Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Mikko Tuhkanen
Course: ENGL/WGST 333.500 & .501
Title: Gay and Lesbian Literature

Description: This class introduces students to some examples of “gay and lesbian literature” by questioning the adequacy of the moniker “gay and lesbian literature.” To observe the historical and cultural specificity of such concepts as “gay and lesbian,” “LGBT [etc],” “straight,” and “heterosexual”—and, why not, “literature”—we’ll start by looking at texts produced in times and places that differ, sometimes radically, from what we claim as our own culture(s). In turning to the more contemporary examples, we’ll pay particular attention to the ways in which histories of race, migration, and globalization are being negotiated in our class readings. We’ll familiarize ourselves with the texts’ social and historical contexts; we’ll also consider how the literary texts are responses to—inventive ways of negotiating—particular historical problems and issues.

While a number of sessions consist of lectures on the historical, cultural, and biographical contexts of the texts we are reading, the majority of the course will be conducted as a seminar, where the students are expected to engage in class discussion.