

# ENGL 101-08/ WGSS 101-04: LGBTQ Literature in the US

Dickinson College, Fall 2016  
MWF 12:30-1:20, East College 405  
<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/lgbtqlit/>

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## **Course Description**

This course will explore how sex and gender intersect with other forms of difference— including race and class—in literature by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer-identified (LGBTQ) authors, and authors who present LGBTQ characters and themes in their texts. Students will consider the impact of sexuality and gender on literature and experience. Our readings will include a range of literary genres, such as essay, poetry, novel, drama, and film and we will focus on the interpretation of texts particularly through the lens of queer theory.

## **Course Materials**

The following texts are required for the course and are available at the college bookstore:

- Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006. ISBN 978-0618477944
- Kushner, Tony. *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes: Part One: Millennium Approaches: Part Two: Perestroika* (ISBN-13: 9781559362313) Theatre Communications Group, 2003
- Levithan, David. *Boy Meets Boy* (ISBN-13: 978-0375832994) Knopf, 2005
- Peters, Julie Anne. *Luna* (ISBN-13: 978-0316011273) Little, Brown Young Readers, 2006
- Rich, Adrienne. *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems 1950-2001*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2002 ISBN 978-0393323955
- Winterson, Jeanette. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (ISBN-13: 978-0802135162) Grove Press, 1997
- Additional readings are available on our class website unless otherwise specified in the syllabus.

## **Course Objectives**

As per the English Department's Learning Goals, by the end of this course students will be practiced in:

- 1) the ability to read texts closely in a sensitive way (based on the presence of germane summary, accurate paraphrase, and/or careful attention to patterns and details of language).
- 2) the understanding of the relationship(s) between text and context in the generation of meaning ("context" to include at least one of the following: portions of a text other than the one under prime examination, other texts, literary genres, history, biography, literary theory).

3) the ability to formulate a powerful critical argument (characterized by an arguable thesis, the convincing marshaling of evidence, and grammatically and mechanically correct prose).

### **Attendance and Participation**

**Preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial to this course and your success in it.**

Regular attendance and conscientious preparation for class are assumed and expected. That said I recognize things sometimes come up, and as such, I give you up to *three* absences throughout the course of the semester without penalty. Missing classes beyond that will result in a reduction of your participation grade. Just showing up for class, however, is not enough to guarantee a high participation grade. Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You come to class having done the day's reading.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation without dominating or silencing others.
- You offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you root your comments in the text we are discussing. (In other words, people who try to comment on things they have not read will lose points.)
- You attend peer review sessions with a working rough draft.
- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals when you are placed in a small group.
- You are present and *engaged* in every class.

I recognize that some students are hesitant to speak in front of class. If this is the case, please come talk with me during office hours early in the semester. In addition, if extenuating circumstances arise that are interfering with your ability to attend and/or participate in this class or others, please come see me as soon as possible. Dickinson has many resources available to you that might help you navigate a challenging a time or situation and I can help you locate those resources. As a general rule of thumb, if you are struggling in some way, please see me as soon as possible.

**“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster**

### **Papers**

Papers will go through the invention, drafting, feedback, and revising process. The process of revision and the ultimate success of the paper depend upon a thoughtful first draft as well as a polished final draft. For each longer paper, you will have ample time for writing the first version and for revising after receiving feedback on the draft. All papers (first and final versions) must be word-processed and meet standard format practices (either double-spaced, 12 point font, pages numbered in the right hand corner, title and name on first page, and date of submission OR an online equivalent). Throughout the paper, the citations and documentation style should be consistent. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade.

**Evaluation Policies for Writing Assignments**

In general, I will evaluate your writing by considering how well you have achieved the following goals (developed by the Writing Program):

1. The author crafts an introduction that identifies a question, frames the question, and states a thesis.
2. The author organizes the writing, demonstrates a progression of ideas, and maintains a consistent focus or thread.
3. The author contextualizes the question and supports it with evidence.
4. The author sustains analytical inquiry throughout the assignment.
5. The author effectively incorporates relevant outside information.
6. The author engages the intended audience with a consistent, distinctive voice appropriate to the task.
7. The author adheres to appropriate standards for language use.
8. The author conforms to appropriate formats for citation of source material.

**Requirements and Grading**

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on regular short writing assignments and two more formal essays. The relative weight of each component is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Blog Posts/Short Papers, comments, & other writing (this means, each blog post/short paper will be between 3&4% of your grade)	35%
First Exam	15%
Second Exam	20%
Final Paper	20%

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way:

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D = 60-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	F = 0-59
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	

**Grade Calculations**

If you would like to discuss graded work, please take at least two days to review my comments, along with the grading criteria for the assignment. While I don't negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improving your writing.

**Deadlines**

Deadlines are firm. Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or you have extraneous, extenuating circumstances, late assignments will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

### **Extra Credit**

If you attend any Dickinson College screening, workshop, or lecture and write a 1-2 page reflection stating how the event related to this class and what was interesting about it for you, I will award 1 point extra credit. You may complete up to 5 extra credit reflections. These points will be added to your lowest exam grade at the end of the semester. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable.

### **Lateness, Cell Phones, and Other Disruptions**

Please make an effort to be on time. Class begins promptly and if you are more than ten minutes late, I will record you as absent. If you have a reason that may cause you to be late from time to time, please let me know. Please remember to turn OFF all cell phones unless otherwise directed. If you are a student athlete or member of a student group that requires you to miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please let me know as soon as possible.

### **Technology in the Classroom**

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I ask that you see me if you would like to use a laptop or electronic device to take notes. I'll make these decisions on a case-by-case basis in consultation with each individual. However, from time to time I will ask you to utilize technology in the classroom. When working on an in-class assignment which requires you to access online texts and/or various social media, I expect **all students to stay on-task and not stray from our class focus**. To put it simply, I do not tolerate students surfing the web or chatting online during class.

### **Privacy**

I request you all create a screen name under which you blog for our class. Our class will think about what it means to perform identity and blogging is one way we can engage the practice of identity and performance. Part of our class will be trying out new and different perspectives and positions. I recognize that these positions can change and grow; by using screennames we give ourselves the room to experiment without fear that our experiments will come back to hurt us. **I am happy to remove any blog posts at the end of the term and/or you may remove your own writing. I ask that you let me know before you do so.**

### **Blog Posts**

You will complete a number of blog posts over the course of the semester as well as comment on other posts made by your classmates. These posts will be in response to prompts handed out in class or of your own direction. Over the course of the posts, I expect you to engage with the readings and discussions and not simply summarize them. I also expect you to make connections to other sources, media, and class texts so please add quotations, images, links, videos, etc. that relate to the week's topics and your interpretation of them. We will explore these skills in class.

### **Norman M. Eberly Writing Center**

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers.

Dickinson's trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor's preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, and edit your writing – among other things. You can make an online appointment here:

<https://dickinson.mywconline.com/>. For more information about hours and procedures, visit their site:  
<http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Writing-Center/>

### **Accommodations**

I am committed to including all students in this course and am happy to discuss accommodations with students.

From Dickinson College's Disability Services:

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Dana Hall, Suite 106. Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from Director Marni Jones every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of ODS is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. ODS proctoring is managed by Susan Frommer (717-254-8107 or [proctoring@dickinson.edu](mailto:proctoring@dickinson.edu)). Address general inquiries to 717-245-1734 or e-mail [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu). For more information, go to [www.dickinson.edu/ODS](http://www.dickinson.edu/ODS).

### **Academic Integrity**

**Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Consistent with Dickinson College's Student Code of Conduct, cheating of any kind may lead to disciplinary action, which often includes failing the course. Submission of someone else's written work or using sources without proper credit is unacceptable. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by the College's principles of academic integrity. Please read Dickinson's fact sheet on academic integrity:

[https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/4626/academic\\_integrity\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/4626/academic_integrity_fact_sheet.pdf)

With respect to all assignments in this course, I expect you to do your own work. You are certainly encouraged to discuss course content and readings with your fellow classmates, but your work in papers must be your own. Regarding outside sources, you will need to cite and/or somehow credit *all* of your sources (textual *and* visual). We will discuss ways of doing this before your first written assignment is due. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please feel free to ask.

From Dickinson College's Community Standards:

"Respect for ideas — our own and others' — is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another's words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors" (2).

From: [https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/963/community\\_standards](https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/963/community_standards)

**Content Note**

Some of the texts presented in this course are explicit in their treatment of sex, of bodies, and of violence. Reading and discussing these texts can be demanding in ways that are often unexpected, and your success in this class will require an open engagement with the material. I will make every effort to work with students who have difficulty; however, if you feel you are not inclined or able to work with explicit material, I encourage you to think about other course options.

**Other Needs**

If you have a concern or issue regarding this class, your ability to participate in it, or the material we are covering, please stop by my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. The sooner we can talk about your concerns, the better I will be able to help you negotiate a solution. I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students.

**Class Contacts:**

If you miss class for ANY reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact another member of the class to see what you may have missed. Please make sure you have at least three contacts:

1. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The policies, procedures, schedules, and requirements in this syllabus are subject to change—should any occur I will make every effort to give you plenty of notice.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: The assignments below are subject to change. Please check course website for updates.

Week	Date	Assignments & Reading Due
1 (M)	8/29	Class introduction
1 (W)	8/31	~ Eve Sedgwick's "Queer and Now" (PDF) ~ Chapter 3 from <i>Writing Analytically</i> (5 Analytical Moves)
1 (F)	9/2	~ Audre Lorde's "Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power" (PDF) ~ selections from <i>Growing Up Gay/Growing Up Lesbian: A Literary Anthology</i> (PDF) ~ complete: <a href="#">Writing Questionnaire</a>
2 (M)	9/5	~ Gloria Anzaldua's "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to 3 <sup>rd</sup> World Women Writers" (PDF) ~ Adrienne Rich's "The Fact of a Doorframe" p131
2 (W)	9/7	~ Adrienne Rich from <i>The Fact of a Doorframe</i> pp 135-154
2 (F)	9/9	~ Rich pp 193-212 ~ <a href="#">blog post#1 due: Group A</a>
3 (M)	9/12	~ Rich pp TBD ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group B</a>
3 (W)	9/14	~ Rich pp TBD
3 (F)	9/16	~ Rich pp TBD ~ <a href="#">blog post#1 due: Group B</a>
4 (M)	9/19	~ Jeanette Winterson's <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> pp1-18 ~ Alison Bechdel's "Coming Out Story" at <a href="http://www.oberlinlgbt.org/bechdel/bechdel-1.html">http://www.oberlinlgbt.org/bechdel/bechdel-1.html</a> ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group A</a>
4 (W)	9/21	~ <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> ; pp 19-52 ~ videos from It Gets Better Project (links on blog)
4 (F)	9/23	~ <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> ; pp 53-70 ~ <a href="#">blog post#2 due: Group A</a>
5 (M)	9/26	~ <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> ; pp 71-97 ~ Guardian article: <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/oct/20/jeanettewinterson">https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/oct/20/jeanettewinterson</a> ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group B</a>
5 (W)	9/28	~ <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> ; pp 98-140
5 (F)	9/30	~ <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> pp 141-end ~ <a href="#">blog post#2 due: Group B</a>
6 (M)	10/3	~ reading TBA ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group A</a>
6 (W)	10/5	~ reading TBA
6 (F)	10/7	Midterm Review
7 (M)	10/10	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
7 (W)	10/12	~ Tony Kushner's <i>Angels in America</i>

7 (F)	10/14	~ <i>Angels in America</i>
8 (M)	10/17	<b>NO CLASS- Fall Pause</b>
8 (W)	10/19	~ <i>Angels in America</i>
8 (F)	10/21	~ <i>Angels in America</i> ~ <a href="#">blog post#3 due: Group A</a>
9 (M)	10/24	~ <i>Angels in America</i> ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group B</a>
9 (W)	10/26	~ <i>Angels in America</i>
9 (F)	10/28	~ <i>Angels in America</i> ~ <a href="#">blog post#3 due: Group B</a>
10 (M)	10/31	~ David Levithan's <i>Boy Meets Boy</i> pp 1-59 ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group A</a>
10 (W)	11/2	~ <i>Boy Meets Boy</i> pp 60-120
10 (F)	11/4	<b>NO CLASS</b>
11 (M)	11/7	<b>NO CLASS</b>
11 (W)	11/9	~ <i>Boy Meets Boy</i> pp 120-185
11 (F)	11/11	~ <i>Boy Meets Boy</i> ; epilogue and "The Quarterback and the Cheerleader" (pp186-end) ~ <a href="#">blog post#4 due: Group A</a>
12 (M)	11/14	~ Julie Anne Peters' <i>Luna</i> ; pp 1-61 ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group B</a>
12 (W)	11/16	~ <i>Luna</i> ; pp 62-128
12 (F)	11/18	~ <i>Luna</i> ; pp 129-187 ~ <a href="#">blog post#4 due: Group B</a>
13 (M)	11/21	~ <i>Luna</i> ; pp 188-end ~ <a href="#">Comments due: Group A</a>
13 (W)	11/23	<b>NO CLASS, Thanksgiving</b>
13 (F)	11/25	<b>NO CLASS, Thanksgiving</b>
14 (M)	11/28	~ <i>Fun Home</i>
14 (W)	11/30	~ <i>Fun Home</i>
14 (F)	12/2	<a href="#">Peer Review—Final Paper</a>
15 (M)	12/5	~ TBA
15 (W)	12/7	Last Class, Wrap Up: No new reading
15 (F)	12/9	<a href="#">In-Class Exam</a>
Final	12/13	<a href="#">Final Paper Due by 5:00pm on Tues 12/13</a>