History 457

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSSEXUAL HISTORY:

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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This colloquium provides a critical introduction to important recent scholarship on queer history, as well as concluding sections on two specific, significant topics - the experiences of queers in the academy and the legal revolution that is underway if still incomplete. While informed by theory, the focus of the course is on history as lived experience and how the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual people changed from the 1890s to the present.

The first writing assignment is a synthetic essay of approximately eight to ten pages summing up and interpreting scholarship for the first weeks of the course. The second project, due at the time when a final exam would be held, is either a longer synthetic essay on themes of the course or a special project (to be negotiated). The first essay counts one-third of the final grade, the final project another third, and class participation the remaining third.

This course is governed by the Oberlin College student honor code. Observance of the code is critical to academic integrity. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with it and abide by it fully.

Required texts

The following texts are required and are available at the college bookstore. They are also on reserve. Other readings are available on ERES.

George Chauncey, Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making Of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940


Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*

Michael Sherry, *Gay Artists in Midcentury America: An Imagined Conspiracy*

**SCHEDULE**

9/8     Introduction

THE GAY MALE WORLD OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

9/13 Chauncey, part 1

9/15 Chauncey, part 2

9/20 Chauncey, part 3
Peter Boag essay on gay scandal in Portland

WORLD WAR II AND ITS LEGACY: “COMING OUT UNDER FIRE”


LESBIAN WORLDS: COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

9/27, 9/29 Faderman

THE LAVENDER SCARE

10/4, 10/6 Sherry, introduction and chap. 1
Margot Canaday, *The Straight State*, chap. 5

**10/11**  
**FIRST ESSAY DUE**

10/13  
No Class

10/18, 10/20  
Sherry, chaps. 2-5

10/25, 10/27  
No Class – Fall Break

**THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSSEXUALITY**

11/1, 11/3  
Meyerowitz

**BLACK QUEER HISTORY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

11/8, 11/10  
Selections from E. Patrick Johnson, *Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South*

**IS THE IVORY TOWER A LAVENDER SANCTUARY?**

11/15, 11/17, 11/22  
Selections from Anne MacKay, *Wolf Girls at Vassar*  
Selections from oral history on Oberlin's queer history developed by Joey Plaster

11/24  
No Class (Thanksgiving Wednesday)

**FROM BOWERS TO PERRY: CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION**

11/29, 12/1  
Bowers v. Hardwick, Romer v. Evans

12/6, 12/8  
Lawrence v. Texas, Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, and, Perry v. Schwarzenegger

12/13  
Conclusion

**FINAL ESSAY OR PROJECT DUE AT TIME OF FINAL EXAM**