

NOTE: This is intended to be taught as an advanced undergraduate seminar course, and can be adapted into a graduate course. Class sessions will center around discussion rather than lectures, and students should have some familiarity with criminology; i.e., have taken at least one intro criminology/CJ class.

Queer Criminology

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
[SEMESTER/YEAR]

Instructor: Max Osborn
Email: mosborn@jjay.cuny.edu
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the field of queer criminology, a subdiscipline of criminology that focuses on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people within the criminal legal system (e.g., as victims, perpetrators, and subjects of state control), and on employing queer methodological approaches and perspectives.

The course is divided into three parts:

- Part I, “What is Queer Criminology?” traces the emergence of queer criminology as a topic of study, and involves comparisons to other subfields such as critical and feminist criminologies. We will also discuss the usefulness of queer criminology to the overall discipline.
- Part II, “Queer Actors, Queer Subjects,” examines the different roles and experiences of LGBTQIA+ people within the criminal legal system. We will first address the historical context of the criminalization of queer and trans identity and behavior, followed by an examination of current issues including the roles of LGBTQIA+ people as both victims and perpetrators of harm, ongoing issues of criminalization and inequity, and the treatment of LGBTQIA+ people within legal system contexts.
- Part III, “Queer Methods & Approaches,” addresses the idea of expanding “queer criminology” to include not only the study of individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+, but also the adoption of critical perspectives and research methods that “queer” or challenge current understandings and practices. We conclude with a look forward into the future of queer criminology and its utility both within and outside the classroom.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Trace the development of queer criminology as a discipline in response to omissions and oversights in other criminological literature.
2. Explore the history and context of the criminalization of LGBTQIA+ people in the United States.
3. Understand the experiences of queerness and queer people across multiple criminal legal system contexts.
4. Apply a queer studies methodological lens to criminological research.

Required Materials

Most of the course readings will be academic journal articles or excerpts from longer works, which will be made available to you as PDFs via Blackboard. In addition, you will be asked to purchase or rent the following texts:

Buist, C. L., & Lenning, E. (2016). *Queer criminology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mogul, J. L., Ritchie, A. J., & Whitlock, K. (2011). *Queer (in)justice: The criminalization of LGBT people in the United States*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Assignments & Grading

Grades for the course will be based on a combination of class participation, short response papers, serving as class discussion leaders, and final papers and presentations.

- **Class Readings:** You are expected to come to class prepared, i.e., having read the assigned readings for that day. While you will not be graded on this directly, doing the reading will allow you to better understand the material and participate in class discussions.
- **Class Participation (20%):** This course follows a seminar format rather than a lecture format, so participation is a key part of your role as a student. Participation may take many forms, including analyzing and critiquing the course readings, engaging in discussions or debates with classmates, offering insight or reflection on key concepts, drawing connections between course readings and to outside material, and asking thoughtful questions. You will be expected to participate regularly, and I may call on you if you do not volunteer.
- **Response Papers (30%):** Over the course of the semester, you will write three (3) response papers based on the course readings. Each paper will make up **10%** of your total course grade, for a total of **30%**. You may choose which weeks' readings to respond to. For each option, I will provide one or two prompts that you may use as the basis for your response paper, or you may opt to write on a topic of your choosing. Papers should be 3-5 double-spaced pages and must incorporate clear references to the course readings from the week you chose. You are also encouraged to cite other sources, either from among the other course readings or outside materials. These papers are due the Monday of the week after the readings are due (e.g., if you chose to write a response paper based on the Week 4 readings, that paper is due on Monday of Week 5).
- **Discussion Leaders (20%):** For one class session during the semester, you will be paired with another student and will serve as "discussion leaders" for the class that session. You will be expected to give a short overview of the material covered that week, introduce prompts or questions for your classmates to respond to, and help to facilitate the class discussion. Come prepared to participate yourself, but also to encourage your classmates to do so!
- **Final Paper (20%) and Presentation (10%):** You will write a final paper on a topic of your choosing that relates to the course material. Note that you should submit a 1-2

page proposal or outline of your paper topic first, which must be approved by me. More details on the assignment and grading criteria will be distributed later in the semester. Papers should be 12-15 double-spaced pages and must draw on at least one of the course readings as well as incorporating material from at least three (3) outside sources, including published academic work. This paper will be due on the last day of class and will constitute **20%** of your final course grade. In addition, you will be asked to give a short (10 minute) presentation of your paper to the class during the last full week of classes. This presentation will be worth **10%** of your final course grade.

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on the following standard scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 or less

Course Policies

- **Attendance:** Attendance will be taken at every class session. If you know in advance that you will be absent, please do your best to notify me ahead of time. While your course grade is not directly contingent on attendance, remember that 20% is made up of class participation – and if you do not attend, it is difficult to participate! Students who miss class are responsible for making up the material covered.
- **Names and Pronouns:** Addressing people correctly is an important part of establishing a safe and respectful classroom environment. If you use a name that is different from the name that appears on the college’s course roster, please let me know. Additionally, please feel free to let me know the pronouns that I should use for you. You can tell me in class or in an email, depending on what feels most comfortable for you.
- **Classroom Behavior:** This course touches on concepts and material that are often deeply personal, including but not limited to gender, sexuality, identity, and experiences with victimization and the criminal legal system. While differences of opinion are inevitable, all students are expected to treat each other with respect and consideration. In other words, criticism and debate are encouraged, but personal attacks and harassment will not be tolerated.
- **Content Note:** Given the focus of this course, which deals heavily with victimization, criminal legal system contact, and incarceration, many of the materials will address issues of physical, sexual, and emotional violence and harm, both interpersonally and institutionally. Please take the steps you need to prepare yourself accordingly, and know that if you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion, either for a short time or for the remainder of the class session, you are free to do so. If you are aware of course material that may be particularly upsetting to you, or you have concerns about class content, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me, either in advance or afterward.

- **Extensions on Assignments:** If you need an extension, it is your responsibility to request one. Extensions will be granted at the instructor's discretion and are not guaranteed – but I am much more likely to grant one if you make the effort to communicate to me about your situation.
- **Blackboard:** This class will use the course-management website Blackboard to disseminate announcements, distribute course materials, post grades, and upload assignments. You will be responsible for checking Blackboard regularly and uploading your assignments on time. If Blackboard is experiencing scheduled downtime or an unanticipated disruption, please email me your assignments instead.
- **Communication:** You will be responsible for checking your school email address regularly to make sure you are receiving necessary information. If you are experiencing any circumstances that may affect your performance in class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies that will address your needs while still fulfilling the course requirements. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours (except over the weekend when it will be 48 hours).
- **Course Withdrawal:** The deadline to drop the class without a grade of "WD" (i.e., the class will not appear on your transcript) is **[INSERT DATE]**. The deadline to drop the class without a grade of "W" is **[INSERT DATE]**. The deadline to drop the class with a grade of "W" is **[INSERT DATE]**.
- **Incomplete Grades:** Students will only receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) if they have otherwise been passing the course but missed the final exam or final paper deadline due to extenuating circumstances. Students may be asked to provide written documentation of these circumstances.

Academic Policies & Support Services

Plagiarism: According to the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- *Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source;*
- *Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source;*
- *Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the sources;*
- *Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.*

Students who plagiarize will be given a grade of 0 for the assignment in question, and may be referred to the College's Academic Integrity Officer. Plagiarizing a major assignment may be grounds for failing the course, at the instructor's discretion. Please refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin and/or the CUNY website for the full text of the academic integrity policy:

<http://www2.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy: Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility from the OAS, which is located in NB L.66.00 in (212-237-8031, accessibilityservices@jjay.cuny.edu). It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the office and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Title IX, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Gender- and Sexual-Based Harassment Policy: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition also protects students from discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or denied services on the basis of sex or gender, you may seek accommodations from the Office of Accessibility (Malaine Clarke, Interim Director of Accessibility Services, 212-237-8031, maclarke@jjay.cuny.edu) or Title IX Coordinator (Silvia Montalban, Office of Legal Counsel, 646-557-4409, smontalban@jjay.cuny.edu).

Writing Center: The Writing Center, located in NB 1.68 (212-237-8569), provides tutoring, writing consultation, and ESL support services to all undergraduate and graduate students at John Jay. Students seeking help are encouraged to make an appointment at the Writing Center and to explore the resources available on their website:
<http://jjcweb.jjay.cuny.edu/writing/homepage.htm>.

Weekly Schedule		
Readings and assignments are listed on the date they are due.		
Week	Topic	Readings
PART 1: What is Queer Criminology?		
Week 1	Introduction/What is criminology?	
Week 2	Criminological subfields: Critical & feminist criminologies	Chesney-Lind, M. (2006). Patriarchy, crime, and justice: Feminist criminology in an era of backlash. <i>Feminist criminology</i> , 1(1), 6-26. DeKeseredy, W. (2011). Critical criminology: Definition and brief history. In <i>Contemporary critical criminology</i> (pp. 1-24). New York, NY: Routledge
Week 3	Why queer criminology?	Buist & Lenning, "Chapter 1: Queer(ing) Criminology" Panfil, V. R., & Miller, J. (2014). Beyond the straight and narrow: The import of queer criminology for criminology and criminal justice. <i>The Criminologist</i> , 39(4), 1-9. Valcore, J. L., & Pfeffer, R. (2018). Systemic error: Measuring gender in criminological research. <i>Criminal Justice Studies</i> , 31(4), 333-351.
PART 2: Queer Actors, Queer Subjects		

Week 4	History of queerness & the criminal legal system	Buist & Lenning, "Chapter 2: Criminalizing Queerness" Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, "Chapter 1: Setting the Historical Stage: Colonial Legacies"
Week 5	Present-day criminalization	Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, "Chapter 3: The Ghosts of Stonewall: Policing Gender, Policing Sex" Ritchie, A. J. (2012). Crimes against nature: Challenging criminalization of queerness and Black women's sexuality. <i>Loy. J. Pub. Int. L.</i> , 14, 355. Snapp, S. D., Hoenig, J. M., Fields, A., & Russell, S. T. (2015). Messy, butch, and queer: LGBTQ youth and the school-to-prison pipeline. <i>Journal of Adolescent Research</i> , 30(1), 57-82. Whitford, E. (2018). When walking while trans is a crime. <i>New York Magazine</i> . Retrieved from https://www.thecut.com/2018/01/when-walking-while-trans-is-a-crime.html .
Week 6	Queer victims	Bettcher, T. M. (2007). Evil deceivers and make-believers: On transphobic violence and the politics of illusion. <i>Hypatia</i> , 22(3), 43-65. Katz-Wise, S., & Hyde, J. S. (2012). Victimization experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals: A meta-analysis. <i>The Journal of Sex Research</i> , 49(2-3), 142-167. Lamble, S. (2008). Retelling racialized violence, remaking white innocence: The politics of interlocking oppressions in transgender day of remembrance. <i>Sexuality Research & Social Policy</i> , 5(1), 24-42.
Week 7	Queer crime	Messinger, A. M., & Roark, J. (2018). LGBTQ partner violence. In <i>The Routledge International handbook of violence studies</i> (pp. 277-285). New York, NY: Routledge. Panfil, V. R. (2014). "I will fight you like I'm straight": Gay gang-and crime-involved men's participation in violence. In <i>Handbook of LGBT communities, crime, and justice</i> (pp. 121-145). New York, NY: Springer. Shah, S. P. (2011/2012). Sex work and queer politics in three acts. <i>Scholar & Feminist Online</i> , 10(1-2). https://sfonline.barnard.edu/a-new-queer-agenda/sex-work-and-queer-politics-in-three-acts/o/
Week 8	BREAK – NO CLASS THIS WEEK	
Week 9	Queer in the courtroom	Buist & Lenning, "Chapter 4: Queer Criminology and Legal Systems" Lee, C., & Kwan, P. (2014). The trans panic defense: Masculinity, heteronormativity, and the murder of transgender women. <i>Hastings Law Journal</i> , 66, 77. Lydon, J. (2014). A compilation of critiques on hate crime legislation. In <i>Against equality: Queer revolution, not mere inclusion</i> . Oakland, CA: AK Press.

		<p>Michalski, N. D., & Nunez, N. (2020). When is “gay panic” accepted? Exploring juror characteristics and case type as predictors of a successful gay panic defense. <i>Journal of Interpersonal Violence</i>.</p> <p>Mogul, J. L. (2005). The dykier, the butcher, the better: The state's use of homophobia and sexism to execute women in the United States. <i>NYC Law Review</i>, 8, 473.</p> <p>Nair, Y. (2014). Why hate crime legislation is still not a solution. In <i>Against equality: Queer revolution, not mere inclusion</i>. Oakland, CA: AK Press.</p> <p>DUE: 1-2 page final paper topic proposal</p>
Week 10	Queer in prison	<p>Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, “Chapter 5: Caging Deviance: Prisons as Queer Spaces”</p> <p>Jones, A. (2021). Visualizing the unequal treatment of LGBTQ people in the criminal justice system. Prison Policy Initiative. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/03/02/lgbtq/</p> <p>Pemberton, S. (2013). Enforcing gender: The constitution of sex and gender in prison regimes. <i>Signs</i>, 39(1), 151-175.</p> <p>Sexton, L., Jenness, V., & Sumner, J. M. (2010). Where the margins meet: A demographic assessment of transgender inmates in men’s prisons. <i>Justice Quarterly</i>, 27(6), 835-866.</p>
PART 3: Queer Methods & Approaches		
Week 11	Queer research methods	<p>Heckert, J. (2010). Intimacy with strangers/Intimacy with self: Queer experiences of social research. In <i>Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research</i>, (pp. 41-53). New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>Pascoe, C. J. (2018). What to do with actual people? Thinking through a queer social science method. In <i>Other, please specify: Queer methods in sociology</i> (pp. 291-303). Oakland, CA: University of California Press.</p>
Week 12	Queer activism & imagination	<p>“No One Is Disposable” video series: https://bcw.barnard.edu/no-one-is-disposable/</p> <p>Bassichis, M., Lee, A., & Spade, D. (2011). Building an abolitionist trans and queer movement with everything we’ve got. In <i>Captive genders: Trans embodiment and the prison industrial complex</i> (pp. 15-40). Oakland, CA: AK Press.</p> <p>Lamble, S. (2011). Transforming carceral logics: 10 reasons to dismantle the prison industrial complex through queer/trans analysis and action. In <i>Captive genders: Trans embodiment and the prison industrial complex</i> (pp. 235-265). Oakland, CA: AK Press.</p> <p>Richie, B. (2005). Queering antiprison work: African American lesbians in the juvenile justice system. In <i>Global lockdown: Race, gender, and the prison-industrial complex</i> (pp. 73-85). New York, NY: Routledge.</p>

Week 13	The future of queer criminology?	<p>Ball, M. (2014). Queer criminology, critique, and the “art of not being governed”. <i>Critical Criminology</i>, 22(1), 21-34.</p> <p>Copson, L., & Boukli, A. (2020). Queer utopias and queer criminology. <i>Criminology & Criminal Justice</i>, 20(5), 510-522.</p> <p>Woods, J. B. (2014). Queer contestations and the future of a critical “queer” criminology. <i>Critical Criminology</i>, 22(1), 5-19.</p>
Week 14	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
Week 15	FINAL PAPERS DUE	