

Queer Worlds: Reading + Writing Queer Ethnographies

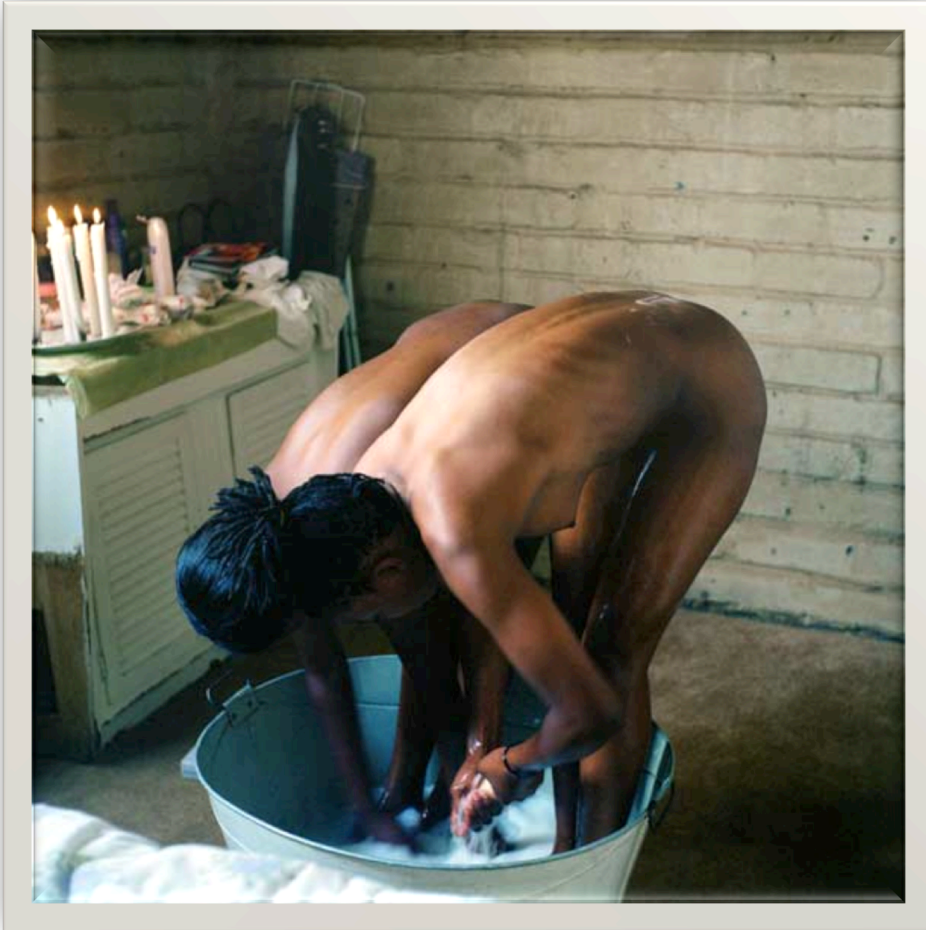
Sarah Lawrence College, 2012-2013, Course Number: LGST 3508 R

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 9-10:55am

Meeting Location: Heimbold 111

Office Location: Gilbert A1

Instructor: Vanessa Agard-Jones (vagard@sarahlawrence.edu)



Zanele Muholi, Being Series, 2007

Course Description

How does queer studies intersect with the humanistic social sciences, particularly in the documentary impulses of ethnographic research?

What kinds of insights can ethnographies provide to understanding and theorizing same-sex desire and gender transgression in different locations?

How can we write about the experiences, relationships, and landscapes that together make up queer worlds?

Building from these essential questions, in this year-long course we will immerse ourselves in ethnographic modes of writing about gender, sexuality, and non-normativity both “at home” and around the world. From *travesti* favela dwellers in Brazil to ex-gays in California, from gay Dominicans in New York to *hijras* in India, and from women loving women in Suriname to intersex people throughout the United States, we will ask questions about local articulations of gender and sexual politics while also plumbing the myriad strategies that social scientists use to represent them. Together we will both think about, and through our scholarship we will engage in, queer world-making: every student will be required to complete a conference project based upon ethnographic research. While the form of that project may vary (from the conventional to the experimental, the realist to the poetic, the narrative to the multi-mediated), we will all consider how we might use ethnography as a way of knowing and representing queer worlds.

By the end of this class students will be able to:

- Devise, propose, and conduct ethnographic research
- Analyze representational strategies in ethnographic writing
- Identify the intersections and disjunctions between Queer Studies and Anthropology
- Demonstrate increased knowledge of/ familiarity with queer and anthropological theories
- Appreciate the histories and (im)mobilities of the terms used to describe same-sex desire and gender non-conformity around the world, both in the academy and in activist work

Assignments and Evaluation

All of your assignments will be submitted to me online via MySLC. Please ensure that they are in 12 point Times/Times New Roman/Cambria font with 1” margins, and are named as follows: YourSurname.AssignmentName.doc

Annotated Bibliographies

Each week you will add an entry to an annotated bibliography of readings from this course. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations, followed by a paragraph that summarizes the author’s argument (the claim being made/position being asserted) along with the key points that the author marshals to support their argument. For the purposes of this course, your annotations won’t stop there: you will *also* include two other dimensions: 1) an evaluative comment on something you appreciated about the work and another about something that you found challenging or ineffective and 2) a reflection on how this work deepens, troubles, or might be used to extend your understanding of one or both of our keywords (“queer” and “ethnography”). This latter point then, is your chance to reflect on both form and content, methods and theory. At three different intervals in the course, you will submit your bibliographies for evaluation.

DUE: October 10, November 15, December 19 by noon

Tumblr Posts

Each week you will post one kernel of fabulousness (fabulousness meaning: wisdom, elegance, TKOs) to our collective Tumblr. Be sure to post it as a “quote,” to include the author/title/page number, and to include at least THREE generative keywords for the post.

<http://queerethnographies.tumblr.com>

DUE: Weekly

Compelling Questions/ Discussion Facilitation

For one session each semester you will be responsible (along with a partner) for drafting five discussion-generating (“compelling”) questions based upon the readings. As you develop these

questions you might identify contradictions, highlight the author's methodological strategies, and/or draw connections to texts that we have previously discussed. Post these compelling questions to the blog section of our course site **by noon on Wednesday before class**. Together, you and your partner will use the questions to facilitate a one-hour discussion with your colleagues. Be sure to think carefully about how you will ensure the participation and engagement of all of the members of our seminar. You should also be reading and pondering these each week!

DUE DATES VARY

Rapporteur Reflection

For one class during the semester you will serve as our rapporteur, engaging in participant observation during the class period and writing a recap of the seminar's discussions, key questions, and resonant themes. Post this reflection to the blog section of our course site **by noon on the Friday after class**.

DUE DATES VARY

Conference Work

This course is designed to support and push forward your conference work, and as such I take this component of our course very seriously, and expect that you will too. Conferences will take place on Wednesdays and Thursdays in A week. Missed conferences will not be rescheduled. It is *your responsibility* to switch conference times with another student if you have a scheduling conflict in any given week. Your conference projects will be carefully choreographed over the course of the year, with everyone submitting an extensive project proposal in December, and a final ethnographic project in May. Further details are below.

DUE BI-WEEKLY: By 5pm on the day of every conference you will email me, addressing these questions: What did we discuss? What have I encouraged you to look at? What work will you complete now?

Portfolios

At the end of each semester you will submit a (hard copy) portfolio that includes your annotated bibliography, your benchmarks from conference, your conference recap emails, your compelling questions, 2 rapporteur reflections (your own and the one a colleague wrote about your session), a reflection on your Tumblr posts, a self-evaluation, and a course worksheet.

DUE: December 20

Class Participation

Attendance at conferences, class sessions and informed participation in discussions, writing exercises, and group work are requirements for both your individual and our collective success in this course. Anything beyond one unexcused absence must be explained (or forewarned) in writing and for good reason. *Repeated absence from classes and/or conferences will result in loss of credit.*

Course Policies

*Academic Integrity: Plagiarism? Don't do it. If you have any questions about what might constitute plagiarism, please don't hesitate to ask. We will discuss the definition of plagiarism in class, but a shorthand definition is this: the submission of written work that either is (or contains samples of) work that is not your own and lacks recognizable citations. You have your own (capable and competent) brains- use them. If you have questions about how to cite sources, please see me during my office hours.

*Attendance: Punctual (and faithful) attendance, as well as active participation in class discussions, are requirements for both your individual and our collective success in this course. To secure an excused absence or authorization to submit late work you must submit verifiable documentation of a medical or comparable emergency to me in writing. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absence from class. If any course assignments are difficult to fulfill because of conflicts with days of observance, please let me know to make alternative arrangements.

*Classroom Community: This course will take on challenging questions about gender, sex, and sexuality, and we will endeavor to discuss both the course materials and our responses to them in a candid manner. In this community of thinkers demonstrating your maturity will be paramount, as will an agreement to respect our classroom as a safe space for expression, respectful challenge, and productive critique. As we attempt to work and speak across our differences, I ask that you contribute your ideas respectfully and in a mode that seeks to advance our conversations. As you participate, you should think not only about your own contributions, but also about the overall classroom dynamic: who is speaking more, who less? How might you contribute to an atmosphere that enables everyone to participate meaningfully?

*Evaluation: Incompletes will not be granted, except in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation. After-the-fact requests for extensions and incompletes will not be considered.

*Required Readings: All of your weekly readings should be completed (and digested!) before our class meetings. By “digested,” I mean that you should be prepared to lay out the authors' basic arguments and key points. Also be prepared to tell us what you think about what you've read: have an opinion! I expect that you read critically, that is, with an eye to the assumptions, claims, and conclusions of the authors. In other words, I expect you to derive from your reading not simply a knowledge of the content of the materials, but also the ways in which these authors understand and work with broader concepts (i.e. "sex," "gender," and "sexuality.") As the semester progresses, you will be encouraged to draw earlier readings into your written work and class discussions. My strong suggestion is that you take notes on the materials you read to aid you in this task.

*Technology: Silence your mobile phones before entering our classroom. Laptops are permitted, but **only** for use as an aid in note-taking and other course related activities—for purposes that advance rather than obstruct our collective goals. Email, IM-ing, social networking, etc. are not acceptable uses of technology in our classroom. Prepare to have your class participation evaluation suffer should these be the uses to which you put your tech devices.

Resources for Students

*Communication: Please feel free to send me questions via email; I will attempt to respond to all electronic communication within 24 hours. You don't have to have an earth-shaking reason to communicate with me—in fact, I welcome feedback on how our class is going or conversations about topics that we haven't had time to address during class.

*Students with Disabilities: For assistance you can contact Polly Waldman, the Associate Dean of Studies and Disability Services at (914) 395-2235 or in Westlands 207C. If you require accommodation(s) in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me.

*Writing Assistance: I will require that most (if not all) of you avail yourselves of the writing assistance offered by Carol Zoref and the College's Writing Coordinators. One of the reasons that I require drafts and benchmarks of your "final" work is so that you can benefit from that support.

fall Course Outline

Required Texts

- Decena, Carlos U. *Tacit Subjects: Belonging and Same-Sex Desire Among Dominican Immigrant Men*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011
- Gray, Mary L. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: New York University Press, 2009
- Kulick, Don. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1998
- Newton, Esther. *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1979
- Reddy, Gayatri. *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005
- Rofel, Lisa. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007
- Valentine, David. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007
- Wilson, Ara. *The Intimate Economies of Bangkok: Tomboys, Tycoons, and Avon Ladies in the Global City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004

Additional articles will be posted to our course site and books will be available on reserve at the Esther Raushenbush Library. For those of you without a background in LGBT/Queer Studies (or for those of you who want a refresher), this volume is on reserve at the library:

- Wilchins, Riki. 2004. *Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer*. Alyson Books.

Getting Oriented

In these sessions we will consider the relationships—and disagreements—that characterize the coming together of academic work in Queer Studies and in Anthropology, as well as in the activist projects with which they are in conversation. We will think together about categories, definitions, and ways of knowing as these processes are debated in both disciplines.

Introductions

September 13:

- Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. "What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?" *PMLA* 110, no. 3 (1995)
- Edelman, Lee. "Queer Theory: Unstating Desire." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2, no. 4 (1995)
- Jagose, AnnaMarie. "Queer Theory," from *Queer Theory*, University of Melbourne Press, 1996. <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-Dec-1996/jagose.html>
- Somerville, Siobhan. "Queer." In *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. New York: NYU Press, 2007
- Weston, Kath. "Theory, Theory, Who's Got the Theory?" in *Long Slow Burn: Sexuality and Social Science*. Routledge, 1998

Queer/Critique?

September 20:

- Glick, Elisa, Sharon Holland, Linda Garber, Daniel Balderston, and José Quiroga. "New Directions in Multiethnic, Racial, and Global Queer Studies." *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay*

studies 10, no. 1 (2003): 125-128

- Cohen, Cathy J. 1997. Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics? *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997)
- Eng, David, Jack Halberstam, and José Muñoz. "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" Duke University Press, 2005
- Marcus, Sharon. "Queer Theory for Everyone: A Review Essay." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 1 (2005)

Ethnography?

September 27:

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" and "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* New York: Basic Books.
- Behar, Ruth. 1997. "Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart" in *The Vulnerable Observer*.
- Rosaldo, Renato. 1993. "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage" in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*.

Queer/Ethnographies?

October 4:

- Elliston, Deborah. "Anthropology's Queer Future: Feminist Lessons From Tahiti and Its Islands." *Out in Theory. The Emergence of Lesbian and Gay Anthropology* (2002): 287-315
- Engebretsen, Elizabeth L. "Queer Ethnography in Theory and Practice: Reflections on Studying Sexual Globalization and Women's Queer Activism in Beijing." *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 5, no. 2 (2008): 88-116
- Newton, Esther. "My Best Informant's Dress: The Erotic Equation in Fieldwork." *Cultural Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (1993): 3-23
- Weston, Kath. "Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22, no. 1 (1993): 339-367
- Boellstorff, Tom. "Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology." *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* 36 (2007): 17-35

Diving In

From this point forward, we will read (most of) an ethnography each week, pairing each text with a particular focus on the methodological insights that the author offers to our work.

On Categories

October 11:

- Newton, Esther. *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1979

October 18:

- Valentine, David. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007

October 25:

- Kulick, Don. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1998

October 30:

- Reddy, Gayatri. *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005

On Community

November 8:

- Gray, Mary L. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: New York University Press, 2009

November 15:

- NO CLASS (turn in annotated bibliographies + continue library research for your proposals)

November 29:

PROPOSAL DRAFT WORKSHOP ***email your drafts by noon on Tuesday 11/27***

December 6:

- Decena, Carlos U. *Tacit Subjects: Belonging and Same-sex Desire Among Dominican Immigrant Men*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2011

On Capital

December 13:

- Rofel, Lisa. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007

December 20:

- Wilson, Ara. *The Intimate Economies of Bangkok: Tomboys, Tycoons, and Avon Ladies in the Global City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004

spring course Outline

Required Texts

- Erzen, Tanya. *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement*. University of California Press, June, 2006
- Gould, Deborah. *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009
- Karkazis, Katrina Alicia. *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008
- Lancaster, Roger. *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011
- Moore, Mignon. *Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood Among Black Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011
- Sinnott, Megan. *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand*. University of Hawaii Press, 2004
- Volcano, Del LaGrace, and Ulrika Dahl. *Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Femininities*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2008
- Weiss, Margot Danielle. *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011

- Wekker, Gloria. *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006

Additional articles will be posted to our course site and books will be available on reserve at the Esther Raushenbush Library.

January 24:

Fieldwork Presentations

(Bring audio clips and visual ephemera to share!)

January 31:

- Sinnott, Megan. *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand*. University of Hawaii Press, 2004

February 7:

- Wekker, Gloria. *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006

February 14:

- Moore, Mignon. *Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood Among Black Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011

Writing, Representing, and Creating Ethnographic Work

February 21:

VIGNETTES WORKSHOP ***email your drafts by noon on Wednesday***

February 28:

VIGNETTES WORKSHOP ***email your drafts by noon on Wednesday***

March 7:

Guest Speaker: Ulrika Dahl

- Volcano, Del Lagrace, and Ulrika Dahl. *Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Femininities*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2008
- Dahl, Ulrika. [TBA]

March 14:

Skills Training Part Two: Final Project Skills

SPRING BREAK

April 4:

- Lancaster, Roger. *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011

April 11:

- Karkazis, Katrina Alicia. *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008

April 18:

DRAFT WORKSHOP ***email your drafts by noon on Wednesday***

April 25:

- Weiss, Margot Danielle. *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011

May 2:

- Gould, Deborah. *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009

May 9:

- Erzen, Tanya. *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement*. University of California Press, June, 2006

May 16:

Final Conversations/ Presentations

what we will be discussing during your conferences

All conferences will happen during A Week on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Missed conferences will not be rescheduled. It is *your responsibility* to switch conference times with another student if you have a scheduling conflict on any given week.

DUE BI-WEEKLY: At the end of every conference you will email me, addressing these questions: What did we discuss? What have I encouraged you to look at? What work will you complete now?

projects

Your conference projects will be carefully choreographed over the course of the year, with everyone submitting an extensive project proposal in December, and a final project in May.

Fall

The first semester's proposal (akin to one that you would submit if you were seeking funding), will both outline and contextualize the research and writing that you will do from December-May. We will discuss your projects individually during our conference meetings, but expect that prior to turning in your proposal at the end of the semester, you will complete the following benchmarks: Positions (September 18), Queer/Worlds (October 2), Contexts (October 16), Methods (November 6), Draft Proposal (November 27), Final Proposal (December 11). You will also participate in an in-class workshop of your proposal.

Fieldwork: November to February

Between November and February you will complete (at least) 20 hours of "deep hanging out" over (at least) 5 forays into your fieldsite. This work may include participant observation, interviews, and/or the convening of focus groups (as well as other methods). Every fieldwork session should be recorded both in real-time and as fieldnotes processed once you have left the scene.

Spring

Everyone will complete an ethnographic project based upon their fieldwork, though "ethnography" has come to mean many different things (from social scientific analyses to films, poetic mash-ups to virtual environments) and you will define what it means for your project. You are welcomed to play with genre and form to create an ethnography that is appropriate both to your subject and to your perspective on what this form of research and writing can/should do. Before you turn in your final project, you will complete the following benchmarks: Vignettes (February 20/27), Inspirations/Dissemination (March 6), Ethnography Draft (April 17), Final Projects (May 7).

Required Text

- Emerson, Robert M, Rachel I Fretz, and Linda L Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011

Additional articles will be posted to our course site and books will be available on reserve at the Esther Raushenbush Library.

fall

Assignment: *Positions*, 3-4pp. (due September 18, noon):

Read: Behar, Ruth. 1997. "The Vulnerable Observer"

Write: Who are you in the world? To which communities do you belong, if any? What forms of identification are relevant for your own sense of self, and which ones do you imagine will be relevant as others encounter you in your research? Inspired by Behar's assertion, this assignment aims to articulate "what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the world, and more particularly, the topic being studied" (13). What do you expect will be the "positions of power and negotiations of entry" (15) that you will confront in your work?

September 19/20

Brainstorming subjects + objects of analysis and proposal overview

BRING: 2 hard copies of your *Positions* statement

Assignment: *Queer/Worlds*, 3-4pp. (due October 2, noon):

Write: Drawing from at least three of the authors that we have read in seminar, write about the definition of "queer" that informs the development of your project. What are the tensions that you find productive for your own work? Where do you situate your own approach? Bearing this definition in mind, make your (first) case for the subjects and objects of analysis that you propose for your project. Draft five research questions that you might ask to drive your work.

October 3/4

Defining a fieldsite, sources, and contexts

BRING: 2 hard copies of your *Queer/Worlds* statement

Assignment: *Contexts* (due October 16, noon):

Read: Luker, Kristin. 2008. "Reviewing the Literature," in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*

Write: First, do as Luker says and "draw yourself a daisy" (seriously—I want the picture). Next, write a 3-4pp. narrative about the various contexts in which your chosen subjects and objects of analysis are embedded. Using Google Scholar (strategically!) and other bibliographic resources, develop a working bibliography (divided by domain) for your project.

October 17/18

Deepening contexts, writing a literature review

BRING: 2 hard copies of your *Contexts* statement

Assignment: *Methods*, 2-3pp. (due November 6, noon):

Read: Luker, Kristin. 2008. "Field (and Other) Methods," in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*. and Emerson, Fretz, Shaw. 1995. "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research," in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Write: Write a narrative about the methods that you intend to use for your project, drawing from any of the possibilities that you have learned about in conference or in seminar. Make sure that you address the basics (who/what/when/where/how you plan to conduct the study), but that you also offer a clear rationale for the strategies that you have chosen.

November 7/8

Defining and operationalizing methods

BRING: 2 hard copies of your *Methods* statement

Assignment: Draft Proposal (due November 27, noon)
Read: Emerson, Fretz, Shaw. 1995. "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes," in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* and AAA statement on ethics: <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm> .
Write: Draft your proposal! Each document must include these five sections: Overview and Goals, Literature Review, Methods, Accountability, Timeline. A handout outlining the goals for each section is forthcoming.

November 29/30
Discuss proposal revisions and feedback from peers
BRING: 2 hard copies of your draft proposal

Assignment: Final Proposal (due December 11, noon)
Read: Emerson, Fretz, Shaw. 1995. "Writing Up Fieldnotes I: From Field to Desk," in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.
Write: Through careful reflection and revision, craft a final version of your research proposal. Include a one-page narrative that describes how you refined your draft and responded to reviewer feedback.

December 12/13
Discuss fieldwork plan
BRING: 2 hard copies of your final proposal

spring

January 30/31
Post-fieldwork trajectories

February 13/14
Vignettes—BRING AT LEAST TWO to conference.

Assignment: *Vignettes* (4) (due February 20 or February 27, noon)
Read: Emerson, Fretz, Shaw. 1995. "Writing Up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes on the Page," in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Optional Read: Emerson, Fretz, Shaw. 1995. "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing," in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Write: This is the chance to process the empirical dimensions of your fieldwork, whether or not this is the approach that you will take in the end. Your four vignettes (endeavor to write one each week!) will address the who/what/when/why/where/how of your fieldwork. They should be both evocative of the experience and concrete about the details of your observations and interactions.

February 27/28
Vignettes—Discussing all four, and ways forward.

Assignment: *Inspirations and Dissemination*, 3-4pp. (due March 6, noon)

Read: Reread your kernels, your notes, the books that excite you...experience the art that moves you, the music that thrills you (you get the picture).

Write: What's your inspiration? Whose form/ which forms do you like and want to work with? Why do you want to go in this direction? Why is this the appropriate form for the processing of your experience? How/will this work be shared and disseminated—both with your interlocutors and with the wider world?

March 13/14

Inspirations, and draft-making trajectories.

April 10/11

Post-Spring-Break updates, and conversations about final product dissemination.

Assignment: *Drafts: Analyses and Interpretations* (due April 17, noon)

April 24/25

Discussing drafts and plans for revision/more work.

Assignment: *Final Projects*, (due May 7, noon)

May 8/9

Discuss final projects! Final conversations, and plans for dissemination.

ASSIGNMENTS

annotated bibliographies Each week you will add an entry to an annotated bibliography of readings. An annotated bibliography is a list of citations, followed by a paragraph that summarizes the author's argument (the claim being made/position being asserted) along with the key points that the author marshals to support their argument. For the purposes of this course, your annotations won't stop there: you will *also* include two other dimensions: 1) an evaluative comment on something you appreciated about the work and another about something that you found challenging or ineffective and 2) a reflection on how this work deepens, troubles, or might be used to extend your understanding of one or both of our keywords ("queer" and "ethnography"). This latter point then, is your chance to reflect on both form and content, methods and theory. At three different intervals in the course, you will submit your bibliographies for evaluation. DUE: October 10, November 15, December 19 by noon

For example:

- Weston, Kath. "Theory, Theory, Who's Got the Theory?" in *Long Slow Burn: Sexuality and Social Science*. Routledge, 1998

Weston takes debates about the inaccessibility of "theory" as an opportunity to deconstruct the meaning of theory itself. Arguing that being pro- or anti-theory does not correlate with fixed political orientations (348), she instead makes a distinction between "straight" theory and "street" theory (348). To make her point, she describes (most) work produced in academic circles (with citations, particular intertexts) as "straight" theory, and the everyday ways that people think about the way the world works (and why) as "street" theory (348). She does this in order to advocate for an expanded (and democratized) engagement with theory, rather than a knee-jerk turn away from it.

I appreciate that Weston offers a clear argument for why ethnographic fieldwork is critical to queer studies—she shows how people who are excluded from a particular set of "queer" conversations might make important contributions to theory building. I still have questions about the best way/s to avoid treating street theorizing as something "TBE" (349)—this forces me to think about questions of audience and reception. "TBE" to whom? To whom is street theory opaque? Because it might call for explanation, does that negate its richness "as a wellspring of explanatory devices and rhetorical strategies in its own right?" (349) This extends my understanding of what ethnography can and could do, and what the stakes are in committing to this kind of a project.

Here's a general template, reduced for clarity:

TK argues that TK. TK uses TK evidence to make their point. TK makes TK theoretical intervention. I appreciate TK about this work because TK. I still have questions about/am not convinced by TK about this work because TK. This work is useful for my understanding of queer/ethnography, because it offers TK.

tumblr (Fall) Each week you will post one kernel of fabulousness (fabulousness meaning: wisdom, elegance, TKOs) to our collective Tumblr. Be sure to post it as a “quote,” to include the author/title/page number, and to include at least THREE generative keywords for the post. The aim of this assignment is to build a repository of inspiring writing, but is also to contribute to circulating what we consider to be great work beyond our classroom’s walls (reblog at will!).

*Choose if you will do this work through your personal Tumblr, or if you will create a new Tumblr “for school only” linked to your slc.edu address.

*If you do not already have a Tumblr account, submissions can be made without actually signing up.

*Submit one (or more) QUOTE/s drawn from our readings each week to <http://queerethnographies.tumblr.com> by the time that our class meets.

*As it may not be clear to me from your Tumblr name who you are (and because you cannot decide on your own tags when you submit), at the end of each quote submission include two supplementary elements: TAGS: (include at least three generative keywords) and SUBMITTED BY: (your first name).

draft proposal guidelines

due 27 November, noon

Your 10-page research proposal will be single-spaced, contain all six of these sections, hew closely to the section page limits enumerated below, and will be thoroughly edited before our peer review.

title

You must have a title for your project! It will be provisional, but should be crafted with the aim of representing the central concerns of your project and exciting readers unfamiliar with your work.

overview and goals (1 p.)

This section of the proposal should lay out the parameters of your project (the “subjects” and “objects” of analysis—taking these categories with a grain, or boulder, of salt), as well as a description of your fieldsite/s. Here you will clearly define three research questions that drive your work (these are not, usually, questions that you’re asking in interviews, rather they are the larger questions that inspire the research, and through which you frame its significance).

literature review (2-3 pp.)

This section will enumerate 4 domains of previous research with which your project is in conversation, one of them being queer theory, queer politics, and/or queer ethnography. Each of these domains should constitute a meaty, well-cited paragraph (about .5 page/each) that you will begin with a phrase that describes the domain in italics (i.e. *Queer Theory and Embodiment*) and that goes on to describe the most pertinent work that you have read in that domain. This narrative is your chance to situate your project in broader contexts and to articulate how what you’re doing addresses a gap/lacuna/mis-reading that you’ve identified in your pre-research.

methods (2-3 pp.)

In this section, you will enumerate all of the methods (i.e. participant observation, informal interviews, recorded interviews, focus groups, mapping, collaborative timelining) that you will employ during your fieldwork. You must offer a clear rationale for each strategy that connects each one to the questions that you seek to answer. Be as specific as possible. For example, rather than just saying that you will engage in “participant observation,” say what that might include. What kinds of activities will you participate in? What will you focus on as you take notes? (i.e. some observations could be *contextual*—documenting the layout of the space, its contours, the flow of people who frequent it, what seems to be happening systematically, what your experience of the place (using your five senses) teaches you AND/OR your notes might be *processual*—documenting what happens within the place in which you are observing. What happens with the passage of time? Who talks? To whom? About what? What do people do, or not do, during that time?) For all of your methods, consider how you imagine that taking *x* approach will help you understand question *y*.

accountability (1.5-2 pp.)

After reading the AAA Code of Ethics (see assignment for link), reflect upon two dimensions of accountability for your project—first, the dimension that will govern **how you do your work**: How will you ensure that the people with whom you work have given their informed consent to entering into this relationship with you? When and how (i.e. written, orally) will you acquire this consent? How will you maintain the confidentiality of your interlocutors? Will you use pseudonyms? Will you take photographs or video? Will your interlocutors consent to the diffusion of your images? Where, and among whom? How will you demonstrate respect for your interlocutors? How will you reflect

on whether you're being ethical and accountable while you're "in the field?" Who will you check in with, if you have a confronted a situation about which you have questions (hint: this can be me!).

Second, the dimension that will govern **what you do with the ethnographic project** that you will create in the Spring. What kind of a relationship will you have with your interlocutors once the fieldwork is complete? Beyond the requirements for the course, will you disseminate your work in some way? Where? To whom? In what form? (For example, will you craft two versions or elements of the project, intended for dissemination to different audiences?)

timeline (.5-1 p.)

Be specific: chart your fieldwork, week-by-week, and indicate by when you intend to have access to your site, when your project goals will be approved by your interlocutors, how many hours you intend to spend at/in your fieldsite, and when you plan to commence individual interviews or focus groups. This is where you chart your 20 hours, as well as any other time that you intend to spend in the field between December and February. You should also indicate what you accomplished in October and November.

conclusion and significance (.5-1 p.)

Wrap your proposal up with a punchy, wildly imaginative bow and tell us: why does your work matter? Why is it urgent that it be done?

deadlines and next steps

By **noon on 27 November**, you'll need to BOTH upload a draft of your proposal to MySLC (for my review) and email a copy to the two other people in your peer review cluster:

peer review clusters:

By **class-time on 29 November**, be sure that you have:

1. Read all of the proposals from the members of your cluster.
2. Written (at least) one page of feedback for each of your partners, including ideas for how they might improve their work.
3. Prepared to share with the larger class any sources of inspiration that you've found in your colleagues' work—has someone taken an approach to accountability that you might emulate for your own project? Is there a method that you hadn't yet considered, but you might now? A body of literature that you are inspired to address in your own work?

presentation videos

At the end of the semester you will each present a 4-5 minute (and NO LONGER) edited video that derives from, gives us a sense of, and/or sums up your conference project. Anything, anything, anything goes with this—you might do something reflective or documentary or animated or conceptual or didactic or ethnographic or experiential—or some mash-up thereof. Your work will be assessed entirely upon how creatively and imaginatively you use this medium to develop an engaging and informative presentation about what you've accomplished in this course. Surprise me!

Submission: In order to submit your video for evaluation and screening, you will upload it to Youtube, then send me the link to your project. Please opt for an “unlisted” rather than a “private” status, if you choose to limit access to your video. The difference is parsed here:

<http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=157177>

DUE: May 15 at 5pm.