context of debates about gender violence, work and family, as well as feminist discussions of epistemology, ethics, and science.

Prerequisite(s): One previous course in Philosophy or Women's and Gender Studies, or consent.

Crosslisting: PHIL 275, WGST 275 .

QS 280 - Special Topics in Religion (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course originating in the Religion Department. This course provides a venue in which to explore topics in Religion that meet the requirements of an elective course in the Queer Studies Concentration. Topics will vary according to the needs and interests of the teaching faculty offering the course. In some cases, this course may be repeated for credit.

QS 281 - Introduction to Theology (4 Credit Hours)

Does Christianity sanction the status quo or is it an instrument of transformation? Is Jesus a personal savior or an agent of liberation? If the church reflects the society of which it is a part, how can it be an agent for a just order? Are women victims in our social order? Does Christianity contribute to our environmental crisis or its resolution? If God becomes male does male become God? Should the church have same-sex marriage ceremonies? Is the death penalty racist? This course fulfills the Power and Justice (P) GE requirement.

Crosslisting: REL 101.

QS 290 - Issues in Feminism (4 Credit Hours)

An introduction to the field of Women's and Gender Studies, this interdisciplinary course considers the socio-political meanings and practices of gender in our lives. It examines whether gender is biologically or socially constructed and how notions of femininity and masculinity are (re)produced. Students will analyze the workings of power and the social production of inequality in institutions such as the family, the workplace, and the state, taking into account the intersections among gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality. Topics will include sexual and gender violence, equal rights, reproductive technologies, body image, and transnational feminist issues. A central aim of the course is to develop critical reading and thinking about the plurality of women's experiences and about the ways in which women have resisted inequalities and engaged in local/global politics for social transformation and change. This course fulfills the Interdivisional (I), Power and Justice (P), and Oral Communication (R) GE requirement.

Crosslisting: WGST 101.

QS 305 - Ethics of Sex and Love: Moral Discourses on Religion, Gender, and Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)

What does religion have to do with intimate love between two adults? Does the Christian Bible teach that homosexual relations are wrong? Does Islam encourage men to discipline their wives physically and emotionally? Is abortion wrong? Why does the state try to regulate sexual behaviors in society? Who has the right to exercise socially acceptable sexuality and express gender? Why is gender-based sexual violence persistent? How is the social perception of sexual promiscuity associated with race? Based on the hypothesis that gender and sexuality are the signifiers of power relations, this course explores morally complex and tough questions concerning human sexuality, intersecting with race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and secular politics. Students will interrogate how religion and state power have historically shaped the dominant understanding of sexual morality, masculinity, and femininity. Taking religion as analytical tools, the course will examine social issues such as same-sex relations, marriage, reproductive justice, domestic violence, and militarized sexual violence. By reading queer scholars of color's challenges of the mainstream discourse on sex, students will learn how to queer sexual ethics shaped by religion and society and to map out their sexual ethics in light of love and justice.

Crosslisting: REL 305, WGST 305.

QS 311 - Feminist Theory (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines various ways of understanding gender by looking at a variety of feminist theories. Theories studied may include psychoanalytic, feminist theory, cultural materialist feminist theory, etc. Particular consideration will be given to issues raised by multiculturalism, women of color, womanist perspectives, queer theory, class concerns, international and transnational movements. The course will introduce students to a variety of theories to enable them both to recognize and use those theories in their research and social practice. Students will be encouraged to become reflective about their own theoretical stances and to consider how societies can move closer to justice for both women and men.

Prerequisite(s): One Women's and Gender Studies course or consent.

QS 320 - Unruly Bodies (4 Credit Hours)

What does it mean to inhabit an unruly body—that is, a body that is marked or othered in some way? How do we experience embodiment? And how does our bodily presence in a deeply unequal world shape identity, personhood, and politics/ethics? This course draws on theoretical approaches across critical race, disability, feminist, queer, and science and technology studies to unearth taken for granted assumptions about who/what bodies are and how they become sites of social and political contestation. That is, rather than presume bodies to be material artifacts, symbolic representations, or disciplined subjects, we will attend to the processes and relations through which bodies are made, unmade, and remade under particular configurations of power. We will pay specific attention to ethnographic approaches to marked bodies/embodiment and draw on a range of texts, images, films, and podcasts across anthropology and cognate fields. In the process, you will develop a critical understanding of what is at stake in various approaches to thinking through bodies and a greater awareness of the possibilities that cohere in your own embodied self.

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 or consent of instructor.

QS 328 - Buddhism, Gender, & Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)

Historian Joan Wallach Scott once warned that scholars could not simply insert gender into their research as though adding a new room on a house already built; they would have to begin again from the bottom. Considering gender as a cultured way of being in, understanding, and interacting with the world within which we are situated, this seminar queries the conceptualization of gender and sexuality in Buddhism and Buddhist communities across space and time, with particular emphasis on those located in Asia. What does it mean to be a woman, a man, someone of the third sex, or none of the above? What are the Buddhist idea(s) about femininity, masculinity, and personhood? How do these idea(s) change with translation and transmission? We will explore together the theories and practices of gender and sexuality proposed by Buddhist communities from its beginnings to the present day. Buddhism's major conversation partners throughout history – Hinduism, Confucianism, and Daoism – will also be brought into discussion. Previous knowledge of Buddhism is preferred but not required.

Prerequisite(s): No first-year students or by instructor consent.

Crosslisting: REL 328, WGST 328.

QS 330 - LGBTQ+ Identities In & Beyond Schools (4 Credit Hours)

In this seminar students will examine gay and lesbian issues in what is, arguably, the most central social institution in contemporary American culture. We will begin with an introduction to sexuality, drawing upon scientific and historical scholarship, and collectively delineate critical issues regarding sexuality in U.S. schools. We will study Queer Theory as a foundation for the work to follow and read central texts in the queer history of education. We will read major legal documents regarding sexuality in the United States and secondary literature relating to them. In this section our focus will be on students' rights regarding Gay Straight Alliances, safety, and educators' employment rights. We will discuss gay and lesbian issues in a multicultural education framework in terms of issues identified by the class earlier in the semester.

QS 332 - Music and Sexuality (4 Credit Hours)**QS 340 - Social Movements (4 Credit Hours)**

In this course we explore social movements as a primary means of social change. We attempt to understand the conditions which precede, accompany and follow collective action. Particular case studies for analysis will be drawn from the United States and cross-cultural contexts to illustrate that social movements are human products that have both intended and unintended consequences. This course is sometimes taught with a special subtitle: "Social Justice Movements in Communities of Color".

Prerequisite(s): ANSO 100 or consent.

Crosslisting: BLST 340.

QS 345 - The Trans Novel (4 Credit Hours)

This class studies long fiction written by trans people that feature trans experiences. The Trans novel also reviews historical and methodological elements of Queer Studies.

QS 349 - The Trouble with Normal: Normalization, Discourse and Power (4 Credit Hours)

One of the primary ways that social power and control are exercised is through the establishment and enforcement of "norms": gender norms, racial norms, sexuality norms, norms of able-bodiedness, norms of beauty and body size, and more. Power is both a product of and forcefield of social relationships, requiring us to attune to the infinitesimal, banal ways in which bodies, beings, and notions of the human are built. Challenging the "mythical norm," this course delves deeply into the theoretical literature of normalization, especially the work of Michel Foucault, and applies it to a wide range of topics including the intersections between sexuality, disability, gender roles, body size, and more.

Prerequisite(s): COMM 280 and COMM 290 or QS 101 and QS 227 or consent.

Crosslisting: COMM 349.

QS 350 - Special Topics Literature (4 Credit Hours)

This is a special topics course originating in the English Department. This course provides a venue in which to explore topics in English that meet the requirements of an elective course in the Queer Studies Concentration. Topics will vary according to the needs and interests of the teaching faculty offering the course. In some cases, this course may be repeated for credit.

QS 351 - Contemporary Drama (4 Credit Hours)

Intensive study of drama from 1956 to the present, with an emphasis on British and American playwrights. The course will focus on the issues, problems, techniques, and generic forms particular to contemporary drama, with interest in the emerging drama of minority, female, and gay and lesbian playwrights.

Crosslisting: ENGL 340.

QS 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)**QS 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****QS 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****QS 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)****QS 400 - Senior Seminar (4 Credit Hours)**

This is a capstone course for the QS concentration during the spring semester, when it may also serve to help students apply Queer Theory to a senior project or honors project in their chosen major.

QS 402 - Language, Identity and Politics: Discourse and the Public Sphere (4 Credit Hours)

This course examines the role of language and discourse in constructing, maintaining and transforming identities, publics and politics in late 20th century democracies. Throughout, we will consider the relationship between language use and unequal relations of power. We will begin with an introduction to discourse studies and explore discourse as symbolic power, social practice and ideology. Next, we will examine the role of discourse in constructing and maintaining identities and communities, including those of subaltern and marginalized publics. Finally, we will examine and critique the role of discourse in public sphere(s) from Afrocentric, feminist and queer perspectives.

QS 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**QS 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)**