

WGSS 370: The Queer Child

Fall 2020: Mondays at 10:20 am on Zoom/Asynchronous work

Taught by: Dr. Jess Vooris [pronouns: they/she]

Email: jessicavooris@depauw.edu

Zoom Office hours: Mon & Wed, 2-4 pm EDT, Tues 9:00-11 am EDT
On campus: Friday mornings (by appointment only)

Course Description/Requirements:

"...the gay child makes us perceive the queer temporalities haunting all children. For no matter how you slice it, the child from the standpoint of "normal" adults is always queer."

Kathryn Bond Stockton, *The Queer Child*

"Children's lives are not preparation for life; they are life itself." Barrie Thorne, *Gender Play*

This seminar explores children's gender and sexuality, focusing in particular on the lives of transgender, gender-creative, gender non-conforming, gay and queer children who are under 12 years old. We will explore how our society thinks about children's autonomy, place within familial structures, and relationships to adults. Most importantly, we will listen to the voices of children and consider their own perspectives on matters of identity, expression and desire. Students will complete a final research paper on a topic of their choice that relates to children's gender and sexuality. This course approaches the "queer" and "trans" child from an interdisciplinary perspective; drawing from trans studies, queer theory, and childhood studies.

This course will meet synchronously via video conference **once a week on Monday**, and will also **include an asynchronous discussion component**. I want to foster as many opportunities for connection between members of the class as possible, while also recognizing potential barriers to access in this time of covid-19. If you cannot attend the synchronous component of class, there will be alternative activities to do in place of class. This is not a typical semester, and I will work with you to make sure that you get as much as you can out of the class, while recognizing the need for flexibility and kindness in these times.

Please visit me during my office hours (virtual or in person outside if conditions allow) as I would love to learn more about what you are thinking and learning, and am happy to answer any question you have about class and class materials.

Be sure to let me know during office hours or via email if you need support, or any specific accommodations, the sooner the better. Students with disabilities or who need time from class to observe religious holidays, please contact me as soon as you can to make any arrangements necessary.

Acknowledgements: Thank-you Rebecca Barrett-Fox for guidance in translating the course to a remote format and Lydia Wilson Marshall for Depauw-specific resources.

Required Materials

Please purchase the two texts below in print, electronic, or audio form, or rent/borrow them.

Emezi, Awaeke. *Pet*. New York: Make Me A World, 2019. Print. ISBN: 978-0525647072
[Will be read at the end of the semester]

Myers, Kyl. *Raising Them*. New York: TOPPLE Books & Little A, 2020. ISBN: 978-1542003681 [will be read mid-semester; doesn't come out till Sept 8th]

All other required course materials will be uploaded as PDFs or links on Moodle.

How the course will be organized

- Once a week Zoom class (Monday at 10:20 am) = children's book, discussion of readings, creative activities
- Optional once a week class-specific Social Hour/Office Hour (Wednesday at 10:20 am)
- Once a week asynchronous forum conversation (Friday at 10:20 am)

Each week students should:

- Carefully read the materials and take notes on them
- Come to our Zoom class prepared to talk and share your thoughts with others
- Respond thoughtfully to discussion prompts, being sure to reference class texts

Creating a community of learning means we must:

- Build a space where each member of the class feels comfortable about sharing their thoughts.
- Understand that we may not always agree, but that disagreement can be a positive, productive part of learning
- Listen carefully to each other and treat each other kindly and with respect.
- Remember that we all have something to contribute, every one of us is learning (even me!) and it is okay to ask questions.
- Understand that learning means taking risks, trying new things, playing around, guessing at times, making mistakes and recognizing that sometimes we won't get it right the first time.

Communication for the Course

Moodle: Class readings, an updated syllabus, course calendar, and class forums will be kept on Moodle.

FYI: Privacy and Moodle. Please note that Moodle keeps track of when you log in, what links you click, and how long you keep any part of the Moodle open. Thus, I can tell if you haven't logged in for a week, if you never opened a particular file, or if you only spend 5 minutes on the discussion board.

Email: Please send email to jessicavooris@depauw.edu if you have questions/comments about the course, readings, or want to make an appointment with me. It will be

helpful if you include the course number and a relevant subject heading with your email. **Example:** WGSS 370, question about Reflective Essay

Note: email sent after 7 pm may not be responded to until the morning, and I will not be checking email frequently on the weekends. Please give me at least 24 hours to respond, however, if you don't hear from me in 48 hours, do send a reminder email! . (If you email after 7 pm on Friday, I may not reply until Monday morning).

Camera/Mic Policies for our Zoom Classes

- I encourage but do not require cameras to be on
- Upload a photo or avatar on your zoom profile if possible
- Mute your mic when not speaking
- Chat/Text is also a way to communicate

For me, personally, it is easier to engage if I can see people's faces on the screen, and this enables us to try to recreate the sense of being in person while connecting remotely. It also makes it less tempting to multi-task or check email. Thus, if possible, I would like for folks to have their cameras on during our video-conference class sessions.

However, I understand that folks may have connectivity issues, may not want to broadcast from their house, may have Zoom fatigue, and/or are uncomfortable being seen on camera. (Note that on Zoom you can hide your video from yourself if you don't like seeing yourself on camera).

Therefore, I will not require that your cameras are turned on. That said, it can be helpful for everyone in the class if you have a photo or avatar to represent yourself, so we can see that instead of a blank square.

Please mute your mics unless you are speaking to avoid background noise. Again, I would appreciate folks speaking via their mics when possible, but I know that sometimes your mic may break, or there is a lot of background noise, or a topic may be sensitive and you don't have privacy to speak freely. For all of these reasons, I also encourage the chat as a place to communicate your thoughts, questions, or responses to questions.

Graded Assignments

15 % Zoom Attendance/Reading Reports

20% Discussion Board responses

20 % Personal Reflection Essay

20 % Child Object Reports

30 % Final Project

Grades:

A work is excellent, unusually creative and/or analytically striking

B is fine work of high quality, though not as skilled, ambitious, or carefully presented as A

C is average or usual work fulfilling the assignment; should not be hasty, or insufficiently collaborated

D work is below average or incomplete; shows many difficulties or cannot follow instructions

F work is not sufficient to pass; unwillingness to do the work, or so many difficulties unable to

complete

I will explain in more detail what the expectations are for each assignment in the handouts and on Moodle.

Graded Assignments

15% Class Participation/Activities: Over the course of the semester, I will be hosting weekly Zoom discussion sessions. These discussion classes will be a space where we can create a sense of community, learn from each other, discuss the readings, and have a bit of fun! I hope that these sessions will be interesting, and useful for you in terms of understanding readings and responding to the discussion board prompts.

I ask that you attend at least 10/14 sessions, which gives you some flexibility depending on tech issues, possible sickness, or plain exhaustion from living in a pandemic. You will earn your Zoom participation grade by attending at least 10 sessions and commenting (either verbally or through the chat at least once during the session). You do not need to contact me about missing class UNLESS you will be missing more than one week in a row, and then I request that you check in so that I know you are okay, and can make sure you are caught up on class materials.

If you miss more than 4 classes, please get in touch with me about **completing an optional/replacement class activity** to make up what you have missed.

20 % Discussion Boards: Each week there will be discussion questions that you will answer, drawing on the texts you have read that week. These responses can be in written format (300-400 words long), audio or video format (2-3 minutes—please be sure to include captions! Or a transcript) or in comic/art form. No matter how you choose to respond, please engage thoughtfully with the question, and reference class materials and key concepts in your answer.

You should then respond to at least two of your classmates' posts. This should be at least a few sentences, or at least a minute response if you choose the audio/video option. Please be thoughtful, generous, curious, and respectful in your responses and interactions on the discussion board.

Due: Fridays at 11:59 pm. (I encourage you to finish your post by 10:20, so folks have time to then respond before midnight)

Note: I will not grade discussion posts until the end of the semester, and you can turn them in/make them up until the last day of class on Dec. 11th. Throughout the semester I will respond to various discussion posts, and will give you a mid-semester evaluation to let you know how you are doing.

20% Two Children's Toy/Book/TV Show/Song Reports: For this assignment you will choose a toy, picture book, television show, OR song that is aimed at children, and will give a short presentation (5 minutes) about it to the class, explaining what it is, what you think it's purpose is, and offer a short analysis of it in the context of class conversations. You will do this 2 times over the course of the semester. If it is difficult for you to present "live" you are welcome to make a video and share that when it is your turn. You should also write a brief 1 page summary of your object/presentation to hand in to me. **Due date: Depends.** (You will sign up for your presentation times at the start of the semester).

20% Personal Reflection Essay: Drawing from texts that we have read on gender, sexuality, and childhood, you will pick a moment in your childhood to analyze. If you do not want to share a personal memory or story, you may choose a passage from a book or another type of media that resonated with you and analyze it for narratives of gender/sexuality. If you choose this option, please verify with me what text/piece of media you will focus on. Please do not write about a friend/family member's gender and sexuality unless you discuss with me how this is related to YOUR gender/sexuality. 4-5 pages.

35% Final Project: For your final project you will create an “educational object” related to children’s gender and sexuality. This might be something that you create that is specifically for children or young people (ex: a book, song, tv show, movie script, zine, podcast, art-work, toy). Or you might be creating an object (book/podcast/magazine/website/art-piece/critical essay/lesson plans/youtube video/zine) that is aimed at folks who take care of children like parents, family members, teachers, social workers, etc. Alongside the object that you create you will write an analysis paper describing the choices that you have made with the object, drawing from course materials to support your thinking. **Due: December 14th at 11:30 am.**

CITATIONS:

It is important as scholars and writers that we respect the work of others, and that we make sure to cite our sources. I like to think about citations as a way to give credit, as a way to guide a reader to more information, and as a way to be a part of a community conversation.

If you are unsure of how to properly cite your information and how to avoid plagiarism please refer to online guides on MLA, APA and Chicago Style formatting. I do not have a preference for which one you use, but please pick one and use that consistently throughout an assignment. If you still need help with citations, please set up an appointment to talk with me.

LATE POLICY and Extension Policy:

Discussion Posts can be completed at any point in the semester, and will be graded in total after the final day of classes, however, I suggest that you stick to the weekly schedule that I have outlined or you will fall behind and find it difficult to catch up.

For assignments with a firm deadline (reflection essay/final project) I will accept them late however, I will not always have time to provide the same level of feedback on late-work as I provide on work that is turned in on time. Work turned in within 24 hours of the deadline will not be penalized. Work turned in after this 24 hour grace period will be penalized with one-time grade reduction (10 percent of possible points).

If you are struggling to turn in work, or are overwhelmed with multiple deadlines get in touch with me BEFORE the due date and ask for an extension. Note that extensions for your children’s book/toy reports will depend on the schedules of your classmates, so please do your best to stick to the original dates that you sign up for. I also encourage you to do these earlier in the semester, rather than later.

FERPA and Confidentiality

FERPA, the federal law that guards student privacy, prohibits me from discussing your performance in this class with anyone except you without your permission, which must be on file with the university, not simply told to me. To ensure compliance with this law, I will not

respond to emails from students unless they originate from university email addresses. Out of respect for the privacy of your classmates, do not record or screenshot any part of this class for use outside of this class, even if you omit identifying information about the speaker or poster.

How to Get Help: There are different resources for different problems you may encounter. Be sure to contact the right resource to get help. If you contact the wrong person, this will delay getting your problem solved.

- For help understanding a concept from the course, contact me via email.
- If you have a question about an assignment requirement, like a due date, post your question in our Student Lounge, the forum dedicated to students answering each others' questions, or email or message a classmate.
- For technical problems with Moodle, like not knowing how to upload an assignment, please contact moodle@depauw.edu for support.
- For all other technical problems with online systems at the university, like how to access your grades, contact our Tech Help at HelpDesk@depauw.edu or 765-658-4294.
- For help dropping or adding a course, contact your advisor or the registrar's office at 765-658-4141.
- For help locating resources for your research project, contact a research librarian by phone at (765) 658-4444, email at library@depauw.edu, or via chat by going to the library's website: <https://libanswers.depauw.edu/>
- For help finding a peer tutor for this class, email acadpeer@depauw.edu for an appointment or sign up here:
<https://www.depauw.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-resource-center/>
- To improve your writing, set up an on-campus or remote meeting with a writing tutor from our writing center. Sign up using the left-hand menu here:
<https://www.depauw.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-resource-center>
- For support with presentations, public speaking, or even discussion skills, you can find a peer tutor through the S-Center: Sign up using the left-hand menu here:
<https://www.depauw.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-resource-center>
- For help with food insecurity, there are a few options in Greencastle, including: Putnam County Emergency Food: 600 Tennessee St, Greencastle, IN 46135. Contact: [\(765\) 301-4431](tel:7653014431)
- For an appointment with a mental health counselor, contact our campus counseling center. They are currently using an online telehealth approach to their services. To schedule a virtual appointment, please email counselingservices@depauw.edu or call 765-658-4268.
- If you would prefer to text someone regarding mental health, text NAMI to 741741. If you would like to talk to someone about domestic violence or sexual assault you can contact:
 - o Elizabeth Gertz (Coordinator of Sexual Assault/Interpersonal Violence Prevention/Education, Phone: 765-658-1088, Email: elizabethgetz@depauw.edu

- Sarah Ryan, (director of the Women's Center) Phone: 765-658-4173, Email: sryan@depauw.edu.
- SASA (Sexual Assault Survivor Advocate) Support is available 24/7 at 765-658-4650.

If you would like off-campus support: Family Support Services of West Indiana has DV programs: <https://fsswci.net/domestic-violence>. If you want to speak to someone anonymously you can call the National Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE. Or RAINN's National Sexual Assualt Hotline: 1-800-656-4673 or chat: <https://hotline.rainn.org/online>

- If there are other resources you need but don't know where to find, please ask!

Accessibility: If you need accommodations, you have a right to have these met. Please chat with me about what kind of support you need, even if you haven't received official accommodations yet. I care about you as an individual and want to support your individual learning needs as much as possible.

While I will do my best to support you regardless of diagnosis/official accommodations, it can be useful (and necessary in particular cases) to get official accommodations through Student Accessibility. They can help you whether you have a documented disability, or just suspect that you have one. Disabilities entitled to accommodation include mobility impairments, hearing or vision issues, speech impairments, learning disabilities, ADD, ADHD, psychological disabilities, neurological impairments, and chronic medical conditions such as migraines, AIDS, cancer, and diabetes. Student Accessibility Services can be reached by phone at 765-658-6267 or studentaccessibility@depauw.edu. Meetings with SAS staff will be conducted virtually this semester.

Course Schedule

Professor reserves the right to change the schedule with prior warning, an updated syllabus will be maintained on Moodle

Week One: Introductions	August 31 st -September 6 th
<p>Before Class on 8/31:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Syllabus • Gender Reveal Fails Compilation (up to 3 min 30 second mark) (write down what counts as a "Fail?") <p>Before 9/4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' Keep Baby's Gender a Secret (6 pgs) • Remember Storm? (1 page) • Baby Storm: Five Years Later (4 pages) 	<p>Zoom Class on 8/31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Syllabus Questions • Concept Map Exercise

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Gender Book Excerpt</u> (1-17 pages) 	<p>TO DO (due 9/4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates • Sign up for Children's Item Report (at least 1)
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Week Two: Constructions of Childhood	September 7th-13th
<p>LISTEN (or read):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof Vooris' Lecture <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chris Jenks, <i>Childhood</i>, "Constituting Childhood" (first 12 pages) o Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez, "<u>Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood</u>" (20 pages) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Corsaro, <i>The Sociology of Childhood</i>, Ch 4: "Historical Views of Childhood" (21 pages) 	<p>Attend Zoom Class on 9/7</p> <p>TO DO (due 9/11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates • Children's Item Report Date

Week Three: Children as Active Meaning Makers	September 14th- 20th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Barrie Thorne, <i>Gender Play</i>, (27 pages) o James and Prout "Sociological Approaches to Childhood" (1 page) 	<p>Attend Zoom Class on 9/14</p> <p>TO DO (due 9/18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

WATCH: Tomboy, the movie (90 minutes)	
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Week Four: Gender: Bodies & Clothes	September 21 st -27 th
<p>LISTEN (or read):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof V's Lecture <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janet Mock, <i>Redefining Realness</i>, Ch 8 • Julia Serano, "Cissexual Privilege" • Jo Paoletti, <i>Telling the Boys from the Girls</i> <p>Recommended: <i>The Queer Child</i> Intro by Kathryn Bond Stockton</p>	<p>Zoom Class on 9/21</p> <p>TO DO (due 9/25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Five: Protecting Kids from Sexuality	September 28 th -October 4 th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Levine, <i>Harmful to Minors</i>, Intro • <u>Why We Don't Force Our Children to Hug Adults</u> • <u>Darling, We Don't Play with Our Vulvas at the Table</u> • <u>When Your 7 Year Old Child Announces "I'm Gay"</u> • 10 Year Old Lesbian "In Her Own Words" (1 page) <p>LISTEN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast TBA 	<p>Zoom Class on 9/28</p> <p>TO DO (due 10/2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Six : Diagnosing Gender	October 5th-11th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Bryant: "In Defense of Gay Children" • Eric & Stephanie Lohman, <i>Raising Rosie</i>, Ch. 2 • Ehrensaft, <i>The Gender-Creative Child</i>, Ch. 3 <p>Recommended: Dean Spade, "Mutilating Gender"</p> <p>WATCH: Raising An Intersex Child (7 mins)</p>	<p>Zoom Class on 10/5</p> <p>Due: 10/19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Seven: Media Representations	October 12th-October 18th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia Serano, "In Lipstick and Heels" • Janet Mock's "<u>Trapped in the Wrong Body</u>" <p>WATCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline's "Growing Up Trans" • Queer Coding in Children's Cartoons <p>Recommended: Steven Universe and She-Ra</p>	<p>Zoom Class on 10/12</p> <p>Due 10/16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Post • Respond to 2 Classmates <p>DUE: Gender Reflection Essay Oct 18th at 11:59 pm</p>

Week Eight: Children and Families	October 19 th -25th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amelia's Huffington Post blog, <u>"Stop Waiting For My Gay Son to Change"</u> • Raising My Rainbow, <u>"Trust Your Mama Gut"</u> • 4th Wave Now: Parents, <u>Keep Listening to Your Gut, Not the Therapist</u> • Deshanna Neal, <u>"How This Black Mom is Making a Better World"</u> <p>WATCH: <i>Paris is Burning</i></p>	<p>Zoom Class on 10/19</p> <p>Due: 10/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Post • Respond to 2 classmates

Week Nine: Gender Creative Parenting	October 26th-November 1st
<p>READ: Kyl Myer's <i>Raising Them</i></p>	<p>Zoom Class on 10/26</p> <p>(potential visit by Kyl Myer)</p> <p>Due 10/30th</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Ten: Children as Activists	November 2nd- November 8th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article about Greta Thunberg • Article about Hilda Lysiak • Article about Black Lives Matter • Article about Voting Rights Activist 	<p>Attend Zoom Class on 11/2</p> <p>TO DO (due 11/6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Eleven: Drag Kids	November 9th-15th
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article about Desmond is Amazing <p>WATCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drag Kids Documentary 	<p>Attend Zoom Class on 11/9</p> <p>TO DO (due 11/13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Post • Respond to 2 classmaets

Week Twelve: Children in Schools	November 16th-Nov. 22nd
<p>LISTEN: Prof V's Lecture</p> <p>READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools in Transition • GLSEN Report • CJ Pascoe's Dude, You're a Fag <p>WATCH/LISTEN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Be a Girl Podcast 	<p>Attend Zoom Class 11/16</p> <p>Due 11/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Discussion Post • Respond to 2 Classmates

Week Thirteen: Thanksgiving	November 22nd-29th
NO CLASS	

Week Fourteen: Chasing Monsters: Fiction	November 30th-December 6th
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READ for class on 11/30: Awaake Emezi, <i>PET</i>	Zoom Class 11/30
	Due: 12/4 Discussion Post and 2 responses

Week Fifteen:	December 7th-December 13th
PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS	

Week 16: EXAMS	December 14th-18th
FINAL PROJECT DUE: Tuesday, December 15th at 4 pm	