

**The Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
Western University**

**GSWS 2167: Queer(ing) Popular Culture  
Winter 2022**

**\*\*TENTATIVE SYLLABUS\*\***

**Weekly Meetings:** Monday 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM

**Location:** TBD

**Instructor:** Amy Keating

**Office Hours:**

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Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

**Course Description:**

How are Queer individuals represented in popular culture? Images of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals in media, including news, film, and television, produce particular ideas of queer identity. This course examines the historical and contemporary presence of queer individuals within popular culture and popular culture produced for and by 2SLGBTQ+ people. Course materials consider 2SLGBTQ+ representations (and lack thereof) over the past century through an intersectional lens exploring who has been left out, the burgeoni what stories continue to be ignored, and the interplay between pop culture, societal understandings of identity, and cultural norms. The content explores common stereotypes as well as how representations have shifted over time for queer and trans people, with attention to the importance of considering historical context. Students will consider a wide variety of pop culture materials and will be encouraged to seek representations beyond the course content for assignments and further thought. Content will span the genres of music, comedy, film, fashion, YouTube videos and podcasts.

**Learning Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the history of queer and 2SLGBTQ+ identities in North American popular culture



**Course**



**Streaming in class:**

Epstein, R., & Friedman, J. (Directors). (1995). *The celluloid closet* [Film]. Channel Four Films, & HBO Pictures.

**Week 4: January 24, 2022. Assignment #1 is due (15%)**

***HIV/AIDS Stigma and Media Representation***

fining queer visibility through the lens of  
AIDS. In *Queer representation, visibility, and race in American film and television: Screening the closet* (pp. 70–109). Routledge.

Cheng, J.-F. (2016). How to survive: AIDS and its afterlives in the popular media. *WSQ*:  
*Journal of the American Queer Studies Association*, 44(1–2), 73–92.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/wsqa.2016.0013>

**Week 5: January 31, 2022.**

Crookston, C. (2021). Can I Be Frank with You?: Laverne Cox and the historiographic dramaturgy of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 27(2), 233–252. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-8871677>

Zamantakis, A., & Sumerau, J. E. (2019). Streaming transgender: Visualizing continuity and change in transgender media representations. In A. Trier-Bieniek (Ed.), *Gender and pop culture* (pp. 25–42). BRILL. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004288716\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004288716_002)

**Week 9: February 28, 2022.**

***A Look into Drag's Past, Present, and Future***

Hodes, C., & Sandoval, J. (2018).

white ruling-class femininity and the etiolation of drag. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 3(2), 149–166. [https://doi.org/10.1386/scp.3.2.149\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/scp.3.2.149_1)

Feldman, Z., & Hakim, J. (2020). From *Paris is Burning* to #dragrace: social media and the celebrification of drag culture. *Celebrity Studies*, 11(4), 386–401.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2020.1765080>

**Week 10: March 7, 2022.**

***Who Killed Disco? Race and Queerness in Mainstream Music***

**Week 12: March 21, 2022.**

***Representations of Queerness and Disability***

Dapper crip: Disability, queer masculinity, and fashion. (2016, October 26). DapperQ: Ungendering Fashion. <https://www.dapperq.com/2016/10/dapper-crip-disability-queer-masculinity-fashion/>

Davies, A., Maich, K., Belcher, C., Cagulada, E., DeWelles, M., & van Rhijn, T. (2021). A critical examination of the intersection of sexuality and disability in *Special*, a Netflix series. In M. S. Jeffress (Ed.), *Disability representation in film, TV, and print media* (First edition, pp. 44–64). Routledge

Dunn, G. & Raskin, A. (Hosts). (2019, November 5). Disability activist Eva Sweeney, being alone forever and comedy vs. PC culture. [Audio podcast episode]. In *Just Between Us. Forever Dog*. <https://foreverdogpodcasts.com/podcasts/just-between-us/>  
[Required listening only 12:00 min to approx. 31:05 min]

**Week 13: March 28, 2022.**

***Queerbaiting and Mainstreaming Queerness***

Whitney, E. (2006). Capitalizing on camp: Greed and the queer marketplace. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 26(1), 36-46.

experiences of queerbaiting. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1–13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2021.1892808>