

Com 10N – Contemporary Master Authors

Liberatory Sexuality: Narratives of Queer and Subversive Desire

Instructor: Patrick Cabell

Instructor Office Hours:

Mondays: 4:30- 5:30pm, 815 Sproul.

Wednesdays: 4:30- 5:30pm, Delta of Venus Cafe, 122 B Street.

Course Description

Modernity once appeared to be revolutionizing romantic and familial life, with heteronormative sexuality as one of its central tenets. Modernist narratives often posited homosexuality as both a threat to and escape from the monolithic reproduction of passive worker-consumers. However, the present status of 'gay liberation' is inconclusive.

Bourgeois-democracies now celebrate queer aesthetics and rhetoric as a key triumph of Liberal capitalism's inclusion and proliferation of identity-positions. On the other hand, capitalism has also incubated and fueled a brand of regressive traditionalism with a radically conservative set of sexual values.

This class will read three novels dealing with queer and non-conforming sexuality. We will also read critical writing and watch films that further interrogate how and why sexual norms are subverted. Authors will include Jean Genet, Kathy Acker, Robert Glück, Chris Chitty, LIES Collective, and Isaac Julien. In a discussion-based format, we will posit: what is the contemporary status of sexuality as a terrain of struggle? Under what conditions does Desire transcend the laws and confines of socialization? What does the restriction and liberalization of sexuality tell us about the historical arc, and possible terminus, of the capitalist system?

Required Texts

<u>Author</u>	Title
Jean Genet	<i>Our Lady of the Flowers</i> (1943)
Robert Glück	<i>Jack the Modernist</i> (1985)
Kathy Acker	<i>Pussy, King of the Pirates</i> (1996)

Texts are available in the campus bookstore.

Other books and essays will be posted to Smartsite.

Class Schedule:

- (Week 1) Mon 9/26 Introductions
Reading assignment: Bruce Nugent, *Smoke, Lilies, and Jade*
Alan Sears, "Queer Anti-Capitalism: What's Left of Lesbian and Gay Liberation?"
- (2) Mon, October 3 Film: *Looking for Langston (1989)*. Dir: Isaac Julien
Reading assignment: Chris Chitty, "The Antinomies of Sexual Discourse"
Our Lady of the Flowers
- (3) Mon, October 10 Reading assignment: *Our Lady of the Flowers*
- (4) Mon, October 17 Reading assignment: Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic"
LIES, "Undoing Sex: Against Sexual Optimism"
Gonzalez and Troyan, "<3 of a Heartless World"
- (5) Mon, October 24 Reading assignment: Robert Glück, *Jack the Modernist*
- (6) Mon, October 31 Happy Halloween
Reading assignment: Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*
- (7) Mon, Nov 7 Reading assignment: *Pussy, King of the Pirates*
- (8) Mon, Nov 14 Film: *A Question of Silence (1982)* – Marleen Gorris
Reading assignment: *Pussy, King of the Pirates*
- (9) Mon, Nov 21 Reading assignment: GLQ, "Queer Studies, Materialism, and Crisis"
Kevin Floyd, "Rethinking Reification: Marcuse, Psychoanalysis, and Gay Liberation"
- (10) Mon, Nov 28 Conclusion
Film: *Side Effects (2013)*

Requirements and expectations:

- Attend class and film screenings
- Do the reading
- Be respectful
- Participate in discussions

Disclaimer:

Much of the material for this class is explicit in nature, and often intentionally provocative and offensive. Please be prepared to have your ideas and boundaries challenged by the texts.