

ENGL 239: Film Directors: “Queer Filmmakers in the US”

Fully Remote/Asynchronous

ACE 7 Course

Dr. James Brunton

This course focuses on films by queer, genderqueer, and otherwise LGBTQ-identified filmmakers working in the US. We will explore the thematic concerns and formal techniques of films in a variety of genres and styles, both narrative and documentary, with the goal of defining the relationship between aesthetic practice and political intervention. To that end, this course poses the following questions:

- What themes have queer-identified filmmakers in the US concerned themselves with, and how are these themes handled differently by directors over time and across genres?
- How does a director’s formal aesthetic decisions around shot construction, editing, and mise-en-scène serve to reiterate or disrupt mainstream narratives about sexuality? How have queer filmmakers utilized cinema’s unique capabilities to alter our experience of space and time in the service of what we might call a “queer” film?
- What narratives about sexuality and its intersections with race, class, gender, and geography are produced, reproduced, or challenged in films by queer directors?
- How can we characterize the relationship between the queer and/or genderqueer identity of the filmmaker and the politics of the film? In other words, does a queer identity guarantee a “queer” film?

FILMS SCREENED:

Saving Face and The Half of It (dir. Alice Wu, 2004 and 2020)

The Miseducation of Cameron Post (dir. Desiree Akhavan, 2018)

Pariah (dir. Dee Rees, 2014)

Mosquita y Mari (dir. Aurora Guerrero 2012)

United in Anger: A History of ACT UP (dir. Jim Hubbard, 2012)

The Watermelon Woman (dir. Cheryl Dunye, 1996)

The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls In Love (dir. Maria Maggenti, 1995)

Total F***ed Up (dir. Gregg Araki, 1993)

Tongues Untied (dir. Marlon Riggs, 1989)

Working Girls (dir. Lizzie Borden, 1987)

Multiple Maniacs (dir. John Waters, 1970)

Dyketactics, Multiple Orgasm, and Nitrate Kisses (dir. Barbara Hammer, 1974, 1976, & 1992)

Flaming Creatures (dir. Jack Smith, 1963)

Blow Job and Chelsea Girls (dir. Andy Warhol, 1964 & 1966)

Fireworks (dir. Kenneth Anger, 1947)

Geography of the Body (dir. Willard Maas, 1943)