



RELIGIOUS STUDIES and GEN&WS 202: Queer(ing) Religion

3 credits

COURSE DESIGNATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

Breadth – Humanities or Social Sciences

Level - Elementary

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explore the intersections of religiosity and queerness, including the role of religion in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals and communities, the role of queerness and LGBTQ inclusion in various religious traditions, and what queerness can add to the study of religion (and vice versa).

REQUISITES

None.

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Tues and Thurs 11 am – 12:15 pm,

INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY

In-person.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO

Professor KD Thompson (they/them)

EMAIL FOR THE COURSE

HOW CREDIT HOURS ARE MET BY THE COURSE

This class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the semester. It carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

COURSE WEBSITE

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Analyze oral and written materials about religion, queerness, and transness.
2. Compare diverse systems of value and belief.
3. Interpret the interrelationships and impact of religious worldviews and communities.
4. Understand core concepts and debates in queer and trans studies of religion.
5. Connect scholarship to the institutions that shape everyday life.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Avishai, Orit. *Queer Judaism: LGBT Activism and the Remaking of Jewish Orthodoxy in Israel*. New York: New York University Press, 2023. [Available online through our library.]
- Lewin, Ellen. *Filled with the Spirit: Sexuality, Gender, and Radical Inclusivity in a Black Pentecostal Church Coalition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. [Available online through our library.]
- H., Lamy. *Hijab Butch Blues: A Memoir*. New York: The Dial Press, 2023. [Available online through our library.]
- Wilcox, Melissa M. 2021. *Queer Religiosities: An Introduction to Queer and Transgender Studies in Religion*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield. [Available online through our library, but if you want to buy a hard copy, you can get a 30% discount off the list price if you buy the e-book at [rowman.com](https://www.rowman.com) and use the code STUDENT30.]

WEEKLY HOMEWORK

- You should complete the assignments for each meeting before class and be ready to discuss them. Bring readings to class with you to refer to them during discussion.
- READING RESPONSES – Due by 8 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Text responses will be submitted via a survey form in Canvas. They should include 1) a new understanding, 2) a quote from the text that resonated or needs unpacking, and 3) a question that will help us wrestle with the meaning of the text and/or its implications.
 - At least one student will be called on randomly to share question(s) with the class during each meeting. This will count toward your attendance/preparation grade for that day.

EXAMS

A midterm will be given on Thursday of Week 7, and a cumulative final exam during Exam Week. Both will comprise short-answer questions (defining key terms) and essays. Students will help write exam questions before each exam.

GRADING

Engagement 25%
Reading Responses 25%
Midterm exam 20%
Terminology 10%
Final exam 20%

EXPECTATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

- Attendance and Preparation 15%. I expect you to show up on time, having done all the assigned work for the day, taking notes on the readings, and demonstrating your preparation by actively participating in our discussion. I will give you a grade of 0-5 each day we meet using the following scale:

5 – attend class, arrive on time, listen to others, volunteer to speak, engage with conversation partners, demonstrate preparation

4 – attend class, arrive on time, listen to others, engage with conversation partners, demonstrate preparation but participate only when called on

3 – attend class but participate minimally, or be late, or be unprepared

2 – attend class but participate minimally and demonstrate a lack of preparation

1 – attend class but do not participate

0 – miss class

I will excuse up to two absences if you let me know in advance that you will be absent OR if you have a documented medical reason or other emergency that requires you to miss class. Unexcused absences will be marked 0 for that day. You are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate as soon as possible.

- Participation 10%. This portion of the grade allows me to give you credit for your informal/unstructured collaborative work. Participation and collaboration are strong predictors of success and learning retention, so please find a way to participate and engage with your colleagues. There are many ways you can do so, for example:

- Come to office hours in person or on Zoom
- Form a study group with your peers
- Email me questions that you'd like me to address in class
- Ask questions during class or my office hours
- Volunteer answers to peer questions during our weekly meetings

For the graded component of your participation, at the end of the semester, I will ask you to self-assess your level of participation. This part of the grade is intended to help you identify what strategies help you learn and plan ways you can grow and improve in the future.

DISCUSSION NORMS

- Learn & use each other's names
- Listen actively (connect to what others have said)
- Ask for clarification
- Provide evidence and examples (stay within the text & on topic)
- Use "I statements" and identify our perspectives
- Be open to new ideas; don't be afraid to be wrong
- Be as concise as possible & allow everyone to speak
- Approach disagreement with curiosity & respect

LATE WORK

Late work will lose 10% per day. Submitting after the due time counts as the first day late.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Attending a relevant lecture and writing a short response will earn you a small amount of extra credit. Some opportunities will be listed on Canvas; please check with me if you hear of others. You may fill out

a form in Canvas to describe what you did and learned.

FINAL GRADING

At the end of the semester, you will receive a letter grade using the following scale:

A=93-100%, AB=88-92%, B=83-87%, BC=78-82%, C=70-77%, D=60-69%, F=0-59%.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES - Please notify me within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates you need to make alternative arrangements to complete coursework because of a religious observance.

Week 1: Introduction to Queer(ing) Religion

Tuesday

- Read [the Google Doc version of this syllabus](#). Leave comments in the margins with any questions. If you don't have any questions, leave a note at the bottom of the document letting me know you have read it and don't have any questions.
- Cotter, Chris. "Religious Studies and Generative AI: A Critical Perspective." | *Contemporary Religion in Historical Perspective* (blog), December 13, 2024. <https://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/religious-studies/?p=1851>.

Thursday

- "Preface" in *Queer Religiosities*. (9 pages)
- Ch. 14, "Non-Heteronormative Language Guidelines," in Motschenbacher, Heiko. 2022. *Linguistic Dimensions of Sexual Normativity: Corpus-Based Evidence*. New York: Routledge. (14 pages)

Week 2: Introduction to Queer Theory and Religious Studies

Tuesday

"Introduction" in *Queer Religiosities* (37 pages)

Thursday

Stryker, Susan. 2006. "(De)Subjugated Knowledge: An Introduction to Transgender Studies." In *The Transgender Studies Reader*, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, 1–18. New York: Routledge. (18 pages)

Week 3: Storying Queerness and Religion

Tuesday

Ch. 1, "Stories," in *Queer Religiosities* (28 pages)

Thursday
Parts I and II of *Hijab Butch Blues*

Week 4: Queering Religious Talk and Texts

Tuesday
Ch. 2, “Conversations,” in *Queer Religiosities* (24 pages)

Thursday
Part III of *Hijab Butch Blues*

Week 5: Queer Rituals and Practices

Tuesday
Ch. 3, “Practices,” in *Queer Religiosities* (22 pages)

Thursday
Thompson, KD. 2020. “Making Space for Embodied Voices, Diverse Bodies, and Multiple Genders in Nonconformist Friday Prayers: A Queer Feminist Ethnography of Progressive Muslims’ Performative Inter-Corporeality in North American Congregations.” *American Anthropologist* 122 (4): 876–90.

Week 6: Identities

Tuesday
Ch. 4, “Identities,” in *Queer Religiosities* (28 pages)

Thursday
Zengin, Asli. 2019. “The Afterlife of Gender: Sovereignty, Intimacy, and Muslim Funerals of Transgender People in Turkey.” *Cultural Anthropology* 34 (1): 78–102.

Week 7: Midterm

- Tuesday**
- Review for midterm exam.
 - Instead of a reading response form, submit a good exam question (by Wednesday at noon).

Thursday – Midterm exam in class.

Week 8: Communities

Tuesday
Ch. 5, “Communities” in *Queer Religiosities* (30 pages)

Thursday

- Scherer, Bee. 2013. “Queer as Kagyu: Negotiating Dissident Identities in Neo-Orthodox Buddhist Spaces.” In *Queering Paradigms III: Queer Impact and Practices*, edited by Kathleen O’Mara and Liz Morrish, 145–55. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

- Nelson, Julie Seido, “How to Choose a Sangha,” Tricycle: The Buddhist Review, March 8, 2025, <https://tricycle.org/article/how-to-choose-a-sangha/>.

Week 9: Politics and Power

Tuesday

Ch. 6, “Politics and Power,” in *Queer Religiosities* (28 pages)

Thursday

Dutta, Aniruddha. 2023. “Elsewhere in Queer Hindutva: A Hijra Case Study.” *Feminist Review* 133 (1): 11–25. (15 pages)

Week 10: Queering Religious Spaces

Tuesday

Assigned chapters in *Filled with the Spirit*. (Different groups will be assigned different chapters.)

Thursday

Assigned chapters in *Filled with the Spirit*. (Different groups will be assigned different chapters.)

Week 11: Queer Theology and Ethics, LGBTQ+ Theological Perspectives

Tuesday

Corless, Roger. 2004. “Towards a Queer Dharmology of Sex.” *Culture and Religion* 5 (2): 229–43. (14 pages)

Thursday

Creamer, Deborah Beth. 2010. “Embracing Limits, Queering Embodiment: Creating/Creative Possibilities for Disability Theology.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26 (2): 123–27. (4 pages)

Week 12: Intersecting Identities

Tuesday

Page, Enoch. n.d. “The Historical Development of BIPOC Trans-Spiritual Leadership.” LGBTQ Religious Archives Network. Accessed 17 January 2024.
<https://exhibits.lgbtran.org/exhibits/show/bipoc-trans-spiritual>.

Thursday

Gleig, Anne. 2012. “Queering Buddhism or Buddhist De-Queering? Reflecting on Differences Amongst Western LGBTQI Buddhists and the Limits of Liberal Convert Buddhism.” *Theology and Sexuality* 18 (3): 198–214.

Week 13: Activism, Advocacy, and the Law

Tuesday

Assigned chapters in *Queer Judaism*. (Different groups will be assigned different chapters.)

Thursday

Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella, and Fabien Le Bonniec. "Queering the Spirit of the Law: Mapuche Shamanic Justice in Judge Karen Atala's LGBT Child Custody Case against the Chilean State." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 80, no. 2 (2024): 143–76.

Week 14: Reflection and Discussion**Tuesday**

Conclusion in *Queer Religiosities* (2 pages)

Thursday

- Review for final exam.
 - Instead of a reading response, submit a good exam question (by Wednesday at noon).
 - Submit participation form.
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EXAM WEEK

Wednesday Final Exam 12:25-2:25 pm

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

Institutional academic policies and statements are reviewed and updated annually, as needed. They currently include:

- [Academic Calendar & Religious Observances](#)
- [Academic Integrity Statement](#)
- [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Course Evaluations](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Statement](#)
- [Mental Health and Well-Being Statement](#)
- [Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement](#)
- [Students' Rules, Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Teaching & Learning Data Transparency Statement](#)