QUEER RHETORICS
WRTG 3020-030, Spring 2006
MW 3:00-4:15 pm, HLMS 255
Course Description and Policies

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Office Hours: MWF 11:45 AM-12:45 PM

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Queer Rhetorics is a reading- and writing-intensive seminar/workshop. The premise of workshop classes is that we learn how to write well by writing. In this class, we will immerse ourselves in the ideas of queer theory and GLBTQ studies, which will provide the context for our practice to become more effective and adept writers. During the semester we will survey different types of writing on queer issues - including history, theory, coming-out stories, journalism, political activism, and academic research - and will use this writing to generate thoughtful discussion and analysis of queer rhetorical contexts, as well as to help us develop our own voices as writers. (Please note: you do not have to identify as LGBTQ etc. to take this class or succeed in it; you do need to maintain an open mind to the intellectual and critical possibilities of queer perspectives.)

In this class you will develop and practice effective writing strategies that will help you discover what you think about a subject, and how to organize your ideas clearly and persuasively. You will work together as a community of writers to practice revision strategies that will help uncover new possibilities in your subjects and refine your writing for your readers. At times, we will use
class as a writing workshop, sharing our drafts in small
groups to give and receive feedback. At times, we will meet
as a seminar, sharing our critical responses to various
readings with the class as a whole. We will actively
contribute our insights and beliefs to one another,
engaging in thoughtful discussion of issues on which we may
not always agree. Our goal is to do so in a way that both
challenges one another respectfully, and challenges
ourselves to learn from each other - all the while becoming
better writers with a unique perspective on the world.

Texts:

• Aaron, Jane. LB Brief: The Little Brown Handbook, Brief

• Warner, Michael. The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics,
  and the Ethics of Queer Life. Cambridge: Harvard University

• A college-level dictionary of your choice.

• Other readings and course materials will be provided in
  the form of handouts or made available on eReserve.

• Student drafts.

Self-Direction

Of course, you are responsible for keeping track of
schedules and assignments, for knowing your workshop
responsibilities and group assignments, for following
directions, and for tracking due dates. If you are absent,
you are responsible for finding out what you missed and
turning in any makeup work.

Attendance:

Attendance is required. In a seminar/workshop class, your
preparation and participation are crucial to your improving
and developing as a writer, and to the success of the rest
of the class.

You may miss three classes without harm to your grade.
There are no "excused absences," so save those three for
important reasons such as the colds that inevitably make
the rounds during the semester. Each absence exceeding
three will lower your final grade by one level (for example, B to a B- for four absences; B to a C+ for five absences, etc.). Seven or more absences will automatically result in failure of the course without exception. Arriving late for class negatively affects your participation grade.

If you foresee any attendance conflicts because of religious observance, please notify me during the first two weeks of the semester so that suitable schedule accommodations can be made.

**Assignments:**

You will be writing two deliberative essays that will be workshopped, revised, and graded for the course. In addition, you will be writing shorter assignments — some of which will be graded. A regular and required assignment is that you read and make written comments on paper drafts of your classmates (typically distributed in class) in advance of the class. You must come to class ready to comment orally and to hand in written comments done outside of class on the work of your colleagues and to share in their inquiry. Students serve regularly as critical readers whose reflection on drafts submitted by classmates will be a regular feature of the workshop. These critical reflections should be prepared in advance of class and be well organized, cogent, and to the point. They should identify weaknesses and propose possible remedies on the appropriate Peer Response sheet, which is completed for the authors and for the instructor.

The principal text in the course will be your own writing. Please have duplicated drafts (typed, double-spaced in hard copy, MLA format) ready when due (usually 48 hours before they are to be workshopped). Drafts are required, but not graded. They factor into your final essay grade. Please date and number all drafts. If you miss classroom critiques because you do not turn in drafts, your writing will almost certainly suffer. I will not accept final papers that have not been reviewed on a regular basis over the course of the assignment. "First draft" final versions are unacceptable and will receive an "F". Late papers will not be accepted.

Computer problems do not excuse the failure to prepare. If you are having problems with your personal computer, remember that there are computer labs all over campus. Plan ahead.
GRADING:

It is difficult to earn an "A" on a paper, and "earn" is the operative word in my grading philosophy. Writing is a skill, one that can always be improved. "C" is the dividing line between satisfactory work and unsatisfactory work. "B" demonstrates good work. "A" is outstanding, exceptional, and rare work; it is definitely not the norm.

*Please note that while almost any essay topic is potentially rich enough to lead you to produce excellent writing, some topics are less likely to lend themselves to the kind of critical analysis and original approaches that are essential for "A" or "B" papers. Make sure you discuss topics with me.

Grading Scale for Papers:

A  Excellent in form, style, and content - original, substantive, insightful, persuasive, clear, and free from mechanical errors.
B  Good, interesting, with above-average thought and expression; no major flaws.
C  Adequate, fulfilling the assignment. Reasonably competent; has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses.
D  Poor in content, form, style, and/or mechanics. Disorganized, unfocused, illogical, confusing, or containing pervasive errors that impair readability.
F  Incoherent, disastrously flawed, plagiarized, never turned in, or not turned in on time.

Revision

The word "revision" literally means "to see again." Global revision of most writing projects is a requirement for the course, and the extent and success of your revision process is part of what your grades are based on. Note that although I spend a good deal of time writing comments on your papers, it is still your responsibility to read your own work holistically.
using my comments, workshop reflections, and what you have learned as a guide, to discover ways to improve the clarity, content, analysis, and style of your papers. It is never adequate to simply fix the specific things I point out and leave it at that. One of the reasons we spend so much time in conference and in workshop is so you will become more skilled at discovering ways to improve and enhance your own writing.

All assigned work (including drafts) must be completed to pass the course.

Participation

This aspect of your grade reflects your mental attendance. In other words, those students who simply show up will not do well; those who are actively engaged in the course will succeed in this area. This is not a “lecture” course in nature, and you learn rhetorical skills primarily through guided, deliberate practice and participation. Participation includes providing quality written and oral feedback during peer reviews and workshops, asking intelligent and relevant questions during discussions and following presentations, acting professionally and in the manner of a colleague (meaning participating fully in all class exercises), etc. Arriving late for class negatively affects your participation grade.

General CU guidelines regarding expectations of classroom behavior are available online at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/index.html. In general, I expect and encourage challenging and critical interactions both with me and with your peers, with common courtesy and respect for others the rule of the day.

Grading Scale for Participation:

A Always prepared for class; participates without being called on; criticisms of other student papers show insight, close reading; comments are clear, succinct, and helpful.
Generally prepared for class; occasionally participates without being called on; criticisms of other student papers demonstrate a good grasp of the course goals; comments generally are clear and helpful.

Adequately prepared for class; only participates when called on; mastery of the course goals generally is evident, but criticisms of student papers, although somewhat helpful, demonstrate a less than thorough reading or understanding of the paper or course goals.

Preparation is less than adequate; never participates unless called on; criticisms of other student papers demonstrate a casual reading, at best; comments demonstrate a failure to master the course goals.

Disruptive to class (talking, reading other materials, continual tardiness, etc.) unprepared when called on; unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions.

25% Annotated Bibliography, in-class graded assignments, etc.
10% Literature Review
15% Persuasive Essay
20% Research Essay
30% Participation (including in-class non-graded assignments, "scribbles & notes," and general participation.

Getting to Online Assignments
For the Critical Reading Themes and Research Tutorial, go to the following PWR site: http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/pwr/ (generally available the second week of classes).

PLAGIARISM:

Uncited, plagiarized material shall be treated as academically dishonest, and the paper will be assigned an "F" as a result. If you are confused as to what constitutes plagiarism, you should review the CU Honor Code on this topic (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html) as well
as the extensive section on the topic in your LB Brief. If you are unclear on this, see the instructor.

Papers submitted by any student, written in part or in whole by someone other than that student, shall be considered to constitute fraud under the University Honor Code, and result in the assignment of an "F" for the entire course and your case reported to the Dean.

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Students should notify the Counselor for Students with Disabilities at the Disabilities Service Office, Willard 322 (303-492-8671 or http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

If English is not your native language, you should let me know the first week of classes so that I can better assist you in the course, advise you about special ESL courses, and/or refer you to appropriate services on campus.