

Gender, Sexuality and the City

Dr. Michael Hunter

URBN PL 219

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Spring 2023

Mon 9 – 11:50am

Course Description:

Gender, Sexuality and the City introduces students to the ways in which 20th and 21st Century cities have policed, surveilled, responded to and shaped the identities of sexual minorities and gender nonconforming subjects, both in and outside a U.S. context.

The course begins with an overview of how (primarily U.S.) urban centers have attracted sexual minorities and gender nonconformists, creating spaces (often inadvertently) for individual self-discovery and collective sexual, political and communitarian (counter)cultural expression. Focusing on the development of “gayborhoods,” the culture of gay and lesbian bars, and the spatial dynamics of cruising and public sex, we examine how cities afford spaces for the development of queer and gender nonconforming subjectivities while simultaneously policing and regulating them, often through institutional and media discourses such as safety, health/hygiene, the family, property ownership, and outright trans- and homophobia.

We consider how contemporary structures/discourses of neoliberalism, capitalism and global urbanism have re-cast some LGBTQ+ individuals as model citizen-consumers, and how their inclusion in cities is used to demonstrate adherence to “global” values such as diversity, tolerance and human rights. We ask which kinds of LGBTQ+ individuals are invited to participate in these forms of inclusion, and which are excluded. Within a U.S. framework, we look at how this can lead to an assimilation of queer spaces into the logics of gentrification and tourism. Beyond the U.S, we look at the work of some scholars and activists who urge the development of new terms and paradigms to understand the global sexual politics of urban studies according to a comparative approach, rather than one dominated by Western values.

Finally, the course examines a series of cities (Beirut, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Taipei) as case studies, connecting challenges such as affordable housing, the policing and regulating of public sexual expression, gentrification, and support of youth populations to the experiences and perspectives of specific LGBTQ+ populations.

These case studies, and the final course assignment, attempt to provoke students to consider current and future opportunities to use urban planning and design to redress patterns of exclusion for LGBTQ+ and gender non-conforming people, and create new access to resources, opportunities, and a sense of belonging.

Materials:

All materials will be available as downloadable pdf files on the BruinLearn site, which is our main portal for accessing readings and uploading assignments.

Requirements and Grade Breakdown:

- 1) **Participation (20%)**, including attending class regularly, being engaged in group activities and discussion, and completing all required readings to the best of your capacity. Collective reading, notetaking, and study are encouraged. I do call people into discussion on a regular basis, so you should be prepared to respond to the assigned readings in class. Participation also includes the informal **Home Site Presentation** described below (Week 2) and the **informal presentation of your research project** on the final day of class.
- 2) Participation in **four online forum discussions (20%, 5 points each)**. These will be in response to the week's readings, and are detailed on the BruinLearn site. **Six possible forums will be provided, of which you need to respond to four.** You will not receive a graded response to these during the quarter. If you complete all components of the forum assignment (usually initial post plus two responses, on time and meeting the minimum word requirement), you will receive full credit.
- 3) One in-class **presentation (15%)** in groups of 4-5 in which you summarize the primary readings, provide additional context, and identify the relevant connection to policy and design challenges. A more detailed prompt for these is on the BruinLearn site, and you can sign up for your preferred presentation on the home page.
- 4) A mid-term **short essay (15%, 1000-1250 words)**, due at the end of Week 5, which draws connections between the readings and materials so far. A more detailed prompt for this assignment is on the BruinLearn site.
- 5) Final **research project (30%, 1750-2000 words)**, due at the end of Week 11.

This research paper should detail the **history, current challenges, and future design/policy possibilities** of a **building, neighborhood or site** that has been shaped by one of more of the themes we've been exploring in the course. The range of possible sites is quite open, but it should have a history of relevance for sexual minorities and gender nonconforming individuals.

Your research paper of **1750-2000 words, due at the end of Week 11**, should be divided between the following three sections:

- A **narrative account** of the history of the site's relevance to LGBTQ+ populations/individuals, including relevant examples of services offered (either formally or informally); relevant changes in the function, ownership, and/or management of the site; relevant historical policy and design changes/responses to

the site; policing, surveillance, and/or vandalism of the site; and any other aspects of the site's history you think are relevant to the course material.

- A discussion of **present challenges** facing the site, which may include funding, development/gentrification, changing populations, perceived irrelevance, etc.
- Your own considered proposal as to the **future of the site**, which should include specific policy and/or design solutions to the challenges detailed in the previous section. In your proposal, you don't need to feel bound by the historical function of the site, though your ideas should address the challenges you describe; for example, if you identify that the community no longer perceives a need for a social space that caters specifically to LGBTQ+ populations, you may choose to imagine a future for the site as a space devoted to historical memory.

You should also include a **works cited page** (MLA or Chicago) with a minimum of **five sources** you've used to research the site.

In addition to your own research sources, your paper should include reference to at least **three of the readings** we've looked at in the course.

You should submit a one paragraph (approximately 250 word) **abstract** for your final project to the BruinLearn site by **Monday of week 7**. You can find the portal for this in the assignments section.

You will also be expected to informally present your site choice and progress on your research in small working groups on the last day of class, June 5.

Weekly Topics and Readings:

Week 1: Introduction: Cities & Sexualities

Readings:

- Phil Hubbard, "Introducing Cities and Sexualities," from *Cities and Sexualities*, London: Routledge 2012.
- David Bell and Jon Binnie, "Sexual Democracy and Urban Life," from *The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond*, Polity Press 2000.
- Michael Frisch, "Planning as a Heterosexist Project," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 21, 2002.

Week 2: Urban Space/Queer Space

Home Site presentation

Readings:

- John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," 1983.
- Lillian Faderman, "Black Lesbians in Harlem," from *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, Columbia University Press 1991.
- George Chauncey, "*Building Gay Neighborhood Enclaves: The Village and Harlem*," from *Gay New York*, BasicBooks 1994.

- Petra Doan, "Queers in the American City: Transgendered perceptions of urban space," *Gender, Place and Culture* 14:1, 2007.

Home Site presentations: in these short, informal in-class presentations, you should briefly introduce your class working group to a site, building, or neighborhood which had/has importance for sexual minorities and/or gender nonconforming people in a town or city you have lived in. If possible, this should be a site which you have some previous knowledge of or familiarity with, rather than something you're researching for the first time for this class.

Week 3: The Rise & Demise of Gayborhoods

**1 group presentation
Forum Assignment #1**

Readings:

- Amin Ghaziani, "Why Gayborhoods Matter: The Street Empirics of Urban Sexualities," from *The Life and Afterlife of Gay Neighborhoods*, The Urban Book Series 2021.
- Petra L. Doan and Harrison Higgins, "The Demise of Queer Space?: Resurgent Gentrification and the Assimilation of LGBTQ Neighborhoods," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31(1) 2011.
- Sam Miles, Let's (not) Go Outside: Grindr, Hybrid Space, and Digital Neighborhoods, from *The Life and Afterlife of Gay Neighborhoods*, Springer 2021.
- Jen Jack Giesekeing, "Mapping lesbian and queer lines of desire: Constellations of queer urban space," *EPD: Society and Space* Vol 38(5) 2020.
- Jack Coffin, "Plateaus and Afterglows: Theorizing the Afterlives of Gayborhoods as Post-Places," from *The Life and Afterlife of Gay Neighborhoods*, Springer 2021.

Optional reading:

- Dereka Rushbrook, "Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist," *GLQ* 8(1-2), 2002.

Week 4: Building a Counterculture in Gay Bars and Nightlife Spaces

**1 group presentation
Forum Assignment #2**

Readings:

- Shane Vogel, "Closing Time: Langston Hughes and the Queer Poetics of Harlem Nightlife," from *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret*, University of Chicago Press 2013 (excerpt).
- Lillian Faderman, "Butches, Femmes and Kikis: Creating Lesbian Subculture in the 1950s and 60s," from *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, Columbia University Press 1991 (excerpt)
- Joan Nestle, *A Restricted Country*, Firebrand Books 1987 (excerpt)
- Jeremy Atherton Lin, *Gay Bar: Why We Went Out*, Back Bay Books 2022 (excerpt)
- Gregor Mattson, "Small-City Gay Bars, Big-City Urbanism," *City & Community* 19:1 March 2020.

- Ben Campkin, Laura Marshall and Rebecca Ross, *Urban Pamphleteer #7: LGBTQ+ Night-time Spaces: Past, Present & Future*, UCL Urban Laboratory 2022. (excerpts)
- UCL Bartlett School of Architecture: Safeguarding London's LGBTQ+ Venues. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/about-us/innovation-enterprise/safeguarding-londons-lgbtq-venues>
- Mayor of London/London Assembly: LGBTQ+ nightlife venues. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/lgbtq-nightlife-venues>

Week 5: Contact: Cruising & Public Sex

**1 group presentation
Forum Assignment #3**

Readings:

- Aaron Betsky, "From Cruising to Community," from *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*, New York: Morrow and Co., 1997.
- John Rechy, *City of Night*, Grove 1963 (excerpt)
- Samuel Delaney, "...Three, Two, One, Contact: Times Square Red" from *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, New York University Press 1999.
- John Lindell, "Public Space for Public Sex," from *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, South Ed Press 1996.
- Graham Gremore, "City Planner Wants Park to be More Accomodating for Gay Cruising," *Queerty*, Dec 7. 2016. <https://www.queerty.com/city-planner-wants-parks-accommodating-gay-cruising-20161207>

Optional readings:

- Samuel Delaney, "Times Square Blue," from *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, New York University Press 1999.
- George Chauncey, "Privacy Could Only Be Had in Public": Forging a Gay World in the Streets," from *Gay New York*, BasicBooks 1994.
- Marc. E. Elovitz and P.J. Edwards, "The D.O.H. Papers: Regulating Public Sex in New York City" from *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, South Ed Press 1996.
- Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24(2) 1998.

Week 6: Neoliberalism, Global Urbanism and Sexual Citizenship

**1 presentation
Forum Assignment #4**

Readings:

- David Bell and Jon Binnie, "Authenticating Queer Space: Citizenship, Urbanism and Governance," *Urban Studies* Vol 49(9), 2004.
- Gavin Brown, "Urban (Homo)Sexualities: Ordinary Cities and Ordinary Sexualities," *Geography Compass* 2/4 2008.
- Natalie Oswin, "World, City, Queer," *Antipode* Vol 47 No 3, 2015.

- Martinn F. Manalansan IV, "'Out There': The Topography of Race and Desire in the Global City," from *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*, Duke University Press 2003.

Week 7: Case Studies: Beirut and Taipei

**2 presentations
Forum Assignment #5**

Readings:

- Sofian Merabet, "Producing Queer Space in Beirut," from *Queer Beirut*, University of Texas Press 2014.
- John Nagle, "'Where the state freaks out': Gentrification, Queerspaces and activism in postwar Beirut," *Urban Studies* Vol. 59(5), 2021.
- John A. Wiggins, Jr., "'May I Talk to You?' Ethno-Sexual Encounters in Taipei's New Park – A Queer Ethnography," *East Asia*, Winter 2000.
- Fran Martin, "From Citizenship to Queer Counterpublic: Reading Taipei's New Park," *Communal/Plural*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2000.

Week 8: Case Studies: San Francisco and Los Angeles

Forum Assignment #6

Guest Presentations:

Eric Shaw, Director, Hope SF, San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

Keilani Garcia and Erica Rodriguez, Youth Services, Los Angeles LGBT Center

Readings TBD in collaboration with guests

Week 9: Memorial Day: no class

Week 10: Conclusion: Designing the LGBTQ+ Inclusive City

Readings:

- B.D. Worthman-Galvin, "Towards a Queer Urban Design Methodology," 104th ACSA Annual Conference, Seattle 2014.
- Ben Campkin, "Centre in Pieces," *Urban Pamphleteer #7: LGBTQ+ Night-time Spaces: Past, Present & Future*, UCL Urban Laboratory 2022.

Final project presentations in working groups.