

*Queer Spectatorship* (CIN340HF)  
Intersession 2019

**Course Description:** From the psychoanalytic theory of the 1970s to more recent accounts of theatre patrons in specific historical periods, the cinematic spectator has rarely been constructed as anything other than straight, their presumed heterosexuality informing not only their relationship to images on the screen, but also the way they occupy the theatre space and interact with other spectators within it. This series of infrequently examined assumptions provokes the following question: what would happen to such understandings of film viewers if they were to be considered through the prism of queer looking, queer communal ethics, or queer visions of political aesthetics? This course will therefore address the intersection of media reception and queer eroticism, focusing both on the ways in which a viewer's sexuality informs their perception of films, but also the role that such sexual practices play in the creation of social worlds ungoverned by heterosexual norms.

**Course Schedule**

**Unit I (What is Queer Spectatorship?)**

**1. May 6: Reading**

Screening: *Late Spring* (Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1949, 108 min.)

Reading: Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* New York: Routledge, 2011, 200-17.

Judith Mayne, "The Critical Audience," in *Cinema and Spectatorship,* London: Routledge, 2002, 157-72.

Yuka Kanno, "Implicational Spectatorship: Hara Setsuko and the Queer Joke," *Mechademia* 6 (2011): 287-303.

**2. May 8: Aestheticism and The Cherished Object**

Screening: *Mario Banana #1* (Andy Warhol, USA, 1964, 4 min.), *Pink Narcissus* (James Bidgood, USA, 1971, 71 min.) and *Looking for Langston* (Isaac Julien, Great Britain, 1989, 42 min.)

Reading: John David Rhodes, "Notes on Cinematic Desire," *World Picture* 4 (2010), 1-8.

Rosalind Galt, "Pretty: Film Theory, Aesthetics, and the History of the Troublesome Image," *Camera Obscura* 24.2 (2009): 1-41.

**3. May 13: Sex and/in the Theatre**

Screening: *Goodbye Dragon Inn* (Tsai Ming-liang, Taiwan, 2004, 82 min.)

Reading: Excerpt from Samuel R. Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue,* New York: NYU Press, 1999.

Mel Y. Chen, "Toxic Animacies, Inanimate Affections," *GLQ* 17.2-3 (2011): 265-86.

**4. May 15: Cinephilia Otherwise**

Screening: *The Watermelon Woman* (Cheryl Dunye, USA, 1996, 90 min.) and *Illusions* (Julie Dash, USA, 1982, 34 min.)

Reading: Rebecca Wanzo, "African-American Acafandom and Other Strangers: New Genealogies of Fan Studies," *Journal of Transformative Works and Cultures* 20 (2015): <https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/699/538>.

Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ* 3.4 (1997): 437-65.

**5. May 22: Camp, Gender, and Bad Taste**

Screening: *Glen or Glenda* (Ed Wood, USA, 1953, 71 min.), "I Want to Break Free" (David Mallet and Queen, Great Britain, 1984, 4 min.), "Walk Like a Man," (Divine, USA, 1985, 4 min.)

Reading: Excerpt from Brett Farmer, "Camping Under the Stars: Gay Spectatorships, Camp, and the Excessive Female Star Image," in *Spectacular Passions: Cinema, Fantasy, and Gay Male Spectatorships*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, 111-23.

J. Halberstam, "The Queer Art of Failure," in *The Queer Art of Failure*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, 87-121.

**Unit II (Past Engagements: 2018 and Queer Historiography)**

**6. May 27: Excess and The AIDS Crisis**

Screening: *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Bryan Singer and Dexter Fletcher, Great Britain and USA, 2018, 134 min.)

Reading: Douglas Crimp, "How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic," *October* 43 (1987): 237-71.

Wayne Koestenbaum, "Opera Queens," in *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire*, New York: Poseidon Press, 1993, 9-45.

**7. May 29: Humour and Care**

Screening: *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (Marielle Heller, USA, 2018, 115 min.)

Reading: Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New York: The New Press, 1997, 135-40.

Lauren Berlant and Sianne Ngai, "Comedy Has Issues," *Critical Inquiry* 43.2 (2017): 233-49.

**8. June 3: Coldness and Form**

Screening: *The Favourite* (Yorgos Lanthimos, Great Britain, 2018, 120 min.)

Reading: Heather Love, "Introduction," in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, 1-30.

Eugenie Brinkema, "Film Theory's Absent Centre," in *The Forms of the Affects*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, 26-46.

**9. June 5: Minor Archives**

Screening: *Shirkers* (Sandi Tan, USA/Singapore, 2018, 97 min.)

Reading: Elizabeth Freeman, "Queer and Not Now," in *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, 1-20.

Mimi Thi Nguyen, "Minor Threats," *Radical History Review* 122 (2015): 11-24.

José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts," *Women and Performance* 8.2 (1996): 256-77.

**Unit III (Contesting Space, Contesting Sex)**

**10. June 10: Bedroom Culture**

Screening: *Me and Rubyfruit* (Sadie Benning, USA, 1990, 5 min.), *Jabberwocky* (Jan Švankmajer, Czechoslovakia, 1971, 13 min.), *La chambre* (Chantal Akerman, Belgium, 1972, 11 min.) and *Hausu* (Nobuhiko Ôbayashi, Japan, 1977, 88 min.)

Reading: Excerpt from Kathryn Bond Stockton, "Introduction: Growing Sideways," in *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, 1-17.

Mary Celeste Kearney, "Productive Spaces: Girls' Bedrooms as Sites of Cultural Production," *Journal of Children and Media* 1.2 (2007): 126-41.

Mizuki Takahasi, "Opening the Closed World of Shōjo Manga," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. Mark MacWilliams, New York: Routledge, 2008, 114-36.

**11. June 12: Intelligibility and the Westernness of Queer**

Screening: *The Sealed Soil* (Marva Nabili, Iran, 1979, 90 min.)

Reading: Sara Saljoughi, "A Cinema of Refusal: *The Sealed Soil* and the Political Aesthetics of the Iranian New Wave," *Feminist Media Histories* 3.1 (2017): 81-102.

Anjali Arondekar and Geeta Patel, "Area Impossible: Notes Toward an Introduction," *GLQ* 22.2 (2016): 151-71.

**12. June 17: Spectatorship after the Human**

Screening: *A Zed and Two Noughts* (Peter Greenaway, Great Britain, 1985, 115 min.)

Reading: Cynthia Chris, "Animal Sex," in *Watching Wildlife*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 122-66.

Timothy Morton, "Queer Ecology," *PMLA* 125.2 (2010): 273-82.