

HL3040: Gender and Diversity

Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary course that focuses much on influential gender and queer theories which will provide foundational frameworks to analyse texts, and understand social and societal phenomena; The course hopes to arm students with the knowledge and language to discuss current issues on heteropatriarchy and marginalisation. The first part of the course questions and complicates the often-thought-as discrete constructions of sex, gender, and sexuality by looking into medical, sociological, literary, and philosophical research. Then we will delve further and narrow the syllabus through intersectionality: disability, transgender identity, etc. While many theories originated from the West, we will test if these theories aligned with Asian concepts of gender by including several Asian texts.

Course Outline

Weeks	Topics	Required Texts
Part 1: Gender v. Sex v. Sexuality		
1	Introduction I	In-class discussion: What is gender? Sex? Sexuality?
2	Introduction II	In-class screening: BBC. <i>The Boy Who Was Turned into a Girl</i> (2000). In-class discussion: Kane, Peter-Astrid. "After years of progress on gay rights, how did the US become so anti-LGBTQ+?" <i>Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/apr/28/lgbtq-rights-us-dont-say-gay Wortham, Jenna. "When Everyone Can be 'Queer,' Is Anyone?" <i>New York Times</i> . https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/magazine/when-everyone-can-be-queer-is-anyone.html
3	Gender v. Sex	-Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes." -Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Is Gender Essential?"
4	Gender v. Sex	-Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman." -Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women."
5	Gender v. Sexuality	-Michel Foucault, <i>The History of Sexuality Vol 1</i> (selections)

6	Gender v. Sexuality	-Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Between Men." -Bram Stoker, <i>Dracula</i> (1 page) - <i>Marry My Dead Body</i> (2022), dir. Cheng Wei-hao
Part 2: Gendered Bodies on Display		
7	Performativity	-Joan Rivere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade." -Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Optional viewing: <i>Psycho</i> (1960) Essay Assignment 1 Due
8	Performativity	-Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" -Judith Butler, <i>Gender Trouble</i> (extracts) -Judith Butler, "Gender is Burning." Optional viewing: <i>Paris is Burning</i> (1990)
9	Trans Bodies	-Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back" -Kessler & McKenna, "Towards a Theory of Gender" -Talia Mae Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and make-believers."
10	Racial Bodies	-Jasbir Puar, <i>Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times</i> (selection)
11	Revision	Revision
12	In class test	In class test
13	Makeup Test/ Consultation	Makeup Test/ Consultation for essay 2

Learning Outcomes

1. Identity and explain critical feminist and queer theories within historical, social, and cultural contexts.
2. Apply concepts and theories in student's own discipline and real-life situations
3. Analyse materials and how they relate to gender and sexuality as an overall structure.
4. Evaluate and synthesise materials to partake in effective written and oral conversations in class and out.

Assessment

Component	Weightage	Deadlines
3 mini “blog” projects	25%	Week 13
2 Essay Assignments	45% (15% first essay + 30% second essay)	Week 7, Week 13
In-class test	30%	Week 12

1. Mini Blog Projects (25%)

Over the course of the semester, you are expected to **submit 3 mini blog projects on the class blog**. When you submit the projects is entirely up to you. You are responsible for keeping track of your work and making sure that you complete this requirement.

There is only one restriction regarding the submissions: **All work must be submitted before 4 April**, although I strongly encourage you to get this requirement out of the way early, especially since there are a final paper and an exam at the end of the semester.

All mini projects have to be submitted twice: (1) my email (aaron.ho@ntu.edu.sg) to be alerted that you have submitted (Please ensure that I acknowledge your submission); (2) class **blog** on NTULearn.

The mini blog projects are beneficial to hone your other intelligences and express yourselves. The purpose is for you to observe how gender issues play a part in your daily lives, in preparation for your future as a working member of society. In academia, we often exercise only the “book-smart” intelligence but there are 8 types according to the theory of multiple intelligences. These are the examples of the projects you can do (**pick any three**):

- a. Visual-spatial intelligence:
 - i. Do a collage/drawing/comic strip/poster of a theory we learn in class. (You may use AI to do the art piece but state clearly that you are using AI.) Explain in a paragraph to the class what the piece relates to gender (Do not use AI in the explanation).
 - ii. Take a photo and explain in a paragraph to the class how it relates to gender.
 - iii. Blog about a gendered architecture of a building to the class (500 words).
- b. People-smart intelligence:
 - i. Create an ad to capture your understanding of gender. (You may use AI to create the ad but state clearly that you are using AI.) Explain in a paragraph to the class how it relates to gender (Do not use AI in the explanation).
 - ii. Do a stitch: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSj2XB6YN/>
 - iii. Explain a social phenomenon or trend: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSj6eXsAR/>
- c. Music-smart intelligence:
 - i. Enter some keywords about the theories we learn in class into a Music AI, asking the AI to generate a 1-minute piece. Explain in a paragraph how the music adheres or not to the theories (Do not use AI in the explanation).
 - ii. Rewrite the lyrics to problematic songs and perform in class. Example: *Love Hard*’s (2021) re-write of the SA song, “Baby It’s Cold Outside”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0JvXVEgqF0>

Original: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MFJ7ie_yGU

- d. Body-smart intelligence:
 - i. Do a short interpretative dance of the theory we do in class. Explain to the class in 1 to 2 minutes what the dance is about.
 - ii. Film yourself or others doing a sport and explain to the class in 2 minutes how it relates to gender: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSj2CdpLu/>
 - iv. Perform a skit in class: <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSj24Nupq/>
 - v. Perform a 5-minute stand-up in class and submit the script to Turnitin: <https://www.tiktok.com/@joeyaverycomedy/video/7433183412858539306>
- e. Self-smart intelligence
 - i. Write a short poem about gender. Recite in class.
 - ii. Write a creative non-fiction (500 words or fewer) about observations on gender.
 - iii. Give a Ted talk in class (5 minutes). Submit script to Turnitin.
- f. Word-smart intelligence
 - i. Write a short film review about how gender is portrayed (500 words or fewer).
 - ii. Write a short book review about how gender is portrayed (500 words or fewer).
 - iii. Write a short story about gender in fewer than 500 words.
- g. Nature-smart intelligence
 - i. Explain to the class how nature (botany, etc) relates to gender (3 to 5 minutes).
- h. Logic-smart intelligence
 - i. Blog about how maths relates to gender.

Some notes on mini projects

1. Pick any three. You may pick a.(ii), c(i), and e(iii), or pick all same option f(ii). It's up to you.
2. I would discourage posting on social media such as in option b(ii) because you're still learning the language to talk about gender and gendered issues may be contentious. You may face a backlash. If you do post, it is your responsibility, not the responsibility of the course.
3. Some projects can be turned into group work (maximum 4 persons in a group) such as skits in d(iii). Consult me for details.
4. There is also an option of doing a longer project in lieu of 3 projects. For example, in d(iv), if you're doing a stand-up routine and find that 5 minutes isn't enough, then you may have 15 minutes (counts as 2 projects) or 20 minutes (3 projects). A longer project has the benefit of finishing everything in a swoop, but it requires more effort and is riskier grade-wise. Consult me for details.
5. If you have other ideas about the project, please approach me.

6. Each blog entry (with few exceptions such as poems) should be about 500 words.

AI Policy

1. In general, you may use AI to generate multimedia projects (music, painting, photo, etc) if you wish but please specify clearly that you have used AI. The importance of the blog entries is the analysis, not the medium.
2. For writing: You may use AI to generate initial ideas in **point form**, then consider if the points are valid. But **all writing itself must NOT use AI**. In other words, use AI to assist you to generate ideas but do not use AI to do any writing. Fair warning: AI is not that sophisticated at the moment and most students, who rely much on AI, score in the lower B and C ranges.
3. **Turnitin can detect AI-generated essays.** Essays with high AI scores will be reported to the Academic Integrity Officer.

Blog Grading Criteria

1. A demonstration of critical thinking about the role of gender in daily lives
2. Creativity and originality

2. Essay Assignments (45%)

There will be 2 essay assignments. The first essay asks for a critique of a theory in Part 1 of the course. The second essay allows you a choice of your text to be pair with one of the theories in Part 2 of the course. The **deadlines for the essays will be Week 7 and Week 13** respectively.

3. In-class Test (30%)

You will only write one essay for the exam. In the exam, you will be given unseen texts and you have to use theories you learn in class to answer the question.

Course Materials (will be provided)

1. Novels (selections)

Peters, Torrey. *Detransition Baby*. USA: Serpent's Tail, 2021.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. USA: Penguin, 2024 [1897].

2. Films

Marry My Dead Body. Directed by Cheng Wei-hao, Calendar Studios, 2022.

Paris is Burning. Directed by Jennie Livingston, Academy Entertainment, 1990.

Psycho. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, Shamley Productions, 1960.

3. Texts

Brady, David, Finnigan, Ryan and Hubgen, Sabine. "Single Mothers are Not the Problem." *The New York Times*, 10 Feb 2018.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/10/opinion/sunday/single-mothers-poverty.html>

Butler, Judith. "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion." *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993. 121-40.

_____. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. 134-149.

_____. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Performing Feminism: Feminist Critical Theory and Practice*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case. Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP, 1990. 270-82.

_____. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. 1-13.

Chiang, Howard, and Wong, Alvin. "Asia is Burning: Queer Asia as Critique." *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 58:2 (2017), 121-126.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "Is Gender Essential?" *Sissies and Tomboys: Gender Nonconformity and Homosexual Childhood*, edited by Matthew Rottnek. New York: NYU Press, 1992, 52-57.

_____. "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough." *The Meaning of Difference*, edited by Karen E. Rosenbaum and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996. 68-72.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Vol 1*, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990. 3-72.

Halberstam, Jack. "Becoming Trans*" in *Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. USA: U of California Press, 2018. 45-62.

Jones, Marian. "Dorothy Roberts on reproductive justice: 'Abortion isn't the only focus.'" *The Guardian*, 28 Aug 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/28/reproductive-freedom-abortion-rights-dorothy-roberts-interview>

Kane, Peter-Astrid. "After Years of Progress on Gay Rights, How Did the US Become so Anti-LGBTQ+?" *The Guardian*, 28 Apr 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/apr/28/lgbtq-rights-us-dont-say-gay>

Kang, Dredge Byung'chu. "Eastern Orientations: Thai Middle-class Gay Desire for 'White Asians'." *Culture, Theory and Critique* 58.2 (2017): 182-208.

Kim, Eunjung. "Asexuality in Disability Narratives." *Sexualities*, 14(4), 2011, 479-493.

- Li, Xiao-jian. "Xingbie or Gender." *Keywords: Gender*, edited by Nadia Tazi. New York: Other Priess, 2004. 89-102.
- McRuer, Robert. "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence." *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. USA: NYU P, 2006. 1-32.
- _____. "Shameful Sites: Locating Queerness and Disability." *Gay Shame*, ed. David Halperin and Valeria Traub. USA: U of Chicago P, 2009. 181-7.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Contemporary Film Theory*, ed. Antony Easthope. London: Longman, 1999. 111-24.
- Polgreen, Lydia. "Ron DeSantis Knows That the Best Place to Humiliate People Is in the Bathroom." *New York Times*, 19 May 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/19/opinion/anti-trans-bathroom-laws-florida.html>
- Puar, Jasbir. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007.
- Riviere, Joan. "Womanliness as a Masquerade." *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James McDonald, and Cora Kaplan. London and New York: Routledge, 1986. 35-44.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Woman: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex." *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975. 157-210.
- Ryle, Robin. "The Case of Transgender Athletes: Why Sports Aren't Fair and That's OK." *Newsweek*, 17 Feb 2021. <https://www.newsweek.com/case-transgender-athletes-why-sports-arent-fair-thats-ok-opinion-1569566>
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. "Axiom 1" and "Axiom 2." *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990. 22-35.
- _____. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia UP, 1985.
- _____. "How to Bring Up Your Kids Gay: The War on Effeminate Boys." *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993. 154-64.
- Stryker, Susan. "An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts." *Transgender History*. USA: Seal Press, 2008. 1-31.
- _____. "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies." *The Transgender Studies Reader*. USA: Routledge, 2006. 1-19.
- Wittig, Monique. "One is Not Born a Woman." *Feminist Issues* 1.2 (Winter 1981): 47-54.
- Wortham, Jenna. "When Everyone Can be 'Queer,' Is Anyone?" *New York Times*, 17 Jul 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/magazine/when-everyone-can-be-queer-is-anyone.html>

Other Notes

1. Students need to watch the films and do the readings before coming to class. The class is run seminar-style so to make each lesson successful, students need to be prepared.
2. Syllabus is subjected to change.
3. **Plagiarism will be reported to the administration.**