

Introduction to LGBTQIA+ Studies

GWS/SOC 200

E (Elementary); Z (Humanities or Social Science); e (Ethnic Studies) credit
3 Credits (see Format & Instructors, p. 6)

Spring 2025

Lectures: MWF 12:05 – 12:55 with Dr. Cabell Gathman
“Cabell” rhymes with “Scrabble”

5206 Sewell Social Sciences

OR

Live via Zoom (backup): <https://tinyurl.com/SOC200SPR25>

Passcode: 118161

Class is typically taught in-person as scheduled, but in some circumstances may be moved online (watch Canvas Announcements for this and other course communications; you may to check your settings for email notifications).

Please do not attend class if you are ill. We want you to act in the best interest of both the community and your own well-being; the course is structured to avoid penalizing you for doing so as much as possible.

Discussion sections meet Monday-Wednesday as scheduled:

Section 321	M 1:20 – 2:10	6101 Social Sciences	David
Section 322	M 2:25 – 3:15	6101 Social Sciences	David
Section 323	T 2:25 – 3:15	2319 Sterling	Mariah
Section 324	T 11:00 – 11:50	2333 Sterling	Mariah
Section 325	T 12:05 – 12:55	2333 Sterling	Mariah
Section 326	T 1:20 – 2:10	2333 Sterling	Mariah
Section 327	W 9:55 – 10:45	6232 Social Sciences	David
Section 328	W 11:00 – 11:50	6232 Social Sciences	David

Campus map with markers for all-gender & ADA-accessible bathrooms:

<https://map.wisc.edu/>

Electronic materials and links available at: <http://canvas.wisc.edu/>

Course Description

This course is an introduction to LGBTQIA+ Studies. The plus-sign is included in recognition that “LGBTQ” (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer) does not include everyone marginalized for their gender or sexuality, e.g. intersex people, asexual/aromantic people, pansexual/panromantic people, etc. Language and identities are always evolving.

We start from the position that taken-for-granted systems of categorization like gender and sexuality are in fact socially developed, enforced, and reproduced such that members of societies see them as “natural.” **Note that this includes categories historically considered “biological” such as sex and race, which are also socially defined.** Although these systems are embedded in particular societies and cultures, and thus may be described as “social constructs,” they are real to the people who are categorized by them, and who actively work to reproduce, oppose, or transform them, as well as the personal identities that arise from them. Furthermore, these systems interact in various ways with other social categories such as socioeconomic class, ability, age, etc.

Mainstream representations of LGBTQIA+ individuals and the LGBTQIA+ community overall tend to reinforce assumptions that the vast majority of LGBTQIA + people are white, middle-class, abled, cisgender men. This course therefore emphasizes the central role in LGBTQIA+ activism and communities that has been and continues to be played by transgender people, people of color, asexual and plurisexual people, and other underrepresented/underserved groups. Throughout the semester, we will consider structural concepts like **intersecting oppressions** and the **matrix of domination**, originally developed by Black feminist theorists like **Kimberlé Crenshaw** and **Patricia Hill Collins**, respectively.

I encourage you to bring up issues that I may not have considered. I value criticism and feedback from students who may have insight that I lack, and I make an effort to incorporate it as fully and immediately as possible.

Finally, introductory courses must cover a broad range of materials, and unfortunately often cannot delve into specific topics as deeply as I might like, **but that doesn't mean that they are easy.** I want to see all students succeed in this course, but you will get out of this course what you are willing to put in.

Course Objectives

- 1) Develop necessary vocabulary for discussing LGBTQIA+ people and issues, with an understanding of how language can reinforce or challenge social norms.
- 2) Understand how “natural” categories such as sex, gender, sexuality, and race are constructed and understood in a particular social and historical context, shaping and also being continually shaped by individual experiences and identities.
- 3) Practice expressing personal experiences and opinions in conversation with social scientific data and general social trends.
- 4) Learn about the history and current structure and effects of social institutions like criminal justice and healthcare in relation to groups marginalized by race, gender, and sexuality, with particular attention to the experiences and outcomes of multiply marginalized people such as transgender people of color, disabled queer people, undocumented queer people, etc.
- 5) Recognize how gender and sexuality intersect with other identities such as race, ethnicity, ability, age, economic class, etc. and explore how a person's experiences are shaped by their identities and group memberships.
- 6) Gain general knowledge about the history and present of LGBTQIA+ communities and activism in the United States, and develop awareness of both coalitions and divisions within the LGBTQIA+ “umbrella,” with particular attention to disability communities, plurisexual and asexual communities, transgender communities, and LGBTQIA+ communities of color.

Contact information: Dr. Cabell Gathman (she/her)
(“Cabell” rhymes with “Scrabble”)

Office: 3328 Sterling Hall (Thursdays)
7133 Sewell Social Sciences (Fridays)
Zoom Personal Meeting Room: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/my/cabell>

Office hours: R 9:45-10:45am; F 1:15 – 2:15; by appointment

Email: chgathman@wisc.edu

Please do NOT contact me via Canvas messages.

Although Canvas does forward messages to email, the system usually diverts them from Outlook’s “Focused Inbox,” so it’s likely that if you message me through Canvas, I won’t see it. I do occasionally use Canvas messages to contact people en masse, for example everyone who is missing a particular assignment in the gradebook, but will always use email for individual communications.

I will frequently leave comments on graded assignments in Canvas, but if you post a comment there in reply, I definitely will not see it—again, please contact me via email.

Contact information: David Montalvo

Office: 8120 Sewell Social Sciences

Office hours: T 12-2pm; by appointment

Email: drmontalvo@wisc.edu

Contact information: Mariah Lindsay

Office: 2422 Sewell Social Sciences

Office hours: M 1:15-2:15pm; F 1:15-2:15pm; by appointment

Email: malindsay@wisc.edu

Communication with the teaching team

We welcome student email, but we ask that you follow these basic guidelines:

Please email:

- Requests for minor clarifications regarding course materials and assignments
- Requests to meet outside of normally scheduled office hours (we may or may not be able to accommodate these)
- More complicated questions, with the understanding that we may need to address them in class or with a one-on-one meeting—giving us lead time allows us to provide you with the best, most complete answer

Please do NOT email:

- Questions answered on the syllabus
- Questions answered in announcements posted to Canvas or emailed to class lists

We will do our best to answer email in a timely fashion, which means **within 48 weekday hours**. Response times over the weekend may be longer. Please do NOT send follow-up emails less than 48 hours after your initial email; this does not make us respond faster, but it does make it more difficult for us to prioritize student communications effectively.

You should watch Canvas announcements as they are our primary method of conveying information outside of class (note that you can change your individual Canvas settings to receive email notifications of announcements on the course site or not, as you choose). We may occasionally send time-sensitive information out via email distribution lists, so you should also be sure to check your WiscMail at least daily whether you receive Canvas notifications there or not.

Format and Instructors

The course includes three lectures per week on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Mondays (note that each week of related content “begins” with our Wednesday lecture) from 12:05 – 12:55, and one discussion section as shown on your course schedule on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday (the 11:00am Wednesday discussion section is the “end” of the week on our course schedule). Lectures are typically taught in-person as scheduled, but there is a backup Zoom (linked on Canvas) for occasional virtual sessions as announced via Canvas.

Similarly, although discussion sections will generally meet in-person, in rare circumstances your TA may need to hold class virtually and will provide details if that happens. There is no attendance taken in lecture, but there are regular assignments that require attendance to complete. Lecture Reflections cannot be made up, but you will have multiple opportunities to complete them for credit. There is also a weekly Discussion Participation assignment that you will complete at the end of section; there is one (1) free drop in this assignment category, and a make-up assignment is available if are unable to attend and cannot (or don't want to) use your drop. There is no limit on the number of makeups that you can complete, although they are graded strictly and the maximum score you can earn on a makeup is a 9/10.

In addition to 200 minutes of instructional time per week, you should expect to spend **8-9 hours per week outside of class**, primarily reading and taking notes on assigned materials in order to complete graded assignments and prepare to participate fully in weekly discussion sections. The course readings are a mix of popular and more academic styles, but if reading longer pieces tends to be a challenge for you, you may need to be more conscientious about blocking out time outside of class to meet expectations. Your TA and course instructor are also happy to discuss strategies for doing your best in the course.

Lectures will cover general concepts that are also addressed in the assigned readings, but they will NOT be a simple repetition of the readings; they will introduce new information and may also include related videos and other multimedia material. Throughout the semester there may be guest lectures by scholars and activists doing related work.

Discussion sections are not meant to repeat lectures; they are an opportunity for students to engage with the material in a small group setting where they may have productive discussions with their peers. Discussion section is a place to raise questions about lectures and assigned readings and make connections between those materials and concepts and popular culture, other university courses, current events, and personal experiences. **While the teaching team will make an effort to review readings that we know from experience may be particularly difficult for many students, it is your responsibility to raise points of interest or confusion and actively participate in setting the agenda for section.**

Policy on Children in Class

Caregivers deserve access to education. Children who are reasonably believed to be non-contagious are welcome in our classroom spaces on an occasional basis. You may wish to provide them with a device and headphones to keep them entertained, but they are also welcome to listen and participate in class to the extent of their ability.

If you anticipate that a child might become disruptive, please just try to sit near an exit so that you can step out with them if necessary.

Accessibility

The policy of the Board of Regents of the UW System is to ensure that no qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated in the UW System. Each qualified person shall receive reasonable accommodations needed to ensure access to educational opportunities, programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate.

If you have official accommodations through the McBurney Center, please contact your TA ASAP to discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you do not have official accommodations, but there are conditions or life circumstances that interfere with your ability to fulfill your responsibilities for this course, we still encourage you to meet with your TA ASAP to discuss how best to accommodate you. In some cases, we may recommend that you consult with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (263-2742), but we recognize that official channels are not equally accessible to all students, and we want to support you in doing your best work for this course.

“Disability” is a broad category that includes physical, cognitive, and psychological issues, including chronic or mental illness. **Disabled people have the right to an education.**

Course Intro Survey

To get to know you better as people, we ask that you fill out an introduction survey via Canvas **no later than 11:59pm on Friday, February 7th**. We have chosen to put this form online in order to allow you more privacy and flexibility in filling it out. It is also a bit longer than similar forms used in hard copy since you will be able to type responses and you will receive course credit for completion. You should have access to a section-specific Canvas announcement with the relevant link following our first class meeting. **Note:** If have trouble with the link, you may need to sign out of your personal Google account, as UW uses Google Apps to record your UW username.

You may decline to answer any questions that you like, but you should go through the entire form and submit it to receive pass/fail credit. Your responses will be visible **ONLY** to your instructor and your assigned TA. The completed survey counts for **2% of your final grade**.

Lecture Reflections

There are 14 weeks in the spring semester, with three lecture dates for every week except Week 14, which has two. We have divided the semester into five “blocks”: Block 1 (Weeks 1 & 2; 6 total lecture dates), Block 2 (Weeks 3-5; 9 total lecture dates), Block 3 (Weeks 6-8; 9 total lecture dates), Block 4 (Weeks 9-11; 6 total lecture dates), and Block 5 (Weeks 12-14; 8 total lecture dates). For each block, you should submit a lecture reflection for ONE (1) lecture date. Lecture reflections are due as a text submission via Canvas no later than 11:59pm on Monday (the assignment for the week opens after class on Wednesday). To receive credit, a lecture reflection should be **at least 250 words** demonstrating engagement with lecture content, for example by:

- Describing your reaction to/thoughts about specific ideas, data, or materials
- Posing questions about the content of lecture or media used in class
- Relating class content (classmates' comments, lecture, media) to content from other courses, personal experience, current events, or media representations
- Raising questions or comments that you want addressed in class but may not want directly attached to you

You are never required to share personal information in your reflections, but you are welcome to do so if you like. These reflections will be reviewed and graded pass/fail by the course instructor, Dr. Cabell Gathman. Reflections that do not clearly engage with the lecture material as given will not receive credit. For dates that we cover documentary film content, you may be able to view the film outside of class and reflect on it, but for regular lectures, reviewing posted slides is generally not sufficient for passing this assignment.

Due to the large size of the class, Lecture Reflections cannot be accepted past the deadline without prior arrangement. If you anticipate issues with attendance, I encourage you to complete reflections ASAP in each block. Each Reflection is worth three (3) percentage points on your final grade, for a total of **15% of your final grade for the category**.

Weekly Quizzes

To help ensure that students stay caught up on course materials, we will have weekly quizzes in Canvas for Weeks 1-14. These quizzes are open notes/materials and will be available for 24 hours from 1:30pm Wednesday through 1:30pm Thursday each week.

You can take the quiz at any time during this window and refer to any and all notes and course materials, including lecture slides and recordings when/if available, but you should not consult with any other person or external source (online searches, etc.) in the process.

If the regularly scheduled window won't work for you this semester due to an ongoing commitment (caretaking, employment, religious observance, etc.), please contact the course instructor no later than Week 3 to set up an alternate window for the semester.

In addition to the graded Weekly Quizzes, there is a Syllabus Practice Quiz which covers the basic structure of the course as discussed in class and outlined in this syllabus. Unlike our regularly Weekly Quizzes, the Practice Quiz allows unlimited attempts and will show your answers, so you can retake it as many times as necessary to earn 100% while it is available. This Practice Quiz is "due" by 11:59pm Friday, January 24th, but it remains available through 11:59pm Friday, February 7th so that students who add late will still have access. Regardless of when you enrolled in the course, you may submit attempts for credit until the Practice Quiz closes. **The Practice Quiz cannot be dropped**, so be sure to submit it before then! **The Syllabus Practice Quiz is worth five (5) percentage points on your final grade.**

For our graded Weekly Quizzes in Weeks 1-14, your four (4) lowest quiz scores, including zeroes, will be dropped. Your remaining ten (10) quizzes are each worth four (4) percentage points on your final grade, for a total of **40% of your final grade for the category.**

There are several dropped scores in the Weekly Quiz category to account for unavoidable absences, technical failures, etc. **Please do not ask members of the teaching team to excuse or re-open a closed quiz after the scheduled window. However, if any individual quiz will conflict with a religious observance, please email the course instructor (chqathman@wisc.edu) ahead of time to be excused.**

Discussion participation

This is a general explanation of discussion participation as a component of your course grade. Your TA will cover their expectations further in discussion section.

This course has a large number of assigned readings, which we expect you to engage with in order not only to score well on quizzes and take-home exams, but also to have productive conversations with your classmates and TA in section. Section is a space where students can raise questions, connect different materials to each other and to materials from other courses and their own experiences, and hear a range of perspectives from people who may be similar to or very different from themselves.

Students often feel that discussion section is too short—we only get 50 minutes a week and there's a lot to cover! To recognize that these sections are really starting points for ongoing conversations, you will fill out a log at the end of each section identifying ideas that you want to pursue further, both your own and those raised by classmates. **This log is available as an assignment in Canvas that opens 10 minutes before your scheduled section for the week ends and closes 15 minutes after it ends.** Your TA will use this log to inform their assessment of your participation, which will be scored out of 10 points for each session. Students who are actively engaged for the full scheduled 50 minutes of section can expect to receive full credit; arriving late, leaving early, or visible disengagement will result in a reduced score.

One (1) low score (including zeroes for absence) will be automatically dropped. For the remaining 12 weeks of discussion section, each week's participation is worth **1.5 percentage points on your final grade, for a total of 18% of your final grade for the category.**

For absences beyond your free drop, see the Discussion Participation Assignment instructions in Canvas for a full description of the make-up assignment. **There is no limit on the number of makeups that you can complete, but the maximum possible score on a makeup is a 9/10, and reflects outstanding performance on the assignment.**

If you will be missing discussion at any point during the semester for a religious observance, please let the instructor and your TA know by Week 3 of class and your absence will be EXCUSED, which means that it does not count against your free drop.

Take-Home Exams

There will be three (3) take-home exams for this course. For each exam, you will receive a list of short answer questions one week ahead of the due date. You will be able to select a subset of questions that you feel best equipped to answer. These exams will be open materials; you can refer to all course readings, posted slides, video content, etc. as you write your answers, but you should not consult any outside sources, including search engines like Google, LLMs like ChatGPT, or other people (whether or not they have taken the course), and you must write your answers alone.

You will submit your exam as a file upload to Canvas. Each exam will be graded out of 50 points. **Your lowest exam score, including a zero for non-submission, will be automatically dropped.** This does mean that you can choose to skip an exam, but we strongly encourage you NOT to skip Exam #1 since that will leave you without a buffer for the rest of the semester!

Your remaining two (2) exam scores will each be worth 10% of your final grade, for a total of 20% of your final grade for the category.

Exam #1 will cover class materials from Weeks 1-4. You will receive the list of questions on Wednesday, February 19th, and the exam will be due via Canvas no later than 11:59pm on Wednesday, February 26th.

Exam #2 will cover class materials from Weeks 5-9. You will receive the list of questions on Wednesday, April 2nd, and the exam will be due via Canvas no later than 11:59pm on Wednesday, April 9th.

Exam #3 will cover class materials from Weeks 10-13. You will receive the list of questions on Wednesday, April 30th, and the exam will be due via Canvas no later than 11:59pm on Wednesday, May 7th.

Course Grading Scheme

Course Intro Survey	2%
Syllabus Practice Quiz	5%
Five (5) Lecture Reflections	15%
Discussion Participation	18%
Ten (10) Weekly Quizzes	40%
Two (2) Take-Home Exams	20%
TOTAL	100%

IMPORTANT note on grades: Grades in this course are not negotiable, but we are happy to discuss course content and strategies for improvement in the future. We do require a 24-hour waiting period between receipt of a grade and discussion thereof so that you can fully read and consider all related feedback. If you have questions about graded work, please set up a time to meet and discuss them with your TA.

Grading Scale

A	92.50+
AB	87.50 – 92.49
B	82.50 – 87.49
BC	77.50 – 82.49
C	69.50 – 77.49
D	58.50 – 69.49
F	<58.50

Note that Canvas calculates final grades to two decimal points, but does not display zeroes in the second place; if Canvas shows a projected grade of 92.4%, for example, that means it is a 92.40%. For assistance using the “What If” grade calculator in Canvas, see the Course Documents & Resources Module on our Canvas course page.

Statement on academic dishonesty

TL;DR: Life is short; this course has been designed to be extremely hard to fail; please don't cheat. Seriously: You could get a 50% on every graded assignment in this class, and as long as you did all the pass/fail assignments, you would still earn a C!

Quizzes are designed to keep students on top of material and prepared to discuss course concepts in depth in discussion section, improving the educational experience for everyone. The take-home exams are designed to elicit a more in-depth demonstration of engagement with course materials. Copying other people's ideas defeats that purpose; we want to know more about YOURS.

If you are unsure how to paraphrase or cite appropriately, we encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center on campus or to meet virtually with your TA. We will work with students to help them attribute information and ideas appropriately and highlight their own ideas. Cases of intentional plagiarism will be assigned a zero for the assignment and reported to the Dean of Students to prevent a continuing pattern of behavior.

For the university's policy on academic dishonesty and misconduct, see:
<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>

Please note: A score of “0” received for academic dishonesty CANNOT BE DROPPED OR REPLACED, regardless of the normal mechanisms for the grade category.

Semester Schedule

All required readings are available for PDF download or as links in Canvas.
There are NO required books for this course.

It's to your advantage to complete all readings as early as possible in the assigned week, to better connect them with lecture content. Readings will be covered on our weekly quizzes on Wednesdays/Thursdays, so you should definitely have completed them before the end of the assigned week; although quizzes are open materials, you will find them difficult if you are looking at the readings for the first time as you take them, and section is a great time to ask questions if anything from the readings was confusing or unclear!

Week 1 (1/22 – 1/29): Introduction

Week 2 (1/29 – 2/5): Social construction of sex & gender

Week 3 (2/5 – 2/12): Social construction of sexuality

Week 4 (2/12 – 2/19): Heteronormativity & “the Other”

Week 5 (2/19 – 2/26): Boundary-policing: Inclusion & Exclusion

Take-Home Exam #1 DUE via Canvas no later than 11:59pm Wednesday, 2/26

Week 6 (2/26 – 3/5): Families & communities

Week 7 (3/5 – 3/12): Embodiment

Week 8 (3/12 – 3/19): Health & healthcare

Week 9 (3/19 – 4/2): HIV/AIDS

^ SPRING BREAK (3/22 – 3/30) SPLITS THIS WEEK UP ^

Week 10 (4/2 – 4/9): Radicalization vs. normalization

Take-Home Exam #2 DUE via Canvas no later than 11:59pm Wednesday, 4/9

Week 11 (4/9 – 4/16): Violence & resistance

Week 12 (4/16 – 4/23): Media representation

Week 13 (4/23 – 4/30): Counterpublics & online communities

Week 14 (4/30 – 5/2): The Queer Art of Failure

Take-Home Exam #3 DUE via Canvas no later than 11:59pm Wednesday, 5/7

REMINDER: WE DO NOT HAVE A CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM, SO WE DO NOT USE THE UNIVERSITY-SCHEDULED EXAM SLOT, BUT IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING TAKE-HOME EXAM #3, IT IS DUE VIA CANVAS NO LATER THAN 11:59PM, WEDNESDAY, 5/7

THE WEEK 14 QUIZ IS DUE VIA CANVAS NO LATER THAN 12PM NOON ON FRIDAY, 5/9