

HUM 524/624: Special Topics in Film and Culture
Film and Teen Sexuality
Summer 2013, MTWThF, 1:00pm – 2:30pm, HM 112

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Office Hours: W/Th 12-1 and by appointment

Course Description

Enrollment in HUM 624 requires Graduate standing; HUM 524 requires Junior standing.

Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* famously argues that although we associate the Victorian era with a taboo on sexual subjects, really, the "repression" of sexuality produced an explosion of sexual discourse. Similarly, in the 20th and the 21st centuries, little seems as taboo as talking about sex involving children—and yet looking at the movies at our theaters and top shows on TV, we seem to talk of little else. This course applies foundational concepts from queer theory and gender/sexuality studies more generally to the representations of late childhood, or teen, sexuality in popular cinema. We begin with Foucault to help us think about how iconography in classics such as *Rebel without a Cause* and *The Breakfast Club* create sexual "species" related to social groupings typical of white suburbia. We then have Shakespeare week, looking at various strategies for adapting the most canonical of plays, themselves produced during times of profound gender instability, in ways that both create and subvert norms for teens to succeed or fail at growing into. Following this extended study of a mostly heteronormatively-driven tradition, we turn to queer traditions' answer to the bildungsroman, the coming out story, often fused with stories of first love. While these films provide norms long missing for (and strongly desired by) queer youth, they fall more safely into types of sexuality not highly vilified in 2013. As Plato's *Symposium* makes clear, relationships involving teens and adults have a long history, but their status, as well as their representation, is morally and ethically fraught. After studying *L.I.E.* (2001) and *An Education* (2009), which tread into this dangerous territory, we turn to cult weirdness *Nowhere* (1997), then to well-known horror film *Carrie* (1977), and finally to a duo of lesser-known horror films that make teen sexuality "issues" hyperbolically central to their visual and narrative developments.

Course Materials

Required Reading

The book *Teen Film*, by Catherine Driscoll, is available at campus bookstores. We will begin reading it immediately, so you need it ASAP. Other required readings are in Blackboard's Course Documents. Please bring printouts or digital copies (i.e., a way to access files) of readings to class.

Films

The films we watch and discuss in this course are available to rent (Wild and Woolly has most of them), stream, or buy, and most are available at Ekstrom Library. Some might be harder to find, but you must still see them prior to class discussions. Although you are not required to purchase copies of the films, you will need screen shots to include in posters, papers, and other assignments. I also recommend seeing

the films in groups. Solo viewing has recently become more common, but film is an intrinsically social art form, so seeing the films with others might enhance your appreciation. I will try to arrange a screening of *Nowhere* (hardest to find) and perhaps some others.

Computer and Software

You need a computer with word processing and presentation software, such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. You also need a media player capable of capturing still images from films, such as the VLC media player, which is available online to download for free. You must also regularly check your UofL email and review materials on this class's Blackboard site. Portable computing devices (e.g. laptops) are useful in class but not required.

Outcomes

The table below details the learning outcomes associated with this course. Emphases are not mutually exclusive. For example, virtually all outcomes relate directly or indirectly to critical thinking.

Table 1: Learning Emphases and Outcomes EDIT

Emphases	Outcomes
<p>Rhetoric Filmmakers and film critics use specific vocabulary and techniques to make meaning from sounds and images. Films also function as rhetorical interventions in cultural discourses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss film narrative as visual, aural, and linguistic forms of rhetoric grounded in patriarchal heteronormativity • Use disciplinary and theoretical concepts and terms that help elucidate films' interventions in creating "the teen" • Present arguments using multiple media as well as written, oral, visual, and digital communication
<p>Culture, History, and Genre Films reflect the diverse cultures that produce and receive them, and they relate to the history of film as a whole as well as the conventions of specific film genres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situate films and identities in specific socio-cultural-economic contexts and historical moments • Examine the consequences of generic classification on film/human history and form: genre/gender/gene • Debate the boundaries of representation and exploitation as films consider tabooed sexual expression
<p>Critical Thinking Understanding and interpreting films requires both attention to details (such as frames and shots) and attention to larger structures (such as sequences and diegesis).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze sounds, images, and narratives as reflections on and challenges to cultural norms • Expand understanding of basic course concepts through independent research • Advance distinct, debatable claims stemming from knowledge of films and their cultural and historical receptions

Assignments

The outcomes in Table 1 relate to the assignments in Table 2, which we will discuss during class. The table presents different requirements for undergraduate (HUM 524) and graduate (HUM 624) enrollment. Note that although assignments are less demanding for HUM 524, course materials and discussions will target graduate-level challenges and mastery. Also, students seeking graduate-level credit for HUM 524 must still complete a graduate-level project, the essay as described in the HUM 624 column.

Table 2: Assignments by Course Enrollment

Category	HUM 524 Requirements	HUM 624 Requirements
<p>Blog (100 points)</p>	<p>Sign up once to write the main blog—an intelligent but conversational analysis of a film's representation of teen sexuality (50 points). Sign up twice to be an official respondent, replying with a paragraph that adds support or refutes a claim in the main blog.</p>	<p>You're the special guest <i>academic</i> blogger or respondent, which means you're supposed to be extra well-informed, maybe even citing an outside source or two.</p>

Presentation (200 points)	Present a digital poster (a single slide/image) that analyzes a series of images that support an argument about an <i>unassigned</i> film (instructor approval required).	The poster should be appropriate for an academic conference.
Essay (500 points)	Link assigned reading to one or two assigned films in an argument that differs from or extends class discussion. 2000 - 2500 words.	Research a thesis about film and teen sexuality related to your disciplinary focus. 5000+ words.
Participation (200 points)	Demonstrate knowledge of readings and films, and share insights.	Support or critique claims with professional rigor. Discuss research trajectory with professor.

Course Policies

Grading

Each assignment has a point value. Assignments add up to a total of 1000 points. The following list shows the letter grades linked to percentages of available points earned, with a description of the work:

- A** (90-100), Exceeds expectations for argument, evidence, organization, and design
- B** (80-89), Meets expectations, with notable merit in some of the categories listed above
- C** (70-79), Meets expectations
- D** (60-69), Meets most expectations, with some problems or omissions
- F** (0-59), Meets few expectations, with significant problems or omissions

Failure to complete an assignment results in 0 points. To calculate +/- values, round total points to the 3, 5, or 8 in your percentile range. For example, 895 – 934 points round to 93 (A-), 935 – 974 points round to 95 (A), and 975 – 1000 points round to 98 (A+).

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you must miss class, email me ahead of time. You have two “freebie” days, classes you may miss without grade penalties. For other absences, you must have made a prior arrangement with me or have official documentation of an illness, injury, legal obligation, or university-sponsored activity that keeps you from class. I will deduct 25 points from your grade for each non-freebie, unapproved absence. Lateness to class counts as a half or whole absence, at my discretion. *Missing more than 25% of class meetings for any reason could result in grade penalties and/or failure.*

Punctual Work

Unless I approve a deadline extension in advance, I will not accept major assignments after the deadline. You are responsible for all information covered during every class meeting.

Decorum

Maintaining class decorum is part of participation: noisy cell phones, disrespectful behavior, and other intrusions lower productivity and, therefore, your grade. “Disrespectful behavior” includes harassment of any kind, directed either at peers or at the instructor. This course will foster discussions of sensitive issues such as gender, race, nationality, and sexuality. All viewpoints are welcome, but as individuals express themselves, they should avoid abusive or insulting language.

Academic Conduct

Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution

and its students and faculty. For more information, see the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (Sections 5 and 6).

Using Laptop Computers and Other Devices

You may only use your laptop and other digital devices for class activities and note-taking. Using such devices during class for other activities—such as email, web-surfing, social media, or games—is rude and strictly prohibited. Inappropriate laptop use may result in grade penalties and/or expulsion from class.

Access

The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate and complete requirements for this class, notify me immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center (Stevenson Hall, Room 119, 852-6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations.

Religious Holy Days and Observances

If your religious observances might require an adjustment in course work, please submit your request(s) to me in writing during the first two weeks of the semester.

Sexual Harassment

The University of Louisville strives to maintain the campus free of all forms of illegal discrimination as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students. Sexual harassment is unacceptable, and unlawful conduct and will not be tolerated in the workplace and the educational environment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems. See the [Affirmative Action policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the U of L [Computer Account Usage Agreement](#).

Diversity

The University of Louisville strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias. We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity, and a genuine understanding of the many differences—including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, national origin or military status—that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research university. We expect every member of our academic family to embrace the underlying values of this vision and to demonstrate a strong commitment to attracting, retaining and supporting students, faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of our larger society.

The Fine Print

I reserve the right to alter this syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or for similar reasons. I exercise this right rarely, but I often provide more detailed information during class. This syllabus is your guide. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Date	Reading and Viewing Assignments	Due Dates (BLOG DATES DETERMINED IN CLASS)
Wed. July 10	Introduction: selections from Kenneth Anger	
Thu. July 11	<i>Rebel without a Cause</i> (1955) Foucault, <i>History</i> , 17 - 49 Driscoll 1 – 44 [skim book for main ideas; slow down for discussions related to assigned films]	
Fri. July 12	<i>The Breakfast Club</i> (1985) Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" Driscoll 45 – 100	
Mon. July 15	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1968) Review play Driscoll 101 – 162	
Tue. July 16	<i>Romeo + Juliet</i> (1996) Anderegg, "James Dean Meets..."	
Wed. July 17	<i>O</i> (2001) Review <i>Othello</i> Hodgdon, "Race-ing <i>Othello</i> "	
Thu. July 18	Renaissance catch-up day Jardine, "Boy Actors"	
Fri. July 19	<i>Were the World Mine</i> Review <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	
Mon. July 22	<i>Pariah</i> (2011)	
Tue. July 23	Ford, "What's Queer about Race?"	
Wed. July 24	<i>Beautiful Thing</i> (1996)	
Thu. July 25	Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet"	624: Meet w/ prof before now
Fri. July 26	<i>But I'm a Cheerleader</i> (1999) Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay"	
Mon. July 29	Stacey, <i>Cinematic Life</i> , 1 – 16	
Tue. July 30	<i>L.I.E.</i> (2001)	
Wed. July 31	Rubin, "Thinking Sex"	
Thu. Aug 1	<i>An Education</i> (2009)	
Fri. Aug 2	DIGITAL POSTER GALLERY	Poster Due
Mon. Aug 5	<i>Nowhere</i> (1997) Chin, "Girlfriend in a Coma"	
Tue. Aug 6	Edelman, <i>No Future</i> , 1 – 31	
Wed. Aug 7	<i>Carrie</i> (1976)	
Thu. Aug. 8	Creed, <i>Monstrous-Feminine</i> , 1 – 15, 73 – 83	
Fri. Aug. 9	<i>Sleepaway Camp</i> (1983)	
Mon. Aug. 12	<i>Detention</i> (2011)	
Tue. Aug. 13		Essay Due

PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. COOPER.

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for HUM 524/624 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

print name

signature

date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications. I understand that permission is optional and will have no influence on my grade.
- I do NOT give my instructor, Dr. L. Andrew Cooper, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications. I understand that permission is optional and will have no influence on my grade.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

print name

signature

email address

phone number

print permanent address

Date