Spring 2020 Course Description

**Instructor:** Dr. Vanita Reddy  
**Course:** ENGL/WGST 333  
**Title:** Gay and Lesbian Literature

**Description:** This class introduces students to some examples of “LGBTQ 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” we will start by looking at texts produced in times and places that differ, sometimes radically, from what we claim as our own culture(s). Examining texts from primarily the mid-20th century to the present, we will pay particular attention to the ways in which histories of race, migration, and globalization are being negotiated.

We will familiarize ourselves with the texts’ social and historical contexts; and 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 small group and large group discussions.

Material from this course will include written texts and such visual representations as photographs, illustrations, films, or theatrical performances.

**Proposed Readings:**

**Literature:**

James Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room* (1956)

Cherrie Moraga, *Giving up the Ghost* (1986)


**Films:**


*Pose* (Netflix series; select episodes) (2018)

*Moonlight,* Dir. Barry Jenkins (2016)
Critical/Theoretical Texts:

David Halperin, “Is There a History of Sexuality?”

D'Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity”

Siobhan Somerville, Queering the Color Line (excerpts)

Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?”

Jewelle Gomez “But Some of Us are Brave Lesbians”

Jack Halberstam, “Lesbian Masculinity: Even Stone Butches Get the Blues”

Kortney Ziegler, “Black Sissy Masculinity and the Politics of Dis-respectability”

“Fabulous!” Special Issue of Camera Obscura (selections)

Street-style fashion by Alok Menon

Drag by Lawhore Vagistan

Vanita Reddy, “Family Togetherness, Affect Aliens, and the Ugly Feelings of Being Included”

“Queer and Feminist Afro-Asian Formations,” Eds. Vanita Reddy and Anantha Sudhakar (selections) Special Issue of The Scholar and Feminist Online