

Present Tense

A Journal of Rhetoric in Society

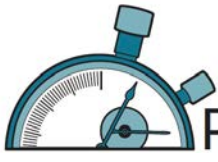
An Annotated Bibliography of LGBTQ Rhetorics

Matthew B. Cox and Michael J. Faris
East Carolina University and Texas Tech University

Present Tense, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 2015.

<http://www.presenttensejournal.org> | editors@presenttensejournal.org





An Annotated Bibliography of LGBTQ Rhetorics

Matthew B. Cox and Michael J. Faris

Introduction

The early 1970s marked the first publications both in English studies and communication studies to address lesbian and gay issues. In 1973, James W. Chesebro, John F. Cragan, and Patricia McCullough published an article in *Speech Monographs* exploring consciousness-raising by members of Gay Liberation. The following year, Louie Crew and Rictor Norton's special issue on *The Homosexual Imagination* appeared in *College English*. In the four decades since these publications, the body of work in rhetorical studies within both fields that addresses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (hereafter LGBTQ) issues has grown quite drastically. While the first few decades marked slow and interstitial development of this work, it has burgeoned into a rigorous, exciting, and diverse body of literature since the turn of the century—a body of literature that shows no signs of slowing down in its growth.

An annotated bibliography of rhetorical studies scholarship that addresses LGBTQ issues and queer theory would have been quite manageable only a decade ago. In 2001, Frederick C. Corey, Ralph R. Smith, and Thomas K. Nakayama delivered a compiled bibliography of scholarship in communication studies that addressed LGBTQ issues at the National Communication Association Convention. This bibliography compiled a list of 66 journal articles in communication studies published between 1973 and 2001 (Corey, Smith, and Nakayama; Yep 15) that revealed a slowly growing field.

The development of such a rich body of work in rhetorical studies, especially over the last decade, has warranted an annotated bibliography of rhetorical scholarship that addresses LGBTQ issues and incorporates queer theory. This bibliography is not the first in rhetorical studies to attempt to collect work that addresses LGBTQ rhetorical scholarship: We want to acknowledge previous bibliographic work, including [Corey, Smith, and Nakayama's](#); [Rebecca Moore Howard's](#); and [Jonathan Alexander and Michael J. Faris's](#). While these bibliographies have been useful for scholars interested in LGBTQ rhetorical studies, they have quickly become outdated, are limited in their disciplinarity—either bibliographies in communication studies or in English studies—and do not provide annotations for readers.

This bibliography, then, is motivated by a series of exigencies. First and foremost is visibility and accessibility of research and scholarship in LGBTQ rhetorics. As Charles E. Morris III and K. J. Rawson note, while queer scholarship in rhetorical studies has been quite visible over the last decade and queer theory has been quite influential across the humanities and social



Present Tense

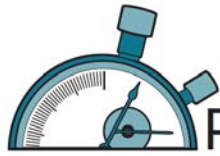
sciences, “rhetorical scholars have been much slower in responding to the ‘queer turn’” (74). This bibliography, we hope, can lend visibility to this body of work.

Thus, this bibliography serves a number of purposes. It should assist graduate students new to the field and researchers already far into their careers in understanding the rich history of sexuality studies and rhetorical studies, finding relevant scholarship, and developing exigencies in research that they can exploit for their own scholarship pursuits. While the field has been growing, it can be difficult to find queer rhetorical work dispersed across a variety of journals. If you had asked either of us as we began our graduate programs if there was much scholarship or even interest in queer issues in rhetorical studies, then we would have been able to reference a few articles—but not much else: Rhetoric studies seemed incredibly straight. And, in many ways, it still does. Graduate students are often encouraged to study heteronormative theory and, we might say, are trained to identify with it. Nakayama and Corey write, “Queer academics want to join the ranks” and do so through “idoliz[ing] heteronormative theories”—theories that have marginalized, ignored, and marked queer sexuality as deviant and abnormal (324). While the field is more inclusive of queer approaches than it was a decade ago when Nakayama and Corey published those words—thanks, in large part, to those cited in this bibliography—, many are still resistant to queer approaches. Professionalization in graduate school often discourages queering the field, as Alyssa A. Samek and Theresa A. Donofrio argue. This bibliography should be useful to graduate students—and to researchers already far into their careers—for understanding the rich work that has already been done in sexuality studies and rhetoric.

Additionally, we hope to encourage more engagement in rhetorical studies with sexuality from a variety of rhetorical approaches. This bibliography might also be useful to scholars looking to publish in queer rhetorics to identify journals that have been particularly open or hospitable to certain queer approaches.

Further, this bibliography should be useful for teachers of graduate seminars who want to incorporate sexuality studies or queer approaches to rhetorical studies in their seminars: Students in courses on feminist studies, identity and rhetoric, methodologies, historiography, public memory, composition studies, public rhetoric, public address, social movements, digital writing, and more can benefit from this bibliography.

Another important exigence of this project is the historical split along disciplinary lines between English studies and communication studies. We follow calls by Steven Mailloux, Michael Leff, and others to attempt to bridge the divide between these two disciplines. This divide goes back nearly a century, to 1917, when communication scholars left the National Association of Teachers of English to form the National Association of Academic Teachers of Speech, now the National Communication Association (Mountford 409; see Mountford for a discussion of this disciplinary split as well as attempts at and prospects for rapprochement).



Present Tense

Mailloux notes—and we agree—that “[a] multi-disciplinary coalition of rhetoricians will help consolidate the work in written and spoken rhetoric, histories of literacies and communication technologies, and the cultural study of graphic, audio, visual, and digital media” (23). Leff has encouraged us to “listen carefully and learn much more about the aspirations, idiosyncracies [*sic*], and anxieties of our rhetorical neighbors” (92). More recently, “The Mt. Oread Manifesto on Rhetorical Education,” published in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, calls attention to our disciplines’ “common interest” (2) to develop an integrated rhetorical curriculum. This disciplinary split is readily apparent in the scholarship listed in this bibliography: English studies scholars have shown a stronger interest in writing pedagogy (including in digital environments) and literacy whereas communication studies scholars have been drawn more toward studying popular culture, public memory, archives, and social movements (though these lists are neither exhaustive nor exclusive of each other). While these bodies of scholarship certainly speak to each other implicitly, explicit connections are few and far between.

Scholars in both fields, we believe, can benefit from the groundbreaking and recent work across rhetorical studies. Perhaps queer rhetorical studies can begin to serve as a model for bridging this disciplinary divide, as Roxanne Mountford notes feminist rhetoricians have done (419). Some of this work has already begun. For instance, the Rhetoric Society of America’s 2009 Summer Institute featured a workshop on “Queer Rhetorics,” led by Karma R. Chávez, Charles I. Morris III, and Isaac West, that drew participants from both sides of rhetoric.

In what follows, we provide a brief overview of queer theory for readers unfamiliar with this body of work, outline a brief history of how rhetorical studies has addressed and approached issues of sexuality and gender nonconformity, discuss our methods for compiling this bibliography, and preview the organization of the bibliography.

A Brief Introduction to that “Tinkerbell,” Queer Theory

In the opening pages of Nikki Sullivan’s *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, she notes that queer theory often resists definition—and, indeed, it has become cliché to claim so. But such claims risk granting queer theory a “‘Tinkerbell effect’; to claim that no matter how hard you try you’ll never manage to catch it because essentially it is ethereal, quixotic, unknowable” (v). Here, we would like to provide a modest attempt at defining queer theory, understanding that the field is much more complex and rich than we can attest to in such a small space. In short, queer theory is a body of work—informed by a variety of methodologies and theoretical lenses—that examines and critiques discourses of sexuality with the goal of transforming society.

The term “queer theory” was first anachronistically applied to work in the late 1980s and early 1990s that did not explicitly claim to be queer theory. This work argued that social theory and



Present Tense

feminist critiques were inadequate if they did not treat sexuality as its own category of analysis. We can briefly chart queer theory's genealogical roots in feminism, poststructural theory, vernacular theory from queer activism, and queer of color critiques. Feminists like Gayle Rubin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler, in now canonical texts, argued that sexuality warranted its own investigation separate from gender and that feminism could not successfully challenge patriarchy without radical changes in sexuality. As Sedgwick writes in *Epistemology of the Closet*, "an understanding of virtually any aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1).

Second, queer theory is informed by poststructuralist theory, particularly the work of Michel Foucault. In *The History of Sexuality*, he denaturalizes assumptions about sexual identities and repressed desires. As a result, he provides a theoretical framework for the discursive construction of sexuality and the relationships between power, discourse, and sexuality. The third genealogical ancestor for queer theory is queer social movements like Queer Nation and ACT UP. In the 1990s, these movements advanced political and theoretical critiques of static gay and lesbian identities and questioned the relationship between sexuality, the nation, and citizenship (see Rand). Fourth, queer theory has been informed by queer of color critiques from scholars and activists like Gloria Anzaldúa and E. Patrick Johnson, who have argued for approaching identities as intersectional and attending to the particularities of lived experiences along axes of difference.

As Hanson Ellis summarizes, "[q]ueer theory is the radical deconstruction of sexual rhetoric." Queer theory in many ways challenges the commonsense norms and assumptions most people think with (*doxa*) regarding gender and sexuality. It "attempts to clear a space for thinking differently about the relations presumed to pertain between sex/gender and sex/sexuality, between sexual identities and erotic behaviors, between practices of pleasure and systems of sexual knowledge" (Hall and Jagose xvi). Queer theory differs from gay and lesbian studies in a few ways. Michael Warner, in his introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, calls for a new queer politics that rejects a "liberal-pluralist" approach to assimilating LGBT persons and concerns into a capitalist society (xxv-xxvi). Sedgwick's distinction between minoritizing logic and universalizing logic is useful in helping to understand queer theory. Whereas gay and lesbian approaches focus on the needs and interests of a minority—a minoritizing logic—a universalizing logic understands sexuality "as an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities" (1).

Thus, queer theorists ask a variety of questions: How are identities constructed and validated, how do discourses about sexuality circulate and reaffirm or reassert power, how do queers or other marginalized sexual and gendered beings engage in "world-making" (Berlant and Warner 558)? This investment in world-making has meant that many queer theorists embrace anti-normativity. It is important to note that anti-normativity here is not embraced simply for



Present Tense

the sake of anti-normativity itself but because, as Lauren Berlant and Warner explain, normativity continues to value statistical mass (and thus heterosexuality) and cramps spaces of sexual culture (557).

Methods for Building the Bibliography

Drawing from prior bibliographic work (Alexander and Faris; Corey, Smith, and Nakayama; Howard), citation-chasing, and searching the archives of over 60 journals in English studies and communication studies, we culled hundreds of citations down to the ones included in this bibliography. We tried to strike a balance of scope between comprehensiveness and accessibility. This balance necessarily meant being selective about what work to include.

Importantly, this bibliography is a bibliography of work by rhetoric scholars. We debated what sort of bibliography this should be: One that introduces queer theory to the field, or one that assists rhetoric scholars in understanding how the field has already been addressing sexuality over the last 35 years. Initially, it seemed unthinkable to put together a collection on queer rhetorics and not include the queer theorists whose volumes we had so many times turned to across publication, teaching, and conference presentation work. A queer rhetorics bibliography without Foucault, Butler, Sedgwick, Warner, David M. Halperin, Anzaldúa, José Esteban Muñoz, and J. Jack Halberstam? And yet, we also reasoned that many readers interested in the work shared here would have a working awareness of these scholars as LGBT and queer scholars, and even those readers who did not have this awareness would notice here the repeating nature of references to these foundational works in the rhetoric-oriented works we did cover. (Readers not familiar with queer theory can reference our discussion above and our Works Cited as a resource.)

And so, ultimately we decided to narrow our focus solely to scholarship in rhetorical studies, despite the rhetorical nature of queer theory. Indeed, we contend, along with Jonathan Alexander and Michelle Gibson that queer theory is “intimately *rhetorical*” (7).

Bibliographic work is in many ways disciplinary work, attending to and demarcating the boundaries of “what counts” as rhetorical, as related to sexuality, and as queer. Despite rich histories of LGBTQ scholarship in media studies and performance studies within communication departments, we have chosen not to include much of that scholarship (with a few exceptions), in part to make this project more manageable for readers. Additionally, what sort of research counts as rhetorical and as queer can be hotly debated. Certainly, due to both our disciplinary trainings (Michael in a rhetoric and composition graduate program in English and Matt in a stand-alone rhetoric and writing studies program), there will be gaps and unintentional exclusions, which we can only attribute to our “trained incapacities” (Burke 7).



Sketching Out Approaches and a History to Sexuality Studies in Rhetoric

It would be disingenuous to claim that rhetorical studies has one singular, coherent approach to studying sexuality and rhetoric. And indeed, creating a comprehensive heuristic for even the multiple, various, and sometimes even conflicting approaches within rhetorical studies is a difficult task, given the variety of scholarship conducted in English studies and communication studies over the last four decades. However, Sedgwick's distinction between minoritizing logics and universalizing logics (discussed above) is useful in understanding two distinct styles of approaches to incorporating sexuality into rhetorical studies. We identify three "stages" to scholarship in queer rhetorics, though by no means are these stages meant to be discrete. Indeed, minoritizing logics are still at play in more recent scholarship, and some early work took universalizing approaches.

Early work in the field largely took a minoritizing approach to sexuality, focusing on gay and lesbian identities (and occasionally transgender or queer ones, though rarely bisexuality). This work focused on visibility, coming out, identifying homophobia, and incorporating LGBT perspectives and rhetoric into teaching and scholarship.

A second stage of queer rhetorical work began to draw on queer theory and take a more universalizing approach to sexuality, understanding that sexuality is an aspect of all our lives, is present (though usually unnoticed) in pedagogical practice and theory, and is an approach useful to all rhetorical studies. These approaches turned to heterosexuality and heteronormativity as discursive constructions and began to critique and challenge rhetorical theory.

The third, most recent stage of queer rhetorical studies is the move to speak to other disciplines, including queer theory. That is, rather than solely import queer theory into rhetorical studies, scholars are beginning to show how queer theory and other disciplines can learn from rhetorical theory. This approach is not novel: As early as 1996, Robert Alan Brookey was arguing that while queer theory has insights for rhetorical studies, rhetorical studies can also contribute to queer theory because of its approach to "the particular" (45). But while Brookey made this claim nearly two decades ago, it is not until much more recently that queer rhetorical scholars have taken up this charge seriously. Isaac West's *Transforming Citizenship* provides an example of this approach. In critiquing queer theory's radical anti-normative stance, he offers rhetorical studies as an approach to mediate decontextualized queer theory resistances to "the norm." West understands rhetoric's focus on "contingency" as an opportunity to provide nuance and situatedness to rhetorical action and agency. "Without this awareness of contingency," he writes, "the anti-essentialist qualities of queerness are lost to a predetermined and fixed sense of radical anti-normativity incapable of accommodating anything other than facially recognizable acts of being against something, most notably, *the norm*" (25-6).



Again, this brief tour through the history of the field oversimplifies but provides one heuristic (among many) for approaching queer rhetorical studies.

Navigating this Bibliography

As with so many tasks around compiling this bibliography, organizing the work defied an easy answer or taxonomy. We have chosen two organizational schemes for this bibliography: chronological and thematic. The first section shares work from 1973 to 1995. We were able to see a visible increase in LGBT rhetorical work throughout the 1990s, and 1995 served as a somewhat arbitrary year to distinguish earlier work from later work. 1995 saw the publication of Harriet Malinowitz's *Textual Orientations*, which served as a touchstone for composition studies. Shortly afterward, in 1997, Jonathan Alexander published "Out of the Closet and into the Network" in *Computers and Composition*, one of his first publications in LGBTQ composition studies. In communication studies, 1996 marked the publication of Charles E. Morris III's "Contextual Twilight/Critical Liminality," an early contribution to queering methodologies. Additionally, Corey C. Frederick and Thomas K. Nakayama published their controversial "Sextext" in *Text and Performance Quarterly* in 1997. Thus, we see the mid-1990s as a "turning point" or "ramping up" moment for queer rhetorics—one among other possible points of departure.

The remaining ten sections of the bibliography are organized thematically, according to broad and admittedly overlapping categories. The bibliography, then, is organized according to the following eleven sections:

[Section 1: LGBTQ Perspectives: 1973-1995](#)

[Section 2: Disciplinary Boundaries and Methodologies](#)

[Section 3: Pedagogical Practices and Theories](#)

[Section 4: Composition Studies](#)

[Section 5: History, Archives, and Memory](#)

[Section 6: Publics and Counterpublics](#)

[Section 7: Rhetorics of Identity](#)

[Section 8: Rhetorics of Activism](#)

[Section 9: Discourses of HIV/AIDS](#)

[Section 10: Popular Culture and Rhetoric](#)

[Section 11: Digital Spaces](#)

Because these sections overlap, we have also provided tags for each annotation; readers seeking to find related work can search through the bibliography for related tags. A list of tags is below.



Present Tense

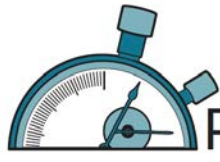
A Final Note

It has been incredibly rewarding to read such a diverse array of scholarship that has approached sexuality and queered rhetorical studies over the last four decades. Even as we researched, wrote, compiled, and organized, we saw concurrently just how useful this resource is. It is, to say the least, reassuring to know that we have created something that seemed to us so useful.

It is important to us to note that we see this bibliographic work as a kairotic space—a first for rhetoric studies in its comprehensive nature, but by no means a canonical text. We hope this bibliography is productive for scholars who hope to continue to challenge the field in terms of methods, methodologies, epistemologies, and modes of publishing—digital and print.

Tags

ACT UP	Ethics	Queer Nation
Activism	Etiology	Passing
Affect	Ex-Gay	Pedagogy
Age	Feminism	Performativity
Agency	Futurity	Politics
Allies	Gay Rights	Popular Culture
Archives	Gender	Privacy
Bodies	Heteronormativity	Psychoanalysis
Camp	Histories	Publics
Citizenship	HIV/AIDS	Public Address
Class	Homophobia	Race
Closet	Identity	Regionalism
Collective Identity	Immigration	Religion
Coming Out	Intersectionality	Representation
Composition	Legal	Safe Spaces
Confessional	Lesbian	Sextext
Counterpublics	Literacy	Silence
Daughters of Bilitis	Literature	Technical Communication
Desire	Materiality	Tolerance
Digital	Media	Violence
Disability	Medical	Visibility
Disciplinaryity	Memory	Visual Rhetoric
Drag	Misogyny	



Present Tense

Works Cited

- Alexander, Jonathan, and Michael J. Faris. "[Issue Brief: Sexuality Studies.](#)" *National Council of Teachers of English*. 2009. Web.
- Alexander, Jonathan, and Michelle Gibson. "Queer Composition(s): Queer Theory in the Writing Classroom." *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 1-21. Print.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987. Print.
- Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. "Sex in Public." *Critical inquiry* 24.2 (1998): 547-566. Print.
- Brooey, Robert Alan. "A Community like Philadelphia." *Western Journal of Communication* 60.1 (1996): 40-56. Print.
- Burke, Kenneth. *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. Print.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.
- Chesebro, James W., John F. Cragan, and Patricia McCullough. "The Small Group Technique of the Radical Revolutionary: A Synthetic Study of Consciousness." *Speech Monographs* 40.2 (1973): 136-146. Print.
- Corey, Frederick C., Ralph R. Smith, and Thomas K. Nakayama. [Bibliography of Articles and Books of Relevance to G/L/B/T Communication Studies](#). Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Atlanta, GA. Nov. 2001.
- Ellis, Hanson. "Gay Theory and Criticism: 3. Queer Theory." *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed. Eds. Michael Groden, Martin Kreiswirth, and Imre Szeman. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005. Web.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. Volume 1*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990. Print.
- Hall, Donald E., and Annamarie Jagose. Introduction. *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*. Eds. Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose, with Andrea Bebell and Susan Potter. London: Routledge, 2013. xiv-xx. Print.



Present Tense

- Howard, Rebecca Moore. "[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Language, Discourses and Rhetorics.](#)" *Rebecca Moore Howard: Writing Matters*. 2014. Web.
- Johnson, E. Patrick. "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from My Grandmother." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 21.1 (2001): 1-25. Print.
- Leff, Michael. "Rhetorical Disciplines and Rhetorical Disciplinarity: A Response to Mailloux." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30.4 (2000): 83-93. Print.
- Mailloux, Steven. "Disciplinary Identities: On the Rhetorical Paths Between English and Communication Studies." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30.2 (2000): 5-29. Print.
- Morris, Charles E., III, and K. J. Rawson. "Queer Archives/Archival Queers." *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*. Ed. Michelle Ballif. Carbondale: University of Illinois, 2013. 74-89. Print.
- Mountford, Roxanne. "A Century After the Divorce: Challenges to a Rapprochement Between Speech Communication and English." *The SAGE Handbook of Rhetorical Studies*. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Kirt H. Wilson, and Rosa A. Eberly. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009. 407-422. Print.
- "The Mt. Oread Manifesto on Rhetorical Education 2013." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44.1 (2014): 1-5. Print.
- Nakayama, Thomas K., and Frederick C. Corey. "Nexttext." *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)*. Eds. Gust A. Yep, Karen E. Lovaas, and John P. Elia. Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 2003. 319-334. Print.
- Rand, Erin J. *Reclaiming Queer: Activist and Academic Rhetorics of Resistance*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2014. Print.
- Rubin, Gayle. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. Ed. Carole S. Vance. Boston: Routledge, 1984. 267-319. Print.
- Samek, Alyssa A., and Theresa A. Donofrio. "'Academic Drag' and the Performance of the Critical Personae: An Exchange on Sexuality, Politics, and Identity in the Academy." *Women's Studies in Communication* 36.1 (2013): 28-55. Print.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1990. Print.



Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York U P, 2003. Print.

Warner, Michael. Introduction. *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Ed. Michael Warner. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1993. vii-xxxi. Print.

West, Isaac. *Transforming Citizenships: Transgender Articulations of the Law*. New York: New York U P, 2014. Print.

Yep, Gust A. "The Violence of Heteronormativity in Communication Studies: Notes on Injury, Healing, and Queer World-Making." *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)*. Eds. Gust A. Yep, Karen E. Lovaas, and John P. Elia. Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 2003. 11-59. Print.



Present Tense

Section 1: LGBTQ Perspectives: 1973-1995

Chesebro, James W., ed. *Gayspeak: Gay Male & Lesbian Communication*. New York: Pilgrim, 1981. Print.

This early edited collection about communication practices takes as its premise that homosexuality is not solely a biological issue but is rather a social issue largely mediated by communication. Contributions to this collection explore both verbal and nonverbal communication of gays and lesbians as well as antigay communication. The 23 chapters are divided into six sections: (1) explorations of the social meanings of *homosexual*, *gay*, and *lesbian*; (2) analyses of in-group communication and how that communication creates intersubjective experiences; (3) discussions of the concept of homophobia, its causes, and its effects; (4) analyses of public discourses about homosexuality in the media, social sciences, arts, and education; (5) rhetorical analyses of gay and lesbian liberation social movements; and (6) analyses of the rhetoric of the gay civil rights debate by both pro-gay and antigay forces. Chesebro's edited collection marks a shift in understanding sexuality as a social and communicative issue instead of a primarily biological or moral one.

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Etiology, Gay Rights, Homophobia, Identity, Media, Representation

Chesebro, James W., John F. Cragan, and Patricia McCullough. "The Small Group Technique of the Radical Revolutionary: A Synthetic Study of Consciousness Raising." *Speech Monographs* 40.2 (1973): 136-46. Print.

Chesebro, Cragan, and McCullough examine the small group activities of revolutionary members of Gay Liberation that occur before their public confrontations. These sessions involve consciousness-raising, which entails the reformulation of identities and the development and commitment to new values. Chesebro, Cragan, and McCullough identify stages of consciousness-raising in these meetings, focusing on the functions of these stages and the rhetorical tactics employed. They chart four stages of consciousness-raising during the meetings: (1) initial claims about identity and oppression, largely focused on individual experiences and the past; (2) the development of a group identity in opposition to straight society; (3) the creation of new values for the group; and (4) identification with other oppressed groups (139-43).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Identity



Present Tense

Crew, Louie, and Karen Keener. "Homophobia in the Academy: A Report of the Committee on Gay/Lesbian Concerns." *College English* 43.7 (1981): 682-89. Print.

In 1976, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution (just barely) opposing discrimination against gays and lesbians. It charged the Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns to achieve two goals: (1) create programming about literature and pedagogy for the national convention and (2) document discrimination within the profession (682-83). Crew and Keener share the results of a survey conducted by the Committee of NCTE members. Nearly twelve percent of those surveyed (K-12 through college teachers) reported that someone they knew (either a student or educator) "received unfair treatment because he or she was thought to be gay," including being fired (683). Reported examples include hostility from department chairs, being put on leave after entrapment by police (homosexual sex was illegal in most states in 1981), not considering gay applicants for faculty positions, disparaging remarks from other teachers and students, and college administrators refusing to certify teachers they believed were gay (684-86). Crew and Keener stress that many of these teachers were effective, loved, and even praised for their talented teaching but often lost their jobs for real or perceived homosexuality (685-86). They remark that "[t]he prognosis for reforming the institutions themselves, even otherwise liberal centers of urban culture, seems grim" (686-87).

Tags: Academia, Homophobia, Pedagogy

Crew, Louie, and Rictor Norton, eds. *The Homosexual Imagination*. Spec. issue of *College English* 36.3 (1974): 271-412. Print.

Crew and Norton's 1974 special issue of *College English* calls attention to the "generally hostile environment" that homosexual literature is written and read within (272) and includes contributions that "'celebrate the homosexual imagination' from 'a pro-gay viewpoint'" (273). Crew and Norton critique the scholarly silence on and censorship and suppression of homosexual literature as well as the outright homophobic responses to homosexual literature (277-84). They also critique the heterosexual bias behind "objectivity" (284-85) and of pedagogy in English classrooms (286-88).

This special issue includes the following pieces: an interview with Eric Bentley, an outspoken gay drama critic; Jacob Stockinger's assessment of the state of gay literary criticism; Dolores Noll's narrative of coming out as a lesbian at Kent State University and being faculty advisor for the Kent Gay Liberation Front; Ron Schreiber's experiences co-teaching a course on homosexuality and Western literature; Arnie Kantrowitz's experiences teaching a "homosexuals and literature" course at State



Present Tense

Island Community College; an anonymous contribution from a graduate student narrating his struggles as a gay teacher and emerging scholar; analyses of homosexuality in the military within literature by Roger Austen, Oscar Wilde and E. M. Forster by David Jago, and John Rechy's *City of Night* by James R. Giles; Jon L. Clayborne's exploration of negative gay representations in African American drama; an analysis of gay slang by Julia P. Stanley; an interview with Allen Ginsberg excerpted from the gay liberation magazine *Gay Sunshine*; and a "Checklist of Resources." While the special issue approached English studies mostly through the lens of literature, it marks an important moment in the history of LGBTQ scholarship in the discipline. The special issue garnered numerous responses from readers; see "Comments on the Homosexual Imagination" in *College English* 37.1 (1975): 62-85.

Tags: Coming Out, Disciplinarity, Literature, Pedagogy, Race

Cummings, Kate. "The Double Scene of Televised AIDS Campaigns." *Queer Rhetoric*. Spec. issue of *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (1992): 67-77. Print.

Cummings analyzes televised HIV/AIDS campaigns of the late 1980s and early 1990s, arguing that they necessarily excluded queers and condoms in order to reassert national, chaste heterosexuality. Drawing on Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Cummings explains that the earliest educational campaigns included images of gay men and condoms, which allowed straight viewers to associate condoms with queerness and see them both as threatening, perverse others. Condoms, then, underwent a semiotic shift, from association with safe heterosexual sex to association with queerness, a double association that had to be expelled from media campaigns. She turns to Magic Johnson's 1991 HIV prevention media campaign, showing how the specter of queer sexuality led Johnson to drop his safe sex campaign, admit that promiscuity is a moral failure, and advocate for abstinence. Thus, heterosexual citizenship is supported and reaffirmed as morally chaste and not perverse.

Tags: Bodies, Citizenship, Histories, HIV/AIDS, Media, Psychoanalysis, Popular Culture

Darsey, James. "From 'Gay Is Good' to the Scourge of AIDS: The Evolution of Gay Liberation Rhetoric, 1977-1990." *Communication Studies* 42.1 (1991): 43-66. Print.

Darsey examines the rhetoric of gay social movements from 1977 to 1990 as a contribution to social movement rhetorical theory. Darsey organizes his rhetorical history through "catalytic events," or those significant events that "provide the appropriate conditions for discourse" (46). He then highlights the value appeals



Present Tense

central to gay rhetoric in response to those events. Darsey identifies three catalytic events that the gay liberation movement responded to rhetorically: Anita Bryant's 1977 Save Our Children campaign, the rise of the Moral Majority and right-wing evangelicalism, and the AIDS crisis (47). The success of Bryant's campaign casted doubt on the idea of liberal progress being inevitable, and gay rhetoric responded predominantly through appeals to unity in the late 1970s as well as through appeals to determination and safety (48-50). As Bryant's national prominence was replaced by the Moral Majority with Ronald Reagan's election in 1980, gay rhetors responded by extending and shifting the appeals of the late 1970s (51-5). In response to the developing AIDS crisis in the early 1980s, gay rhetoric shifted in tone more toward appeals to justice (56).

Tags: Activism, Gay Rights, HIV/AIDS, Religion

Dean, Tim. "Bodies that Mutter: Rhetoric and Sexuality." *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 15.1-2 (1994): 80-117. Print.

Tim Dean critiques a paranoid style of queer politics and queer theory, especially Judith Butler's theory of performativity and use of psychoanalysis, in order to develop a theory of sexuality and rhetoric that is "antifoundational *and* antirhetoricalist" (84). Dean argues that poststructuralist theory too quickly claims that "sex is fully mediated," equating sex and rhetoric and thus ignoring desire (82). Dean turns to Lacanian psychoanalysis to argue that sexuality is not rhetorical: "although desire is 'in' language, *desire is not itself linguistic*" (84). Put differently, psychoanalytic accounts like Butler's and Lee Edelman's theorize a subject created by language and identification (the psychoanalytic symbolic and imaginary) but not subjects of desire (90). Dean argues that his approach is political in that, while Edelman and Butler place resistance in deconstruction and performativity, Dean sees resistance in psychoanalysis (93, 104). Whereas poststructuralism theorizes sexuality in terms of gender binaries, Lacanian psychoanalysis theorizes desire in terms of loss, independent of gender (95). While desire is a product of language's disruption on the body, it is not linguistic: "*desire is predicated on the incommensurability of body and subject*" (100). In this way, Dean attempts to rescue Lacan from claims that his theory is heterosexist (95).

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Performativity, Psychoanalysis



Present Tense

Dow, Bonnie J. "AIDS, Perspective by Incongruity, and Gay Identity in Larry Kramer's '1,112 and Counting.'" *Communication Studies* 45.3-4 (1994): 225-40. Print.

Dow examines Larry Kramer's 1983 essay "1,112 and Counting," a central rhetorical text to the development of AIDS activism. Using Kenneth Burke's concept of "perspective by incongruity," Dow argues that Kramer's essay worked to change gays' perceptions of AIDS and themselves and to take action regarding AIDS. Through anger and shock, Kramer's essay works to make gay readers' denial of AIDS seem incongruous with the startling reality of the AIDS epidemic (232). Further, Kramer's rhetoric highlighted the contradiction between responsibilities of government agencies and their inactions, forcing readers to draw political conclusions that gay men are disenfranchised (233). Kramer also makes gay men's focus on sex rather than politics seem incongruous with life, equating silence and the closet with death and self destruction (236). These strategies of perspective by incongruity set the ground for Kramer to advocate a new, political identity for gay men who respond to the AIDS crisis (237). Dow shows how Kramer's essay functions as constitutive rhetoric, helping to constitute a new identity for his audience (239-40).

Tags: Activism, HIV/AIDS, Identity

Fejes, Fred, and Kevin Petrich. "Invisibility, Homophobia, and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 10.4 (1993): 396-422. Print.

Fejes and Petrich offer a review of literature on how scholars have approached gays, lesbians, and mass media, asking, "How do media images and meanings create definitions of homosexuality, homosexuals, and the homosexual community, and what are the consequences?" (396). They overview scholarly literature on gay and lesbian representations in film, primetime television, news media, and pornography as well as studies of audience and market analyses. They attribute the shift from pre-Stonewall invisibility to more representations of gays and lesbians in mass media to activism by gays and lesbians, but note that "[h]omophobia has been replaced by heterosexism as the major component in the mainstream media's discourse about homosexuality and homosexuals" (412). They close by calling for further understanding of how heterosexism works, for studies of the production of media, and for reception studies of real audiences.

Tags: Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Media, Representation, Visibility

Fenster, Mark. "Queer Punk Fanzines: Identity, Community, and the Articulation of Homosexuality and Hardcore." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 17.1 (1993): 73-94. Print.

Fenster examines "homopunk" zines (independently created and distributed magazines) and the articulations and circulations of identities at the intersections of punk and queer sexualities. He argues that these zines constitute identities and communities through articulating "confrontational sexual politics" (74). These zines are situated within and against mainstream gay and lesbian communities and hardcore communities. Through analysis of published letters to these zines and the zines' editorial content, Fenster shows how readers expressed a sense of "empowerment" through recognition in contrast to their local isolation from both gay and lesbian communities and hardcore communities (79); homocore readers and zinesters express both identification and dis-identification with hardcore and gay and lesbian scenes, often critiquing hardcore for its homophobia or lack of inclusiveness and critiquing gay and lesbian communities for their conservative politics and consumerism (81). These zines create an "intertextual community" (82) and produce identities and communities through oppositional politics and cultural practices.

Tags: Collective Identity, Identity, Media, Popular Culture

Fraiberg, Allison. "Electronic Fans, Interpretive Flames: Performative Sexualities and the Internet." *Works and Days* 13.1-2 (1995): 195-207. Print.

Fraiberg situates her analysis within conceptions of the Internet in the 1990s, arguing that the Internet is not a monolithic space but rather a "segmented place" composed of a variety of spaces, and, while sex and sexuality saturate the Internet, they do so in a multitude of ways (196). Fraiberg asserts that spaces devoted to sexuality already have some of the parameters of the discussion negotiated by virtue of the focus of the space (197-8). In order to explore how other online forums might be queered, Fraiberg turns to discussion lists not devoted to sexuality—one for fans of Melissa Etheridge and one for fans of the Indigo Girls—after these performers came out as lesbians (199). Fraiberg analyzes how posters' signature files function to out them as lesbians and how the performers serve as *topoi* to launch broader conversations about sexuality (200-5). Discussions about sexuality in these spaces require "repeated performance, consistent reinscription," and "textual negotiation" in ways that destabilize the space: Queer performances establish queer spaces, but they also propel discussion forward, constantly changing the space (205).

Tags: Digital, Identity, Popular Culture, Performativity



Present Tense

Gilder, Eric. "The Process of Political *Praxis*: Efforts of the Gay Community to Transform the Social Signification of AIDS." *Communication Quarterly* 37.1 (1989): 27-38. Print.

Gilder examines the discursive construction of HIV/AIDS and how people with AIDS (PWAs) construct their understandings of themselves. Drawing on Michel Foucault's analytic conceptions of bio-power and subjectification, Gilder explains that AIDS has become equated with homosexuality in the public imagination and that discourses about homosexuality have become re-medicalized (33-4). One implication of this re-medicalization is that PWAs often understand themselves, and others understand them, as "exotic but passive 'objects' for medical study" (28). Gilder argues that this re-medicalization has moved homosexuality from political-social realms and harmed the advancement of gay liberation. He proposes that the gay community turn to political praxis that engages in "a self-interpretive construction of AIDS" that redefines identities and AIDS and resists medicalizing discourses that objectify bodies (36).

Tags: Bodies, Collective Identity, Gay Rights, HIV/AIDS, Medical, Politics

Gross, Larry. "The Contested Closet: The Ethics and Politics of Outing." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8.3 (1991): 352-88. Print.

Gross explores the ethics of outing by journalists and gay activists. Gross notes that the question is not one with answers on the extreme—to out everyone or to never out anyone—but rather a question of "who has the right to decide on which side of the line any particular instance [of outing] falls" (353). Gross analyzes the claims made on each side of the debate about outing throughout the twentieth century, exploring "the underlying ethical and normative assumptions" that inform these positions (354). Gross explores various tensions: journalistic traditions of protecting private life; the rise of sensational journalism; a gay history of protecting others' secrets; a post-Stonewall gay politics of publicness; the need for visible role models for younger gays and lesbians; hypocrisy in the media for discussing heterosexual relationships but not homosexual ones; the desire to call out closeted politicians for hypocrisy when they promote antigay agendas; and, of course, an individual's right to privacy. The rhetoric of gay activists who advocate outing, Gross summarizes, works through a "rhetoric of allegiance and accountability" that depends on an understanding of gay identity as essentialized and minoritized (379). While reactions remain strong to outing, Gross also notes that the appeals to "a narrow focus on the right to privacy" also will not work for advancing the gay movement (381).

Tags: Closet, Coming Out, Media, Politics, Privacy



Present Tense

Hirsch, David A. H. "De-familiarizations, De-monstrations." *Queer Rhetoric*. Spec. issue of *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (1992): 53-65. Print.

Hirsch argues that gay and lesbian appeals to the rhetoric of family and sympathy only serve to reinforce unjust structures and societal norms. Hirsch advocates instead for embracing antigay rhetoric that portrays homosexuals as "anti-family, because, in part, civil rights like same-sex marriage are still exclusionary and privilege the couple as family." Hirsch argues for "constructively chang[ing] the terms of the argument" (60); gays and lesbians should see "'monstrosity' as a strength of difference, and not a weakness of failed similarity" (60). Hirsch closes by suggesting that rather than "stretch current definitions" of family to include a few more people (gay and lesbian couples), we should instead completely redefine the family or even disentangle the family from civil liberties completely (61-2).

Tags: Gay Rights, Heteronormativity

Johnson, E. Patrick. "SNAP! Culture: A Different Kind of 'Reading.'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 15.2 (1995): 122-42. Print.

Johnson explores the uses, functions, and ownership of the "snap," a nonverbal communication used among African American gay men and African American women. Understanding snapping as a nonverbal form of Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s discussion of Signifying (124), Johnson explores the various meanings of its use within African American gay male communities: to "read" and to "throw shade"; snapping is often conjoined with verbal acts to punctuate verbal Signifying and can be either playful or serious (125-7). Snapping is understood as an "effeminate" act, largely associated with gayness, especially "queens" (128). It serves a community-building function, working because audience members participate through their recognition of the act (129-30). Johnson also explores appropriation of snapping by gay white men, heterosexual African American men, and heterosexual white men. Straight men often appropriate snapping through parody, Johnson notes, which serves to stereotype gay men and distance the straight performer from femininity through irony and parody (133-5). Johnson notes that many African American gay men are concerned with "ownership" of snapping, but Johnson claims that ownership is "an impossibility given the dynamics of culture" (138); however, Johnson suggests that snapping might be able to retain some of its subcultural power because of the complexity of its use and the criteria for competency that African American gay men have developed and use to judge snapping (138, 140).

Tags: Identity, Race



Present Tense

Malinowitz, Harriet. *Textual Orientations: Lesbian and Gay Students and the Making of Discourse Communities*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995. Print.

One of the earliest book-length projects in rhetoric and writing studies to address sexuality and pedagogy, Malinowitz explores lesbian and gay students' risky positions in the mainstream writing class and in gay-themed writing classrooms. She discusses how lesbian and gay studies, social construction theory, and liberatory pedagogy shape her own approach to issues of sexuality in the writing classroom. Malinowitz draws heavily as well from queer theorists (such as Butler and Sedgwick) but does not talk about queer theory as a body or influence overtly. A critical concept is "assumed global validity of heterosexual knowledge" (65). This describes the ways heteronormative assumptions are social constructs generated by communities of like-minded people, and, as such, these are key to situating the positionality that LGBT people bring to the discussion of sexuality and professionalism. She describes how liberatory pedagogy takes social-epistemic rhetoric a step further and calls individuals to not only think as critical intellectuals but also to actually empower them to change the conditions of their lives. In addition to some attention on her own positionality as an out lesbian teacher in the classroom, Malinowitz spends roughly the second half of the book helping us look at the idea of a lesbian and gay-themed writing course, including her discussion of two classes at two different institutions titled "Writing about Lesbian and Gay Experience" and "Writing about Lesbian and Gay Issues," respectively. She then walks readers through the class makeup, class texts, and class writing assignments. She shares her data as three chapters of "interpretive portraiture" that profile four students in the courses. She shares their histories, their coming out stories, and their experiences with writing in the course itself. On a final note, Malinowitz wonders, if identity is shaped by language, then how does it shape identity? (261).

Tags: Composition, Heteronormativity, Identity, Pedagogy

McLaughlin, Lisa. "Discourses of Prostitution/Discourses of Sexuality." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8.2 (1991): 249-72. Print.

Confronting feminist claims that the representation of marginalized women in media has improved, McLaughlin argues that feminism has in fact *not* adequately resisted normalizing representations. McLaughlin's primary focus is the representation of prostitutes in the media as deviant and dangerous. She overviews a history of the representation of prostitution, noting that women have historically been marked as "other" but that, due to the notion of "true womanhood," class distinctions further marked "disreputable" women as "other" (250). Nineteenth-century representations of



Present Tense

prostitutes were used to maintain social order and symbolize anxieties about sexuality. McLaughlin turns to contemporary television coverage of prostitutes, showing that, despite claims of improved representation, not much has changed: They are associated with moral and corporeal dangers and contrasted to images of good girls. Drawing on Foucault, McLaughlin argues that analyses along gender lines are insufficient if they do not take into account the regulatory discourses that distinguish between respectable and deviant sexual practices (256). While she admits that feminist voices have entered mainstream media, she argues that they are not necessarily heard over competing discourses and do not guarantee resistance to normalizing discourses (259-60). McLaughlin turns to the limits of identity politics in her conclusion, exploring potentials for feminist activism that may counter normalizing discourses.

Tags: Bodies, Identity, Feminism, Gender, Media, Popular Culture, Representation

Meyer, Moe. "The Signifying Invert: Camp and the Performance of Nineteenth-century Sexology." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 15.4 (1995): 265-81. Print.

Understanding "Camp as a system of homosexual gestural production" (266), Meyer explores the relationship between the invention of homosexual identities in the late nineteenth century and the development of camp (a subcultural aesthetic sensibility or style of theatricality and irony). He examines nineteenth-century sexology narratives, arguing that camp, homosexual subject formation, and medical models of homosexuality are intricately linked (266). Meyer notes that the medical construction of homosexual was "a scientific response" to the visibility of subcultural cross-dressing (268-9). Medical discourses equated transvestism with homosexuality, allowing for the gender inversion theory of homosexuality; Meyer claims, "it was a pathology of fashion and gesture" (271). These medical—and after the visibility of the Oscar Wilde trial, legal—descriptions of gender inversion were then used by sodomites and inverts, who "inscribed *themselves*" with the descriptions of effeminacy, developing agency (275). Meyer argues that these cross-gender performances are what developed as camp, a term that was recorded only a few years after the Wilde trial (275). Thus, Meyer argues for understanding camp as "performative utterance" (275) that marked performance and recognition of homosexuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He closes by asking how notions of camp then changed in the mid-twentieth century, from a homosexual performative utterance to a notion of aesthetics (277-8).

Tags: Camp, Etiology, Histories, Identity, Legal, Medical, Performativity



Present Tense

Morrison, Margaret. "Laughing with Queers in My Eyes: Proposing 'Queer Rhetoric(s)' and Introducing a Queer Issue." *Queer Rhetoric*. Spec. issue of *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (1992): 11-36. Print.

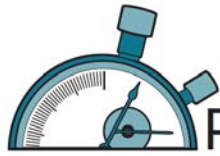
Margaret Morrison opens this special issue of *Pre/Text* by calling for a "queer rhetoric(s)" that explores the intersections of bodies, desires, and language (13). Writing at a postmodern moment when she sees identity terms as increasingly unstable and "fruitfully disruptive" (12), she notes that, thus far, "lesbian and gay rhetoric" has been driven by "a normalizing impulse" (15). Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, and Michel Foucault, Morrison outlines how identity categories and the homo/hetero distinction regulate bodies and attempt to (but often fail to) limit desire (15-7). Queer rhetoric, Morrison proposes, challenges the will to know one's place or location, as in standpoint theory (19-20), and instead "suggests . . . perverse movements" (20) and the movement between veiling and unmasking (21). Morrison understands queer rhetoric as like Lynn Worsham's reformulation of *écriture feminine*, a subversive and playful discourse (21-2).

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Identity

Nakayama, Thomas K. "Show/Down Time: 'Race,' Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 11.2 (1994): 162-79. Print.

Nakayama analyzes the 1991 film *Showdown in Little Tokyo* and images in men's magazines for representations of race, gender, and sexuality. He argues that Asians and Asian-Americans are constructed in relation to whiteness, that racial constructions are also gendered and sexualized, and that these representation serve to keep white heterosexual masculinity at the center of power. *Showdown* is one of many martial arts films in which "a white male typically enters Asian or Asian-American social space and emerges victorious from whatever conflict is at hand" (164). Noting a paucity of scholarly analyses that explore the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality, Nakayama turns to *Showdown* in order to "reverse" the impulses of feminism, race studies, and gay and lesbian studies and read instead whiteness, masculinity, and heterosexuality in the film (163). Nakayama shows how mainstream media reveals "an ideological colonialism in which white men are home everywhere" (173), Asian and Asian-American men are emasculated or hinted at being homosexual, and Asian women are sites of conquest for white men. Nakayama closes by calling for cultural studies approaches that focus on difference and take intersectional approaches.

Tags: Feminism, Gender, Identity, Media, Popular Culture, Race, Representation



Present Tense

Patton, Cindy. "In Vogue: The 'Place' of 'Gay Theory.'" *Queer Rhetoric*. Spec. issue of *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (1992): 151-57. Print.

Patton notes that gay readings of texts are becoming a pedagogical and critical norm, which, while erotic and pleasurable, restabilize gender binaries as natural. Patton advocates moving away from a hermeneutics of suspicion toward reading texts kinesthetically while resisting essentialism. She turns to a reading of Madonna's music video for "Vogue" and voguing in gay clubs, exploring implications for bodies and memory. Reading "Vogue" as co-opting queer black subcultures, Patton argues, is too simple of a reading that misses the rhetoricity of voguing. The pastiche of voguing allows for a kinesthetic and cyborgic performance that resists gender and racial binaries, though it also "reroutes the memory of collective resistance by queens of color" and collapses history through nostalgia (156). Ultimately, Patton argues for attending to and articulating embodied practices that might provide resistance to essentialist or binary gender, racial, and sexual identities.

Tags: Bodies, Memory, Popular Culture, Race

Perez, Tina L., and George N. Dionisopoulos. "Presidential Silence, C. Everett Koop, and the *Surgeon General's Report on AIDS*." *Communication Studies* 46.1-2 (1995): 18-33. Print.

Perez and Dionisopoulos examine Ronald Reagan's prolonged silence in response to HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and analyze the 1986 *Surgeon General's Report on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* and the accompanying media coverage. Reagan's silence, they contend, conflicts with modern understandings of the "rhetorical president" who responds and governs through speech in response to public concerns (18). In the context of Reagan's silence, Attorney General Everett Koop released the *Surgeon General's Report* directly to the public instead of to the President. The report's "clinical compassion" and avoidance of moralizing (24) was praised in the mainstream media but was criticized by others in the Reagan Administration (25-6). These conflicts within the administration made Reagan's silence on AIDS even more pronounced (27), and Perez and Dionisopoulos draw implications for understanding how silence is deployed and constrained for rhetorical presidencies.

Tags: Bodies, HIV/AIDS, Politics, Public Address, Silence



Present Tense

Ramirez, John. "The Chicano Homosocial Film: Mapping the Discourses of Sex and Gender in *American Me*." *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 16.3-4 (1995): 260-74. Print.

John Ramirez analyzes Edward James Olmos's *American Me* for its representations of gender, Chicano ethnicity, and sexuality, showing that the film serves to reinforce and support conservative family values, including patriarchy; in short, it has a "homophobic homosocial agenda" (270). The film acts as a "cautionary appeal" against the decline of the proper heteromascularity and family, targeting gang violence, the drug trade, and homosexuality as the causes of that decline (263). *American Me* portrays the antagonist, Santana, as underdeveloped, emasculated, and "heterosexually-challenged" (264) and ultimately failing to fully undergo rites of passages "into the 'legitimate' masculine performances of capitalist enterprise, social mobility, and heterosexuality" (271). Ramirez shows how the film's focus on failed masculinity allows it to reaffirm patriarchy and homophobia because it ultimately never challenges the logics of heteromascularity and patriarchy.

Tags: Gender, Homophobia, Media, Popular Culture, Race, Representation

Ringer, R. Jeffrey, ed. *Queer Words, Queer Images: Communication and the Construction of Homosexuality*. New York: New York UP, 1994. Print

Ringer's edited collection follows James Chesebro's 1981 collection *Gayspeak* in exploring gay and lesbian communication and representations of gays and lesbians in popular culture. The collection's goals are to provide current research on gays and lesbians from a communication studies perspective, to provide communication studies with insights from a gay and lesbian approach, and to set a research agenda for gay and lesbian communication. The collection is divided into five sections that explore gay and lesbian rhetoric, representations of gays and lesbians in mass media, constructions of homosexuality in literature and popular discourse, interpersonal communication between gays and lesbians, and coming out in the classroom. Chapters analyze and approach such topics as Harvey Milk's political rhetoric, court cases, gay liberation rhetoric, representations in television and young adult literature, and Edmund White's literature. As Chesebro notes in his contribution to the collection, changes in the 1980s—particularly the rise of the HIV/AIDS crisis, the introduction of postmodern theory into communication studies, and feminist insights into how no analysis is ideologically neutral—influence the arguments and analyses in this book (77-87). Analyses of representations in the media show, as Larry Gross summarizes, that while visibility was increasing in the 1980s, these representations were not necessarily positive, and, when they were intended to be positive, they often desexualized gays and lesbians to be "nonthreatening to heterosexuals" (151). The



Present Tense

collection's self-reflexivity is shown through responses to contributions (such as Chesebro's and Gross's responses) that question assumptions and ask questions about the status of gay and lesbian communication studies. Dorothy S. Painter, for example, asks questions of how gay and lesbian communication scholars justify, or should justify, studies to a broader, heterosexual field (281-2).

Tags: Coming Out, Disciplinarity, HIV/AIDS, Literature, Media, Pedagogy, Representation, Visibility

Siegel, Paul. "Are the Free Speech Rights of Heterosexuals at Risk?" *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. 15.1 (1991): 135-52. Print.

In the context of various universities taking action against homophobic speech in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Siegel asks if regulating hate speech is the best response. Siegel argues that this approach might clash with the values of the gay rights movement, which he understands as being predicated "at its core" on free speech (135). Overviewing a variety of legal cases, Siegel shows how the First Amendment is at the center of various gay rights arguments (135-7). Further, free speech provides benefits for society: we can argue about truth; free speech prevents hate groups from going underground, feeling victimized and becoming martyrs, and turning to violence; and it allows us to see how "lousy" we are as a society (144). Siegel's explanation of the "'lousy people' rationale" suggests that we are better off responding to hate speech through rhetoric and action; silencing it is "the easy way out" (146), especially for university administrators who, by banning hate speech, do not have to actually work to counter it (147). Responding to hate speech with rhetoric also provides opportunities to advance gay rights movements (147).

Tags: Gay Rights, Homophobia

Slagle, R. Anthony. "In Defense of Queer Nation: From Identity Politics to a Politics of Difference." *Western Journal of Communication* 59.2 (1995): 85-102. Print.

Noting scant research in social movements within communication studies on gays and lesbians, Slagle makes a distinction between gay and lesbian liberation movements and queer movements. Liberation movements, he explains, advocate an essentialist gay identity and seek inclusion or assimilation. Using Queer Nation as an example, Slagle shows that queer movements advocate difference from heterosexuals and within queer identity groups and argues that oppression based on difference is not justified. Slagle claims that "queer theory provides an important critique of



Present Tense

mainstream rhetorical theory” (87) and that *Queer Nation* challenges identity politics by critiquing essentialized identities, challenging nationalism, and challenging the traditional public/private distinction.

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Gay Rights, Identity, Queer Nation

Waldrep, Shelton. “Deleuzian Bodies: Not Thinking Straight in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.” *Queer Rhetoric*. Spec. issue of *Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory* 13.3-4 (1992): 137-49. Print.

Waldrep responds to Alice Jardine’s feminist critiques of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari—that their theories are abstract and move away from dealing with any “historically specific situation and struggle with women” (Polan qtd. in Waldrep 139)—by placing Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of bodies without organs in conversation with Monique Wittig’s theory of lesbian bodies. Both Wittig and Deleuze and Guattari theorize the fragmentation of the body in ways that advocate choosing one’s own desires and resisting regimes of regulation. Deleuze and Guattari, then, are “positing a new way of thinking” that involves moving beyond sexual and gendered binaries and escaping encoding of the body and desires by regulatory regimes (145). Waldrep closes by arguing that Deleuze and Guattari have practical value for radically rethinking our bodies and sexuality (145).

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Feminism, Gender, Lesbian

[Return to bibliography menu](#)



Present Tense

Section 2. Disciplinary Boundaries and Methodologies

Benson, Thomas W. "A Scandal in Academia: Sextext and *CRTNET*." *Western Journal of Communication* 76.1 (2012): 2-16. Print.

Benson, editor of the National Communication Association listserv *CRTNET* in 1997, provides an account of the conversations on the listserv after the publication of Corey and Nakayama's "Sextext." Between January 1997 and March 1999, there were over 148 messages that directly responded to the initial thread about "Sextext" started by Robert Craig or implicitly referred to issues that arose in that thread (3). Benson situates the discourse on *CRTNET* about "Sextext" within broader disciplinary anxieties about "the decline of the discipline of rhetorical studies into obscurantism and Francophilia" (5). Writers on the listserv objected to "Sextext" on grounds that it was autoethnographic, amounted to pornography, or revealed the discipline's obsession with French and postmodern theories (5). Benson also notes that writers were concerned that "Sextext" would become "a new standard" of scholarship—a claim that Benson observes "'Sextext' does not make for itself" (6). Benson argues that the affordances of the listserv allowed for a scholarly conversation and for readers to refute objections to "Sextext." Additionally, the fact that Corey and Nakamura, as well as the editor of *Text and Performance Quarterly*, stayed out of the conversation "allowed it to go its way as a discussion among readers, and not to attain standing as a trial or deliberation" that might have harmed "editorial independence and scholarly freedom" (14).

Tags: Disciplinarity, Sextext

Corey, Frederick C., and Thomas K. Nakayama. "deathTEXT." *Western Journal of Communication* 76.1 (2012): 17-23. Print.

Corey and Nakayama reflect on their 1997 essay "Sextext" fifteen years after its publication. They explore changes in communication technologies and gay male cultures and argue for new methodologies and ways of knowing for scholarship. They claim that "Sextext" did not set any new standard for scholarship as some (e.g., Craig. "Textual Harassment." *American Communication Journal* 1.2 [1996]) had feared. Instead, "it merely performed a newness" (18). Changes in surveillance, exhibitionism online, chat rooms, and the migration of sexual cruising to online spaces warrant "new methodologies" because older methodologies cannot understand these new ways of being and knowing (20); however, new methodologies do not mean forgetting prior



Present Tense

scholarship and methods but rather building off of them and creating new ways of understanding changing technologies and practices (21).

Tags: Disciplinarity, Sextext

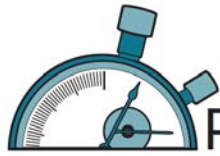
Corey, Frederick C., and Thomas K Nakayama. "Sextext." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 17.1 (1997): 58-68. Print.

Corey and Nakayama write a "fictional account of text and body as fields of pleasure" (58) in the first-person voice of a graduate student studying masculinity, homosexual desire, and pornography. The narrator describes scenes engaging in pornography as a participant-researcher, moments of pedagogical frustration (students always doubting queer epistemologies), and his own erotic encounters with theory. Mixing academic discussions of how masculinity is idealized and desired within gay culture with erotic encounters with bodies and texts, the narration explores the difficulties of writing about homosexual desire within a heterosexual culture and within the constraints of academic discourse. This piece sparked much debate in the field on listservs (see Benson; Corey and Nakayama, "deathTEXT"; and Yep, Lovaas, and Elias's edited collection in this bibliography).

Tags: Desire, Disciplinarity, Sextext

Fox, Catherine Olive-Marie. "Toward a Queerly Classed Analysis of Shame: Attunement to Bodies in English Studies." *College English* 76.4 (2014): 337-56. Print.

English studies, Fox argues, disciplines faculty through norms and normalizing discourses, which produces shame, especially related to social class (343). As a classed endeavor wrapped up in notions of propriety and civility, the normalization of the professoriate involves the shaming of professors with working class backgrounds or who deviate from other norms of propriety. Rather than seeing shame as the opposite of pride and something to be eradicated, Fox suggests that shame also promises recognition. Drawing on queer theory, Fox sees "shame as a fundamental component of our social reality" (342), one that provides "a 'critical opening' that allows for integration and expansion of existing norms that govern recognition" (345). Fox provides the term "*queerly classed*" to describe faculty who are displaced and shamed by these normalizing discourses (340). Moments of shame, when normalizing discourses conflict with a body's habitus, are "ruptures" that can provide openings to listen to our bodies and question norms (352). We all feel shame, Fox notes, and shame can be used to attune ourselves to "relational awareness" (353). That is, we can



Present Tense

recognize and use shame to attend to how we are in relation with each other, developing an *ethos* of humility to create shared interests across differences.

Tags: Affect, Bodies, Class, Disciplinarity

Gross, Larry. "The Past and the Future of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies." *Journal of Communication* 55.3 (2005): 508-28. Print.

Gross assesses the status and changes of LGBT studies and queer studies within communication studies and proposes an agenda for the future. He provides a history of LGBT studies and its development with communication studies, positioning it within an LGBT political and activist history. The 1980s were largely marked by contentions in activism and academia between those who viewed sexuality as socially constructed and those who had a more essentialist view of identity (514). In the 1990s, Queer Nation, queer theory, and people of color began to question white privilege, normative homosexuality, and essentialist sexual identities (515-517). Gross largely focuses on studies of media representation within communication studies. While he believes that suspicious readings of the media have been and continue to be useful, he claims that scholars "must move beyond surveillance and textual analysis" of the media (522). He also advocates research to further understand queer youth, the implications of queer theory's challenges to notions of identity and sexuality, and political rhetoric (522-4).

Tags: Disciplinarity, Histories, Media, Queer Nation, Representation

Henderson, Lisa. "Queer Communication Studies." *Communication Yearbook* 24. Ed. William B. Gudykunst. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000. 465-84. Print.

Henderson assesses the state of queer communication studies, exploring the "multiple points of intellectual intervention and possibilities" in queer communication scholarship that navigates a tension between political liberation and traditional modes of inquiry (466). She stresses that queer studies is not solely the purview of LGBTQ scholars but should be of interest to all scholars because sexuality, normativity, and difference—dominant or nondominant—is "discursively organized" (468). Henderson then overviews scholarship in queer communication, also highlighting its "nonqueer relevance" (468). Henderson encourages rhetorical scholars to examine how LGBTQ people articulate their desires and identities "in relation to multiple others and multiple circumstances," how sexual subjectivity is shaped, and how people respond to shifts in subjectivity (472) as well as questions of how marginalized sexual and



Present Tense

gender identities are represented in the media, and how audiences respond to representations.

Tags: Disciplinarity, Identity, Media, Representation

Herring, Scott. "The Hoosier Apex." *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 243-51. Print.

Herring opens his essay explaining the linguistic term "Hoosier apex," the dialect of southern Indiana that involves drawls, slow speaking, and other markers of southernness, referring to it as a "queer space" because it violates typical geographic boundaries of dialects (243-4). He proposes that the Hoosier apex can queer southern studies, questioning boundaries of the region, and that, just as scholars attend to transnationalisms, scholars, too, need to attend to interregionalisms (244-5). Herring argues that looking toward such queer spaces, which entail migrations and mobilities, is an avenue for bringing queer studies into southern studies. He shows how southern vernaculars and southern sexual cultures have migrated into the Midwest, using the southern slang "greasy" and Tina Turner as examples, exploring how interregional migrations disrupt assumed regional borders and can "enrich current theories of queer mobility, migration, and regionalism" (243).

Tags: Regionalism

Johnson, E. Patrick. "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know about Queer Studies I Learned from my Grandmother." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 21.1 (2001): 1-25. Print.

Johnson argues that queer theory gives little attention to issues of race and class and intervenes by proposing to "quare" queer studies. Drawing on black vernacular discourses, Johnson's rearticulation of "quare" seeks to locate and articulate racialized and class-based knowledges and challenge stable identities (3). He analyzes a queer theorist's misreading of Marlon Riggs's *Tongues Untied* for its essentialist approaches to race and class (8-9). Johnson's approach to quare theory also provides "a rejoinder to performativity" by attending to and theorizing material performances, agency, resistance, and historical situatedness (10). He provides an example of his approach through analyzing Marlon Riggs's documentary *Black Is . . . Black Ain't*.

Tags: Class, Disciplinarity, Identity, Performativity, Race



Present Tense

McAlister, Joan Faber. "Figural Materialism: Renovating Marriage through the American Family Home." *Southern Communication Journal* 76.4 (2011): 279-304. Print.

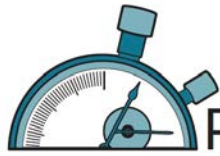
McAlister argues for revitalizing the study of the figurative, or "arrangements or devices that function by 'enhancing or altering meaning' in discourse" (Jaskinski qtd. in McAlister 280), through exploring how subjectivity and agency are shaped by "literary, visual, and material figures" (280). Calling this approach "figural materialism," she provides an example of such an approach through analyzing the figure of the couple. She traces the figure of the couple through various discourses, visuals, and material objects and argues that "the couple" was refigured in the 1980s and 1990s to reaffirm the normativity of heterosexual marriage. It did so, she contends, by incorporating the biggest threat to heteronormativity—eroticism—into the institution of heterosexual marriage (281).

Tags: Agency, Heteronormativity, Materiality, Visual Rhetoric

McRuer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York: New York UP, 2006. Print.

McRuer theorizes "compulsory able-bodiedness" and its relationship to compulsory heterosexuality, showing how able-bodiedness "masquerades as a nonidentity" and is wedded to compulsory heterosexuality (1-2). Situating his argument within a critique of neoliberalism, McRuer argues that neoliberalism allows for the celebration of difference and flexible identities (2-3) but only allows for the visibility of queerness and disability temporarily, using those visibilities to shore up compulsory able-bodiedness and compulsory heterosexuality (29). McRuer's "crip theory" is designed to expose the openings and gaps in compulsory able-bodiedness, to advocate oppositional discourses to neoliberalism, and to insist that "a disabled world is possible" (31, 71). McRuer explores various cultural sites and institutions where disability and queerness are made to appear only to then disappear in order to support domesticity, rehabilitation, and composed bodies. For composition studies, he proposes that composition is intricately connected to order and composed bodies; he advocates crippling composition, "placing queer theory and disability studies at the center of composition theory" and inaugurating "a process of 'de-composition'" (149).

Tags: Composition, Disability, Disciplinarity, Heteronormativity, Identity, Politics



Present Tense

Morris, Charles E., III. "Contextual Twilight/Critical Liminality: J. M. Barrie's *Courage* at St. Andrews, 1922." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82.3 (1996): 207-27. Print.

Morris examines literary author J. M. Barrie's 1922 graduation address at St. Andrews University for Barrie's tactics of persona, especially liminality. Barrie, a fairly private individual, negotiated his public persona in this address through combining concealment and disclosure—particularly related to sexuality. Morris explains that the "closet" functions through secrecy that also "entices, perplexes, and teases the critic" to look for contexts that the rhetor attempts to hide but "long to be revealed" (208). Morris terms this type of criticism "critical liminality," an approach that tacks between textual context and "'invisible' contexts," or those contexts that have been silenced (208). Critical liminality requires a methodology of curiosity that seeks out these invisible contexts that can illuminate texts in new and interesting ways (221).

Tags: Closet, Public Address, Privacy

Morris, Charles E., III. "'The Responsibilities of the Critic': F. O. Matthiessen's Homosexual Palimpsest." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84.3 (1998): 261-82. Print.

F.O. Matthiessen, a progenitor of American Studies, has been roundly critiqued for largely omitting sexuality from his 1941 *American Renaissance* and accused of cowardice because he kept his homosexuality private. Morris attempts to challenge this view by situating Matthiessen and *American Renaissance* in "the context of the pernicious homophobic oppression he faced" (262). In order to do so, Morris reconsiders "passing" as "a means of resistance" (262), rejecting the dominant idea that passing is always a marker of cowardice. Through an analysis of *American Renaissance*, Morris explains that Matthiessen is engaged in a particular type of passing: "homosexual palimpsest," which Morris understands as the infusion of resistance into a text in ways that make it appear as dominant discourse but ultimately transfigures the dominant discourse. Morris provides this analysis, in part, to offer a model for gay historical criticism for public address scholars, a model that involves balancing invention and critical judgment as well as speculation in the face of evasive source texts.

Tags: Closet, Passing, Public Address, Silence



Present Tense

Morris, Charles E., III. "(Self-) Portrait of Prof. R.C.: A Retrospective." *Western Journal of Communication* 74.1 (2010): 4-42. Print.

Morris provides a queer retrospective on four special issues of *Western Journal of Communication* that assessed "the state of the art of rhetorical criticism" (4). Morris turns to Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* to allegorize rhetorical criticism before reflecting on each issue. His essay calls for "*critical self-portraiture*": a mode of self-reflection articulated in rhetorical criticism (32). Noting that rhetorical criticism in the 1990s was marked by a commitment to the critics' reflection on their own positions, voices, and constraints—a commitment that seems to have passed—Morris asks, "whither critical self-reflection?" (33). Further, the field needs a genealogy of rhetorical criticism (33).

Tags: Disciplinarity, Identity

Morris, Charles E., III, ed. *Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2007. Print.

Declaring that historical public address scholarship "has yet to be queered" in the introduction (4), Morris explains that the essays in this collection take two general approaches. The first approach does recovery work to share "a queer rhetorical past" (5). The second approach queers rhetorical history, by which Morris means that the goal is "rearticulating that tradition from its very origins or roots" (5) and to "explode the homo/hetero binary" and create a variety of erotic identifications that do not depend on identity (7). Through an analysis of biographical texts about Eleanor Roosevelt, Dana L. Cloud argues that rhetorical scholars need to explore *how* we remember queer figures and to challenge the privatization of sexuality. The privatization of sexuality, she argues, has privileged normativity, does not trouble heteronormativity, and does not explore the contexts that allow queerness to emerge. Ralph R. Smith and Russel R. Windes explore the complexities of the marginal identity formation of queer subjects. Their goal is to promote more efforts by rhetoric scholars to explore identity formation through social movements and constitutive rhetoric. Karen A. Foss analyzes Harvey Milk's rhetoric "to explore the nature of the queer rhetorical situation" (75), arguing that to do so, scholars need to place rhetors within complex rhetorical situations and attend to the complications of how they adapt to and transform those situations. Morris's chapter explores rhetorical debates about Abraham Lincoln's queer memory. He critiques the *mnemonocide*, or attempts to use rhetorics of control to preserve a hegemonic memory of Lincoln as heterosexual, by professional historians (103-8) and explores the implications of Larry Kramer's "insurgent commemoration" of Lincoln, or rereading of traditional history in order to



Present Tense

revitalize it and create new future possibilities (102). Drawing on E. Patrick Johnson's theorizing of "quare" studies, Julie M. Thompson argues for quaring public address by disrupting "historical silences in rhetorical scholarship regarding human sexuality, race, gender, and class" (121). John M. Sloop explores the life of and texts about Lucy Lobdell, who, in the nineteenth century, abandoned by her husband, dressed and passed (and worked) as a man off-and-on, developed a relationship with a woman, and became the subject of much psychological study when she was put in a psychiatric ward. Sloop does so to trouble and question gendered and sexualized categories, both how they were deployed and created in the nineteenth century and how they are still deployed today. Eric King Watts explores tensions between queer voices and African-American *ethos* during the Harlem Renaissance, exploring how Harlem became a contested space for the development of queerness. Robert Alan Brookey explores silences and speech in relationship to oppression; following Foucault, Brookey explores the dynamics of queer voices and silences and their relations to power and subjectivity. Lisbeth Lipari turns to playwright Lorraine Hansberry, analyzing her 1950s political rhetoric that was intersectional along lines of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. The collection closes with Lester C. Olson's categorization, analysis, and descriptions of what he calls "traumatic styles" of rhetoric, analyzing Audre Lorde's rhetoric to explore the potentials for these styles for being heard, for listening, and for political action.

Tags: Collective Identity, Disciplinarity, Gender, Identity, Memory, Public Address, Race

Olson, Gary A., and Lynn Worsham. "Changing the Subject: Judith Butler's Politics of Radical Resignification." *JAC* 20.4 (2000): 727-65. Print.

In this interview, Judith Butler articulates why she believes that difficult writing and thinking are important and critiques calls for "common sense" and universally accessible scholarship, advocating that such concepts as common sense and the public sphere are "fictions" that lead us to believe "we all inhabit the same linguistic world" (734). Butler values difficult language because it can open up new ways or avenues of thinking. Also in the interview, Butler clarifies and amends her argument in *Gender Trouble*, advocating a contingent universality (747) that is not totalizing but rather "is brought into crisis again and again by what is outside of itself" (747). The interview turns to gay and lesbian politics, and Butler expresses concerns about mainstream movements' focus on visibility and inclusion rather than a focus on abject subjects who are not legitimate "by virtue of their aberrant relation to the norm" (754).

Tags: Academia, Disciplinarity, Identity, Performativity, Politics, Publics, Visibility



Present Tense

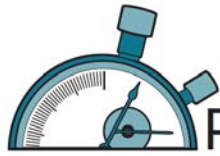
Rand, Erin J. "Queer Critical Rhetoric Bites Back." Spec. issue of *Western Journal of Communication* 77.5 (2013): 533-7. Print.

Rand's essay is a contribution to a special issue of *Western Journal of Communication* that addresses the question "what is the theory-building obligation of critical rhetoric?" (533). Advocating for queering rhetorical criticism, Rand argues that rhetorical scholarship is always politically interested and never politically neutral. That is, rhetorical scholarship creates norms through including and excluding theoretical work, by separating theory and criticism, and by policing boundaries of archives (533-4). She suggests that queer criticism is often not recognized as theory-building—even denied its role as theory-building—as it is often misrecognized as "'merely' queer criticism" (534). And queer archival work is often seen as "merely additive," a view that fails to see "the stakes of recovery" and keeps in place the "heteronormative structures of exclusion at the level of theory" (535). But, as Rand explains, by turning to overlooked queer objects in rhetoric, scholars also "reveal the blind spots of analysis" and prompt us to revise heteronormative theories that have lead rhetorical studies to see these objects as irrelevant—or to not see them at all (534).

Tags: Archives, Disciplinarity

Rand, Erin J. *Reclaiming Queer: Activist and Academic Rhetorics of Resistance*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2014. Print.

In this exploration of queer theory's academic status and relationship to queer activism, Rand theorizes rhetorical agency from a queer perspective. Through analyses of early texts in queer theory's development and their relationship to activist rhetorics—especially Queer Nation, ACT UP, Larry Kramer, and the Lesbian Avengers—Rand asks how activism and practice is put into theory (11). Rand argues that the formal features of texts enable rhetorical agency—that is, agency is a function of form and how that form is made intelligible (20). Agency, then, is not a quality of a rhetor or of a text; rather, agency "arises from the positioning of discourse in terms of its formal features" (21). Understanding *queer* to denote and connote "indeterminacy and excess" (22), Rand suggests that queerness is a "resource through which rhetorical agency is possible" (23). Rather than understand queerness as resistance, Rand argues that queerness is found in the gaps between a rhetor's intention and the rhetorical act and between the rhetorical act itself and its effects or how others take up the text (23-4). These gaps lead to queerness—unpredictability—that allows for rhetorical agency; agency, in turn, as an attempt to control the effects and meaning of a text, works through "temporarily deferring queerness" (25). She explores how scholars use the academic form of scholarship in Chapter 1 to make a space in academia for queer theory. Chapter 2 explores Larry Kramer's polemics, showing that polemics are open to



Present Tense

unintended readings and uses, which makes them productive for agency (66-7). Polemics serve as inventional material for queer theorists, but, as queer theorists deny their indebtedness to the polemic, they also foreclose queerness (89). In Chapter 3, Rand turns to the Lesbian Avengers (<http://www.lesbianavengers.com/>), a network of lesbian activists in the 1990s who relied on “daring, creative, and spectacular modes of demonstrating” (91). Rand argues that their appeal (intelligibility) in mass media made them unintelligible to queer theory as queer. Chapter 4 discusses ACT UP and queer theory’s recent turn to privileging shame, arguing that history itself serves as a form and that, if we are to find potential in theorizing shame, then queer theorists need to explore, rather than resolve, the tensions between pride and shame in the histories they deploy. While Rand shows that rhetorical agency depends upon displacing queerness, she also contends that “agency can never fully or finally exclude queerness” and that “a queer stain” remains: agency is still marked by queerness “to remind of the founding exclusion through which agency arose” (168).

Tags: ACT UP, Affect, Agency, Activism, Disciplinarily, Lesbian, Histories, Politics, Queer Nation

Samek, Alyssa A., and Theresa A. Donofrio. “‘Academic Drag’ and the Performance of the Critical Personae: An Exchange on Sexuality, Politics, and Identity in the Academy.” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 36.1 (2013): 28-55. Print.

Samek and Donofrio explore the politics of inclusion and avoidance of queer theory and queer projects in academia, especially in graduate school. Graduate education, they argue, through rhetorics of professionalism, weakens the potentiality of engaging in queer transformative work (29). As education is a socializing process, they argue that the socializing project of graduate school—professionalism and taking on the identity of a professor—is often about containing queerness and radical potential (32). Samek and Donofrio mix personal narrative with critical reflection, exploring how queerness is contained through silences about sexuality from fellow graduate students, the logics of the public/private distinction, and identity politics that relegate queer scholarship to queers (38-9, 46). They close by calling for the necessity of graduate classrooms to be spaces for critiques of professionalism in addition to socialization into professionalism (46-7). Further, they express concern that queer rhetorical studies is seen as useful only in studying LGBTQ rhetors, whereas it is useful for exposing and challenging heteronormative rhetoric more broadly. They argue that queer rhetorical studies is not a mere “lens” to interpret with, a view that absolves liberal scholars of doing queer work; rather, “sexuality cuts across various ‘objects, methods, and theories’” (Morris qtd. in Samek and Donofrio 47).

Tags: Academia, Disciplinarity, Identity, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Spurlin, William J. "Theorizing Queer Pedagogy in English Studies after the 1990s." *Lesbian and Gay Studies/Queer Pedagogies*. Spec. issue of *College English* 65.1 (2002): 9-16. Print.

In this introduction to a special issue of *College English* on queer pedagogy, William J. Spurlin briefly overviews queer theory and raises a series of questions that the special issue addresses: What potential does queer theory have for undergraduate English education? How has it transformed notions of disciplinarity, production, and interpretation? How can queer theory and pedagogy be put in conversation with each other in ways that do not either erase or fully reaffirm theory/practice splits? For annotations on articles in this issue, see Wallace, "Out in the Academy," and Kopelson, "Dis/Integrating the Gay/Queer Binary."

Tags: Disciplinarity, Pedagogy

Wallace, David L. "Transcending Normativity: Difference Issues in *College English*." *College English* 68.5 (2006): 502-30. Print.

Wallace calls for a "praxis of difference" (503) to transcend normativity in the academy. He argues that issues around difference are the best way to look at the extent that we have been able to transcend our own normative discourses but also to account for both individual and collective subjectivities. Wallace calls on Geertz's idea of "being here" to think about how our texts are either "author-saturated" or "author-evacuated" (508). He examines 204 *College English* pieces (across five volumes) for identifiers of difference (race, gender/sex, religion/spirituality, sexual identity, class, ethnicity, physical abledness, and mental/emotional abledness). He found that only 27 of the authors self-identified by difference issues. He notes that those writing from positions of conventional privilege rarely acknowledged this privilege in any meaningful manner. He then goes on to mark references to difference issues across these volumes finding that there are many cursory references to difference but these do not pass traditional ideas of normativity. He calls on authors, editors, and reviewers to stop failing to engage issues of differences just because they do not see these as part of their research. He calls on us to look for commonalities of experience and to "look hard at the limits of our own subjectivities" (528) if we hope to move beyond this normativity.

Tags: Academia, Class, Collective Identity, Disability, Gender, Intersectionality, Pedagogy, Race, Religion



Present Tense

West, Isaac. "Queer Generosities." Spec. issue of *Western Journal of Communication* 77.5 (2013): 538-41. Print.

As part of a special issue of *Western Journal of Communication*, West addresses the question of what obligation rhetorical criticism has to theory-building by turning to queer critique. He resists the standard understanding of queer theory as a mode of paranoid critique that studies resistance and critiques normativity—an approach that encourages a theoretical binary of resistance and normativity (538-9). Instead of this hermeneutics of suspicion, queer rhetoric scholars “need more capacious theories of norms, the normative, and normativities capable of capturing the multiplicities of texts and practices” (539). In his proposed “more generous approach to engaging queer texts and practices,” West advocates turning to rhetors to understand how they theorize bodies, genders, and desires and “play the norms against one another” (540). Such a focus on norms also allows queer rhetoric scholars to demonstrate the usefulness of their work to scholars who see queer work as minoritizing or dressed up identity politics. The field of rhetorical studies is well suited for this endeavor because of its focus on particularities and the contingent (540).

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Disciplinarity

Yep, Gust A., Karen E. Lovaas, and John P. Elia, eds. *Queer Theory and Communication: From Disciplining Queers to Queering the Discipline(s)*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 2003. Print.

This collection intends to intervene in communication studies by drawing on queer theory to question the “normalization of hegemonic heterosexuality” and spark scholarship in communication studies that can “imagine different social realities, gender/sexual systems, and participation in cultural politics” (2). Editors Yep, Lovaas, and Elia reject the minoritizing logic they see prevalent in earlier work in communication, taking instead a universalizing logic toward sexuality. The first section of the volume takes up research interventions, including fourteen chapters that explore sexuality, heteronormativity, queer theory, and communication. Yep’s chapter introduces queer theory to readers and argues that heteronormativity is both symbolically and materially violent for all people. Elia’s and Lovaas’s chapters call for queering interpersonal communication and nonverbal communication research, respectively. In her contribution, Jacqueline M. Martinez recovers lesbian women of color from poststructuralist critiques that have relegated their contributions to the merely essentialist and personal narrative. R. Anthony Slagle’s chapter analyzes *Peewee’s Playhouse* in order to argue that scholars should analyze texts for both traditional and oppositional readings. Wenshu Lee’s “autocritography” explores both historical and present Taiwanese and Chinese *nu-nu* (female-female) words and relationships in



Present Tense

order to *kuær* queer theory. Diana Fisher's ethnographic study of queer-identified Russian-Jewish immigrants in West Hollywood explores how her participants used the "closet" tactically to move within, if not disrupt, the visibility-invisibility dichotomy. Other chapters include Gina Masequesmay's analysis of "identity work" in a support group for Vietnamese lesbians, bisexual women, and female-to-male transgender persons; E. Patrick Johnson's analysis of African-American heterosexual male performers' parodies of gayness; Davin Grindstaff's argument that same-sex marriage discourses reinforce heteronormativity; and John R. Butler's autoethnographic exploration of LGBT activism in DeKalb, Illinois. The section closes with A. Susan Owen's analysis of responses to Frederick C. Corey and Thomas K. Nakayama's 1997 essay "Sextext" and a follow-up essay from Nakayama and Corey titled "Nextext." The second section of the book includes eleven short essays from a variety of scholars in communication studies and in queer theory who explore the relationships between queer theory, communication studies, and higher education. This collection was simultaneously published in *Journal of Homosexuality*, volume 45, issues 2/3/4 (2003).

Tags: Closet, Disciplinarity, Heteronormativity, Lesbian, Identity, Media, Pedagogy, Popular Culture, Race, Sextext

Young, Anna M., Andria Battaglia, and Dana L. Cloud. "(UN)Disciplining the Scholar Activist: Policing the Boundaries of Political Engagement." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96.4 (2010): 427-35. Print.

Young, Battaglia, and Cloud argue that disciplinary norms in communication studies impede the work of activist scholars who seek engagement in civil and political matters. Further, this "boundary policing runs contrary to the ethical commitments of the rhetorical tradition" (428). They turn to the 2008 National Communication Association's conference at the San Diego Grand Hyatt, which was under intense scrutiny for unfair labor practices and its financial contributions to California's Proposition 8; numerous NCA members called for changing venues and held an "UNconvention" in protest. Young, Battaglia, and Cloud analyze listserv posts, the NCA newsletter *Spectra*, and personal emails to show how NCA leaders used victimage, abstract calls for free speech, and calls for civility in ways that "demonized the political engagement of academic scholars" (428). They close by placing public engagement squarely within the rhetorical tradition and laying out some principles for discussing activism in the discipline.

Tags: Academia, Activism, Ethics, Politics

[Return to bibliography menu](#)



Present Tense

Section 3. Pedagogical Practices and Theories

Blackburn, Mollie. "Exploring Literacy Performances and Power Dynamics at the Loft: 'Queer Youth Reading the World and the Word.'" *Research in the Teaching of English* 37.4 (2003): 467-90. Print.

Blackburn explores literacy performances in the Loft, a youth-run space for LGBTQ youth, specifically the group's Speakers Bureau, who were uniquely trained and equipped to educate and work against homophobia and heteronormativity. She draws on Judith Butler's ideas of performativity (468) and on James Paul Gee, Shirley Brice Heath, and others (469) to envision what she calls "literacy events" that form around reading and writing words and experiences. Over three years, Blackburn collected data related to these literacy events in the Loft. Members of Speakers Bureau, Blackburn asserts, use literacy events to disrupt and interrogate power structures and dynamics both inside the Loft and in the world at large (475-6). As a caveat, though, Blackburn shows us that in some cases, power dynamics were instead reinforced. Blackburn makes a connection for educators, ultimately, that we must, like the youth of the Loft, work unceasingly for social change.

Tags: Age, Literacy, Pedagogy

Blackburn, Mollie. "Risky, Generous, Gender Work." *Research in the Teaching of English* 40.3 (2006): 262-71. Print.

Blackburn builds upon her 2003 work "Exploring Literacy Performances and Power Dynamics at the Loft: 'Queer Youth Reading the World and the Word.'" She talks about how both instructors and students can create "gender trouble" (drawing on Judith Butler and others; 263). She warns though that this gender trouble must happen in school environments where violence will not occur but admits that in most schools the results will be violence (263). She lays out five points from the Loft's Speakers Bureau for teachers to deal with students who come out to them as LGBTQ. These points include listening fully to the student, telling the student he or she is not alone, referring the student to talk further with trained personnel, always addressing harassers/harassment, and always following up with the student to check on his or her well-being (265). She also gives examples of further resources for teachers (from organizations such as Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) and reminds us that regardless of teachers' beliefs, they have a responsibility to make schools safer spaces for students to engage and learn. This is risky work, Blackburn admits, but important work.

Tags: Age, Gender, Literacy, Pedagogy, Safe Spaces



Present Tense

Brueggemann, Brenda Jo, and Debra A. Modellmog. "Coming-Out Pedagogy: Risking Identity in Language and Literature Classrooms." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 2.3 (2002): 311-35. Print.

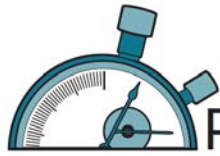
Brueggemann and Modellmog discuss the intersections of queer and disabled positionalities as they relate to the classroom and identity. Queer theory and feminism have, Brueggemann and Modellmog point out, both asserted that the body and identity are socially constructed (312). This means that for queer persons and disabled persons, striving to be a "normalized" body means attempting to pass (as not queer or not disabled or a close approximation to it). They draw here on first name Pamela L. Caughie to describe passing (312). Both authors identify as either disabled or queer and discuss performativity as they relate to these identities and each tell classroom stories springing from the intersection of teaching and these identities. They end with a discussion of the risks and rewards of asking students to consider the implications of sexuality and disability for literature and rhetoric studies. They ask us to consider not just how risk might be imposed on students but how instructors, too, can take risks in the classroom with respect to sexuality and disability (332).

Tags: Bodies, Disability, Intersectionality, Passing, Pedagogy, Performativity

Charles, Casey. "Queer Writes." *Women's Studies in Communication* 28.1 (2005): 32-56. Print.

Charles uses the lens of a class proposed as "Queer Stories" in 1998 at the University of Montana at Missoula. Through this lens, Charles seeks to connect the key points of articulation theory to historical and current circumstances around competing meanings of queer. Charles looks at the queer subject through the work of Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall and others to show how representation appears in social and political spaces. Many LGBT persons still do not associate the term queer with Judith Butler's "notion of parodic redeployment or de-essentializing linguistic performance" according to Charles (37). Charles then shares the political drama that unfolded in Montana (in the state legislature as well as in the university) over this course, heightened by its use of the word "queer." Charles looks specifically at the rhetorical actions of a state senator in opposition to the course as well as the actions of the Christian Coalition and other antigay groups. Ultimately, Charles points out the ways that the use of a controversial term (such as "queer") shows the "evolution of social activism" (53).

Tags: Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Pedagogy, Politics, Publics



Present Tense

Elliott, Mary. "Coming Out in the Classroom: A Return to the Hard Place." *College English* 58.6 (1996): 693-708. Print.

Elliott explores "the emotional and physical tolls" of teachers coming out in the classroom. Elliott notes that prior scholarship on coming out to students focuses on the political imperative to disclose in order to combat institutional invisibility of gays and lesbians but largely ignores the emotional turmoil that the process involves (694). Elliott's essay explores a variety of emotional and embodied issues, describing the coming out process in class as crossing an abyss and the risks involved in that crossing being "monologic, not dialogic" (705); it is a unidirectional disclosure from teacher to supposedly straight students. Ultimately, Elliott understands coming out to students as not some "intellectual enterprise that follows from a series of political decisions" but rather as a fully embodied and emotional act (706).

Tags: Affect, Body, Closet, Coming Out, Pedagogy

Fox, Catherine. "Reprosexuality, Queer Desire, and Critical Pedagogy: A Response to Hyoejin Yoon." *JAC* 26.1-2 (2006): 244-53. Print.

Fox responds to Hyoejin Yoon's 2005 *JAC* article "Affecting the Transformative Intellectual: Questioning 'Noble' Sentiments in Critical Pedagogy," in which Yoon argued that discourses of critical pedagogy are thoroughly affective, meant to manage emotions, and construct white, masculine subjects as "the center of transformative teaching and learning" (244). Fox extends Yoon's analysis, drawing on queer theory to argue that the management of emotion Yoon explores is also a heteronormative regulation. Critical pedagogy is seductive, Fox argues, because of its "heteronormative frame . . . that centers on reproduction and generational transmission" (245). Fox points out that Yoon's analysis reveals sexual desire throughout the discourse of critical pedagogy: "arousing students' consciousness," reproducing values through "generational transmission," and the shaming of those critics who refuse to engage in such reproduction (245). Following Yoon, Connie Monson and Jacqueline Rhodes, and insights from queer theory, Fox proposes a pedagogy without a *telos*, one that "offers new places to stand" (250) and focuses on "becomings" (249).

Tags: Affect, Desire, Heteronormativity, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Fox, Catherine. "From Transaction to Transformation: (En)Countering White Heteronormativity in 'Safe Spaces.'" *College English* 69.5 (2007): 496-511. Print.

This piece interrogates (in 2007) just how far the academy has come in its acceptance of queer issues and persons through the lens of the many "safe space" stickers seen on English department academics' doorways on campuses. Fox envisions these physical spaces as a "text" that portrays our English departments as benevolent places. Fox asserts that ultimately such "safe space" culture simply reproduces heteronormative order through ideas of "safety" and "comfort" and reinforces the hetero/homo binary, thus leaving out queer as a space and concept that allows queer scholarship to become practice instead of simply theory. Fox points out that often those who display such safe space stickers and symbolism do not support or see the interconnected nature of sexuality with race, gender, class, and so on. She points to the ways that white culture often creates ideas of safety that allow for a kind of queer "colorblindness" and normalizing a "good, pure, innocent" heterosexual ally who offers space instead of queer persons demanding their own safe space (503). Ultimately instead of simply passively displaying these signs of created safe space, Fox asks what we are actually doing to advance queer causes and concepts in our departments (508).

Tags: Allies, Academia, Class, Gender, Heteronormativity, Intersectionality, Race, Safe Spaces

Fox, Ragan. "'Homo'-work: Queering Academic Communication and Communicating Queer in Academia." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 33.1 (2013): 58-76. Print.

Through personal narrative, Fox argues for a queer pedagogy that understands that pedagogy is already sexualized and heterosexualized, though the presence of heteronormativity goes unnoticed and understood as the absence of sexuality (59). Queer pedagogy for Fox involves queering both "instructional communication and communication about instruction" (62). Communication scholars, he argues, are "uniquely positioned" to queer acts of communication because of their expertise in and study of communication (62). Fox lays out two important aspects of queer pedagogy: unpacking the discursive construction of heteronormativity and a commitment to "queer world-making" (62).

Tags: Heteronormativity, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Hall, Donald E. "Cluelessness and the Queer Classroom." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 7.2 (2007): 182-91. Print.

Hall responds to Gerald Graff's 2003 *Clueless in Academe* from a queer perspective. Graff's initial premise—that academics too often view their students as blank canvases upon which to impart expert knowledge—is taken up by Hall and critiqued and built upon. Hall draws from twentieth-century philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer and queer theory to assert, with Graff, that "energetic critical engagement with some prejudgments and traditions is exactly what living as an intellectual should mean" (186). Risk taking, for Hall, must include the instructor as well. Hall is critical of Graff for using the metaphor of the closet in respect to criticism in the classroom. Graff does not understand, Hall says, what the real risks are for LGBT persons to actually come out in the classroom (190). A more sustained conversation that includes queer and feminist theorists is needed in response to Graff's work. Though this piece is mostly a response to Graff's book and an engagement of the place of criticism and queer theory in the classroom, it does offer some important pedagogical advice, namely that queer instructors must also be avid queer learners. That is, we, as instructors, must also be willing to disrupt and engage our own views and approaches—not just those of students.

Tags: Criticism, Theory, Pedagogy

Horn, Stacey S., Christina R. Peter, Timothy B. Tasker, and Shannon Sullivan. "Moving Past Assumptions: Recognizing Parents as Allies in Promoting the Sexual Literacies of Adolescents through a University–Community Collaboration." *Community Literacy Journal* 8.1 (2013): 71-91. Print.

Horn, Peter, Tasker, and Sullivan examine the ways that a university–community collaboration looked at the dominant assumption that parents are one of the main barriers to providing gender and sexuality education and information to students. One of the key approaches of the collaboration was to recognize that parents are "critical stakeholders and partners" in providing their children with sexual literacy (along with educators). Horn, Peter, Tasker, and Sullivan argue that parental support is critical to sexuality education because of the parents' unique role. They provide important insights for educators such as their acknowledgement that they as educators actually knew very little about parents' concerns and ideas of their children's sexual education in schools (73). The goal throughout this study was to identify places of disconnect between parents, educators, and students and to provide results from advisory board work between parents and educators.

Tags: Identity, Pedagogy, Publics



Present Tense

Kopelson, Karen. "Dis/Integrating the Gay/Queer Binary: 'Reconstructed Identity Politics' for a Performative Pedagogy." *Lesbian and Gay Studies/Queer Pedagogies*. Spec. issue of *College English* 65.1 (2002): 17-35. Print.

Kopelson notes that despite the decade since Judith Butler argued that gender and sexual identities are performative and thus not stable and natural, research in sexuality and composition has generally asserted "a *real* and *stable* gay/lesbian identity" (18). Kopelson explores tensions between identity-based pedagogies and queer or performative pedagogies, overviewing critiques of each before arguing that the binary between identity-based pedagogies and queer/performative pedagogies is too simple. Indeed, performative pedagogies must start with and work with those identities that are already known, for no one is outside ideology or power. For Kopelson, it is only by using and drawing on stable identities that we can begin to question their construction; following José Esteban Muñoz, she advocates for "a *reconstructed* identity politics" (Muñoz qtd. in Kopelson 32) that renegotiates and complicates identities.

Tags: Identity, Pedagogy, Performativity

Morris, Charles E., III. "Sunder the Children: Abraham Lincoln's Queer Rhetorical Pedagogy." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99.4 (2013): 395-422. Print.

Morris claims that while Abraham Lincoln has been the site of blurring historical (forensic) rhetoric and commemorative (epideictic) rhetoric that often supports heteronormative domination, these blurrings also offer the potential for fostering queer world-making (397). He pushes this further and argues that Lincoln's archive can be deployed to queer Lincoln and queer K-12 education, deploying a rhetorical education to facilitate "incipient and emergent queer futures" (398). Morris does not argue Lincoln is gay. Rather, Lincoln defies such easy categories, and it is this very complexity in his archive and life that provides opportunities to disrupt normativity and to provide "queer animating sustenance" (402). Morris advocates, then, for a rhetorical pedagogy that investigates Lincoln's rhetorical corpus, engaging in *imitatio* (drawing on Michael Leff's work on Lincoln and pedagogy), and queering students' sense of Lincoln and sense of self (407-8).

Tags: Archives, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Shahani, Nishant G. "Pedagogical Practices and the Reparative Performance of Failure, or, 'What Does [Queer] Knowledge Do?'" *JAC* 25.1 (2005): 185-207. Print.

Shahani argues for "a performative understanding of failure as a moment of pedagogy" (186) that works through what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls "reparative thinking," where failure can be a place "to *begin* the process of reparation" (186-7). In order to make this argument, Shahani explores students' enjoyment of the film *Boys Don't Cry* and their failure to enjoy Sarah Schulman's novel *Girls, Visions and Everything*. Students enjoy *Boys Don't Cry*, Shahani explains, because they sympathize with Brandon Teena in ways that keep pleasure and citizenship private, which helps to reaffirm "inclusive toleration" so as to not rework citizenship (195). Shulman's *Girls, Visions and Everything*, however, provides potential for reparative pedagogy because students *fail* to enjoy it: The protagonist and narrative resist inclusive representation, in part because the protagonist is an abject outsider (200-4). Students' failure to enjoy the novel is made possible by the privatization of citizenship that the novel resists. Rather than a pedagogy of inclusive, positive representation, Shahani argues that we should explore what knowledge *does* and where knowledge stops (188-9). Students' ambivalent responses to *Girls, Visions and Everything* are productive, Shahani claims, not because they point to the difficulty of students developing empathy or identification, but because the failures to enjoy the novel or identify with the protagonist "enable inquiries into the limits of intelligibility both in and out of the classroom" (205). Ultimately, failure in the class can be productive in moving toward a reparative approach to re-conceptualizing citizenship.

Tags: Affect, Citizenship, Literature, Pedagogy, Performativity

Spurlin, William J., ed. *Lesbian and Gay Studies and the Teaching of English*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000. Print.

This collection of sixteen essays looks at queer difference as a "lens through which to read, interpret, and produce texts" as ways of reading both the classroom and the world (xix). The essays are divided among three sections: positions, pedagogies, and cultural politics. Positions looks at the difficulty of theorizing classroom positions around LGBT identities. The first essay in this section, "Cruising the Libraries" by Lee Lynch, looks at the author's own search as a young person for lesbian representation in literature she could identify with (3). In "When the Cave is a Closet: Pedagogies of the (Re)Pressed" by Edward J. Ingebretsen, S.J. looks at how teachers must wrestle between private sexuality and scrutiny in a public position (33). Jay Kent Lorenz's "Blame it on the Weatherman: Popular Culture and Pedagogical Praxis in the Lesbian and Gay Studies Classroom" looks at the ways that experienced homophobia in youth can resurface in adults lives (37). Lived experience in this way is crucial to Lorenz for

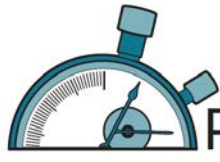


Present Tense

pedagogy. In "On Not Coming Out: or, Reimagining Limits" by Susan Talburt, we see one lesbian faculty member's struggle with performing both "lesbian" and "intellectual" (54). And in "(Trans)Gendering English Studies," Jody Norton worries about the shift in literature studies from the critic's detached position of researcher to the critic's personal experiences. Specifically, she worries about these personal experiences as always emblematic of the social and discursive communities from which these critics speak. (79).

The second section looks at pedagogies and examines strategies for teaching lesbian and gay studies in the English classroom. Lillian Faderman in "The Uses of History" asserts that histories are almost always under the control of socially dominant groups (109). "What's Out There? Gay and Lesbian Literature for Children and Young Adults" by Claudia Mitchell and "Creating a Place for Lesbian and Gay Readings in the Secondary English Classrooms" by Jim Reese both offer classroom strategies for resisting heteronormative approaches to the English classroom. "Shakespeare's Sexuality: Who Needs It?" by Mario DiGangi takes up the questions of Shakespeare's sexuality and who certain understandings of Shakespeare benefit (147). In "Coming Out and Creating Queer Awareness in the Classroom: An Approach from the US-Mexican Border," Tatiana de la Tierra talks about her own multiple identities (bilingual, Latina, immigrant, lesbian, etc.) as they relate to the classroom (168). "Swimming Upstream: Recovering the Lesbian in Native American Literature" by Karen Lee Osborne asks us to reconsider ideas of teaching Native American literature to depart from Native American as victim and turn instead to threads of survival and resistance (207).

In the third section, "The Politics of Culture" takes up cultural and social contexts that have affected the teaching of lesbian and gay studies in the English classroom. In Debbie Epstein's "Reading Gender, Reading Sexualities: Children the Negotiation of Meaning in 'Alternative' Texts" examines how children interact with master narratives in culture around sexuality and how they construct their own ideas around sexuality and a teacher coming out in the classroom (230). Next, and perhaps most well-known, is Richard E. Miller's 1994 piece, "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone: Assessing Homophobic Student Writing." Miller looks at the ways that discussing issues of LGBT and sexuality in the classroom raise strong responses from students including homophobic ones and the ways that teachers are often uncertain how to respond or deal with these. Drawing from Mary Louise Pratt, Miller lays classrooms out as "contact zones" where conflicting cultures meet and clash (234). He asks us to consider our reactions to homophobic writing beyond removing the writer from the classroom or silencing the writer and asks what it looks like to engage these things. We must always closely attend to our students' writing to really understand where they are coming from and help make change (251). In "Queer Pedagogy and Social Change: Teaching



Present Tense

and Lesbian Identity in South Africa,” Ann Smith looks at the first class in lesbian literature taught at a university in South Africa and interrogates the historical split between activism and teaching (257). “The Straight Path to Postcolonial Salvation: Heterosexism and the Teaching of English in India Today” by Ruth Vanita questions the English literary canon at work in India and why gay and lesbian-rich literature is often excluded (285). And finally, in “Remembering: Quilt Readings,” Marcia Blumberg examines how the AIDS Memorial Quilt’s postmodern performance of mourning is related to and intersects with critical classroom pedagogy (307).

Tags: AIDS, Class, Gender, Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Identity, Literature, Pedagogy, Theory

[Return to bibliography menu](#)



Present Tense

Section 4. Composition Studies

Alexander, Jonathan. "Literacy and Diversity: A Provocation." *Writing Program Administration* 33.1-2 (2009): 164-168. Print.

In his contribution to a forum on diversity, Alexander argues "that the proper subject of composition should be discourse of othering" (166). That is, composition courses should explore discourses that create and describe others. This is in contrast to the dominant version of diversity education, which teaches students to appreciate the discourses of others through inclusive readings. Alexander shares suspicion of "sensitivity training" and diversity pedagogy that teach people not to offend and to identify with the other rather than trace and critique "unexamined discourses and ideologies" (166). Alexander draws on his own experience as a queer Writing Program Administrator. He writes from a position of anger and "Queer disgust," describing details of "the wounded life" he brings to the position as he confronts overt and covert homophobia and heterosexism (165). He calls upon his readers, other writing program administrators, to adopt curricula that address, explore, analyze, and critique discourses of othering. Alexander's essay received responses in issue 33.3 of *WPA* by Mark McBeth in "(Un)Standard Deviations" and Jacqueline Rhodes in "Who Are We? What Do We Become?"

Tags: Composition

Alexander, Jonathan. *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy: Theory and Practice for Composition Studies*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2008. Print.

Alexander focuses on how sexuality interacts with the composition classroom and literacy studies. The book functions as a critical resource for writing instructors looking to integrate sexuality/queer theory into pedagogy. In the chapter "Discursive Sexualities," his characterization of sexuality as "sexual literacy"—something both discursive and performative—draws connections between the language used surrounding sexuality and the identities people feel and create—how people enact discursive understandings of sexual identity and conversely how sexual identity comes to be written and codified. He writes that sexuality—with race, gender, and religion—must be acknowledged as crucial in forming Western contemporary senses of literacy (5). The introduction also includes considerable discussion of terminology around LGBT and queer studies. He asserts that sex and sexuality are among the least discussed issues in college writing classrooms (2). Therefore, he calls on us to develop a "critical sexual literacy" to connect literacy and sexuality. Composition in its social



Present Tense

turn has not quite made a sexual turn. In seeking to link discursivity and literacy to sex and sexuality, he turns to Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick primarily. Alexander is especially concerned with student reading and writing and looks at sites for pedagogical development, including queer theory for straight students, transgender rhetorics, and gay marriage as a political issue in the classroom. His overall goals include disrupting straight narratives in the classroom and interrogating ideas of “normal” as they relate to gender performance. He also discusses confronting resistances to queer/sexuality issues in pedagogy. He rounds out the book with several stories of student resistance and draws on Michel Foucault to point out the ways we are asking students to consider densely ethical questions (208).

Tags: Citizenship, Composition, Ethics, Heteronormativity, Literacy, Pedagogy, Transgender

Alexander, Jonathan, and Michelle Gibson. “Queer Composition(s): Queer Theory in the Writing Classroom.” *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 1-21. Print.

Noting that queer theory is just now being used in scholarly conversations about pedagogy, Alexander and Gibson ask how it might inform composition pedagogy, situating such an approach within the social turn in composition studies. They briefly outline queer theory as an inquiry into how identities are constructed or performed, how all identities are sexualized and gendered, and how power shapes understandings of the self (3). Alexander and Gibson clarify that incorporating queer theory into pedagogy isn’t a matter of including gay and lesbian texts or teaching queer theory texts, but is rather about “the way theory *shapes* practice” (5). Queer theory’s investigation into the ways that power shape identity and make it appear “natural” is useful for composition studies, for students are often required to analyze or write narratives about identity (7). Queer theory is “intimately *rhetorical*,” they argue, as it explains how language and power shape identity claims, authorship, and representation (7-8). Alexander and Gibson provide a brief history of how composition studies has incorporated queer perspectives, identifying trends and approaches, before they introduce the special cluster of articles in this issue of *JAC*.

Tags: Composition, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Alexander, Jonathan, Janell Haynes, and Jacqueline Rhodes, eds. *Public/Sex: Connecting Sexuality and Service Learning*. Spec. issue of *Reflections: A Journal of Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service-Learning* 9.2 (2010). Print.

This special issue of *Reflections* situates sex and sexuality in relation to service learning in writing courses. Alexander, Haynes, and Rhodes's introduction contends that gender, sex, and sexuality are often "*unspoken and dis-articulated* in many service learning experiences" (2), and contributions to the issue attempt to articulate the connections between sex/sexuality and service learning. In "Legato and the Practices of 'Sexual Literacy' in Turkey," Sorkin Gorkemli provides a study of two members of Legato, a student gay and lesbian group in Istanbul, Turkey. He shows how their sexual literacy is community-based, inflected and influenced by a variety of conflicting communities, as well as by space and place. Carrie Jo Coaplen-Anderson's essay, "A Stripped Classroom: Exotic Dancers, Sexuality, University Teaching, and Community Engagement," reflects on her experience as a stripper in order to explore implications of stigmatized identities and experiences for writing classes and community engagement. She highlights the importance of sharing personal stories of stigmatization or under-representation, which she contends can "provide opportunities for community engagement that can lead to social action" (46). In "An (Em)Bodied Workshop: When Service Learning Gets Bawdy," Brenda Glascott shares her experiences as a graduate student in a service learning experience where she volunteered to teach a writing group composed of senior citizens with Alzheimer's disease. Glascott explains that she had assumed, according to cultural logics of the elderly and the disabled, that her students were not sexual beings (83), but members of the writing group consistently referenced her sexualized body and engaged in bawdy talk. Glascott concludes that when writing courses engage in service learning, it is important for students to self-reflect on narratives of education they carry with them, and to question their assumptions about teacherly and student bodies (85-86).

Geoffrey W. Bateman shares his experience teaching an upper-division service-learning course on queer rhetorics in "Queer Rhetorics and Service-Learning: Reflection as Critical Engagement." He explores his students' process of moving from personal responses in their journals to learning "how to access the worlds that are in the process of being created" through community-based projects (110). In "Serving the Public: Gender, Sexuality, and Race at the Margins," Jill McCracken discusses her service learning course "Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Marginalized Communities." In this course, students engaged in rhetorical analyses and moved from a theoretical understanding of gender, sexuality, and race, to an ability to see how discourses of gender, sexuality, and race impact everyday lives. In "Queering Syracuse: Remember When?", Alison Mountz and Amy Tweedy reflect on their co-taught 2009 course "Sexuality and Space: Queering Syracuse." The course explored the relationships



Present Tense

between space, place, and sexuality, and Mountz and Tweedy explore how students struggled with the meaning of “queer” together, and how they pushed students to represent queer spaces and to queer the city of Syracuse.

Tags: Affect, Age, Bodies, Composition, Disability, Gender, Literacy, Pedagogy, Publics, Race

Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. “Flattening Effects: Composition’s Multicultural Imperative and the Problem of Narrative Coherence.” *College Composition and Communication* 65.3 (2014): 430-454. Print.

Alexander and Rhodes take issue with the ways that multicultural pedagogy “flattens” or treats the same critical difference among humanity. A “narrative of inclusion” often means that the “other” is tamed or treated as “knowable” (431). They see issues of identity becoming almost “fetishized” over the last twenty years in composition pedagogy and call for a pedagogy that is not simply inclusive but turns more to being as challenging as possible. Citing LuMing Mao, they point out that people experience the world differently both rhetorically and materially and that these differences cannot be glossed over. They ask if it might not be more productive to ask students to write about what they do not know instead of what they do know—in this way they push back against the idea of narrative coherence. They note that writing is often an unsettling practice and to guard against honoring diversity in a way that makes all difference feel comfortable and all writing practices seem safe.

Tags: Composition, Identity, Literacy, Pedagogy, Race

Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2014. Print.

Alexander and Rhodes argue that in the move to incorporate multimodal or new media in composition courses, compositionists have “privileged text-based forms of writing” that ignore or elide the affordances of digital media (3). Put differently, rhetoricians have continued to view digital media through traditional rhetorical lenses that see everything as “writing” and do not attend to the “distinct logics” and “different affordances” of digital media (17, qting. Gunther Kress). If we want students to enter public spheres, Alexander and Rhodes argue, then we have to attend to how new media work differently than print media (19). Throughout the book, Alexander and Rhodes draw on their experiences as “queer compositionists, poets, and multimedia artists” in order to develop their argument (21). Through a historical



Present Tense

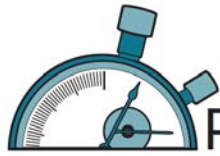
analysis of composition scholarship, they show how composition scholars have understood digital media through the lens of the print essay (Chapter 1). They then examine videos (Chapter 2), photo manipulation (Chapter 3), and online gaming (Chapter 4), showing how these media offer affordances that differ from print, even as composition teachers domesticate them by drawing on print genres (like the literacy narrative), and often offering queer examples of effective uses of new media that draw on their particular affordances. Their final chapter explores implications for shifts in subjectivity shaped by new media, and how composition teachers might address these shifts in how we understand subjectivity.

Tags: Composition, Digital

Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. "Queer: An Impossible Subject for Composition." *JAC* 31.1-2 (2011): 177-206. Print.

Alexander and Rhodes argue that "[q]ueerness is one of composition's *impossible* subjects" (179), primarily because "queerness is essentially about impossibility and excess" (180). The excess of queerness insists on not being composed, of disrupting the composed self, but composition is about composing and disciplining subjects (181-183). Historically, compositionists have valued multiculturalism and accommodating new voices, but Alexander and Rhodes argue that "some voices cannot be heard together" and that multiculturalism reduces queerness to "another surface difference" that tames its criticality (188, 180). They respond to Robert McRuer's argument to "position queer theory and disability studies at the center of composition theory" (189, qting. McRuer), sensing that such a "move" is actually a change in "topic" that still continues to discipline bodies (189). Alexander and Rhodes have come to celebrate queer's "outsider status" (190) for its ability to disrupt identifications and composed bodies, to challenge "the status quo of the *composed* text" (194). Composition only serves to discipline, to make subjects "articulate and ordered" (196), a task antithetical, inimical to queerness. Queerness's disruption provides potential for "*a new kind of writing*" (196) that is inhospitable and decomposed, and challenge to composition's value of the orderly and composed.

Tags: Composition, Pedagogy



Present Tense

Alexander, Jonathan, and David Wallace. "The Queer Turn in Composition Studies: Reviewing and Assessing an Emerging Scholarship." *College Composition and Communication* 61.1 (2009): W300-W320. Web.

Alexander and Wallace overview roughly 15 years (starting in 1993) of scholarship in rhetoric and composition that approaches LGBT/queer studies in relation to composition studies. They identify three distinct approaches in this scholarship: 1) moves to confront homophobia in the composition classroom; 2) moves to include LGBTQ individuals in representations in the classroom in ways that don't tokenize and that can create safe spaces; and 3) moves that draw on queer theory to question stable identities, the hetero/homo binary, and heteronormativity, understanding as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick does, that heteronormativity is a problem for all people (W314). Alexander and Wallace argue that the first two approaches are necessary, but have limitations, namely that they don't draw on the power of queerness to expose and critique how the hetero/homo binary is pervasive in even the most personal aspects of our lives. They contend that attention to sexuality in rhetoric and composition scholarship "has been spotty at best and provides an inadequate basis for understanding heteronormativity in our theory and practice" (W302). They suggest that the small amount of scholarship already completed has had a limited impact (W315). Queerness, they argue, can help composition teachers and students to deconstruct and better understand identity and literate agency (W301). They advocate critiquing inclusive multiculturalism and reconceptualizing pedagogy to include critiques of heteronormativity to expose the operations of power in literacy, identity construction, and agency (W317).

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Pedagogy

Marinara, Martha, Jonathan Alexander, William P. Banks, and Samantha Blackmon. "Cruisin' Composition Texts: Negotiating Sexual Difference in First-Year Readers." *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 269-296. Print.

Marinara et al. examine how LGBT issues are or are not addressed in first-year composition texts. For texts that do include these issues, they examine how ideas around queerness and sexuality are addressed and framed rhetorically. They find that most of the scholarship to that point deals with first person teacher narratives about LGBT experiences in first year writing classrooms. They find any large-scale research completely lacking in the field and find that mainstream publishers typically leave out queer conversations altogether or marginalize them. They critique the lack of acknowledgement of intersectional identities that move beyond just being LGBT or queer (280) and the disembodied nature of narratives that deal with only "safe"



Present Tense

aspects of issues around sexuality. They also offer some solutions and tactics for overcoming these issues including supplementary texts and refusing to follow binaries (being simply “for” or “against”). They finally call us to guard against erasure of queer topics in our classrooms as we also continue to encourage students to think about these issues more complexly.

Tags: Composition, Literacy, Pedagogy

Banks, William P. “Queering Outcomes: Hacking the Source Code of the WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition.” *Writing Program Administration* 36.1 (2012): 205-208. Print.

Banks looks at the Council of Writing Program Administrators’ Outcomes Statement and suggests that critiquing this statement seems “both overly simple and overly vexed” (206). While one can certainly critique things not included (like explicit statements about sexuality), Banks asks, “[W]hen does the one-more-thing stop?” (206). Instead of such an approach that looks at the outcomes, Banks suggests that instead we look to the introduction of the Statement, asking whom it is addressing and whom it is describing. The framing of the Outcomes seems not to incorporate the theories and research that Banks has found useful (206-207). He suggests that, instead of a static document delivered and received, that it be remediated as a multimodal, crowd-sourced version that can incorporate input from seasoned and new professionals alike, placing various ideologies and theories in conversation with each other (207-208). For Banks, then, queering the Outcomes Statement isn’t simply a matter of revising the outcomes, but more so a matter of “disrupting the theories and practices that inform the outcomes” (208).

Tags: Administration, Composition

Banks, William P. “Written Through the Body: Disruptions and ‘Personal’ Writing.” *The Personal in Academic Writing*. Spec. issue of *College English* 66.1 (2003): 21-40. Print.

Banks lays out an argument for the importance of embodied writing. That is, writing practices that account for the personal and the fragmented and the awareness of one’s body (and the bodies of others) as they also try to make and understand theory and meaning. He uses several “figures” (narrative snippets) to demonstrate personal experience making meaning of one’s world. He draws from childhood experiences, classroom experiences (as both student and teacher), and peer writing groups and situations. Jane Hindman’s idea of “embodied writing” figures prominently (33). One



Present Tense

particularly important section details the activity of leading his students in a queer rhetorics course to write (or imagine) coming out stories, again to emphasize that personal narrative and embodied writing are highly undervalued and utilized in our field. Banks's work here is highly personal in its own right and clearly models its own understanding of what personal and embodied student writing could be. He is not afraid to speak frankly of personal sexualized situations and an awareness of his own body (26-27).

Tags: Academia, Bodies, Composition, Coming Out, Desire, Performativity, Pedagogy

Banks, William P., and Jonathan Alexander. "Queer Eye for the Comp Program: Toward a Queer Critique of WPA Work." *The Writing Program Interrupted: Making Space for Critical Discourse*. Eds. Donna Strickland and Jeanne Gunner. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2009. 86-98. Print.

In this chapter, Banks and Alexander share their experiences as queer white men administering writing programs in order to raise questions about the positionality of queer Writing Program Administrators (WPAs). They note a general lack of literature on queer WPAs, speculating that this lack could be because teaching is often framed as individual and where difference is deployed, and administrative work is framed as the oppressive site of the institution (88-89). However, Banks and Alexander suggest that it is worth exploring the relevance of queerness to WPA work. For instance, WPAs are in positions to advocate for causes, but for a closeted queer WPA, certain advocacy work can raise questions and out them, and for an out queer WPA, such advocacy work can be read as merely a personal agenda (89-90). If various scholars have framed WPA work as feminized and motherly, and others have framed it as husbandly and fatherly, what does this familial framing mean for queer WPAs? Or, perhaps, what does it mean to be in a position gendered as *both* motherly and fatherly (91-92)? They suggest that because queerness exists on the margins, that queer WPAs might be adept at questioning the status quo, of critiquing binaristic thinking, of seeing and conveying the ways in which sex and identity are tied up in language and power (94-96). They conclude with a discussion of how *queer a program* can be, given queerness's marginality and the normativity of programs (97-98).

Tags: Composition, Identity, Education, Pedagogy, Visibility



Present Tense

Carr, Allison. "[In Support of Failure.](#)" *Composition Forum* 27 (2013). Web.

Carr seeks to build a pedagogy of feeling and failure. This draws initially on queer theorist Judith Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure*. Carr talks about failure as an "affect-bearing" concept that sticks with people and typecasts them as "failure." Because of this, "failure isolates" says Carr. She talks about her own home institution's language around failure as an example. Drawing on Trimbur and Brody, she also investigates both historical and gendered ideas of success and failure in writing. The relationship between failure and feeling as well as how failure can create shame come next. In this way, Carr advocates for failure to be a normal part of the writing and revision processes. She notes that "we continue to rely on a fairly conservative, product-oriented concept of creative and intellectual work." This concept encourages the stigmatizing of failure. Her goal here is not to "lift up" failure, Carr says, but rather to let us all "experience failure" as a necessary part of our process. She finally gives us some very useful pedagogical sketches of what failure-based assignments might look like (for example a "failure narrative").

Tags: Composition, Disciplinary

Cooper, Jan. "Queering the Contact Zone." *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 23-45. Print.

Cooper questions the adequacy of Mary Louise Pratt's metaphor of the "contact zone" and the literacy and pedagogical "arts" for composition courses and multicultural education. Drawing on queer theory and her experiences teaching LGBT-themed composition courses, Cooper analyzes the metaphor for its limitations in understanding classrooms and students. The metaphor of "contact," Cooper explains, can impersonalize and reify our students "as representatives of 'cultures'" (26), and the metaphor of "zone" implies a static geographic space that can ignore the context of particular places (25-26). Further, regarding sexuality, the notion of contact ignores how sexuality and identifications are "more like fluids or gases than solids" (27). As queer theory explains, identities are fluid and performative, not stable representations of cultures. The metaphor of contact zones risks a militarized understanding of classrooms as sites of contact between cultures instead of a place where ideas and identities are constructed and performed.

Tags: Composition, Identity, Pedagogy, Performativity



Present Tense

Cummings, Martha Clark. "Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You: Self-Disclosure and Lesbian and Gay Identity in the ESL Writing Classroom." *Journal of Basic Writing* 28.1 (2009): 71-89. Print.

Cummings discusses her own lesbian sexual orientation and her return from four closeted years in Japan as an English instructor. Back in the United States, she writes of her experiences coming out to her ESL students and the impetus it had for them to also share their own cross-cultural secrets and struggles. She then discusses her use of Peter Cameron's novel *Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You* with her students. This novel too deals with issues of sexual orientation and otherness. She concludes that "being pedagogically prepared to deal with issues of sexual orientation and homophobia, through the creation of lessons that critically engage students might make the experience of teaching this particular novel more relaxing for me and more enlightening for my students" (85-86).

Tags: Coming Out, Disciplinarity, Identity, Intersectionality, Pedagogy, Representation

Denny, Harry. "A Queer Eye for the WPA" *Writing Program Administration* 37.1 (2013): 186-198. Print.

Denny first notes the rise of the pop culture phenomenon of the television program *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* over a decade ago. Within this context, he asks writing program administrators to think about their usage of the terms: "normal," "performance," and "identity." Invoking Michael Warner and Michel Foucault, Denny notes that the rise of the positionality of "the homosexual" actually normalized this identity in binaristic relation to the unmarked heterosexual (188). Similarly, with the rise of the AIDS crisis, heterosexual society marked the LGBT community as abnormal and to teach a "moral lesson" (188). What then, Denny asks, does this mean for the way normal and abnormal play out in the writing center? For Denny, our spaces must not be something we have domain over and try to "fix others" within but rather we must ask: How can our spaces empower others (191)? "Questioning performance," Denny says, is vital for us in our writing centers and also in our classrooms to help students think about socio-cultural interrogation (193). We must ask ourselves what and whom we are making "normal" and move on from there.

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Pedagogy, Representation, Safe Spaces



Present Tense

Denny, Harry. "Queering the Writing Center." *The Writing Center Journal* 30.1 (2010): 95-124. Print.

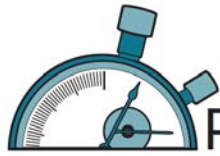
Denny notes that the writing center is a space where lore circulates and identity politics are strong. What does becoming a writer mean for other identities in a person's life? How do writing tutors figure into this as well? Talking (and writing) about LGBT issues is uncomfortable for many or most, Denny says, but this is something that tutors understand (writing and talking about difficult things). That said, writing centers are still rife with binaries and structure and queer theory can help to disrupt and interrogate these binaries and structures (97). But Denny warns that though queer theory has much to teach writing center studies, we must avoid identity politics that place epistemology in the position of offering "total knowledge or understanding" (98). Denny then draws on queer theory's concept of "passing" and how it operates as well in writing centers (for example, tutors with class or educational backgrounds that they can cloak in their positions). He then talks about the ways that the LGBT practice of "coming out" can be useful for writing center tutors to build bridges to students who come to the center. In this way, Denny's work here is more about what LGBT communities and queer theory can teach the writing center than it is about bringing explicitly LGBT content and queer theory more to the forefront of writing center daily operations.

Tags: Allies, Composition, Disciplinarity, Heteronormativity, Pedagogy, Representation

DiGrazia, Jennifer, and Michel Boucher. "Writing InQueeries: Bodies, Queer Theory, and an Experimental Writing Class." *Composition Studies* 33.2 (2005): 25-44. Print.

DiGrazia and Boucher take us through an experimental writing course that contained eleven LGBT students. A discussion from the course around the term "queer" as well as reflection on identity categories (through a Foucauldian lens) follows (28). Drawing from Britzman, the authors assert that queer theory has a potentially productive place in the writing classroom (29). They then take us through the specific course design that semester (including major projects and readings). Topics analyzed include who felt authorized to speak in class; how students struggled with positionality; how to introduce queer theory in the classroom; and how instructors use autobiography, place, and body. After presenting some of the students' work in the class, DiGrazia and Boucher conclude by asking how we can use queer theory to help us reach different levels of understandings about how our bodies are not only read but also internalized by each of us.

Tags: Bodies, Composition, Disciplinarity, Pedagogy, Politics, Representation



Present Tense

Garrett, Bre. "[A Responsibility for 'Thinking More Capaciously' about Composition: An Interview with Jonathan Alexander.](#)" *Composition Forum* 24 (2011). Web.

Garrett's 2011 interview of queer rhetorician and scholar Jonathan Alexander is presented here in full transcript as well as three recorded video clips. Garrett asks Alexander to focus first on his own background in Rhetoric and Composition Studies. Alexander explains his journey from comparative literature in the early 1990's into writing studies and his honing in on LGBT and queer rhetorics especially in digital environments. The conversation next focuses on the intersections of these strands within composition studies. Alexander notes that, in this field, we are often under pressure to help students adapt to multiple literacies and modalities, but that "what counts as writing" continues to be under scrutiny (especially in light of technology). For Alexander, this translates into a "wider range" of available materials and ways of composing and writing. Garrett and Alexander move into a discussion of the term "literacy" within the discipline. Alexander notes that for him, literacy is "a variety of different kinds of communicative practice, but I also recognize it has its limitations, and that it has limits." They then spend some time discussing Alexander's *Writing Across the Curriculum* and *Writing in the Disciplines* work in his current position. This, too, Alexander feels, meshes well with ideas of increasingly diverse modalities and technologies. They conclude with a discussion of Alexander's current work and the continuing effects of shifts in technologies and genres.

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Literacy, Visual Rhetoric

Gibson, Michelle, Martha Marinara, and Deborah Meem. "Bi, Butch, and Bar Dyke: Pedagogical Performances of Class, Gender, and Sexuality." *College Composition & Communication* 52.1 (2000): 69-95. Print.

Gibson, Marinara, and Meem discuss how power structures in the academy encourage certain strong characteristics and discourage complexity. Their goal is to "critique both the academy's tendency to neutralize the political aspects of identity performance and the essentialist identity politics that still inform many academic discussions of gender, class, and sexuality" (70). The authors take us through three stories, each about one of their identities. The first story about being bisexual deals with complicating fixed identities. The next narrative deals with the implications of a Butch body. Here, an interesting graph helps us to think about overlapping and concurrent identities. Lastly, one narrative tells of being a "bar dyke" and working as a writing teacher and waitress who is also a lesbian. This positionality is one that helps her relate to students who



Present Tense

may believe they have no place in the academic community. Ultimately these stories and positionalities, Gibson et al. write, is to serve the purpose of complicating ideas of Otherness in the academy.

Tags: Coming Out, Disciplinarity, Identity, Intersectionality, Representation

Gonçalves, Zan Meyer. *Sexuality and the Politics of Ethos in the Writing Classroom*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2005. Print.

Gonçalves shares the rhetorical practices of students in the Speaker's Bureau of the Stonewall Center, a University of Massachusetts at Amherst outreach program in which LGBT students and allies speak to classes and organizations in order to address heterosexism and homophobia on campus. Gonçalves especially analyzes their identity claims, using these students as models to argue for "a new way of thinking about ethos" in writing classes (xii). She understands ethos as situated identity performances that are shaped and informed by social discourses (xii-xiii). Gonçalves's approach to teaching writing involves placing identity at the center of composition courses, exploring how it is constructed and multiple. The student speakers she studied created identity claims in response to heterosexism and homophobia, as well as other discourses. In doing so, they were contesting representations of themselves, requiring them to understand and analyze discourses and position themselves rhetorically. Ethos, Gonçalves argues, can be used to shape audiences and build alliances. Additionally, the rhetorical work of consciously articulating identity and ethos can assist in transfer of rhetorical skills from one context to another.

Tags: Composition, Homophobia, Identity, Pedagogy

Goshert, John. "Reproductions of (Il)Literacy: Gay Cultural Knowledge and First-Year Composition Pedagogy." *Composition Studies* 36.1 (2008): 11-27. Print.

Using John Rechy's 1963 novel *City of Night*, Goshert examines how both cultural and disciplinary pressures in LGBT studies affect students' and scholars' "acquisition of critical literacies" (11). The novel centers on the gay underground of the 1950's and '60's. The key theme here for Rechy is that LGBT people become pressured (in Michael Warner's view) to reinforce and act out the very stereotypes that keep the culture of closetedness alive (16). "Complex and politically disruptive" narratives are avoided in the classroom and no change happens (17). Goshert then draws on David Bartholomae's idea of a disruptive pedagogy that unsettles students' desires to learn in familiar and comfortable ways.



Present Tense

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Histories, Pedagogy, Popular Culture, Politics, Representation

Howard, Rebecca Moore. "Sexuality, Textuality: The Cultural Work of Plagiarism." *College English* 62.4 (2000): 473-491. Print.

In this article, Howard calls on English studies to discard the term plagiarism altogether. For Howard, discourse around plagiarism implies sexual discourse as well, pointing to metaphors of "gender, weakness, collaboration, disease, adultery, rape, and property" that she says transmit a fear of crossing both textual and sexual boundaries (474). And yet, she asserts, as English teachers, we continue to expect and demand original work from our students though we do not theoretically believe it is possible for any work to be completely original. An argument is made that understandings and uses of the term plagiarism display the "worst sort of liberal-culture gatekeeping" that maintain "false distinctions between high and low literacy" (475). The gendered nature of authorship and links between sexual property and textual transgression are explored as ways that plagiarism enacts textual violence against writers and students. In the same way that Judith Butler calls on a new feminism that will contest "reifications of gender and identity," Howard calls on English instructors to reject metaphors of plagiarism in our classrooms and in textual spaces (485). Finally, she asks us to consider the terms fraud, citation, and repetition rather than plagiarism (488).

Tags: Gender, Identity, Literacy, Pedagogy, Violence

Hudson, John. "[Breaking the Silence: Toward Improving LGBTQ Representation in Composition Readers](#)." *Composition Forum* 29 (2014). Web.

Hudson makes a case for writing program administrator (WPA) stakes in LGBTQ representation in composition readers. Through his own research and surveying the research of others in the field, he first discusses statistical LGBTQ representation in composition readers from the 1970's through present day, finding little-to-no representation to start and then an increasing but still underwhelming amount even into recent times. He questions the message sent to LGBTQ students when representation is absent. Addressing publishing/publishers, he points out the ways that the reliance on the textbook has kept movement toward true representation. One helpful model he points out has been the custom reader. Drawing from Martha Marinara et al. in *Cruising Composition*, Hudson also encourages a move away from



Present Tense

simply centering representation on hot button issues or stagnant, defined identity categories and instead asks us to consider queering these practices and categories in the classroom. Coming out narratives are offered as one tool in this space. This type of narrative-based approach is one that teachers and WPAs can turn to rather than waiting for publishers (whom Hudson says we cannot depend upon to make change). He leaves us with a set of suggested resources (including bibliographies, lesson plans, FAQs, and internet links) that help us to consider how to continue to make LGBTQ representation a reality.

Tags: Composition, Homophobia, Pedagogy

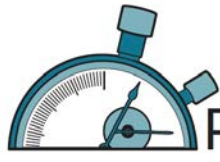
Kopelson, Karen. "Rhetoric on the Edge of Cunning: Or, the Performance of Neutrality (Re) Considered as Composition Pedagogy for Student Resistance." *College Composition & Communication* 55.1 (2003): 115-146. Print.

Kopelson argues that a politicized climate in the classroom may create resistance from students and inhibit true learning. She advocates for marginalized teachers to practice the neutral stance that students often expect. This is the rhetorically savvy and responsible thing to do because it enables students to engage with difference and minimizes difference (118). Kopelson points out that her advocacy here for neutrality does not spring from the liberal idea that all points-of-view are created equal but rather is a deliberate, reflective, self-conscious masquerade that serves an overarching and more insurgent political agenda than does humanist individualism. It is never a stance that believes in or celebrates its own legitimacy but, rather, feigns itself, perverts itself, in the service of other—disturbing and disruptive—goals (123). This is a Burkean "edge of cunning" argument for Kopelson (130). Cunning because it seems to have one purpose at its surface but really is an attempt to slyly achieve another purpose (ultimate acceptance of the marginalized teacher's positionality).

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Identity, Pedagogy, Representation

Kopelson, Karen L. "Tripping Over Our Tropes: Of 'Passing' and Postmodern Subjectivity—What's in a Metaphor?" *JAC* 25.3 (2005): 435-467. Print.

In an attempt to explore the tensions between postmodern theoretical work and actual practices in the classroom, Kopelson turns to an examination of Pamela Caughie's 1999 book *Passing and Pedagogy: The Dynamics of Responsibility*. Caughie argues that any act of writing is an act of "passing," temporarily claiming a stable position (437). Caughie uses the passing trope to attempt to make writing in classes a



Present Tense

place for subjectivity to emerge and students to work through positions (440). Kopelson interrogates Caughie's metaphor of passing for subjectivity, arguing that writing teachers and postmodern theorists need to develop metaphors that allow for and "embrace the notion of 'original' or 'prior' position" (439). Kopelson argues Caughie's metaphor of passing requires an "erasure that must obliterate the passing subject's ambiguity" and prior subject position (443). Further, historically, passing is available only for a few privileged individuals, and as an individual act, doesn't alter structural inequality (445). Kopelson argues that Caughie's work doesn't *reconfigure* passing, but rather "too faithfully repeats some of passing's original and most deleterious effects" (448). Kopelson proposes that perhaps a better metaphor than passing is incomplete passing, or drag, which as failed passing, or "not quite passing," relies on "*exposure*" (456). That is, drag or not quite passing calls attention to and makes visible "that 'something else' came *before* its enactment" (457). This metaphor, Kopelson argues, may be more useful for understanding subjectivity and writing, where students struggle through positions because it does not erase prior subject positions.

Tags: Composition, Drag, Passing, Pedagogy

Kopelson, Karen. "Queering the Writing Program: Why Now? How? And Other Contentious Questions." *Writing Program Administration* 37.1 (2013): 199-213.

Kopelson draws on Sarah Ahmed's concept of "queer pessimism" (199) in critiquing a WPA call that invites scholars to "give voice to 'what we cannot bear to know'" (199, qting. Winans). By employing this pessimism, Kopelson asserts that, like Ahmed, she will point to an unknown "Other way" forward that's not yet been hypothesized (199). Taking us then through literature over the last 20 years, Kopelson asks whether queer theory has run its course. Moving on to rhetoric and composition, she cites Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes' idea that the "queer turn" in Rhetoric and composition never actually happened (200). How can we queer the writing program, Kopelson wonders, if the party is over or never even happened? Kopelson is concerned here with the "normalization" of queer and the rise of homonormativity (202). Perhaps, as Alexander and William Banks, assert, Kopelson wonders if queer actually has nothing to say to WPA work and that, because the very idea of a program is normative, that what queer suggests is outside of the WPA altogether (204). We may want to ultimately ask why we even want to queer the writing program at all.

Tags: Allies, Composition, Disciplinarity, Pedagogy, Representation

Marinara, Martha. "Engaging Queerness and Contact Zones, Reimagining Writing Difference." *Writing Program Administration* 36.1 (2012): 200-204. Print.

As part of a colloquium on the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) Outcomes Statement, Marinara argues for queering first-year composition. She critiques approaches to diversity that rely on tolerance because tolerance "strives for sameness" (202). She turns to Mary Louise Pratt's often-used concept of the "contact zone" to further critique uncritical multiculturalism, explaining that Pratt's concept is not about safety or tolerance. Her concept, Marinara contends, has been "appropriated by an uncritical, liberal multiculturalist movement" that has domesticated its use to attend to power asymmetries (202). To Marinara, queerness is a performance of questioning and challenging assumptions and norms, and she suggests that the CWPA Outcomes Statement is limited in that it understands "difference as a definition, rather than a critical process that promotes a fuller notion of identity" (204).

Tags: Composition, Pedagogy, Tolerance

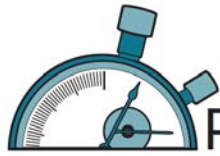
McBeth, Mark. "(Un)Standard Deviations: Observing Diversity/Enabling Divergence." *Writing Program Administration* 33.3 (2010): 129-134. Print.

McBeth's essay is a response to Jonathan Alexander's "Literacy and Diversity: A Provocation." In it, he recounts his experiences teaching a themed writing course titled "What is Normal?: Exploring the Weird, the Wacky, the Queer, and the Quirky." In this course, students explored "discourses of othering" (129, quoting Alexander), normalizing discourses and structures, and their own non-normativity. McBeth explains that his "students soon realized that as humans if we shared anything, we shared the 'substantive discomfort' of feeling outside the norm" (131). McBeth closes by calling for the Conference on College Composition and Communication to re-think diversity to invite and include more underrepresented voices (133).

Tags: Composition, Pedagogy

Mitchell, Danielle. "I Thought Composition Was about Commas and Quotes, Not Queers: Diversity and Campus Change at a Rural Two-Year College." *Composition Studies* 36.2 (2008): 23-50. Print.

Mitchell points out how widespread heterosexist speech still is among students and notes that often first year writing instructors must not only take on the task of



Present Tense

teaching writing but also help students navigate the “zone of cultural contact” (23). In this piece, Mitchell seeks to show how “curricular, administrative, and cultural forces that collectively produce a campus climate” (24). She shares with us her own experiences in a first year composition classroom as it related to cultural awareness and LGBT issues, namely the ways she’s encouraged students to move beyond rhetorical analysis and into ideological analysis. She walks us through examples of students feeling tension, discussion, and even a student walking out on her. Ultimately writing courses are often some of the smallest, most accessible courses rural students may have and Mitchell calls on us to engage them there even when it seems difficult or daunting.

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Pedagogy, Popular Culture, Politics, Representation

Monson, Connie, and Jacqueline Rhodes. “Risking Queer: Pedagogy, Performativity, and Desire in Writing Classrooms.” *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 79-91. Print.

Monson and Rhodes draw on queer theory, especially Michel Foucault, to critique composition pedagogy, arguing that composition courses are sites of disciplining desire and shaping subjectivity, making them already sites of sex and sexuality—even if, or especially as, that sexuality is disciplined and made normative or invisible. They advocate the importance of “interrogating and disrupting regimes of subjectivity and sexuality” in writing courses (79). Critiquing the “fictionalizing stability” (87) and “confessional duty” (80) of the desire and construction of authentic voices from students in liberatory composition pedagogy, Monson and Rhodes call for a queer pedagogy that involves carnivalesque performances of multiple personae and risk taking by both students and teachers.

Tags: Composition, Confessional Desire, Pedagogy

Nelson, Cynthia D. *Sexual Identities in English Language Education: Classroom Conversations*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.

Reporting on interviews and focus groups with over 100 English language teachers and learners, as well as classroom observations, Nelson explores the challenges and opportunities of teaching LGBT themes in English language classes. Her goal is to provide “informed guidance” through “macrostrategies” to teachers (ix, 206). Through interweaving her qualitative research with queer theory, Nelson challenges teachers of English language learners to approach sexuality in the classroom as an issue of language and culture, using inquiry into heteronormativity as opposed to a civil rights



Present Tense

approach (66). This means, in part, exploring assumptions behind homophobia comments in class and tracing the effects of oppressive power relations rather than ban homophobia outright (88-90). Understanding sexuality as an aspect of language and culture allows students and teachers to focus on contexts, assumptions, “the *process of identity negotiation*,” and the consequences of language, rather than reify identities as concrete and naturalized (119). She also encourages teachers to understand that classrooms are already multisexual and to critique and challenge heteronormative structures and thinking in classrooms, teaching resources and research, and institutions (44, 216-218).

Tags: Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Pedagogy

Pauliny, Tara. [“Queering the Institution: Politics and Power in the Assistant Professor Administrator Position.”](#) *Enculturation* 10 (2011). Web.

Pauliny begins by defining queer as a disruptive force in the academy. From here, she asserts that the WPA and the idea of queer do actually share much in common. She notes that often WPA’s are pre-tenured or untenured within the academy and that as an administrator, the WPA is both “authorized and de-authorized” within the academy (paragraph 2). This space can be embraced as full of possibility rather than fraught with peril, Pauliny argues. Drawing on Banks and Alexander, Pauliny points out that the assistant professor administrator in the WPA position (APA) is either a “ruler or a victim” and exists within multiple nodes of power (paragraph 3). The APA, Pauliny says, is in a key position to “upset institutional norms and perform a queer intervention” (paragraph 3). Employing a queer lens, Pauliny then takes us through the rhetoric around the APA’s positionality. She is particularly interested in the “two sites of powerlessness” that she describes as: “the overworked, underappreciated APA and that of the at-risk queer in a heteronormative society” (paragraph 14). She shares both classroom and administrative stories/examples of her own that show these sites at work and how she worked within them and to overcome them. “When queer is thus understood not only as an identity mis/designation or a political descriptor, but also as an analytic methodology” (paragraph 29), Pauliny says, it will then have the ability to take on dominant ideologies and normative, repressing structures and organizations. These are the conditions that already exist for the APA, she says. Whether queer or not, Pauliny notes that a queer theory approach for the APA can afford these things and change the profession and the field.

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Identity, Intersectionality, Pedagogy, Representation



Present Tense

Rhodes, Jacqueline, ed. "[Sexualities, Technologies, and Literacies: Metonymy and Materiality Online.](#)" Spec. Issue. *Computers and Composition Online* (Fall 2004). Web.

This special issue edited by Jacqueline Rhodes includes six web-based pieces. In "Contending Cartographies of Rhetoric: Mapping Legato (Project) and the Turkish Queer College Students' 'Coming to Rhetoric' Through the Internet," Serkan Gorkemli explains his own involvement in an LGBT Turkish group and discusses space and distance and the role of (digital) media as it relates to the Turkish queer experience. In Angela Asbell's "The Birth of *Bitch King*: Zine of the Vulva-lution!," she takes us through the creation of the first issue of the zine as well as exploring the term "bitch king." Next, Marshall Kitchens and Lindsey Larkin's "The Trans-gendered & Transgressive Student: Rhetoric & Identity in Trans-Queer Ethnography" offers both student and teacher perspectives (as well as resources) on transgender identity in the field. Brian Houle, Alex Kimball, and Heidi McKee's "'Boy? Girl? You Decide': Multimodal Web Composition and a Mythography of Identity" explores Alex's experiences as a transgender student in a course taught by Houle and McKee. In "Composition Studies, Heteronormativity, and Popular Culture," Thomas Peele shows the heteronormative bent in Composition Studies through the lens of popular culture (such as *Friends* and *Will & Grace*). Lastly, "Queerness, Sexuality, Technology, and Writing: How Do Queers Write Ourselves When We Write in Cyberspace?" by Jonathan Alexander, Barclay Barrios, Samantha Blackmon, Angela Crow, Keith Dorwick, Jacqueline Rhodes, and Randal Woodland, transcribes a conversation about queered digital writing that takes place in a multi-user dimension (MOO).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Coming Out, Digital, Disciplinarity, Heteronormativity, Identity, Intersectionality, Lesbian, Pedagogy, Representation, Visual Rhetoric

Rhodes, Jacqueline. "Who Are We? What Do We Become? A Response to Jonathan Alexander." *Writing Program Administration* 33.3 (2010): 125-129. Print.

In her response to Jonathan Alexander's "Literacy and Diversity: A Provocation," Rhodes argues that the field's "composure" "reifies boundaries—of writing, of identity, of our professional and administrative work" (124). She suggests that queering composition means pushing and exceeding these boundaries. She provides an example of the boundary work of composition: In 2009, the Writing Program Administrators listserv discussed an attempt to dismiss queer theory scholars at Georgia State University. Many members of the listserv rushed to describe this as a case of "academic freedom" (126). Rhodes contends that this framing, this boundary work, too quickly ignores and makes invisible the anti-queer homophobia behind the



Present Tense

attempted dismissal (126-127). Rhodes advocates critiquing our field's strategies, knowledge, and boundaries, and challenging the differences between the theories the discipline claims to have and the theories we actually employ in practice (128).

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Representation

Roberts-Miller, Trish. "Discursive Conflict in Communities and Classrooms." *College Composition & Communication* 54.4 (2003): 536-557. Print.

Roberts-Miller argues that the concept of "communities of discourse," while well meaning, can serve as an excuse to allow marginalization to occur. This term is used by most to promote inclusivity but the use of a catch-all term can actually lead to ignoring discursive conflict and the pressures of "consensus and conformity" (536). Roberts-Miller shares examples of this, one of which involves a homophobic student. She warns us against protecting classroom civility at all costs when core values and student positionalities are harmed (537). Drawing on John Trimbur, Joseph Harris, and Susan Jarratt, she notes that compositionists have historically avoided conflict. This must change for students' sake, she says. She asserts that both listening and arguing need to be privileged and increased in classrooms and public spaces, and warns us against mistaking progressivism and lively discussion for actually learning about difference.

Tags: Composition, Disciplinarity, Identity, Pedagogy, Representation

Smith, Lauren. "Staging the Self: Queer Theory in the Composition Classroom." *Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality*. Ed. Calvin Thomas. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000. 68-85. Print.

Postmodern critiques have charged expressivism and personal writing in composition classes as apolitical and hyper-individualistic (69-70). Against these critiques, Smith argues that queer theory can help to resurrect the political efficacy of personal writing in composition classes. Smith turns to Judith Butler and Diana Fuss, both of whom argue that coming out of the closet does not reveal an already known self; rather, as a performative act, coming out constructs the self (73). Smith relates this to personal writing: Personal narratives are a "revelation of *self*"—a coming out of sorts (73). To explore the potential for personal writing in composition courses, she uses Butler's discussion of drag and camp as an analogy. A drag queen performs her identity self-consciously and "wears his mask as a mask," whereas a typical writer who un-self-consciously tells a narrative believes they are sharing their authentic, true self (76).



Present Tense

Drag is a personal narrative, Smith suggests, that “is a dramatization of self that is aware of (it)self *as drama*” (76). Personal writing can also be “profoundly critical of the social dynamics that bring it into being” (76) and thus does not have to be privatizing, apolitical, and hyper-individualistic. Personal writing can be social, critical, and self-conscious of itself as a political performance, and teachers can foster this sort of personal writing through effective writing assignments and being “out” about their own motivations and desires (79-83).

Tags: Composition, Confessional, Drag, Pedagogy, Performativity

Wallace, David L. *Compelled to Write: Alternative Rhetoric in Theory and Practice*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2011. Print.

Taking an intersectional understanding to identity, informed in part by queer theory, Wallace argues that the discipline of rhetoric and composition needs to take seriously oppression and privilege in order to address societal inequalities. This process involves the deployment of what Wallace calls “alternative rhetorics,” or those rhetorics that make one’s subjectivity and position within discourse and power visible (5) with the goal of resisting oppression. Wallace believes that rhetoric and composition has not done enough to address “our complicity in maintaining” the status quo and marginalizing discourses (8), and argues that alternative rhetorics need to be taught and explored in rhetoric and composition courses in order to provide students with tools to address “discourses of power” (19). In order to explore the tactics and aspects of alternative rhetoric, Wallace devotes a chapter each to Sarah Grimké, Frederick Douglas, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Sedaris. Wallace’s conclusion argues that we should treat composition courses as introduction to authorship courses.

Tags: Composition, Identity, Gender, Pedagogy, Race

Wallace, David L. “Out in the Academy: Heterosexism, Invisibility, and Double Consciousness.” *Lesbian and Gay Studies/Queer Pedagogies*. Spec. issue of *College English* 65.1 (2002): 53-66. Print.

Wallace starts from Butler’s idea of performativity to build a case for increased accountability and visibility for LGBT issues in the academy. He first calls us to push at heteronormative situations in the academy and to call them out as heterosexist. He then pushes us to consider the idea that coming out and visibility for LGBT people helps to change minds and diffuse heterosexism. Lastly, Wallace takes us through the concept of double consciousness. That is, as LGBT persons we are prone to ask and



Present Tense

understand how heterosexuals see and operate in the world but rarely, if ever, ask heterosexuals to consider how we as queer persons see the world (or a situation). For Wallace, these important concepts are to be thought of even in what he calls “mundane” circumstances (like emailing with or meeting administrators) in order to affect change (65).

Tags: Coming Out, Disciplinarity, Heteronormativity, Identity, Intersectionality, Representation

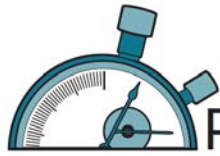
Wallace, David L., and Jonathan Alexander. “Queer Rhetorical Agency: Questioning Narratives of Heteronormativity.” *JAC* 29.4 (2009): 793-819. Print.

Alexander and Wallace argue that, while necessary, addressing homophobia in the classroom is a limited approach; scholars and teachers in rhetoric and composition need to address heteronormativity and how it is maintained. They propose approaching heteronormativity rhetorically, understanding it as a set of discourses that privileges heterosexuality and the nuclear family. Alexander and Wallace also argue that queer theory can nuance and advance our understandings of literate and rhetorical agency. They critique progressive theories of rhetorical agency for failing to take into account the needs of LGBTQ students and not addressing critiques of agency from queer theorists (796). Theories of rhetorical agency have been heteronormative, they contend, and queering rhetorical agency reveals “how agency in our culture is heterosexualized” and how heterosexism constrains queer agency and limits possibilities for queer lives (806). Queer rhetorical agency, they explain, exposes and challenges heteronormative privilege, understands that intent is not necessary for participating in heterosexism, and challenges shallow approaches of inclusion that still support heterosexism (811-814).

Tags: Agency, Composition, Heteronormativity, Literacy, Pedagogy

Winans, Amy E. “Queering Pedagogy in the English Classroom: Engaging with the Places Where Thinking Stops.” *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 6.1 (2006): 103-122. Print.

Winans notes that while discussions around gender, race, and class continue to increase in the literature and writing classroom, conversations around sexual orientation have been largely absent despite a growing presence in news and pop culture conversations. She notes that she does not want to simply add sexual orientation to a laundry list of diversity oriented topics in the classroom but rather



Present Tense

wants to explore the tensions that exist around this topic and ask why it has often been silenced. She draws on Audre Lorde (103-104) to point to how we can help students find new words and emerge from these silences. She calls on queer theoretical understandings (drawing on David Halperin) of decentering as potential classroom practices and to “interrogate geographies of normalization” (110). She then takes us through her own students’ examples of writing to the prompt of “analyze how aspects of campus culture encourage or place positive value on heterosexuality” (111). All of this encourages students to understand and question/challenge their discursive affiliations and from that place, Winans encourages them to explore tensions and conflicts. For her, this is the beginning of a queer pedagogy that pushes students “beyond where thinking stops” (118).

Tags: Composition, Identity, Pedagogy

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 5. History, Archives, and Memory

Alexander, Jonathan, and Jacqueline Rhodes. [“Queer Rhetoric and the Pleasures of the Archive.”](#) *Enculturation* 13 (2012). Web.

Alexander and Rhodes’s webtext takes up the issues of defining queer rhetoric and offer a (mini) counter-archive for queer rhetorical practices. They seek to disidentify from/against Aristotelian notions of ethos, pathos, and logos. They assert that these notions have been used in ways historically that are “heteronormative or incommensurate with seeing and honoring non-normative sexual expression.” Drawing on José Esteban Muñoz’s concept of disidentification, they take us through YouTube videos, links to queer archival work, and side stories that look at Oscar Wilde and Walt Whitman. They then move into a discussion of the ways the archive is technologized, as digital spaces (like YouTube) offer queered opportunities to build humor and multiple voices. They also look at the pedagogical implications of the queer archive, noting Jack Halberstam’s observation that archives are not “simply a project just for scholars and academics, but also for a wide array of ‘cultural producers,’ of those actively involved in the production and dissemination of information and data points that become part of the larger cloud of potential meaning making.” They refer back to Alexander and David Wallace’s noting of the “queer turn” in composition studies in “The Queer Turn in Composition Studies,” but ask, since queer coverage of work in the field has continued to be spotty, what a serious engagement of queer would look like. Here, they draw on Michel Foucault’s concept of genealogy, tracing histories. Alexander and Rhodes then take us through a re-imagining/response to logos, pathos, and ethos from a queer perspective. They finish by asking, “Once queer subjects begin to speak . . . With what do they speak?” They assert that the “queer tongue, long denied its utterances, long disciplined by legislation and normalization, long in the making of critique and the construction of queer identities, of queer particularities, of queer taste” also contains our LGBT histories and possibilities.

Tags: Archives, Collective Identity, Digital, Media, Pedagogy, Representation

Bessette, Jean. “An Archive of Anecdotes: Raising Lesbian Consciousness after the Daughters of Bilitis.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43.1 (2013): 22-45. Print.

Bessette argues that Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon’s 1972 *Lesbian/Women*, a collection of letters between the women and other lesbians in the 1950s and ’60s, serves as an archive that acts rhetorically for readers “as a communal and identificatory resource” (23). As co-founders of the activist group Daughters of Bilitis (1956-1970), Martin and



Present Tense

Lyon collected anecdotes, organizing the collection according to conservative, middle class values. While the contents of the collection are not queer in an anti-normative way, Bessette contends that Martin and Lyon's act of archiving is queer (28). Understanding *Lesbian/Women* as a collection of anecdotal ephemera, Bessette argues that the collection is interventionist against public records and misinformation about lesbians, engaging in consciousness raising for readers who might not have access to lesbian public spaces or pro-gay research (30). Because the archive allowed for identification through the anecdotes, it was able to collectivize, rather than individualize, trauma and pain, as well as counter homophobic narratives about lesbians. Bessette closes by exploring the limits of identification for some readers of *Lesbian/Women* who were not gender or middle class conforming.

Tags: Activism, Archives, Daughters of Bilitis, Lesbian

Duberman, Martin. *Left Out: The Politics of Exclusion/Essays/1964-2002*. Cambridge, MA: South End P, 2002. Print.

This collection spans over four decades of activist and scholar/historian Duberman's essays. These works take on historiography and ask us to rethink our histories. The three sections of the volume examine histories of oppression, sites of resistance, and new responses to ongoing prejudices, race, gender and sexuality, and foreign policy (looking at the Vietnam conflict, US/Cuban relations, and the first Gulf War and American ideals of "economic determinism"). The volume begins with pieces written in the 1960s and '70s that examine the issue of slavery in the 19th century US. By looking at Northern responses to slavery in the 1800s, Duberman examines a resistance to dealing directly with social problems in American history and character. And in "The Latest Word on Slavery in the United States" (published in 1974), he takes to task modern historical revisionist chronicles of slavery.

In the gender and sexuality section, four pieces deal with topics from modern understandings of same-sex relationships in the 1800s, to the work of Dr. first name Kinsey and Donald Webster Cory and their place in LGBT histories, as well as a critique of William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson's work on homosexuality in the late '70s. Throughout, a continual theme of dominant heterosexist revisionist histories where LGBT voices are silenced or left out emerges again and again.

In the sites of resistance section, Duberman's essays take up the black struggle in America including debates on "moderation versus militancy" and the black power movement in the perspective of American radical tradition. Radicalism on American college campuses and the "dissenting academy" in American higher education are



Present Tense

taken up. The rise of “pedantry, neutralism, and careerism” he writes, threaten to drown out knowledge making, compassion, and social consciousness. But ultimately, he sees the academy’s contradictions, shortcomings, and failures are also the corruptions of our larger society (194). Radicalism among youth and the campus climates of the ‘60’s and ‘70’s figure prominently as does a critique of the multicultural curriculum. “Melting pot celebrants,” he writes, “fail to recognize the complexity” of American history and heterogeneity (259).

Duberman takes on several issues around the emerging gay and feminist movements in America. The author examines the relationship between the gay movement and academia, the National Gay Task Force, issues of sexuality in the military, and the late ‘70’s Anita Bryant anti-gay publicity, as well as an important piece from the early 80’s on racism in gay male culture. The LGBT movement “radical at its inception, has today lost courage,” Duberman states (348). Lobbyists, assimilationists, and traditional politics mean that non-white voices are shut out of our movement. Finally, taking us into the 1990’s, Duberman writes about the new (and contested) history of gays and lesbians. Here, he interrogates essentialist categories of “gay” and “lesbian” and asserts that homosexual activity is not the same as homosexual subculture (397). A final piece in the volume looks at the political Left’s schism between identity-based politics and class-based politics. We know that the patriarchy is white and heterosexual, Duberman writes, but sadly, now we see that many in the political Left bring these racist and heterosexist identities and values into leftist politics.

Tags: Activism, Agency, Class, Counterpublics, Feminism, Gay Rights, Politics, Race, Violence, Visibility

Dunn, Thomas R. “‘The Quare in the Square’: Queer Memory, Sensibilities, and Oscar Wilde.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100.2 (2014): 213-240. Print.

Dunn observes that Oscar Wilde has served as a site of queer memory work for more than a century, but that Wilde does not resonate with queer youth as he once did. In order to reanimate Wilde’s memory, Dunn turns to an analysis of Danny Osborne’s *Oscar Wilde* monument in Dublin, Ireland. Dunn argues that the monument reframes Wilde’s memory: Instead of remembering him as a gay man, the monument remembers his “*proto-queer sensibility*” (216). The monument challenges predominant memory of Wilde, troubling the idea that he had a static, gay identity, and promotes Wilde’s “penchant for embracing a distinctive, anti-establishment, playful, and disruptive lifestyle” (224). This re-remembering, Dunn argues, may make Wilde resonate more with contemporary queer audiences. Dunn’s analysis has two larger implications. First, queer memory studies should approach anachronisms not with



Present Tense

correction, but in context to understand their usefulness and harms. Second, the boundaries of queerness in rhetorical scholarship should be pushed to not just include sexuality, but to explore broader potentials for queering rhetoric.

Tags: Age, Identity, Memory

Dunn, Thomas R. "Remembering 'A Great Fag': Visualizing Public Memory and the Construction of Queer Space." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97.4 (2011): 435-460. Print.

Dunn examines various interpretations and understandings of the statue of Alexander Wood in Toronto. In the early nineteenth century, Wood had been forced out of Toronto (then York) because of a scandal and suspicions of homosexuality, and now has become memorialized as part of official memory in Toronto. Dunn analyzes three interpretations of the Wood statue:

- the official democratic memory (intended and sanctioned by the creators and the city) that makes Wood a "safe" homosexual for the public (442-443) and sees the Wood statue as an important part of making a gay past visible in order to gain recognition and make the city a safe space for gays and lesbians;
- the traditionalist (anti-gay) countermemory that argues that Wood cannot be verified as gay, but was instead a criminal who should not be memorialized; and
- the camp countermemory performed by radical queers who challenge the rigid normative (white, masculine, wealthy) identity presented by the statue and attempt to alter the memory of Wood through graffiti and decorations and dressing the statue in drag.

Dunn concludes by suggesting that "certain *structural* forms of materiality" like the Wood statue can assist in combating the erasure of queer memory and history, but that queers must also rely on non-sanctioned material practices to memorialize the past, particularly "the radical edges of queer public memories" that official memories often "dull (let alone eradicate)" (453).

Tags: Collective Identity, Materiality, Memory, Camp

Dunn, Thomas R. "Remembering Matthew Shepard: Violence, Identity, and Queer Counterpublic Memories." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13.4 (2010): 611-652. Print.

Dunn analyzes public and counterpublic discourses that remember Matthew Shepard's murder, arguing that LGBTQ communities have strategically remembered



Present Tense

Shepard. Dunn outlines three frames of memory work for LGBT publics and counterpublics: Shepard 1) as victim, 2) as Secular Saint, and 3) as Common Man. Each of these frames of remembrance are also contested or challenged, either between mainstream publics and LGBT counterpublics, or between queer counterpublics themselves. Dunn shows how this memory work was used for strategic action and to provide alternative understandings and meanings to the murder, which helped advanced arguments about gay and lesbian identities. Importantly, Dunn shows how the public/counterpublic dialectic simplifies the complexity of contests over public memory, as memory work is contested within and between counterpublics.

Tags: Counterpublics, Memory, Publics, Violence

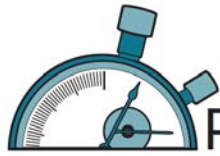
Goss, Robert E. "Silencing Queers at the Upstairs Lounge: The Stonewall of New Orleans." *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 269-277. Print.

Goss recounts the story of the arson hate crime at the Upstairs Lounge in New Orleans in 1973. Known as "the Stonewall of the South," the fire took 32 lives, many of them gay Christian men who attended the Metropolitan Community Church. Goss indicts a variety of institutions for their subsequent homophobic silence after the mass murder, arguing that this silence was lethal violence (271). Police investigation was minimal, the media maligned and mocked the bar and its clients, other churches responded with silence, and gay business owners renounced activists who tried to call attention to the tragedy (271-273). However, Goss also recounts the efforts of activists like Reverend Tony Perry, who organized religious mourning and memorial services that laid the ground for the arson to be remembered to this day, in the form of memorial marches and conferences (274-275).

Tags: Homophobia, Memory, Religion, Regionalism, Violence

John Q [Wesley Chenault, Andy Ditzler, and Joey Orr]. "The Campaign for Atlanta: An Act of Research." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.2 (2014): 15-37. Print.

Chenault, Ditzler, and Orr write as "John Q," "an idea collective of artists, archivists, and curators" (15). They share the research process in creating *The Campaign for Atlanta: An Essay on Queer Migration*, a 2013 public event held at the Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum. This event involved the co-mingling of Civil War histories with archival material of Crawford Barton's photographs and home videos. Barton, born in rural Georgia, migrated to Atlanta and then San Francisco in the 1970s, creating movies of



Present Tense

his migration. Chenault, Ditzler, and Orr use their experience creating and deploying *The Campaign for Atlanta* to explore various issues related to place, migration, performance, technologies, histories, and archives. They write, “John Q’s public acts of research may offer innovative uses for archival memories and even suggest new models for how meaning can be created in expanded contexts” (18). They advocate deploying archival material in new and innovative ways in public forums to link archival scholarship to the public.

Tags: Archives, Histories, Publics, Regionalism

Lynch, John. “Memory and Matthew Shepard: Opposing Expressions of Public Memory in Television Movies.” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 31.3 (2007): 222-238. Print.

Lynch examines two 2002 television movies that represent the Matthew Shepard murder—NBC’s *The Matthew Shepard Story* and HBO’s *The Laramie Project*—for how they shape public memory. Lynch argues that public memory of gays and lesbians has traditionally remembered them as problems to be solved by heterosexuality (225). Because public memory is shaped through social texts, Lynch contends that genre shapes public memory. As a movie-of-the-week, *The Matthew Shepard Story* continues the tradition of portraying gays as victims and problems, reinforcing heteronormativity (227-229). On the other hand, Lynch shows how *The Laramie Project* provides an “alternative public memory” (230) by troubling conventional representations of Shepard, portraying a gay and lesbian community, and placing the blame of the hate crime on heteronormativity (230-235).

Tags: Media, Memory, Popular Culture, Violence

Morris, Charles E., III. “Archival Queer.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9.1 (2006): 145-151. Print.

Morris argues that archives are ideological, political, and rhetorical sites, especially when it comes to queer or potentially queer holdings. Queer inquiries are often difficult, sometimes because of categories in search aids (that only label “confirmed” queers as such) or the lack of indexes—or even subtly or explicitly hostile environments. Because of the silences on queer issues from archives and the doubts about queer epistemologies from colleagues, queer scholars must become what Morris calls “archival queers,” drawing on their rhetorical knowledge to navigate archives and deploy evidence for queer scholarship (147). This activity involves “queer movement,” the “restless” movement through space and time to make new meanings, challenge normativity, and theorize from archival materials (147-148). Morris calls for



Present Tense

readers to be archival queers, both to advance disciplinary pursuits of LGBTQ rhetorical studies, and to circulate these rhetorical histories outside of the discipline.

Tags: Archives, Disciplinarity, Histories

Morris, Charles E., III. "Hard Evidence: The Vexations of Lincoln's Queer Corpus." *Rhetoric, Materiality, and Politics*. Eds. Barbara Biesecker and John Lucaites. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 185-213. Print.

Morris examines C. A. Tripp's *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln*, in which the historian argues that Lincoln was gay, and responds to the book, in order to explore the dynamics between historical evidence, desire, and the materialization of evidence. Morris argues that Lincoln's "vexing corpus" (185) provides an opportunity "for a queer refiguring of our understanding of the past" (186). He proposes a paradigm shift from positivism and adjudicating facts to a queer reading of history, one motivated explicitly by desire (203-204). Through his analysis, Morris shows how both readings of Lincoln as gay and readings of Lincoln as straight rely on positivist beliefs about historical facts. These histories also often obfuscate the processes of interpreting historical material (187). However, heteronormative critiques of arguments for a gay Lincoln raise the bar of evidentiary validity, rejecting evidence of homosexuality as "immaterial, insufficient, and ideological" while leaving their own heterosexual investments unmarked (188). Morris's analysis of "the rhetoric of evidence" (189) shows that "the game is rigged" because we do not attend to motivations and desires behind the deployment of evidence (190): Heterosexual readings of Lincoln are as motivated by desire as gay readings, but are more persuasive to many because evidence is taken as self-evident, queer motivations are questioned as ideological, heterosexual motivations are made invisible, and heterosexual historians argue through their own ethos (194-201). Evidence, Morris argues, doesn't really determine the truth of Lincoln's sexuality; rather, it reveals the "materialization of desire to determine a *particular truth*" (195).

Tags: Archives, Desire, Heteronormativity, Histories, Secrets, Silence

Morris, Charles E., III, ed. *Remembering the AIDS Quilt*. East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2011. Print.

Originally a special issue of *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, this collection commemorates and reflects on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the NAMES Project's AIDS Quilt in 2012. The collection opens with a prologue from Cleve Jones, founder of the AIDS Quilt, who



Present Tense

describes the genesis of the project. Editor Morris argues that it is important to remember the Quilt, placing it in historical context and summarizing critiques of the Quilt, as well as stressing its message “that human life is sacred” (xlv). He reflects on the political potential of the quilt for countermemory and understands the Quilt as an archive that works rhetorically.

Contributors to the collection situate the quilt in a variety of personal, political, and national contexts, arguing about the rhetoric and political effects of the AIDS Quilt. Carole Blaire and Neil Michel, for instance, situate the Quilt in context of the Vietnam Memorial as a new sort of public commemoration that has the potential to democratize public memory and recognize groups that have historically been under-represented. Gust A. Yep explores the memorialization of HIV/AIDS through an analysis of the film *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*. Other contributors take an experimental approach, honoring and mimicking the Quilt’s pastiche nature through multi-vocal collage essays. Jeffrey A. Bennett’s contribution explores how the quilt produces “a performative repertoire of civic belonging” (135) where participants are active contributors in emotional meaning-making and creating stranger-relations.

Using lenses of mobility studies, Daniel C. Brouwer explores the relocation of the Quilt from San Francisco to Atlanta, exploring the tensions between the quilt’s efficacy under “promiscuous mobility” (165) and the desires for a homeland for the Quilt. Erin J. Rand explores the question of what it means to “commemorate a memorial” (229). “This double commemoration” (229), she cautions, has risks, as the AIDS quilt possibly creates gay men as “mourned subjects,” incorporating them into the citizenship in fairly limited, “not self-fashioned” ways (230); she turns to the potentials for anger and aggression, exemplified through ACT UP, for different modes of subjectivity and recognition. Morris closes the collection by stressing the need for rhetorical scholars to continue and broaden explorations of materiality, affect, relationships between memory and activism, and critics’ own presence through “greater ethnographic commitment, a commitment to oral history, and our presence as participant observers” (302).

Tags: Activism, Affect, ACT UP, HIV/AIDS, Materiality, Memory

Morris, Charles E., III. “Richard Halliburton’s Bearded Tales.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95.2 (2009): 123-147. Print.

Morris analyzes adventure-writer Richard Halliburton’s 1925 travel tale *The Royal Road to Romance* in order to theorize a particular form of passing as straight—the use of beards, or “proximate, apparitional straight pretexts” (125)—in conjunction with “tall



Present Tense

tales." Halliburton's massive "heteronormative ethos" with readers depended upon his "closet eloquence," or his ability to pass using tall tales (125). Morris explores the rhetoricity of these tall tales and how they could simultaneously dupe heterosexual fans and reveal his queerness to those who could identify queer allusions. Morris closes by stressing that rhetorical scholars should understand archives as rhetorical, that "passing theory" is necessarily genealogical work, that queer approaches are useful for rhetorical studies broadly, and that these uses have not yet been realized (141).

Tags: Archives, Closet, Heteronormativity, Histories, Passing, Silence

Morris, Charles E., III. "Sexuality and Public Address: Rhetorical Pasts, Queer Theory, and Abraham Lincoln." *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address*. Eds. Shawn Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 398-421. Print.

Morris notes that the "queer turn" in rhetorical studies is a full two decades in development, yet has been ignored by many in the field (399). In response, Morris explores various queer trajectories in queer theory related to archival queers, historicism, and historiography in order to stimulate future inquiry in rhetorical studies. Morris explains that "archival queers" do not simply attempt to recover forgotten LGBTQ rhetors, but rather queer the archives and investigate in ways "akin to promiscuity" (400). He maps out approaches to historicism, including exploring historical silences, affective histories, and deviant historiographies (400-404). These approaches, Morris claims, provide ways to conceptualize, and thus to critique, dominant and non-dominant understandings of time, history, and memory, and provide tools for resisting heteronormativity (405). To provide an example of how these approaches work to queer the field, Morris discusses his attempts to queer Abraham Lincoln.

Tags: Affect, Archives, Histories, Public Address, Silence

Morris, Charles E., III, et al. "Forum: Remembering AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) 1987-2012 and Beyond." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98.1 (2012): 49-108. Print.

Morris, Charles E., III. "ACT UP 25: HIV/AIDS, Archival Queers, and Mnemonic World Making." 49-53.

This forum explores memories occasioned by the 25th anniversary of AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). Noting that AIDS is "a mnemonic



Present Tense

pandemic" (49), Morris's introduction calls for remembering ACT UP but not commemorating it, for to "heroicize" the activist organization can be to forget it or sterilize its history. The contributions to this forum embody Morris's concept of "*archival queers*," or disruptive transformations of history (51).

Gould, Deborah B. "ACT UP, Racism, and the Question of How To Use History." 54-62.

In her contribution, Gould addresses claims that ACT UP was a racist organization, countering that the claim "paints a totalizing picture" that doesn't allow a full understanding of the organization or "how racism actually functioned within the movement" (55). Gould contextualizes racism within the movement, not to dismiss it, but to allow for a fuller political understanding of how racism works.

Chávez, Karma R. "ACT UP, Haitian Migrants, and Alternative Memories of HIV/AIDS." 63-68.

Chávez explores a largely forgotten aspect of ACT UP: Its protests of the Bush and Clinton administrations' policies of detaining Haitian immigrants at Guantanamo Bay because of their alleged HIV-positive status.

Juhasz, Alexandra. "Forgetting ACT UP." 69-74.

As "a professional ACT UP rememberer" (69), Juhasz explains how the continual re-memorialization of ACT UP often leads to forgetting so many "other forms and forums of activism that were taking place during that time" (70). Juhasz chronicles a variety of other activism "across the broader AIDS activist community," exploring how ACT UP's sexiness, privilege, and visibility often make these other activism invisible (72).

Rand, Erin J. "Gay Pride and Its Queer Discontents: ACT UP and the Political Deployment of Affect." 75-80.

Rand explores the affective history of ACT UP in order to explore and unsettle current debates in queer theory around queer pride and queer shame. Rand encourages us to remember the affective ambivalence of ACT UP and to understand the "capricious nature of deploying affect as a political tactic" (79).



Present Tense

Gingrich-Philbrook, Craig. "ACT UP as a Structure of Feeling." 81-88.

In his contribution, Gingrich-Philbrook urges readers to think through the interrelationships of ethics, politics, and aesthetics and to not view ACT UP "as a singularity" (81) but rather to situate it in "structures of feeling" (87).

Emmer, Pascal. "Talkin' 'Bout Meta-Generation: ACT UP History and Queer Futurity." 89-96.

Emmer proposes understanding the transmission of ACT UP Philadelphia's history as "meta-generational," a view that privileges cross-generational relationality and "queer futurity" (José Estaban Muñoz) and refuses an episodic view of the past.

West, Isaac. "Reviving Rage." 97-102.

West situates the affective history of ACT UP within and against the initial 1985 reception of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* and its 2011 Broadway revival, exploring the play as a source of countermemory that can reactivate rage and anger.

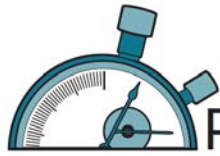
Nakayama, Thomas K. "Act Up–Paris: French Lessons." 103-108.

Nakayama explores the conditions that led to the founding of ACT UP–Paris and its politics, including how the public/private distinction and activists' relationship to Foucault differed in France compared to the United States.

Tags: ACT UP, Affect, Archives, Futurity, HIV/AIDS, Immigration, Memory, Race, Visibility

Morris, Charles E., III, and K. J. Rawson. "Queer Archives/Archival Queers." *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*. Ed. Michelle Ballif. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2013. 74-89. Print.

Morris and Rawson propose that, in order to address the "disciplinary heteronormative neglect and omission" of the "queer turn" in rhetorical studies, rhetorical scholars should "chart and mobilize queer archives and archival queers" as acts of radical historiography (74). While "queer archives" include LGBTQ material, the two are not synonymous: Morris and Rawson understand queer archives to be challenges to normativizing practices of collection and circulation (76). Challenging archival norms involves such actions as moving beyond traditional sites of archives toward sites such



Present Tense

as gossip, ephemera, and more, and viewing archives as “sites of rhetorical invention” (78). Morris and Rawson understand archival queers as those who engage in imaginative historiography and reflexivity, relating to archives affectively and deploying archives for producing historical consciousness and utopian futurity (79-80). Further, archival queers expose and critique heteronormative and homonormative “assaults on memory” that have created a collective amnesia of queer histories (84, qting. Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed). With no institutional backing for queer collective memory, queer memory is precarious, and Morris and Rawson argue that being an archival queer also entails “induc[ing] and construct[ing] queer mnemonic socialization” (86).

Tags: Archives, Disciplinarity, Histories, Memory

Narayan, Madhu. [“At Home with the Lesbian Herstory Archives.”](#) *Enculturation* 15 (2013). Web.

Narayan looks at New York City’s Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) as an example of the archive as rhetorical space. Archives, she says, are sites of “rhetorical power that can be simultaneously welcoming and alienating” (paragraph 5). She also points out that for LGBT people, archives and ideas of history are contested spaces where we potentially feel left out or at odds with non-queer histories. She also shares discussions with founder Joan Nestle and her feelings that the archives are spaces of “erotic encounter.” The connections of the archive to the LGBT idea of safe space is also examined here. The physical space of the archive in a converted house gives Narayan pause to discuss the ways that the personal and public rub up against one another in the LHA space.

Tags: Archives, Bodies, Histories, Lesbian, Memory

Rawson, K. J. “Accessing Transgender // Desiring Queer(er?) Archival Logics.” *Archivaria* 68 (2009): 123-140. Print.

Rawson analyzes two aspects of archives—the physical environment and the language used—to show how they might not be fully accessible for transgender patrons and for accessing material about transgender individuals. The physical environment, Rawson argues, can be exclusionary for a variety of reasons, including a lack of gender inclusive or single-stall bathrooms and a failure to use patrons’ preferred pronouns (127-129). Language of archives can make accessing material difficult, and archives can reproduce the fraught identity history of the term “transgender” in problematic ways—using the term too narrowly for only those who



Present Tense

used the word themselves, or using it to broadly to apply to those who would not have identified with the term (130-131). Rawson asks for careful attention to how the category “transgender” is used (132). Rawson then queers the logic of archives, asking how barriers to access might be productive by challenging the desire for satisfactory (efficient) access. Rawson turns to a grassroots library that eschews that logic and embraces a logic of discovery. Frustration can be productive, Rawson argues, because there is deferred satisfaction (137). Further, archives have a reciprocal desire with the researcher: Archives desire to be touched and touch back (137-139).

Tags: Archives, Desire, Transgender

Rawson, K. J. [“Rhetorical History 2.0: Toward a Digital Transgender Archive.”](#) *Enculturation* 16 (2013). Web.

In a 20-minute video essay, Rawson encourages scholars of rhetoric to consider the context that digital historical materials come from and to make further efforts to include born-digital materials in archives. Rawson approaches an online transgender history as a type of “case study” as various transgender related visuals are shown (websites, historical photographs, etc.). Rawson asks, what materials are kept and honored in the archive? What materials are discarded? Whose histories are told and cherished here? What histories are “unarchivable”? Rawson then asks what kinds of histories search engines (in this example, Google) can give us about transgender history. Transgender histories and positionalities are “deeply intertwined,” Rawson says, with the technologies that transgender persons are using. Rawson shares various examples of digitally archived digital transgender related materials (in this case YouTube videos) and Rawson asserts that digital archiving flattens out the contextual elements that a traditional archive can offer. Rawson next moves to look at Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes’s 2012 *Enculturation* piece on queer archives. Here, again, Rawson wants us to see the ways that born-digital pieces are so important so as to not lose transgender histories and to remember that matters of archiving are fundamentally about selection and discrimination.

Tags: Archives, Bodies, Digital, Histories, Transgender

Woods, Carly S., Joshua P. Ewalt, and Sara J. Baker. "A Matter of Regionalism: Remembering Brandon Teena and Willa Cather at the Nebraska History Museum." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99.3 (2013): 341-363. Print.

Woods, Ewalt, and Baker read two separate 2010-2011 exhibits at the Nebraska History Museum: "We the People: The Nebraska Viewpoint," which included the story of Brandon Teena's 1993 murder under a banner titled "The Shadow of Intolerance"; and "Willa Cather: A Matter of Appearances," which celebrated the Nebraska author. These two exhibits appropriate the memories of Brandon Teena and Cather for Nebraska-centered and heteronormative ends, particularly through regional nostalgia, boosterism, and optimism, thus "restricting counter-public formation" (342). Through both material and discursive rhetoric, the exhibitions make Brandon Teena's murder a national problem, not a concern for Nebraska, and explain away Cather's gender non-conformity by attributing it to a love of the outdoors, farm work, and theater. Woods, Ewalt, and Baker advocate for a critical regionalist framework to place memory criticism, one that places the rhetorical memory of a place in conversation with other spaces and political discourses and disrupts dominant public memories.

Tags: Transgender, Materiality, Memory

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 6. Publics and Counterpublics

Bennett, Jeffrey A. "The Critical Interrogation of a Category: An Interview with Jack Halberstam." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 0.1 (2013): 177-192. Print.

In his interview of Jack Halberstam, Bennett and Halberstam explore the rhetoricity of the term *bullying*, from its appropriation by conservative politicians (177-178) to its gendered aspects (182-183). The term, Halberstam contends, has so many meanings and instantiations that there is no single measure to address it, and we need to tease out how it plays out in different contexts. Halberstam critiques the "It Gets Better" campaign as "a national band-aid" (182) that fails to address the complexities of social violence (182, 186-187) and challenges the simple causal link between bullying and suicide (185). He notes that heterosexuality is never blamed for suicide, even though the pressures of heterosexuality certainly contribute to suicides (185-186). Halberstam and Bennett also critique the ways in which we talk about LGBTQ youth, as having negative experiences and just needing to get through adolescence toward a freer adulthood; discourses never focus on the joys of being a queer youth (190).

Tags: Activism, Age, Gender, Homophobia, Identity, Politics, Violence

Bennett, Jeffrey A. "Queer Teenagers and the Mediation of Utopian Catastrophe." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27.5 (2010): 455-476. Print.

Bennett examines the shifting discourse about LGBTQ teenagers in popular media, exploring how these representations manage anxieties about LGBTQ politics. Popular media represent LGBTQ youth simultaneously in utopian and apocalyptic tropes, Bennett argues: There is hope that they are living in a more open era with less discrimination, but this also means the end of traditional LGBT movements, allowing for assimilation (458). The utopian rhetoric shows teens eschewing traditional categories and embracing sexual fluidity—they are "radical separatists" (464). But simultaneously they are portrayed as "disinterested assimilationists" (464). Bennett sees the blurring of these tropes "as a sign of transformation in the queer world" (462).

Tags: Activism, Age, Futurity, Media, Politics, Publics, Representation



Present Tense

Brouwer, Daniel C. "ACT-ing UP in Congressional Hearings." *Counterpublics and the State*. Eds. Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 2001. 87-109. Print.

Brouwer explores the textual evidence of ACT UP members' testimonies during Congressional hearings about HIV/AIDS between 1988 and 1990, an understudied aspect of the group, as scholars tend to focus on their public demonstrations. Brouwer argues that members had much ambivalence about testifying in Congress, as they feared co-optation, but they necessarily "oscillated" between publics. Brouwer explains that their testimony in front of Congress "constitute[d] a 'weak' public" in that deliberation and norms are tightly constrained and the focus is on opinion-making without decision-making (93). However, ACT UP members' testimony also "revitalize[d] public discourse" because it granted members access to other public venues (89): They gained increased publicity because of the testimony, and their testimonies enabled them to gain access to other government agencies, where they could participate in policy decision-making (100-101). Brouwer's study shows that activist organizations can strategically oscillate between forums and exploit state venues to gain access to other publics.

Tags: ACT UP, Counterpublics, HIV/AIDS, Legal, Publics

Brouwer, Daniel C. "Corps/Corpse: The US Military and Homosexuality." *Western Journal of Communication* 68.4 (2004): 411-430. Print.

Brouwer analyzes the testimony given by current and former military members at May 1993 hearings of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, where the ban on homosexuality in the military was discussed months before the passage of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Brouwer explores how these 34 witnesses frame the military and homosexuality by tracing the "parallel dual meanings of 'corps'"—"as a social body and . . . as the flesh of bodies"—in claims about the "nature" of the military and of homosexuality (413). Arguments for lifting the ban construct the military as akin to civil society, drawing on rights discourses and appeals for inclusion and equality: A ban on gays harms the integrity of the social body (417). Pro-ban arguments construct the military as "a unique social body" distinct from civil society because of its need for cohesion (418), and they frame homosexuality as excessive and a contagion or virus that infects this body (420, 424). Brouwer explains how heterosexuals are able to "disincorporate themselves"—heterosexual bodies can be abstracted and silent in public, whereas homosexual bodies are incorporated, revealing power disparities and making some claims more readily persuasive than others (426-427).

Tags: Bodies, Gay Rights, Heteronormativity, Legal, Military, Politics, Publics



Present Tense

Brouwer, Daniel C. "Counterpublicity and Corporeality in HIV/AIDS Zines." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 22.5 (2005): 351-371. Print.

Brouwer examines two zines (independent, do-it-yourself magazines) produced in the 1990s—*Diseased Pariah News* and *Infected Faggot Perspectives*—arguing that they constitute counterpublics. Through modes of "explicit and implicit identifications and disidentifications," the two zines directly addressed readers, particularly along lines of political ideology and HIV status (354). *Diseased Pariah News* constituted a counterpublic that was open to a broad range of gay and queer politics, whereas *Infected Faggot Perspectives's* political ideology was anti-assimilationist (358). Drawing on Michael Warner, Brouwer explores the corporeality of the two counterpublics through two modes: "the erotic/sexual and the grotesque" (358). The zines allowed for a counterpublic that could sexualize bodies with HIV (including their own) within a context of a larger gay culture that stigmatized seropositive bodies. The zines also turned to the grotesque, subverting norms of attractiveness and carnivalizing powerful figures. Brouwer closes with observations about counterpublicity, such as the necessity to not automatically fetishize counterpublic discourse as necessarily liberatory.

Tags: Bodies, Counterpublics, HIV/AIDS

Brouwer, Daniel C. "Privacy, Publicity, and Propriety in Congressional Eulogies for Representative Stewart B. McKinney (R-Conn.)." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7.2 (2004): 191-214. Print.

Daniel C. Brouwer analyzes the eulogies given by US Representatives and Senators after the death of Representative Stewart B. McKinney of AIDS-related causes in 1987. Drawing on prior rhetorical studies of propriety, Brouwer shows how McKinney's private life—his AIDS-related death, allegations of homosexuality—are at the nexus of issues of propriety in these speeches. Because the AIDS-related death of a Congressperson was an unprecedented exigence, Senators and Representatives appealed explicitly to propriety and crafted norms of propriety during their speeches, delimitating what would be appropriate to speak about and chastising the media for invading McKinney's private life and speculating about his sexuality rather than focusing on his public record. Thus, propriety is both a rhetorical process and product and allows for the drawing of boundaries between public and private.

Tags: Closet, HIV/AIDS, Politics, Privacy, Publics



Present Tense

Campbell, Peter Odell. "The Procedural Queer: Substantive Due Process, *Lawrence v. Texas*, and Queer Rhetorical Futures." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98.2 (2012): 203-229. Print.

Campbell analyzes Justice Anthony Kennedy's majority opinion in the 2003 Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down anti-sodomy laws. While queer legal critics have maligned Kennedy's argument for emphasizing due process instead of equal protection, and thus reaffirming normative notions of privacy, Campbell argues that the argument from due process may provide more possibilities for "queer world making." Drawing from legal rhetorical criticism, queer legal theory, and queer futurist theory, Campbell argues that Kennedy's rhetorical framing of his decision leaves open the possibility for an understanding of due process that is always open for revision. Arguments from due process may be more amenable (or at the very least, less damaging) to queer futurity than arguments from equal protection.

Tags: Futurity, Gay Rights, Legal, Privacy

Cloud, Dana L. "Private Manning and the Chamber of Secrets." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.1 (2014): 80-104. Print.

Cloud analyzes media coverage of Chelsea Manning's role in WikiLeaks and her trial for treason in order to outline how government agencies, journalists, and LGBT movements disciplined Manning. She identifies two modalities of rhetorical discipline: First, juridical disciplining served to repress Manning's revelations about the military and punish Manning for her disclosure of government secrets (88-89). Second, biopolitical disciplining pathologized Manning's transgender identity as dysfunctional (92-94). Both of these disciplining rhetorics served to hide away information. Cloud uses the verb "to secret" to show how these discourses served to recover information that had been disclosed and "restor[e] its secret status through punishment and diagnosis" (81). Importantly, Cloud notes that juridical disciplining and biopolitical disciplining rarely appear together in news stories; keeping them separate prevents readers from developing a "critical awareness of how gender and sex are connected to the national security state and capitalist interests" (97). Cloud explores what it might mean to refuse to cooperate with this gender and state disciplining (98).

Tags: Activism, Confessional, Gender, Legal, Media, Politics, Publics, Transgender, Violence



Dalton, Philip D., and John R. Butler. "Getting Clipped: Denial and Masculinity Politics in the 2002 US Senate Race in Montana." *Western Journal of Communication* 74.3 (2010): 226-248. Print.

In 2002, Democrats in Montana ran a political commercial against candidate Mike Taylor accusing him of using student loan money for personal gain while operating a hair care school. Taylor's campaign was outraged, claiming that the spot portrayed him as a homosexual. Democrats, and much of the public, disagreed with this interpretation. Dalton and Butler argue that the commercial uses "strategic ambiguity" so that it can both portray Taylor as gay and protect the producers against charges that it does so (228). Situating the commercial within a "recent upsurge of gay-baiting" (229, qting. Lawrence Birkin), Dalton and Butler explore the conditions that allowed the Democrats to successfully claim that the commercial was not intended to be homophobic and to emerge from the controversy with integrity: Democrats focused on denotative meaning, expressing ignorance of any homosexual connotations, which made Republican critics of the commercial appear to possess "exotic . . . knowledge of homosexual codes" (235). Thus, the ad was effective at both challenging Taylor's masculinity and insulating Democrats from charges of homophobia. Dalton and Butler urge critics to further explore the "implications of deceptive and malicious communication" and its relationship to hegemonic masculinity (244).

Tags: Gender, Homophobia, Media, Politics

Deem, Melissa. "Stranger Sociability, Public Hope, and the Limits of Political Transformation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88.1 (2002): 444-454. Print.

Deem theorizes rhetoric, publics, and corporeality with the goal of transforming norms and making intimacies more publicly available. She focuses on Michael Warner's discussion of "intimate strangeness," a concept that Deem contends challenges normative dichotomies of intimacy and strangerhood and helps to synthesize poetic-expressive (Warner's counterpublics) and critical-rational (Habermas's public sphere) theories of publics. Deem suggests that Warner's opposition between publics and counterpublics has conceptual limitations: It sees dominant publics as critical-rational and not corporeal, failing to leave room for the possibility of non-normative discourse in state publics (446). Publics, Deem explains, work through abstracting normative bodies, marking non-normative bodies, and norms of transparency, strangerhood, and intimacy—but the nature of that abstraction makes bodies with marked differences visible and disruptive or afford indecorous rhetoric (446, 449). She theorizes that "minor rhetorics," which disrupt dominant rhetorics, may be more useful than



Present Tense

counterpublics in understanding how norms of transparency, intimacy, and strangerhood can be challenged in state publics (447).

Tags: Bodies, Counterpublics, Publics

Grindstaff, Davin Allen. *Rhetorical Secrets: Mapping Gay Identity and Queer Resistance in Contemporary America*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2006. Print.

Grindstaff asserts that sexual identity is “essentially a public matter” because it comes from discourse. He adds that the “mastery of heteronormative discourse and discursive regimes is still our most enduring oppressor” (5). Public discourse on sexuality is never “merely descriptive” for Grindstaff, but will always be normative and because of this “rhetorically charged” (5). The body is more than simply an incidence of one’s sexuality; it is also a responsive collective entity that interacts with others. The queer body is not just one that identifies; it’s also a desiring body—and to Grindstaff the function of desiring is the queer body’s most important aspect. Gazing upon other queer bodies and discussing one’s body with others are more vital than simply self-identifying as queer. To Grindstaff, “identity” and “secrecy” must be reinvented and redefined as desire, because, as he says: “Desire is our most powerful form of resistance” (156). He makes a particularly strong appeal to LGBT persons to operate outside of heteronormative discourses that suppress “secrets” and foster shame. Queer identity and desire must not only be public but must also always be desirous—even in all its lustful, uncomfortable, messy sexual-ness.

Tags: Bodies, Closet, Desire, Identity, Publics

Hansen, Wesley D., and George N. Dionisopoulos. “Eulogy Rhetoric as a Political Coping Mechanism: The Aftermath of Proposition 8.” *Western Journal of Communication* 76.1 (2012): 24-43. Print.

Hansen and Dionisopoulos analyze the eulogistic rhetoric of LGBT print periodicals after the passage of Proposition 8, which made same-sex marriage unconstitutional in California in 2008. Drawing on scholarship showing that political losses are psychologically traumatic, they show how LGBT periodicals helped readers to make sense of this loss and move forward. LGBT periodicals drew on the form of the eulogy in order to draw on a sense of bitterness and defeat, praise the progress of LGBT civil rights activism, express collective anger, and promote channeling emotions into action—including in day-to-day interactions, grassroots protests, boycotts, and appeals to compassion. In contrast to prior research on eulogies, the deliberative



Present Tense

aspect of these eulogies was not subordinated, and Hansen and Dionisopoulos show how the eulogistic rhetoric allowed for critical dialogue about potential action.

Tags: Legal, Media, Politics, Publics

Landau, Jamie. "Straightening Out (the Politics of) Same-Sex Parenting: Representing Gay Families in US Print News Stories and Photographs." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26.1 (2009): 80-100. Print.

Landau examines visual and verbal representations of same-sex parents in US newspapers and magazines, arguing that the increase in representation is not unmitigated progress. Rather, these images function rhetorically to demarcate what counts as "recognizable children" for same-sex parents (82). The overwhelming focus in print media on gay and lesbian couples' children might challenge traditional representations of homosexuals, but Landau shows how the representations of children of same-sex parents reinforce homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity. They do this, she argues, through making children "the yardstick by which gays, as parents, are evaluated" (85). The narratives are framed so that children often "come out" as the child of gay parents, casting gay parenthood in rhetorics of secrecy and shame (86-89). Additionally, articles about these families are often accompanied with scientific or medical discourses, casting the children as "bio-products of mysterious new social scientific experiments" (90). Coverage also obsesses over the children's sexuality, reinforcing an ideal of heterosexuality; further, gay children are nearly invisible, and children are always portrayed as gender normative (91-94). Ultimately, Landau argues that these representations present "the heterosexual child as a synecdoche and social test for gay familial life" (82).

Tags: Heteronormativity, Media, Representation, Visibility, Visual Rhetoric

Lythgoe, Kenneth. "Sleight of Hand: Michigan's Anti-Bully Law, (Un)acceptable Exceptions, and the Reversal of Policy Making Rhetoric." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 0.1 (2013): 115-140. Print.

In 2011 as the Michigan legislature was debating an anti-bullying law, Republicans proposed an amendment protecting any "statement of a sincerely held religious belief or moral conviction" from being held accountable as bullying (116). State Democratic Senator Gretchen Whitmer responded to this amendment with a moving speech on the state Senate floor, a video that went viral and contributed to defeating the amendment (116-118). While the defeat of this amendment is often praised as a progressive and pro-LGBTQ victory, Lythgoe argues that the speech should not be



Present Tense

understood in isolation. The final legislation that passed in Michigan, he argues, even without this amendment, “represented a defeat for anti-bullying, LGBTQ, and other progressive advocates” (118). Taking an ecological approach to rhetoric that explores processes for the production of policies (118-120), Lythgoe argues that the religious exemption amendment, not Whitmer’s speech, should be seen as “a turning point in the rhetorical life” of the anti-bullying law (120). It performed a “rhetorical . . . sleight of hand” that distracted discussion from other aspects of the law and ultimately led to a weaker law “with potentially violent consequences for LGBTQ young people” (120). Ultimately, the shift in rhetoric driven by the failed amendment led the final bill to appeal to universality and not enumerate classes of students that bullying affects; whereas before the amendment Democrats and progressive activists were adamant that an effective bill must include enumeration, after the final bill passed without enumeration, they praised the bill almost unequivocally (121-132). Lythgoe closes with implications for state policy that, as state policy is violent, without explicitly naming those it targets or addresses (132-134).

Tags: Age, Homophobia, Legal, Politics, Violence

Ott, Brian L., and Eric Aoki. “The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy: Media Framing of the Matthew Shepard Murder.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5.3 (2002): 483-505. Print.

Ott and Aoki analyze print media coverage of the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, arguing that the coverage framed the murder in such a way as to alleviate any public culpability, to reaffirm stigmatizing discourses about LGBTQ persons, and to shape political discourses that would make progressive policy changes more difficult to enact. Ott and Aoki explain how early media narratives used a tragic frame that sensationalized and personalized the story, creating the need for resolution. Shepard was able to become a martyr in the public media due to his slight frame, whiteness, and status as middle class, and because of “the dramatic structure of the narrative” (489). However, because the murderers were scapegoated as having character flaws—of being “*uniquely ignorant*” and drug dealers—media coverage moved away from any discussion of larger cultural homophobia (492). Because the trial and conviction provided closure and healing for the public, hate crime policies that were attached to rhetoric around Shepard’s death lost support and appeal. Ultimately, the tragic frame promoted the status quo: creating sympathy for an individual, relatively acceptable queer (young, white, and attractive), and finding cathartic resolution so that no social change is needed. Ott and Aoki suggest that Kenneth Burke’s notion of the “comic frame” might be a better way to frame the murder, allowing for the public to integrate lessons about society, rather than just personalize and punish the murderer (497).

Tags: Media, Politics, Race, Violence

Sender, Katherine. "Gay Readers, Consumers, and a Dominant Gay Habitus: 25 Years of the *Advocate* Magazine." *Journal of Communication* 51.1 (2001): 73-99. Print.

Building on Pierre Bourdieu's analysis that links taste to cultural capital and habitus, Sender explores the changes in *Advocate* magazine and its appeals to readers between its inception as an activist newspaper in 1967 and 1992. Sender extends Bourdieu's concept of the habitus to suggest that there is a "dominant gay habitus" structured through "established (and changing) aspects of gay sensibility" and constructed through marketing and publications (75). She analyzes the changes in the *Advocate*, exploring its changes toward a more assimilationist approach to gay rights and from a "society-making media" approach to a market approach (77, qting. Turrow). The magazine, she argues, helped to construct and promote a consumerism model for an ideal gay lifestyle. These changes have come with costs: lesbians have been excluded; public gayness has been desexualized; gays are narrowly represented at the expense of racial, class-based, and gender inclusivity; and community politics are set aside (93-95).

Tags: Gay Rights, Identity, Media, Representation

West, Isaac, Michaela Frischherz, Allison Panther, and Richard Brophy. "Queer Worldmaking in the 'It Gets Better' Campaign." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*. 0.1 (2013): 49-86. Print.

West, Frischherz, Panther, and Brophy analyze a sampling of "vernacular videos" posted to the It Gets Better campaign (51). Rather than the hermeneutics of suspicion approach favored by many critics of It Gets Better, who often take Dan Savage and his husband Terry Miller's initial video as a synecdoche for the entire campaign (53, 55), West et al. trace the thematic meanings of "It," "Gets," and "Better" through 200 sample videos. They argue that these videos provide a myriad of meanings for "getting better," providing viewers with ways to "imagine livable pasts, presents, and futures for LGBTQs" (52). Against critiques that "Gets" implies a passive approach to change, West et al. find that "Gets" has many articulations in the video, functioning to figure the present as temporary and providing a myriad of possible "processes by which alternative futures are achievable" (64). Likewise, "Better" is articulated in a variety of ways, providing optimistic futures with the potential for queer worldmaking (69-72).

Tags: Activism, Digital, Futurity, Publics

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 7. Rhetorics of Identity

Araiza, José Andrés. "Saying Goodbye to Men: Southern Feminists Publishing News While Challenging Patriarchy." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 38.4 (2014): 273-290. Print.

Araiza analyzes *Goodbye to All That (GTAT)*, a newsletter produced by Austin lesbian feminists from 1975 to 1978. Noting a lack of research on lesbian periodicals in non-urban and Southern locations (276), Araiza uses feminist standpoint theory to explore the features and ideology of the *GTAT*. The newsletter was collectively published, and it prioritized local and national news that were relevant to local feminists and largely ignored in mainstream media (278-279). Araiza argues that the newsletter was a clear attempt at developing agency "by publishing news on their own terms and disseminating opinions critiquing patriarchy" (286). The newsletter, initially associated with the Austin Lesbian Organization (ALO), was also a site for debating lesbian separatism, as it shared discussions during ALO meetings about the merits of lesbian separatism. While early editors clearly espoused a lesbian separatist ideology, readers and some writers expressed frustration with this approach. The newsletter was marked by a constant tension about separatism and concerns with alienating both separatist and non-separatist readers (281-282). Araiza also explores how, unlike most other lesbian periodicals of the time, *GTAT* addressed sex only indirectly, often through poetry, and had an explicit focus on lesbian motherhood, which he attributes to Southern cultural heritage and values (283-284, 286).

Tags: Activism, Feminism, Identity, Lesbian, Regionalism

Bacon, Jen. "Until Death Do Us Part: Lesbian Rhetorics of Relational Divorce." *Women's Studies in Communication* 35.2 (2012): 158-177. Print.

Bacon shares the stories of 25 lesbians who were ending relationships with partners, arguing that these women engage in "outlaw rhetorics" that imagines divorce differently from the standard narrative of separation. While none of her participants were legally married, they drew on marriage and divorce discourses to understand and explain their relationships. However, Bacon shows how they understand divorce as a new relationality or a continuation of a relationship in which partners re-write their identities (162). They draw on traditional discourses of marriage to understand their relationships as permanent, but didn't draw on legal discourses to see divorce as an end to the relationship (163). Rather, divorce marked a continuation of the relationship that no longer included romance (165). Further, these women did not draw on adversarial discourse that is typical of legal heterosexual divorce. Instead,



Present Tense

breakups were understood in terms of supporting each other (166-167). They described their exes as “sister” or “friend” to recast the relationship (168-169). Bacon suggests that these “outlaw discourses” may promote models for dominant culture for approaching divorce and relationality differently (170, 175).

Tags: Feminism, Lesbian

Bennett, Jeffrey A. “Love Me Gender: Normative Homosexuality and ‘Ex-gay’ Performativity in Reparative Therapy Narratives.” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23.4 (2003): 331-352. Print.

Bennett analyzes John and Anne Paulk’s co-authored autobiography *Love Won Out*, a reparative therapy narrative that chronicles John and Anne’s struggle through their homosexuality, their conversion to Christianity, and their coming out as heterosexual, or “ex-gay.” Drawing on Judith Butler’s theory of performativity, Bennett argues that the narrative’s rhetoric deconstructs itself because John and Anne come to “simultaneously embody *both* heterosexuality and homosexuality” and ultimately fail to support claims to heterosexuality’s ontological security (333, 345-346). The text presents gay and lesbian identities as inauthentic and heterosexual identities as authentic through portraying homosexuality as something that can be removed from the body and heterosexuality as something one “comes out” as (335-336, 339-340). However, John and Anne are forced to “authenticate” that they were gay and lesbian through detailed descriptions of their former gay and lesbian lives (336-337) and struggle to learn the supposed “natural” behavior of heterosexuality (341-342). In the end, the text performs an “ex-gay” identity instead of a heterosexual one—what Bennett calls “a modified sexuality” (343), a performative identity that actually challenges heteronormativity because the articulation of an ex-gay identity challenges the supposed naturalness of heterosexuality (347).

Tags: Ex-Gay, Gender, Heteronormativity, Identity, Performativity

Brookey, Robert Alan. “Bio-Rhetoric, Background Beliefs and the Biology of Homosexuality.” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 37.4 (2001): 171-183. Print.

Brookey examines biological research on homosexual etiology for how useful it might be for gay rights claims. While explorations of biological causes for sexuality are not new, what is new is the belief that such biological evidence for the immutability of homosexuality will help advance gay and lesbian rights (171). Brookey’s analyses show how scientific experiments and discourses, what he calls “gay gene discourse,”



Present Tense

reinforce gendered assumptions that could be harmful for gay rights discourses (172). He shows how the discourses of these studies equate male homosexuality with femininity: “the gay gene discourse operationalizes the male homosexual body as a feminized body, . . . invests this body with feminine behaviors, and . . . considers this body to be a product of feminine intervention and pollution” (175). Not only do these discourses rely on a reductive view of gender and sexuality, but “bio-rhetoric” is not influential in courts, as Brookey shows with his analysis of *Romer v. Evans* (180).

Tags: Bodies, Etiology, Gender, Gay Rights, Medical

Chávez, Karma R. “Beyond Complicity: Coherence, Queer Theory, and the Rhetoric of the ‘Gay Christian Movement.’” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 24.3-4 (2004): 255-275. Print.

Chávez analyzes the rhetoric of Soulforce, an interfaith Christian organization devoted to the inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people into Christian churches. Chávez argues that by appealing to biological and psychological understandings of homosexuality as “natural” that Soulforce is complicit with evangelical Christian rhetoric. Drawing on both performative writing styles (exploring her personal experience) and traditional rhetorical analysis, Chávez explains how Soulforce’s rhetoric relies on the choice vs. nonchoice binary for understanding homosexual identity that is complicit in the way evangelicals have framed the debate. In order to respond to evangelical rhetoric that homosexuality is a choice or “lifestyle,” Soulforce uses essentialist and universalist rhetoric about sexuality. Chávez asks whether Soulforce might be able to reframe the debate about sexuality by incorporating choice about different individual experiences into their rhetoric, thus building a larger coalition.

Tags: Activism, Etiology, Identity, Religion

Chávez, Karma R. “Exploring the Defeat of Arizona’s Marriage Amendment and the Specter of the Immigrant Queer.” *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 314-324. Print.

In 2006, Arizona voters defeated the “Protect Marriage Amendment,” becoming the first state to defeat a ballot measure limiting marriage to different-sex couples at the polls. Chávez argues that the Arizona Together coalition was successful in campaigning against this amendment because they used “straight-washing” and “white-washing” strategies (315). These strategies isolated LGBT issues from other social justice issues. By emphasizing white people in campaigns, Arizona Together



Present Tense

appealed to common conceptualizations of whiteness=citizenship (319). The campaign also chose not to focus on LGBT people and rights, and instead focused on heterosexuals who would be harmed by the end of domestic partnership benefits (318). These tactics, Chávez argues, collude with xenophobic discourse that mark immigrants as the most “queer” (320); in the same 2006 election, four anti-immigration ballot measures passed by 3-1 margins. Chávez concludes that while straight-washing and white-washing tactics may bring short-term success at the ballot, in the long run, they are harmful. Arizona voters passed a constitutional amendment in 2008 defining marriage as between one man and one woman (321-322).

Tags: Activism, Citizenship, Collective Identity, Immigration, Gay Rights, Legal, Politics, Race

Chávez, Karma R. “Spatializing Gender Performativity: Ecstasy and Possibilities for Livable Life in the Tragic Case of Victoria Arellano.” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 33.1 (2010): 1-15. Print.

Chávez takes up Judith Butler’s theory of performativity in the context of spatiality, arguing that spaces where bodies become ecstatic—“unravel and become unhinged”—produce possibilities for subversion (2). She understands “ecstasy” as those moments when one is not in control of one’s body, when one is “beside themselves, precarious” (2). Chávez turns to the case of Victoria Arellano, an HIV-positive Mexican migrant transwoman who was detained by immigration as an undocumented migrant in 2007. She subsequently died of HIV-related illnesses in custody because she was denied her medications and treatment. Chávez explores the heteronormative logics of US immigration policies and spaces, logics that made Arellano’s body unintelligible—thus, she was read as biologically male and placed in a men’s detention cell (7). Chávez analyzes the cell space as heteronormative and masculinist, but also contends that once Arellano became ill, “migrants in the cell—queer and nonqueer—were constituted as different kinds of gendered subjects” (9). In response to the crisis of a sick and dying body, detainees became ecstatic, producing loving relations as they cared for her and protesting collectively to get her medical aid (9-10). However, this subversion was fleeting, as after Arellano’s death, these detainees were dispersed to other detention centers (11). Chávez closes by wondering how panic and ecstasy can be deployed for subversion rather than retaliation against threats, as it often is (in the case of responses to terrorism and moral panics) (11-12).

Tags: Affect, Bodies, HIV/AIDS, Immigration, Materiality, Performativity, Transgender



Present Tense

Chesebro, James W. "Ethical Communication and Sexual Orientation." *Communication Ethics in an Age of Diversity*. Eds. Josina M. Makau and Ronald C. Arnett. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997. 126-151. Print.

Chesebro argues that regulatory discourses have influenced and limited the development of communication ethics for men and women in same-sex relationships. He identifies societal forces that limit and regulate gay and lesbian communication: Definitional authority given to "experts," such as psychologists, medical professionals, and social scientists, who could delimit and set boundaries on homosexuality (129) as well as created contradictory definitions and stigmatized homosexuality (130). Further, negative public attitudes stymie attempts to develop gay and lesbian communication ethics (133-134), as has the death toll and stigmatization resulting from the AIDS crisis (134-135). Despite these restrictions, Chesebro believes that a "foundation" for gay and lesbian communication ethics "can be detected in the word *gay*" (135), which, beginning in the 1960s, marked a turn toward self determination (136). Chesebro identifies three other dimensions of communication ethics for same-sex relationships: 1) a complex ethic of tolerance that can unite gays and lesbians as allowable deviance from norms but risks separation from the rest of society; 2) an ethic of desire or commitment to pleasure; and 3) an ethic of paradox that redefines gender norms and expectations, questioning binaristic ethical thinking (137-141). Chesebro suggests some ethical propositions, including the needs to be self-reflexive about moral condemnation, to be respectful and not dominating of others' experiences, to value sexual expression as free speech, and to value creativity for societal change (141-142). He closes by exploring the implications of these propositions for gay stereotyping, the scapegoating of gays in AIDS discourses, and the ethics of outing others (142-145).

Tags: Ethics, Identity, HIV/AIDS, Tolerance

Clarkson, Jay. "The Limitations of the Discourse of Norms: Gay Visibility and Degrees of Transgression." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 32.4 (2008): 368-382. Print.

Clarkson examines discussion forums on StraightActing.com, a website devoted to gay men who identify as "straight-acting." Participants on this site, Clarkson shows, attribute homophobia to a response to flamboyant gay men, blaming those "flaming" gay men for homophobia (372, 374). Participants promote a "quietly gay" approach that relies on some visibility of gay men, but one that is not sexualized and is conventionally gendered (376). Further, posters on this site fear that the flamboyant gay man has become normalized in popular representations. Clarkson argues that discourses of "normalization" promote the idea of a singular gay identity and occlude nuance. Clarkson suggests that instead we read representation through the lenses of



Present Tense

“conventions,” which may open up a wider variety of representations available (372-373). Clarkson further argues that the visibility of flamboyant gay men is necessary for social acceptance of homosexuality as a wide variety of conventional identity practices (370, 377).

Tags: Digital, Gender, Homophobia, Identity, Representation, Visibility

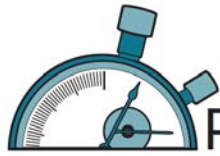
Galewski, Elizabeth. “Figuring the Feminist Femme.” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 28.2 (2005): 183-206. Print.

Galewski argues for understanding femme lesbian performance as rhetorical in order to explore its fluidity and subversive potential. She overviews the scholarly and political framing of femmes—often as the non-queer, non-visible other in relation to butches in the 1980s—and its feminist recuperation in the 1990s (186-188). Galewski argues that this recuperative work has privileged the femme lesbian who is “loud, visible, political, and public” (193). This privileging, she claims, re-centers masculine values, limits our understanding of the fluidity of femme performances, and has been antagonistic toward heterosexual femininity (193-197). A rhetorical approach, Galewski suggests, can help to ameliorate these pitfalls. The femme’s rhetorical power comes in her movement between “publicity and privacy, visibility and invisibility, voice and silence” (200). Because she can pass between straight and queer worlds, she denaturalizes these boundaries and can build bridges between the two worlds (201).

Tags: Feminism, Gender, Identity, Lesbian

Goltz, Dustin Bradley. “Laughing at Absence: *Instinct* Magazine and the Hyper-Masculine Gay Future?” *Western Journal of Communication* 71.2 (2007): 93-113. Print.

Situating his argument within the context of a gay male culture that values youth and stigmatizes aging, Goltz explores issues of age and aging, masculinity, and the future in the popular gay magazine *Instinct*. *Instinct*, targeted toward young gay men, privileges youth and the present, celebrates sexuality, eschews politics, and engages heavily in sarcasm and humor. Goltz argues that the hyper-masculine stance of the magazine constructs “readers in the persona of an invincible gay bully” (99) who is sexually dominant over straight men and older gay men. “Older” gay men are sexualized in “daddy” fantasies, but their sexuality is carefully monitored: They are constructed as the objects of fantasy and not allowed to express their own desire. *Instinct* magazine’s preservation of youthfulness and stigmatizing of aging leads it to



Present Tense

take an anti-future stance. Goltz concludes by speculating about the potentials and harms of anti-futurity as a queer tactic.

Tags: Age, Futurity, Media

Gorkemli, Serkan. [“Gender Benders, Gay Icons, and Media: Lesbian and Gay Visual Rhetoric in Turkey.”](#) *Enculturation* 10 (2011). Web.

This digital piece looks at contemporary representations of Turkish gay and lesbian pop icons as visual rhetoric. Gorkemli examines two Turkish pop culture icons of the 1980s and 1990s: gender-bending celebrities Zeki Muren and Bulent Ersoy (queer male and male-to-female transsexual, respectively). Gorkemli draws first on William J. T. Mitchell’s *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* to call us to a “poetics of pictures” for images rather than a rhetoric or hermeneutics of images. That is, rather than ask simply what images mean but what they “want” from us. What “claim” do these make upon us? Next, a Turkish fanzine called Legato is looked at to examine representations of these gay pop icons. Ultimately, Gorkemli points out these performances and representations help not only to reproduce, appropriate, and queer straight visual rhetoric and representations but also to subvert them.

Tags: Agency, Collective Identity, Histories, Identity, Language, Performativity, Pop Culture, Visibility, Visual Rhetoric

Gronnvoll, Marita. “Gender (In)Visibility at Abu Ghraib.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10.3 (2007): 371-398. Print.

Marita Gronnvoll analyzes discourses around the 2004 Abu Ghraib abuse scandal, as well as photographs from the scandal, in order to argue that women involved in the scandal are gendered, whereas men’s gender is made invisible in the media. The women soldiers—Lynndie England, in particular—were chastised and pathologized in the media for their deviance from norms of womanhood. Further, England’s sexuality became the site of much disapproval from the media. In contrast, male soldiers like Graner were portrayed as victims of war and as failing to follow procedure. While women soldiers at Abu Ghraib were marked in the media as representing all women soldiers, the men soldiers were treated as individuals. Gronnvoll turns to the images from Abu Ghraib, showing how the male soldiers’ heterosexuality was left in tact while the prisoners were feminized, humiliated, and homosexualized. Gronnvoll closes by noting how the gendered discourse in the media distracted from potential policy



Present Tense

discussions (about inadequate training, for instance) and by reiterating the need for rhetorical scholars to attend to gender seriously in their analyses.

Tags: Gender, Heteronormativity, Media, Race

Holland, Suzanne. "Levinas and Otherwise-than-Being (Tolerant): Homosexuality and the Discourse of Tolerance." *JAC* 23.1 (2003): 165-189. Print.

Holland argues that liberal rhetoric has drawn on a rhetoric of tolerance in order to respond to conservative rhetoric of religious values, which "contributes to domesticating the other" (166). Building off Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of alterity, Holland claims that tolerance is harmful to LGBT persons and not a sufficient grounding for ethical interaction with others. For Levinas, the basis of an ethical encounter is to be "face-to-face" with the other, and one's very existence is grounded in such an encounter (167). This approach is contrasted with liberalism, which is grounded in protecting the sovereign self through negative liberties (167). In Holland's interpretation of Levinas, tolerance rhetoric asks that one "thematizes" the other, reducing them to a category, and thus doing violence to them (167-168). Encountering the face of another, in Levinas's sense, is a case of encountering the other's vulnerability as well as one's own, encountering radical alterity and being responsible to it (168-169). Because tolerance discourse does not ask us to decenter one's ego, then "it instead permits the self to be the sole measure of the other's worth" (172). Holland shows how the rhetoric of tolerance plays out in sports, education, the military, and religious institutions, explaining that through this discourse, "the other is never really seen, never really heard" (181).

Tags: Ethics, Religion, Tolerance, Politics

Jack, Jordynn. "Gender Copia: Feminist Rhetorical Perspectives on an Autistic Concept of Sex/Gender." *Women's Studies in Communication* 35.1 (2012): 1-17. Print.

Noting that many autistic people question or resist normative gender binaries and identities, Jack argues that feminist and gender theorists can learn from autistic critiques of gender. An autistic perspective, she claims, provides "a rhetorical model for understanding gender" (2). A rhetorical model of gender sees gender as providing a wide variety of available discourses to deploy in order to understand and perform gender identity (2). Jack explores personal accounts of gender identity by autistic individuals on blogs, online discussion forums, and print memoirs, and argues that autistic individuals draw on a variety of gender and sexual discourses to invent gender



Present Tense

identities from *copia* (3). Jack identifies a variety of discursive activities autistic individuals engage in as they make sense of, create, and perform their gender identities, including disidentifying with gender and claiming a non-gendered identity; identifying with gender ambiguity; seeing gender as a social code that isn't a part of one's neurology and must be interpreted; seeing gender as a conscious performance or role modeled off of others' performances; or understanding gender as an idiosyncratic identity (4-14).

Tags: Disability, Gender, Identity

Landau, Jamie. "Reproducing and Transgressing Masculinity: A Rhetorical Analysis of Women Interacting with Digital Photographs of Thomas Beatie." *Women's Studies in Communication* 35.2 (2012): 178-203. Print.

Landau studies the cropping of, circulation of, and conversing with and about digital images of pregnant transman Thomas Beatie by "women of childbearing age" (181). She argues that while these digital activities and receptions of the images reinforce some norms of masculinity, they also opened spaces to redefine families, allowing for the inclusion of cisgender heterosexual men and transmen into the processes of family formation. Through analyzing her interview participants' responses to the images, Landau shows how her participants understood the images as "strange" because of the juxtaposition of a visually masculine man with a protruding pregnant belly, responses that reproduce norms of masculinity (186-187). However, in her participants' laughter at the images, she sees possibility for subversion because of the parody of gender norms (189). Further, in response to an image of Beatie and his wife, participants responded with joy at the "happy family" (193), a response Landau finds hopeful; it might challenge gender binaries and biological essentialism, making pregnancy "a relational process" (194) that is more inclusive and doesn't rely on essentialist notions of women's bodies (192-194). Landau's interpretation suggests a different reading than traditional feminist arguments that pregnant men signify patriarchal control over reproduction (194-195).

Tags: Digital, Feminism, Identity, Transgender, Visual Rhetoric

Leap, William L., ed. *Beyond the Lavender Lexicon: Authenticity, Imagination, and Appropriation in Lesbian and Gay Languages*. Luxembourg: Gordon and Breach, 1995. Print.

A collection of 16 essays by linguists and social scientists in an edited collection, this volume pulls together pieces that look at how gay men, lesbians, trans, and (in one



Present Tense

case) drag queens, use language and discourse. The volume is thematically divided between queer discourse's relationship to imagination as well as appropriation. The first eight pieces constitute "Imagination in Lavender Discourse" and include Edward David Miller's look at the interplay between storytelling and phone sex lines. Other examples of these imagination essays include Mary A. Porter's look at discourses around homosexuality in Kenya and Samuel Gerald Collins' interrogation of gay and lesbian representations in science fiction. The second half of the volume with seven pieces themed along appropriation looks at gay, lesbian, trans, and drag queen community discourses that both appropriate, are appropriated, and use language to perform and protect. Key examples here are Ruth Morgan and Kathleen Wood's "Lesbians in the Living Room: Collusion, Co-Construction, and Co-Narration in Conversation" and Rusty Barrett's "Supermodels of the World, Unite! Political Economy and the Language of Performance Among African-American Drag Queens." Overall, the collection draws from personal narrative of the researchers/authors and gives thorough treatment to issues of socio-linguistics and sexuality.

Tags: Agency, Bodies, Camp, Collective Identity, Drag, Gender, Histories, Identity, Language, Lesbian, Literacy, Performativity, Race, Silence, Visibility

Leap, William L., and Tom Boellstorff, eds. *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Queer Tongues*. Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 2004. Print.

This introduction plus ten essays interrogates globalization's role in queer language and identity. What happens when dominant Western constructions of LGBT culture clash and coincide with non-Western representations? The pieces shift from Canada through Europe to Israel and Africa and to Asia and as far as New Zealand. Leap and Boellstorff call these dominating Western constructions of LGBT culture "universal gay identity" (23). Supporting this, in "Vague English Creole: (Gay English) Cooperative Discourse in the French Gay Press," Denis M. Provencher discusses the ways that English (dominant Western) consumer culture (that perpetuates desire) has made it difficult to shift a community's consciousness (28). Other pieces point to global communication, the Internet, and entertainment and media as ways that dominant Western cultures continue to displace other LGBT (non-Western) cultures. But as Ross Higgens explains in "French, English, and the Idea of Gay Language in Montreal," gay language is a "process not an entity," which means that it is not immune from these cultural and economic influences but also leaves hope for other types of shifts and changes (and resistances) in the future (100).

Tags: Agency, Collective Identity, Histories, Identity, Language, Literacy, Performativity, Race, Silence, Visibility



Present Tense

Libretti, Tim. "Sexual Outlaws and Class Struggle: Rethinking History and Class Consciousness from a Queer Perspective." *College English* 67.2 (2004): 154-171. Print.

Libretti looks at the works of John Rechy and James Baldwin to examine how queer writers of color represent queerness in relation to class and race as well. In doing this, he hopes to interrogate US history and literary history through a homosexual imagination and lens that is anti "racial patriarchal capitalism" (158). He examines closely Rechy's literary and documentary work *The Sexual Outlaw* as they, through a queer imagination, "defamiliarize the heterosexual experience" (thereby exposing the normalization and naturalization of heterosexuality) (162). He then also looks at Baldwin's work "The Price of the Ticket" as it explicates both whiteness and queer consciousness. Ultimately, gay identity cannot be imagined away from race, class, and gender considerations. By looking at Rechy and Baldwin's writings, Libretti believes that gay and lesbian writers have a practice for addressing social relations and cultural forms as well as for imagining liberation.

Tags: Class, Literature, Heteronormativity, Identity, Race

Leap, William. *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1996. Print.

Leap focuses on the linguistic (and rhetorical) features of gay men's use of English. Throughout the volume, he is generous with collected data of conversation between gay men and gay men and others. He spends considerable time focusing on gay men's cooperative and collaborative use of text making and the strategies that are explored to make sure such cooperative discourse is sufficiently collaborative. Important features here are a consistent use of sexual and erotic tones based on a "shared culture of desire" (7). Drawing from Luce Irigaray's concepts of how women speak when they are among themselves, Leap hypothesizes about the ways that gay men come together through discourse to create an experience that is "optimal, valuable, and life cherishing" (11). Exaggeration (including imagery and innuendo) and turn-taking are other important features here as are what Leap calls "terminals," words or phrases that mark the end of a segment of a conversation (e.g., "that's great.") (44).

He then moves to examine gay men's speech as it operates outside of "gay centered speech settings" where there is higher risk for the speaker(s). He looks to Michael Musto's definition of "gaydar" as an "intuitive aptitude" that someone (gay or non-gay) may have about whether others are gay (49). Especially important here are ideas of secrecy and silence and how many gay men, when faced with risk, simply do not speak at all. He then moves into how gay men use speech to create "space" in places that were not previously gay friendly. Leap examines a piece of bathroom graffiti on a



Present Tense

men's room partition as it grows over time with responses (the initial graffiti being anti-gay) where intellect and humor feature prominently.

He also examines themes of urban life and city identity in music (for example, Bronski Beat's "Smalltown Boy") as sites for gay men to create meaning around experiences and risk. "Queer as space" he says, means a flexibility and fluidity with boundaries (104). One of the most interesting sections of the book looks into how gay men use homo-erotic discourse in a locker room in a health club. Leap considers how gay men's English here interacts with other men's English in a space of intimacy and risk. He emphasizes here that heterosexual men's language also negotiates erotic spaces and that while gay men's language can be the language of eroticism, it is not solely so in these intimate environments (124).

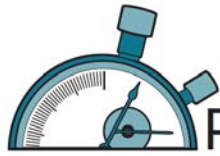
Leap also examines how young gay men are enculturated and socialized into gay speech patterns and tactics. Gay socialization in this way is a defense against isolation. Drawing on Gates, Leap asks us to consider how narrative contributes to an individual's gender socialization (139). Finally, he addresses how the HIV epidemic has, to that point in the mid-1990s, impacted the gay male community, including discourse references to safe sex in conversations between gay men and ideas of innocents and victimhood. Throughout Leap's work, themes of authenticity (between gay men) and recasting (in light of audience or risk factor) recur.

Tags: Camp, Literacy, Performativity, Popular Culture, Representation, Silence

Morris, Charles E., III. "Introduction: 'Travelin' Thru' the Queer South." *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 233-242. Print.

Morris introduces this special issue on "Queering the South" by overviewing the diverse scholarship on southern queerness since 1997. He situates southern queerness studies as necessarily reflexive, critiquing both what it means to be queer and what it means to be southern. He also sees it as useful for extending critique outward, to critiques "of racism, nationalism, colonialism, or metronormativity" (236). Southern queer critique especially critiques regionalisms that paint the South as the locus of racism, homophobia, and bigotry in the country, but also destabilizes the centrality of "hegemonic gay culture" (237).

Tags: Regionalism



Present Tense

Morris, Charles E., III. "Passing by Proxy: Collusive and Convulsive Silence in the Trial of Leopold and Loeb." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91.3 (2005): 264-290. Print.

Morris theorizes "passing by proxy," a term he uses to describe silences about homosexuality that are also "collusive and compulsive act[s]" that speak queer sexuality (264). Morris analyzes the discourses during and surrounding Richard Loeb and Nathan Leopold's famous 1924 trial for the murder of Bobby Franks—press coverage, courtroom testimony, *in camera* conferences, and defense lawyer Charles Darrow's closing summation. He argues that attempts to closet, or be silent about, Loeb and Leopold's homosexuality also convulsively spoke about sexuality. That is, silence about sexuality involves a "collusive, open secret" (267) that is not as disciplined as one might expect: "*convulsive*, inducing utterance when its absence is desired" (266). Morris's analysis asks rhetoric scholars to "more carefully attend to the rhetorical dimensions of silencing" homosexuality (266).

Tags: Closet, Histories, Identity, Media, Passing, Silence

Morris, Charles E., III. "Pink Herring & the Fourth Persona: J. Edgar Hoover's Sex Crime Panic." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88.2 (2002): 228-244. Print.

Morris examines J. Edgar Hoover's passing performance and public rhetoric in the 1930s. Hoover, publicly known as a "pansy" (an acceptable performance of homosociality in the 1920s), had to respond rhetorically to shifting gendered norms during the homosexual panic of the 1930s. Arguing "that sexual identity was significant to FBI policy in the years prior to Hoover's Cold War dominance," Morris explains how Hoover employed the "*pink herring*" in his rhetoric, a tactic of passing that deploys a moral panic and diverts attention from one's own sexual life (229). Morris notes that passing requires two audiences: an audience that is fooled by passing and an audience Morris terms "the *fourth persona*: a collusive audience constituted by the textual wink" (230). The fourth persona can serve as a community for an individual, who reads his or her "textual winks," but can also be dangerous, potentially "outing" the individual. This was the case with Hoover, who, in order to protect himself, deployed the pink herring as a passing tactic: Working in the FBI, he helped to define sexual deviancy as a moral threat and positioned "himself as a hunter of those deviates" (235), thus silencing the fourth persona as well.

Tags: Closet, Identity, Gender, Heteronormativity, Histories, Passing, Politics, Silence



Present Tense

Morrissey, Megan E. "Rape as a Weapon of Hate: Discursive Constructions and Material Consequences of Black Lesbianism in South Africa." *Women's Studies in Communication* 36.1 (2013): 72-91. Print.

Morrissey argues that in post-Apartheid South Africa, "corrective rape" of Black lesbians is used to shore up "an authentic South African identity that foregrounds strength, heterosexuality, and what are perceived to be traditional South African gender roles" (73). After Apartheid, heterosexuality is now seen as a marker of belonging for Black South Africans, and Black lesbians are marginalized as "un-African" (76) because homosexuality is understood as part of white colonialism (80). Morrissey analyzes news coverage of corrective rape in South Africa, human rights reports, and Lovinsa Kavuma's 2005 documentary film *Rape for Who I Am*. She argues that much of these discourses, while meaning well, contribute to the marginalization of Black lesbians because they portray Black lesbians as victims instead of agents "standing up to oppression" (81, 82). Thus, the cultural logic of South Africa, the use of violent corrective rape to discipline bodies, and the discursive construction of Black lesbians as victims "collude to place insurmountable barriers between Black South African lesbians and any form of national belonging or inclusion" (84). Morrissey closes with suggestions for reframing the discussion, drawing on feminist rhetoric and coalition politics (87-88).

Tags: Collective Identity, Feminism, Gender, Heteronormativity, Identity, Lesbian, Race, Violence

Nichols, Garrett W. "[The Quiet Country Closet: Reconstructing a Discourse for Closeted Rural Experiences.](#)" *Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society* 3.1 (2013). Web.

This screencast with voiceover (and accompanying transcript) seeks to complicate popular assumptions about queer rural life. Nichols draws from his own experiences growing up gay in a rural Idaho town. He also draws from popular culture representations (such as *Boys Don't Cry* and *Brokeback Mountain*), critical theorists (Jack Halberstam, Sherrie Inness, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and others), and visual elements (photos, drawings, etc.). Drawing from Inness, Nichols points out that coming out is not one moment but rather a series of moments and experiences that can last over many years or a lifetime. Nichols writes that all of this serves to help form an "understanding of closeted rural queerness" and represent a childhood that was "sometimes confused, sometimes depressed, often happy." He continues that he now sees his relationship to his rural community as "more nuanced than a simple stereotype of rural homophobia can even attempt to explain."



Present Tense

Tags: Bodies, Closet, Coming Out, Digital, Identity, Heteronormativity, Popular Culture, Regionalism, Representation, Visual Rhetoric

Olson, Lester C. "The Personal, The Political, and Others: Audre Lorde Denouncing 'The Second Sex Conference.'" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 33.3 (2000): 259-285. Print.

Olson argues that Audre Lorde's 1979 speech at The *Second Sex* Conference, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," is an example of "human liberation rhetoric" that masterfully mixes polysemic representations of the personal, the political, and others in the genre of a diatribe (261). Noting that most readers engage with only part of the essay, and often just the title, Olson seeks to examine the speech as a whole (262). In the speech, Lorde argues that white feminists reproduce systems of domination in how they represent "others," and that feminists needed to attend to all oppressions. Olson's analysis shows how Lorde's polysemy allowed for others, particularly white feminists, to appropriate and interpret Lorde's speech in ways she did not intend.

Tags: Collective Identity, Feminism, Identity, Race

Pritchard, Eric Darnell. "For Colored Kids Who Commit Suicide, Our Outrage Isn't Enough: Queer Youth of Color, Bullying, and the Discursive Limits of Identity and Safety." *Harvard Educational Review* 83.2 (2013): 320-345. Print.

Pritchard argues that dominant discourses about anti-LGBTQ bullying rely on limited understandings of identity that ignore how sexuality is raced, classed, and gendered. Through analysis of media coverage and interviews with queer people of color, Pritchard shows how discourses about bullying rely on "flattened theories of identity" (321) that result in less than effective anti-bullying policies that do not address structural inequalities (326). Further, these discourses separate "youth" from the rest of society and structural inequalities, casting them as innocent and allowing for victim-blaming (331-334). Pritchard also explores how myopic discourses of identity interrelate with limited notions of safety that leaves race and class oppression unaddressed (335-337) and argues that safety is cast as a property right attached to normative identity performances (339-340).

Tags: Age, Class, Gender, Identity, Race, Violence



Present Tense

Pritchard, Eric Darnell. "Like Signposts on the Road': The Function of Literacy in Constructing Black Queer Ancestors." *Literacy in Composition Studies* 2.1 (2014): 29-56. Print.

Drawing from interviews of sixty African-American LGBTQ individuals, Pritchard explores their literacy practices in relationship to historical erasures of Black queer lives. This historical erasure, Pritchard argues, is a detrimental part of oppression that cleaves Black LGBTQ individuals from Black queer histories and ancestors. However, Pritchard's research participants used literacy in order to confront historical erasures through "four patterns of ancestorship" (31). The most frequent pattern Pritchard chronicles is using literacy as rhetorical invention to "create, discover, and affirm ancestors" through reading and imaginative practices (38). A second pattern Pritchard identifies is using ancestors' writings about their "multiplicity of identities" to rhetorically analyze the world (39-44). The third pattern he explores is participants' use of ancestors' writing to create and affirm their own identities (44-46). Fourth, participants developed a sense of responsibility to leave records of their own literacy and lives for future generations of Black LGBTQ people (47-49). Pritchard's study explores the intersections of African American literacies and LGBTQ literacies, an understudied aspect of literacy in rhetoric and composition.

Tags: Agency, Literacy, Race

Rand, E. J. "A Disunited Nation and a Legacy of Contradiction: Queer Nation's Construction of Identity." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 28.4 (2004): 288-306. Print.

In order to explore the historicity of the identity term *queer*, Rand analyzes Queer Nation's 1990 flier "Queers Read This" and explores the responses to the flier. She argues that the flier served to consolidate a queer identity that worked across differences, was in contrast to gay and lesbian identities, and responded to violence with "queer rage" (290-296). However, "Queers Read This" was also a contradictory text: While calling for unity across differences, it also revealed an uneasy incorporation of lesbians into a queer identity, and while it expressed solidarity against racism, queers of color remained invisible (296-299). Further, while the flier claims that queers are in contrast to gays and lesbians, they are also simultaneously gays and lesbians (302). These contradictions allow for the identity meanings of *queer* to proliferate (297), as it did in media coverage of Queer Nation, which alternated between explaining the group as rebellious youth in opposition to older gays and lesbians, and as a "gay-rights" group (302). Thus, the meanings of *queer* have expanded and it has come to signify many different and conflicting identity claims. Rand concludes any attempt to define *queer* "or to establish normative criteria for its use denies the contradictory impulses that have been embedded within it" (303).

Tags: Identity, Media, Queer Nation, Violence



Present Tense

Sloop, John M. *Disciplining Gender: Rhetorics of Sex Identity in Contemporary US Culture*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2004. Print.

Sloop analyzes cases of “gender trouble” in the 1990s that, instead of encouraging reconsideration of gender and sexual norms, led to the reassertion of dominant ideologies of gender and sexuality. Sloop provides five case studies wherein mass media discussed gender deviance and disciplined gendered bodies, thereby reinforcing gender normatively and heteronormativity. In Chapter 1, Sloop examines scientific and mass mediated discourses about the gender of the “John/Joan” case from the 1960s to 1990s. “John/Joan” was the case of a male infant who had been “reassigned” as female after the accidental removal of his penis during a circumcision (25). Scientific and mass media coverage of this case at first celebrated the case as evidence that gender was socially constructed, but when the child later learned that he was “originally” male and wanted to live as a male, undergoing surgery, scientific and mass media used the case to affirm that sex and gender were biologically determined. Sloop argues that both of these perspectives—biologism and social constructionism—reproduce the gender binary of male-female. Following Judith Butler and Judith (now Jack) Halberstam, Sloop explores how these discourses help to make gender and sexuality “remarkably rigid” (27, qting. Halberstam). In Chapter 2, Sloop analyzes mainstream discourses about Brandon Teena to show how gender is ideologically disciplined to be tied to biological sex. In Chapter 3, Sloop turns to musician k.d. lang, arguing that her coming out as lesbian, which coincided with her turn away from country to a larger mass appeal, also marked a shift in her gender performance and her media coverage: Her gender and musical performances and media discussion of her shifted from “categorically messy” and ambiguously gendered to a “truth-telling” lesbian performance (84). Chapter 4 explores public rhetoric about Janet Reno, showing how print media discussed her gender performance in terms of her body and masculinity, and tamed anxieties about her “family status and presumed (and troubled) sexuality” through disciplining femininity (107). Chapter 5 explores discourses about the 1999 murder of Private Barry Winchell, killed for being gay by fellow soldiers. At the center of these discourses is Winchell’s relationship with Cal “Calpernia” Addams, who was portrayed in the media as either a gay man or as a male-to-female transsexual. This gender trouble, Sloop shows, created a debate over Winchell’s sexuality and Addams’s gender and sexuality that attempted to ignore ambiguities and reinforce gender norms. Through his analysis, Sloop advocates a “critical rhetoric” approach that attempts to intervene in these discourses through attending to *doxa* and the materiality of discourses (18).

Tags: Bodies, Gender, Heteronormativity, Identity, Media, Medical, Representation, Transgender



Present Tense

Sloop, John M. "‘This Is Not Natural!’ Caster Semenya’s Gender Threats." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 29.2. (2012): 81-96. Print.

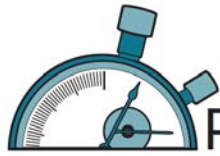
Sloop examines public discourses about Caster Semenya’s “true” gender in order to explore the implications of the gendered logic that inform these discourses and problematize binary understandings of gender. Semenya, a gold-medal-winning South African runner, came under scrutiny in 2009 for her gender identity, as suspicions about her “true” gender arose because of her masculine features. She was required to undergo “gender tests” and became the subject of much public discourse. Sloop identifies four logics of gender at play in public discourses: 1) gender as biological, in the body, and marked by physical signifiers like chromosomes and secondary sex characteristics, reading Semenya as male (84-85); 2) gender as identifiable through visual markers on the body, in opposition to scientific views of gender, reading Semenya as female (86); 3) Semenya as a hermaphrodite, a logic that reads non-normative bodies by maintaining binary gender categories (88); and 4) a minority logic of gender identity in which individuals choose their gender identity (89-90). Sloop speculates, with cautious hope, that these competing logics open up spaces for loosening gender rigidity and its ties to biological sex (86-87); further, the development of “an organic articulation” of queer logics of “self-naming identity” provides positive hope for challenging rigid gender binaries (90).

Tags: Bodies, Gender, Identity, Media, Medical, Representation

Smith, Ralph R., and Russel R. Windes. “The Progay and Antigay Issue Culture: Interpretation, Influence and Dissent.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83.1 (1997): 28-48. Print.

Smith and Windes explore the dynamics of the oppositional interactions between progay and antigay interpretive communities. These oppositional discourses, Smith and Windes argue, shape the terms of the controversy, influence how collective identities are presented, and help to create dissent within interpretive communities. For example, antigay discourses focus on chosen or learned behaviors, rather than identity, which has shaped progay rhetoric to favor essentialist and ethnic notions of identity instead of constructionist ones. Conversely, progay rhetorics have pushed for secularization of the civil order and argued that antigay religious factions are powerful; antigay rhetorics have responded by creating a more secular identity and claiming that their views are an oppressed minority. These oppositional interactions also shape terms of the issue, and they invite dissent within interpretive frames (such as debates between essentialist and constructionist identities within progay camps). Smith and Windes advocate further research into how oppositional interpretive packages influence each other.

Tags: Gay Rights, Homophobia, Identity, Politics, Religion



Present Tense

Spurlin, William J. "Rhetorical Hermeneutics and Gay Identity Politics: Rethinking American Cultural Studies." *Reconceptualizing American Literary/Cultural Studies: Rhetoric, History, and Politics in the Humanities*. Ed. William E. Cain. New York: Garland, 1996. 169-183. Print.

Spurlin argues that reader-oriented theories often posit a universal reader who is not marked by difference or position (169). Drawing on Steven Mailloux's argument for rhetorical hermeneutics that situates interpretations of texts (169-170), Spurlin asks what a rhetorical approach might afford regarding understanding identity politics and American cultural studies (171). In order to explore an answer to this, Spurlin analyzes the reception of James Baldwin's texts, especially *Another Country*, in the 1960s, exploring the tropes used to understand and interpret gay desire and identity in that particular historical context (171). Reception of Baldwin, he shows, was marked by racial anxieties and the perceived threat of homosexuality. The psychologizing of homosexuality and the conceptual linking of health and morality in the 1960s informed coverage and reception of Baldwin (176), as did the increased visibility of gays in conjunction with cultural anxieties over their undetectability (179). Spurlin advocates a rhetorical hermeneutics approach that, rather than conduct close readings of texts in classes, puts texts in historical contexts to explore how tropes about homosexuality inform readings of texts and interpretations of identities.

Tags: Histories, Identity, Literature, Race

Squires, Catherine R., and Daniel C. Brouwer. "In/Discernible Bodies: The Politics of Passing in Dominant and Marginal Media." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19.3 (2002): 283-310. Print.

Squires and Brouwer analyze coverage in both dominant media and Black and queer media of cases of two types of alleged passing—the passing of those allegedly Black as White, and the passing of those allegedly female as male. Squires and Brouwer compare how dominant media and marginal media frame sex, gender, race, and passing, showing both similarities and differences between dominant and marginal media coverage, and between instances of racial and gendered passing. These similarities between dominant and marginal discourses shows a similar fixation on determining one's "true" identity but for different reasons: In marginal media, passing is often put into context of a history of civil rights or the politics of identity, a context largely ignored by dominant media. Additionally, marginal media is often invested in fixing identity categories to advance group solidarity. Squires and Brouwer also show how the act of passing across gender lines is also interpreted in media as an act of passing across sexual identity lines.

Tags: Bodies, Gender, Identity, Media, Passing, Race, Transgender



Present Tense

VanHaitsma, Pamela. "Queering the Language of the Heart: Romantic Letters, Genre Instruction, and Rhetorical Practice." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44.1 (2014): 6-24. Print.

VanHaitsma argues that romantic letter writing—though often understood as a “natural” practice—in the nineteenth century was learned through rhetorical practice and genre education that also taught heteronormative notions and practices of romantic life. She analyzes nineteenth-century instruction manuals that taught the genre of romantic letters, as well as letters between two mid-nineteenth-century African American women, Addie Brown and Rebecca Primus, who subverted the norms of the genre, “compos[ing] a cross-class, same-sex romantic relationship at midcentury” (9). By providing and discussing models of romantic letters, manuals taught conventions of the genre and also heteronormative gendered relations, proper timing, restraint for relationships, and the goal of marriage. VanHaitsma shows how Brown and Primus subverted, or queered, gendered conventions of romantic letters, norms of restraint, and norms of content for letters.

Tags: Class, Heteronormativity, Race

West, Isaac. “What’s the Matter with Kansas and New York City? Definitional Ruptures and the Politics of Sex.” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 47.3 (2011): 163-177. Print.

West examines the implications of who is invested with authority to define *sex* through analyzing a Kansas Supreme Court case and a regulatory reform for amending birth certificates in New York City. The Kansas Supreme Court had nullified a marriage, arguing that a transgender woman was legally a male, and transgender activists in New York City worked with regulatory agencies to simplify the process of changing one’s sex on birth certificates. West’s reading of the Kansas Supreme Court case asks—instead of how the state defines marriage—how we might define *sex* and who gets to define it. Drawing on Edward Schiappa’s concept of “definitional rupture,” West explores the risks of authorizing the state to define *sex*. He suggests that investing the law with such definitional work as a prerequisite for cultural intelligibility may foreclose possibilities for reimagining politics (176).

Tags: Gender, Legal, Transgender, Politics



Present Tense

Wilcox, Sarah A. "Cultural Context and the Conventions of Science Journalism: Drama and Contradiction in Media Coverage of Biological Ideas about Sexuality." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20.3 (2003): 225-247. Print.

Wilcox explores media coverage of the science of sexuality, including how the media selects studies to cover and the role mass media plays in circulating ideas about science and sexuality. She argues that there is "a circuit of communication" between various institutions that shapes media coverage (241). Media coverage of sexual politics relies on a dichotomy between choosing to be gay and being born gay, a dichotomy that depends upon beliefs in biological determinism, a strict hetero/homo divide, and the necessity of evidence that homosexuality is immutable in order to advance social change (231). The larger political debate between choice and biological determinism helps to frame media coverage of biological studies about sexuality, and those scientific studies that more easily fit into this frame were more likely to receive coverage (233, 236). Further, Wilcox shows how science journalism often included discussions of how studies might impact politics, especially if the study received high coverage (238-239). Additionally, science coverage often represented gay and lesbian political voices, but only rarely included conservative voices (240-241). This science coverage risks shifting the debate about homosexuality from the realm of politics to the realm of science (243).

Tags: Etiology, Identity, Media, Medical, Politics

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 8: Rhetorics of Activism

Awwad, Julian. "The Postcolonial Predicament of Gay Rights in the *Queen Boat* Affair." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 7.3 (2010): 318-336. Print.

Awwad explores the implications of the *Queen Boat 52* for international gay rights and gay rights advocacy in postcolonial conditions. In 2001, Egyptian police arrested, tortured, and tried 52 individuals accused of crimes against the state for same-sex behaviors. Drawing on Joseph Massad's postcolonial critiques of the "Gay International," Awwad argues that Western intervention is problematic because it assumes a universal gay and lesbian identity, but non-intervention is also problematic because it does not hold states accountable and does not help the plight of those persecuted by the state (319). Awwad addresses this tension by proposing a human rights approach not based on identity but rather on other human rights ideals (330). Awwad shows how the Egyptian state has begun to constitute gay subjectivities in response to postcolonialism: In a moment of neoliberal economic problems, and to shore up the state as moral and virtuous, gay subjectivity was constituted by the state for the first time in the *Queen Boat 52* case (321-323). Awwad's analysis further shows that both the Egyptian state and the Gay International rely on an "orientalist epistemology" that "historically reinvent[s] the past" and a "pre-colonial culture" (326). While Awwad agrees with critiques that human rights can be a violent, colonial discourse, once a state has constituted gay subjectivities and enacts violence against those subjects, human rights discourses become "the most expedient and available way to address the plight of those enduring state oppression" (333).

Tags: Activism, Citizenship, Gay Rights, Legal

Bean, Hamilton. "US National Security Culture: From Queer Psychopathology to Queer Citizenship." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.1 (2014): 52-79. Print.

Bean analyzes the discourse surrounding Chelsea Manning's leak of US national security documents to Wikileaks and shows that there is (still) a cultural assumption that homosexuality is psychologically pathological. By comparing this discourse to the Nixon administration's attempt to associate Daniel Ellsberg (leaker of the "Pentagon Papers" in 1971) with homosexuality, Bean argues that homosexuality is still associated with divulging state secrets, destabilizing security, instability, and disloyalty. Charges of homosexuality serve to undermine credibility and a leaker's motivation (53, 56-60). Hamilton also explores Manning's rhetoric itself, emphasizing its "queerness"—"its ability to frustrate, counteract, and undermine established



Present Tense

assumptions" (61). Manning's rhetoric, Bean argues, alludes to important shifts in understanding national security leaking: Digital technologies leave evidence of conflicting messages, making it difficult for a rhetor to create a coherent case about oneself (63-64), and contemporary communicative capitalism means that massive amounts of leaked information is possible, but then this material lacks coherence and uptake by citizens (65-66). A variety of factors lead the public to focus on the leaker instead of on the information of the leaks themselves (69). Bean suggests that Manning might provide a model for queer citizenship that focuses on affective citizenship, "generating affect and activism in ways that combat the injustices and cruelties of war" (70).

Tags: Activism, Affect, Citizenship, Digital, Homophobia, Transgender

Bennett, Jeffrey A. *Banning Queer Blood: Rhetorics of Citizenship, Contagion, and Resistance*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2009. Print.

Bennett explores the sociopolitical and rhetorical implications of the Food and Drug Administration's ban on men who have had sex with men who donate blood. Bennett argues that this ban has implications for understanding citizenship and cultural politics. Namely, blood donation should be understood as "a performative act of civic engagement and nation building" that works through an altruistic relationship to the social body (6). Bennett chronicles how scientific discourses and "public health" are deployed to not only stigmatize queer men but to discipline their bodies. Bennett's ultimate goal is to re-stimulate the conversation about the blood ban and open up cultural politics to a more nuanced approach to citizenship.

In chapter 2, Bennett argues that blood has historically been tied to kinship and citizenship, but queer men have been imagined as the "abject other who pose a threat to the purity of the nation" (30). They are simultaneously imagined as foreign others and as part of the nation, a sacrificial citizen who helps to sustain the reproductive citizen. Chapter 3 explores how the development of the blood ban is remembered in popular texts. Bennett argues that certain citizens have been imbued with having scientific knowledge and that queer men are constructed as naive, ignorant, or oblivious to the effects of HIV/AIDS. Bennett explores the risks of this rhetorical pitting of science against gay men.

In chapter 4, Bennett explores the scientific construction of queer men as a danger and how scientific discourses constructed queer men "as diseased citizens who must be closely monitored and swiftly contained to ensure the safety of the blood supply" (85). Bennett turns to queer men who attempt to donate blood in chapter 5. These men



Present Tense

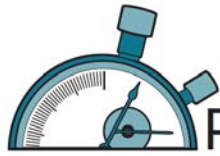
have two options: either to confess that they've had sex with men and be turned away, or to deny their sexuality and thus be able to donate. Bennett argues that these two choices—“protest” and “passing,” respectively—are resistant strategies that support each other: Protesting at the donation site calls attention to the fact that others are passing, and thus passing calls attention to the fact that queer blood is not automatically harmful. Bennett understands these individual acts of resistance as part of “networks of resistance [that] remain imperative for dismantling the deferral policy” (139). Bennett's conclusion calls for renewing the debate about the blood ban.

Tags: Activism, Bodies, Citizenship, HIV/AIDS, Medical, Passing

Chávez, Karma R. *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalition Possibilities*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2013. Print.

Chávez explores the intersections of queer politics and migration politics to explore the possibilities of coalition activism. She provides a focus on “queer migration politics” that is meant to challenge liberal inclusionary approaches to politics and utopian political visions (6). As she traces how activists try to create “more livable worlds,” she understands *queer* as an inventional process for coalition building, exploring how activists “discover and innovate responses—creative and sometimes mundane—to predominant rhetorical imaginaries” (7). In chapter 1, Chávez explores manifestos that “put forth visions of for queer, migrant, and queer migrant activism, rights, and justice” (23). These manifestos, Chávez shows, constitute coalition building that does not rely on inclusion or utopian politics but rather provides a “*differential vision*,” or “an impure political orientation” (47). This orientation builds a coalition between groups that may have different political strategies but are similarly aligned against hegemonic power (47). Chapter 2 analyzes Yasmin Nair's online rhetoric that critiques inclusionary politics. Chávez terms Nair's rhetoric “*radical interactionality*,” a form of rhetorical confrontation that explore and exposes the roots of problems and reveals how power is working to constrain and shape responses to the problems (51). Although Chávez argues for the value of radical interactionality, she also explores the limitations of Nair's rhetoric: Critique often minimizes the role of emotions in politics, and its effectiveness often depends on white queers to reimagine coalition politics (77).

In chapter 3, Chávez analyzes the activism of migrant youth who supported the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. She explores the appropriation of the queer discourse and strategy of “coming out” by these activists and the development of the “undocuqueer” activism. Chapter 4 studies the coalition building of Tucson-based activists and how they reframe difference and reimagine



Present Tense

politics. Chávez ultimately advocates for a vision of coalition politics as one “that can reorganize our possibilities and the conditions of them” as an alternative to inclusionary or utopian politics (146).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Identity, Immigration, Legal, Politics

Ciszek, Erica. “Cracks in the Glass Slipper: Does It Really ‘Get Better’ for LGBTQ Youth, or Is It Just Another Cinderella Story?” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 38.4 (2014): 325-340. Print.

Ciszek analyzes the 20 most popular videos posted to the *It Gets Better* campaign for the narrative embedded in the videos. She shows how the narratives in the videos mirror fairy tale narratives, particularly the Cinderella story with “a promise of a happy ending” (331). The videos include basic components of the Cinderella narrative: a hero or heroine in need of saving, a villainous family in a toxic environment that must be escaped, an LGBTQ community of support that functions like a fairy godmother, a transformation through coming out that promises authenticity and freedom, and a magical “happily ever after” that often includes finding a romantic partner (331-333). Ciszek’s concern is that these narratives reinforce dominant representations of LGBTQ youth as “at-risk, isolated victim[s]” (334) and that the videos’ focus on distant futures doesn’t address the relationship between LGBTQ communities and individuals (334-335).

Tags: Activism, Age, Digital, Futurity, Media

DeLuca, Kevin Michael. “Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation.” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36.1 (1999): 9-21. Print.

DeLuca examines the body rhetorics of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation, arguing that they engage in constitutive rhetoric using “an alternative image politics” for public argumentation (10). Their use of unconventional tactics—making bodies visibly vulnerable, dangerous, ludicrous, or taboo—are rhetorical attempts to reframe and rename identities and worldviews (10-11). Rather than argue through reason, these decentralized activist organizations argue through bodies put at risk: Earth First! challenges anthropocentrism by putting their bodies in danger, and ACT UP and Queer Nation refigure homosexual bodies and “transgress heterosexist spaces” (19). DeLuca suggests that bodies are “both socially constructed and excessive” and advocates that rhetorical critics analyze bodies for their rhetorical force (20).

Tags: ACT UP, Activism, Bodies, Queer Nation



Present Tense

Fejes, Fred. *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Fejes provides a history of gay and lesbian activism and religious and moral opposition to homosexuality, focusing on 1977 as a turning point in the national debate on homosexuality. He argues that although the 1969 Stonewall riots were important in the development of gay and lesbian activism, the political campaigns in Dade County Florida and elsewhere in 1977 and 1978 marked a turn to and development of national politics. To provide context for the late 1970s, Fejes outlines the history of representations and understandings of homosexuality in the US from the 1940s on in chapter 2. Before World War II, the image of the homosexual as a fair was seen as barely a threat (11-12), and after the war, homosexuality began to be seen as a problem and a threat to traditional gender roles and heterosexuality. Homosexuality became portrayed "as a sickness, a crime, and a source of national subversion" (17). By the 1970s, this rhetorical framing had shifted to a focus on gay and lesbian "lifestyles," but Fejes notes that the stereotypes of the dangerous and sick homosexual had never fully been challenged (50-52).

With this history in mind, Fejes turns to the events of 1973 Dade County, Florida in chapter 3, noting that gay rights had made strides nationwide with a variety of city ordinances protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination. However, with the passage of an ordinance in Dade County protecting, the seeming progress over the last few years was challenged. 1977 also marked a radical change in Evangelical politics: Prior to this time, most evangelical leaders eschewed explicit involvement in politics and didn't focus heavily on homosexuality as a threat (71-74). However, in response to the new ordinance in Dade County, and led by Anita Bryant, Evangelical politics took rise and gained a national stage.

In chapters 4 and 5, Fejes recounts the campaigns to repeal the anti-discrimination ordinance, showing how Anita Bryant's campaign had focus and how gay and lesbian leaders struggled to organize and respond effectively to her campaign. Ultimately, citizens repealed the ordinance in a vote, and Fejes argues that the "human rights" appeals of gay and lesbian activists were no match for the appeals to fear and homophobia of Bryant's Save Our Children campaign (139). In chapter 6, Fejes traces the effects of this political battle in St. Paul, Wichita, and Eugene where ordinances were similarly repealed by referendums, and how discourses of both "human rights" and "gay rights" by gay and lesbian activists were ineffective in these ballot measures. His analysis shows that gay and lesbian tactics of framing themselves as a "minority" facing oppression and needing government protection was not effective (178).



Present Tense

Chapter 7 explores Proposition 6 in California, John Briggs's referendum to make it legal to fire gay and lesbian teachers, and attempts to repeal anti-discrimination laws in Seattle. Both of these referendums failed, in part because of a growing and developing coalition of gay and lesbian activists. Ultimately, then, the events of 1977 and 1978 signified the emergence of a national gay and lesbian community and the simultaneous rise of the religious right (214-215, 220). Fejes's analysis shows that while a national movement had begun, gay and lesbian activists still struggled to argue that they were an oppressed minority (227).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Gay Rights, Legal, Politics

Galewski, Elizabeth. "Playing Up Being a Woman': Femme Performance and the Potential for Ironic Representation." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11.2 (2008): 279-302. Print.

Elizabeth Galewski notes that "visibility" has become the main political strategy of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activists at the expense of other strategies that "at least partially hinge on *invisibility* and enable the queer to appear *otherwise*" (280). The visibility strategy has particularly privileged butch female visibility, thus harming femmes who are seen "as not queer 'enough'" (280). To reconsider the values of publicity and to consider alternative forms of political representation, Galewski turns to an ethnographic study of femme queer women in Philadelphia, showing how logics of visibility have censured femme women, do not represent their interests, and reproduce stereotypes. Galewski proposes "irony" as a potential alternative political strategy, which involves the unexpected, surprise, and stealth. Thus, femme bodies provide "a peculiar potential" (292) to disrupt expectations by appearing "straight" but subverting expectations and coming out as "queer." Galewski concludes by outlining the risks and limitations to an ironic approach, advocating instead that the ironic and visibility strategies need to be used "together in a productive tension" (299).

Tags: Bodies, Lesbian, Performativity, Visibility

Goltz, Dustin Bradley. "It Gets Better: Queer Futures, Critical Frustrations, and Radical Potentials." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 30.2 (2013): 135-151. Print.

Queer criticisms of the It Gets Better campaign have argued that it is self-congratulatory, tied to privilege, and condescending. Counter to these critiques, which Goltz sees as "tragic critique" that shut down debate, Goltz deploys "critical frustration" and argues that the It Gets Better campaign has queer potentials and that critiques of the campaign can strengthen these potentials (137). The It Gets Better



Present Tense

project, he argues, offers multiple, contradictory meanings of “better” and challenges heteronormative assumptions of temporality (138). If straight time excludes queers and equates them with destruction or the end of futurity, *It Gets Better* resists this temporality and offers multiple visions of the future (137). Critiques, Goltz argues, are partial and thus cannot encompass the whole project of *It Gets Better*. One aspect of their partiality, he shows, is that they equate *It Gets Better* with Dan Savage’s privilege, ignoring the multivocality of the videos in the project and how those videos often incorporate critique (143-145).

Tags: Activism, Digital, Futurity, Heteronormativity, Privilege

Gray, Mary L. “‘Queer Nation is Dead/Long Live Queer Nation’: The Politics and Poetics of Social Movement and Media Representation.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26.3 (2009): 212-236. Print.

Gray examines Queer Nation/San Francisco’s (QN/SF) short life (1990-1991), drawing from press coverage and the group’s archives. She argues that coverage in the gay press and mainstream media focused on their goal of visibility, particularly through focusing on the spectacle of their actions, to the detriment of their goal of larger coalition building (213). Analyses of archive material shows that QN/SF was deeply invested in interrogating intersectionality and the interrelations of multiple oppressions; however, press coverage of spectacle brought in new recruits who were committed to spectacle, shifting QN/SF’s goals away from coalition building (214). The media’s inability to portray QN/SF as anything more than a gay and lesbian rights group speaks to the difficulty of multi-issue activism gaining complex media coverage (222). Gray suggests that much “identity construction and deconstruction” (226) was being conducted behind the scenes and at events that received little or no media coverage. Following Cindy Patton’s argument that identity “is a matter of duties and ethics, not of being” (qtd. in 230), Gray argues that QN/SF’s identity work warrants attention in order to further understand coalition building.

Tags: ACT UP, Identity, Media, Queer Nation, Visibility

Hundley, Heather L., and J. Scott Rodriguez. “Transactivism and Postmodernity: An Agonistic Analysis of Transliterature.” *Communication Quarterly* 57.1 (2009): 35-50. Print.

Hundley and Rodriguez examine transgender activist movements, arguing that they deploy a postmodern approach for their rhetorical strategies. They use *trans* as an umbrella term for an array of communities that do not fit into traditional gender



Present Tense

dichotomies (36). As a contribution to research in social movements rhetoric, they approach transactivism through literature written by trans activists, such as Kate Bornstein's 1994 *Gender Outlaw*. Hundley and Rodriguez identify three postmodern strategies deployed by transactivists in this literature: polysemy, polyvocality, and the use of identity construction to build community (38-47).

Tags: Activism, Gender, Transgender

Morris, Charles E., III, and John M. Sloop. "What Lips These Lips Have Kissed': Refiguring the Politics of Queer Public Kissing." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3.1 (2006): 1-26. Print.

Morris and Sloop argue for understanding the visibility of man-on-man kissing as still disruptive to heteronormativity if we consider the rhetoricity of the kiss—its kairotic and tactical aspects—and how it is disciplined. They understand kissing as performative—read as “not only normal but natural” when heterosexual and potentially disruptive when same-sex (4). Although many have argued that the increased visibility of same-sex kissing in television and movies shows great progress for gay and lesbian inclusion, Morris and Sloop argue that we need to contextualize same-sex kissing and explore the ways it is disciplined. They argue that the increase in same-sex kissing in popular culture does not necessarily translate to politics, and that simple progress narratives of visibility obscure the kairotic aspects of kissing (6-7). Rather than a simple “count” of visible same-sex kissing, we need to attend to the forms of visibility: Much same-sex kissing in film and television is domesticated, “predictable and comfortable” (8). Same-sex kissing is still disciplined politically, economically, ideologically, and even violently (13-18), and Morris and Sloop see potential for the visibility of man-on-man kissing to challenge heteronormativity if understood kairotically and tactically, and for providing potential for queer world making (10-13, 19).

Tags: Activism, Bodies, Desire, Heteronormativity, Popular Culture, Publics, Representation, Visibility

Poirot, Kristan. “Domesticating the Liberated Woman: Containment Rhetorics of Second Wave Radical/Lesbian Feminism.” *Women's Studies in Communication* 32.3 (2009): 263-292. Print.

Through an analysis of second wave lesbian feminist rhetoric between 1970 and 1975, Poirot argues that radical lesbian feminists attempted to redefine “woman” in a way



Present Tense

that resulted in containing and domesticating both “woman” and “feminist.” Radical feminists, motivated by a goal of self-determination, redefined woman and feminist as “woman-identified-woman,” in opposition to a male-defined woman, creating a vision of an authentic self outside of the oppression of men (274-275). Through this rhetorical move, lesbian feminists ultimately tied the identity lesbian to political consciousness and liberation, making the political personal (279). Inadvertently, then, they tied liberation to a set identity, creating a “lifestyle feminism” (280). While they attempted to politicize the private sphere, their rhetoric also inadvertently tied feminism and “woman” to the home, which further domesticated politics (281-282). Poirot thus shows how radical lesbian feminists’ rhetoric during this period “domesticated radical liberation by circumscribing it to what was already known in advance,” containing feminism to a pre-set identity, social consciousness, and domestic space (286).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Feminism, Lesbian

Pritchard, Eric Darnell. “‘This Is Not an Empty-Headed Man in a Dress’: Literacy Misused, Reread and Rewritten in Soulopoliz.” *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 278-299. Print.

Noting a lack of scholarly attention to black transgender experiences in southern cultures, Pritchard provides a case study of Ella Mosley, an African-American, transgender woman, and rights activist. Exploring her “rhetorical strategies to disrupt anti-transgender sentiments and policies in her southern community” (279), Pritchard advocates for using literacy as a lens for “examining black queer activism,” resistance, and identity creation. Pritchard explores the “peculiar labor at the intersections of literacy and the multiplicity of identities” (280). He identifies “misuses of literacy”—the ways that oppressive agents work against marginalized individuals and communities through appropriating literacy (282)—and explores Mosley’s challenges to these misuses of literacy. Particularly, Mosley responds with three rhetorical strategies: mandates, those internal and external forces that lead her to resist misuses of literacy; rereading, or decoding, critiquing, and reinterpreting misuses of literacy; and rewriting, or inventional strategies that work in the spaces created by rereading (283). Pritchard’s case study is useful in showing the utility of using literacy as a lens for examining activism and exploring the complex relationships between literacy and multiple identities.

Tags: Agency, Activism, Identity, Literacy, Race, Regionalism, Transgender

Pritchard, E. "Yearning to Be What We Might Have Been: Queering Black Male Feminism" *Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International* 1.2 (2012): 179-200. Print.

Pritchard intervenes in black male feminism by advocating for self-critique along the lines of sexuality and cisgender identities. Pritchard argues that black male feminism has often worked under the assumption that black men are heterosexual and cisgender, which risks promoting and reinforcing unrecognized gendered and sexual normativity (180). He examines the barriers to queering black male feminism, the ignored and unrecognized privileges in black male feminism, and potential points of intervention in these discourses. Pritchard stresses the necessity of including a multitude of black masculinities within black male feminism in order to fully critique patriarchy (189). Another implication of black male feminism's assumptions of heterosexuality and cisgender identity is that queer male privilege and sexism has been left unaddressed (194).

Tags: Identity, Feminism, Gender

Sewell, John Ike. "'Becoming Rather Than Being': Queer's Double-Edged Discourse as Deconstructive Practice." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 38.4 (2014): 291-307. Print.

Sewell theorizes the word "queer" as a "double-edged discourse," or a discourse that can both "unite and divide—to empower *and* to alienate" (293). He explores the malleability of "queer" and the development of queer discourses that arose in response to stigmatizing discourses and assimilation during the AIDS crisis (293-295). Understanding the AIDS crisis as an Event, in Alain Badiou's sense, Sewell explores how Queer Nation and the tract "Queer Read This" responded to the Event in a moment when traditional gay and lesbian strategies didn't seem to be working (297). "Queer," he shows, could mobilize by uniting a "nation" and a "people" (298) and could work antagonistically within the LGBTQ community as "an oppositional discourse within a larger oppositional (LGBTQ) discourse" (301-302). Because "queer" is a paradox—it is both a thing and "a thing that *cannot be*"—Sewell suggests understanding the term as a deconstructive practice rather than an identity category (303).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, HIV/AIDS, Identity, Politics, Queer Nation



Present Tense

Smith, Ralph R., and Russel R. Windes. *Progay/Antigay: The Rhetorical War over Sexuality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000. Print.

Smith and Windes rhetorically analyze the competing claims around sexuality in national politics, exploring the ways in which progay arguments and antigay arguments influence each other. They deploy two concepts central to their analysis: *issue culture*, or “the textual practices which become relatively fixed in discussion of a public question” (xix), and *interpretative package*, or the clustering of symbols around an issue to represent and frame that issue (54). Chapter 1 chronicles the rise of progay advocacy and traditionalist antigay rhetoric in the second half of the twentieth century, which they note gave rise to the development of professional organizations devoted to each side of the issue and has led to a divisive, polarized public policy debate (32-33). In chapter 2, Smith and Windes analyze the language strategies and development of collective identities involved in the public debate over sexuality, as well as how anti-gay and progay rhetorics have influenced each other. Chapter 3 analyzes the interpretive packages of progay and antigay, showing that there is a common ground of reliance on the public/private distinction, but that “each side draws radically different conclusions from this binary” (58). Anti-gay rhetoric frames homosexuality as a “private evil,” whereas progay rhetoric sees it as a “neutral difference” (61). This difference leads to differences in arguments over policy, whether the government’s role is to discriminate or to protect.

Smith and Windes turn to collective identity in chapter 4, showing how the rhetorical strategies of both sides of the debate seek to frame themselves as moral, legitimate, and the “defender of order,” and frame the other side negatively (93). In chapter 5, they analyze internal struggles within interpretive frames. They show that there are numerous viewpoints and arguments within each side of the debate and note that traditionalists have been able to develop a more coherent argument due to supportive institutions (particularly churches) and access to historical language (128). Chapter 6 provides a case study of their analysis by approaching the gay marriage debate specifically. In their closing chapter, Smith and Windes outline the challenges and limitations of the public policy debate around homosexuality, suggesting, among other things, that traditionalists need to find appeals that work in a multicultural society (185) and that gay rights movements needs to develop a wider range of appeals and not mistake itself as akin to the black civil rights movement (188). Smith and Windes close by exploring some potentials for future research regarding political rhetoric and public policy.

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Gay Rights, Identity, Politics, Publics, Religion



Present Tense

Spade, Dean, and Craig Wilse. "Sex, Gender, and War in an Age of Multicultural Imperialism." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Wordmaking* 1.1 (2014): 5-29. Print.

Spade and Wilse analyze three concurrent events that coalesce around militarism and human rights: the trial of Chelsea Manning, who came out as a transwoman as she was tried for leaking sensitive US military documents to Wikileaks; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2011 speech claiming that gay rights are human rights; and the attempts to charge Julian Assange with rape charges in Sweden as charges pending for his Wikileaks involvement in the US. The authors argue that the discourses around these events help to support, strengthen, and naturalize US military imperialism through constructions of "sympathetic victims of violence" (7). Put differently, gay rights and feminist discourses are often deployed in support of hegemonic US militarism and neoliberal economic policies in ways that leave heteropatriarchy and structural violence unchallenged. Clinton's speech, for example, in universalizing gay rights, portrays the US as the leader and arbiter of human rights, deploying militaristic language against threats abroad (9-12). "Carceral feminism" is deployed to strengthen criminalization and the prison-industrial complex that disproportionately harms people of color and woman, and rape charges against Assange can be deployed to support military interests (13-16). Further, mainstream gay rights groups support Chelsea Manning in so far as she can be portrayed as a sympathetic, pro-military gay man, but distanced themselves from her as she became too anti-military and figured as a transwoman (17). These discourses, particularly anti-homophobic discourses, allow for US liberal politicians to appear progressive but still promote racist and militaristic policies, it channels desires to confront heteropatriarchy into identification with the violent state apparatuses, and it makes criminal and military systems appear as though they are "sites for freedom, inclusion, and equality" (21). Spade and Wilse close by examining some potential anti-imperialism queer politics.

Tags: Activism, Feminism, Gay Rights, Identity, Legal, Military, Race, Transgender, Violence

Quinn, Therese, and Erica R. Meiners. "From Anti-Bullying Laws and Gay Marriages to Queer Worlds and Just Futures." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 0.1 (2013): 149-176. Print.

Quinn and Meiners question the efficacy of anti-bullying laws, which have become popular and passed in most state legislatures. They place these laws within a neoliberal context—the privatization of education, the increased criminalization of schools, and precarious work, including de-unionization (153). Anti-bullying laws, they argue, ignore structural and state violence, framing bullying narrowly and punishing



Present Tense

individual perpetrators, “mask[ing] the complex roots of queer violence” (156). Further, these laws are not preventative. Instead, they are punitive, furthering the criminalization of the education system that disproportionately punishes the most marginalized students (159). Quinn and Meiners ask, in public schools that are increasingly privatized and de-unionized, will teachers take risks in confronting homophobia when their jobs may no longer be protected (162-163)? They close by challenging the goal of equality as a goal that limits potential and excludes the most marginalized, and they promote coalition politics that links queer justice to the justice of other oppressed groups (164-168).

Tags: Activism, Citizenship, Homophobia, Intersectionality, Legal, Politics, Violence

Rand, Erin. “What One Voice Can Do’: Civic Pedagogy and Choric Collectivity at Camp Courage.” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 34.1 (2013): 28-51. Print.

In order to explore the relationship between performance and rhetorical studies, Rand analyzes the choric performances at Camp Courage, a training program held at the 2009 National Equality March to teach community organizing to activists. Rand argues that the choric activities at the camp highlight how rhetoric is embodied and performative, and how performance is thoroughly rhetorical (29). Rand argues that Camp Courage responds to the challenges of activism—creating collectivity across differences, developing trust in the face of risky protest, and developing cooperation—through collective choric rituals (30). She identifies the tactics Camp Courage deploys—storytelling, call-and-response, collective chanting, and applause—as a “civic pedagogy” (32) that through embodied and affective action create a “temporal collectivity” (46) that does not depend on erasing identity or belief differences.

Tags: Activism, Affect, Bodies, Identity

Spencer, Leland G., and Joshua Trey Barnett. “Touring Homophobia: Understanding the Soulfource Equality Ride as a Toxic Tour.” *Southern Communication Journal* 78.1 (2013): 25-41. Print.

The Equality Ride, operated by Soulfource, is an activist movement in which LGBTQ Christian college students travel by bus to visit and protest Christian colleges with anti-LGBT policies. Borrowing Phaedra Pezzulo’s concept of “toxic tourism” and analyzing blog posts by Equality Ride activists, Spencer and Bennett argue that this movement is rhetorically persuasive through their presence on these campuses. Their



Present Tense

presence on campus helps to reframe anti-LGBT policies as “toxic” and the campuses as toxic environments. The Equality Ride’s presence on these campuses also challenges the belief that Christianity and queerness are incompatible.

Tags: Activism, Identity, Religion

Tate, Helen. “The Ideological Effects of a Failed Constitutive Rhetoric: The Co-option of the Rhetoric of White Lesbian Feminism.” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 28.1 (2005): 1-31. Print.

Tate analyzes the constitutive rhetoric of second wave white lesbian feminists, arguing that their vision of feminism was too narrow and failed as effective constitutive rhetoric. Further, their failed rhetoric was co-opted by anti-feminist activists and used to discredit feminism and to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment. In their articulations of feminism, white lesbian feminists in the 1970s identified heterosexuality as the ultimate cause of oppression and advocated a “woman-identified woman” version of feminism in an attempt to be inclusive of heterosexual women. This vision provided a *telos* of liberation that expanded the meaning of lesbian beyond just sexual orientation, synthesizing “lesbian” and “feminism” against male supremacy (9-14). However, their claims were contested and rejected by heterosexual feminists and lesbians of color for being essentialist and for missing analyses of racism and the necessity of alliances with Black men (19). Tate argues that this failed constitutive rhetoric was easily co-opted by anti-feminist activists, particularly Phyllis Schlafly, who was able to caricature their arguments and use them to attack all of feminism, portraying feminism as anti-family (22-23). Tate argues that this co-optation helped to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment and contributed to the postfeminist disidentification of feminism by women (24-26).

Tags: Activism, Collective Identity, Feminism, Identity, Lesbian, Politics

West, Isaac. *Transforming Citizenships: Transgender Articulations of the Law*. New York: New York U P, 2014. Print.

West explores transgender activism from a rhetorical perspective, exploring the relationships among activism, the law, and citizenship. He examines specific claims about citizenship and troubles those notions of citizenship, particularly as they have been articulated by anti-normative queer theorists. Drawing on Stuart Hall’s notion of articulation, West understands citizenship broadly as the process of negotiating “actual or perceived rights, obligations, and privileges among members of a collective”



Present Tense

(6) and argues that citizenship involves both resisting and appealing to the law. The law, in his understanding, is not a deterministic “force acting on culture” (21); instead, it is one of the many means and “making one’s way in the world” (24), “a cultural practice of managing stranger relationalities” (21). Thus, West critiques queer theorists and activists who dismiss appeals to the law as reasserting normative citizenship; rather, West claims, the law can act and be acted upon in multiple, various ways as it is invoked and changed. Claims for inclusion or recognition are not necessarily liberal assimilationist practices: They involve both invoking the law and critiquing it (27). Through analyses of archives and collective actions for changes in bathroom policies and city and federal anti-discrimination ordinances and laws, West theorizes agency as a “performative repertoire,” or as a repertoire of embodied practices that are “enabled by and negotiated through the logics of subjective recognition” (39). West advocates for studying and understanding—even endorsing—“impure politics,” a politics that is necessarily invested in “authorizing gestures” of the law, even as it is not complicit in it (164).

Tags: Activism, Citizenship, Legal, Politics, Transgender

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 9. Discourses of HIV/AIDS

Bennett, Jeffrey, and Isaac West. "United We Stand, Divided We Fall': AIDS, Armorettes, and the Tactical Repertoires of Drag." *Queering the South*. Spec. issue of *Southern Communication Journal* 74.3 (2009): 300-313. Print.

Bennett and West explore the "tactical repertoires" of the Atlanta-based drag troupe the Armorettes. In the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis, which has disproportionately affected the South in comparison to the rest of the country, the Armorettes serve as more than just campy entertainment for the LGBTQ community in Atlanta. Bennett and West contend that the Armorettes deploy what they call "tactical repertoires" to constitute queer counterpublics, educating audiences about HIV/AIDS and building "communal obligations" among individuals (301-302). Through spectacles of grotesque performances, alliances with HIV/AIDS organizations, and large fundraisers, the Armorettes respond to stigma and shame, enacting "an ethics of queer life" (308, qting. Michael Warner).

Tags: Counterpublics, Drag, HIV/AIDS, Regionalism

Bowdon, Melody. "Technical Communication and the Role of the Public Intellectual: A Community HIV-Prevention Case Study." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 13.3 (2004): 325-340. Print.

Bowdon's key argument is that technical communicators must be civically engaged public intellectuals. She argues technical communicators possess both specialized knowledge about the ideologies of language as well as an understanding of "historical misconceptions about language" (325). All of this contributes to our ability to create "ethically sound texts" and shape the world around us. Her own research around an HIV/AIDS prevention program report is given as an example of public intellectual work in technical communication. What Bowdon calls "textual activism" is not just an opportunity but an obligation that we should feel. Drawing from John Trimbur, Carolyn Miller, and Tom Miller, Bowdon encourages us as communicators (as well as our students) to be agents of social change (327). As she presents her own work with the prevention program, she discusses the trope of risk among gay men and ideas of risk rhetorics. By investigating the wording and target audiences of the report, Bowdon is able to call into question misconceptions about ideas of risk and blame in the gay and bisexual male community as they relate to HIV/AIDS. Drawing on Richard Posner's work, Bowdon calls for consciousness raising and ethical and collaborative



Present Tense

models of writing as ways to impact communities for the better with social change (339).

Tags: Activism, Bodies, Ethics, HIV/AIDS, Technical Communication

Brouwer, Dan. "The Precarious Visibility Politics of Self-Stigmatization: The Case of HIV/AIDS Tattoos." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 18.2 (1998): 114-136. Print.

Brouwer examines the phenomenon of asymptomatic HIV-positive individuals marking their seropositive status on their bodies with tattoos. Such a move, he explains, is a "self-stigmatization" of the body that both conveys technical information and expresses a refusal to internalize shame (115). Brouwer situates these tattoos within a lineage of visibility politics, noting that the tattoos can invite surveillance and punitive responses from others, but also that the tattoos can challenge assumptions about healthy and ill bodies: If a body that appears visibly healthy is marked as HIV-positive with a tattoo, how can we actually discern between healthy and ill bodies (116)? Brouwer explores various implications that complicate these tattoos, including the opportunities for community strengthening, the risk of identity reduction, and the privilege of being able to self-stigmatize (127-128).

Tags: Affect, Bodies, Identity, HIV/AIDS, Visibility

Butler, Paul. "Embracing AIDS: History, Identity, and Post-AIDS Discourse." *JAC* 24.1 (2004): 93-111. Print.

Noting and decrying a lack of discussion of AIDS in English studies, Butler explores the "post-AIDS discourse" in our culture and the field, one marked by a shift from seeing AIDS as a crisis and death sentence to one of managed care (94). This discourse has led to decreased attention to HIV/AIDS on a global scale and in US minority populations. Post-AIDS discourse, Butler argues, masks the complications of the effects of AIDS and stigmatization on the LGBT community, attempting to "avoid linking a context of shame, fear, and horror with queer identity" (95). Further, this discourse has been harmful to the LGBT community, separating it from its history and serving as part of a process of normalization. Butler advocates that gays and lesbians "should embrace AIDS as part of its history" (95) in order to contest medical rhetorical and classification, combat stigmatization, and advocate for other communities affected by HIV/AIDS. Further, normalizing discourses and forgetting AIDS allows gays and lesbians to imagine a "shameful past" and to construct and stigmatize "others" in the process of



Present Tense

normalization (104). Butler ultimately calls for the necessity of remembering AIDS through a variety of media and strategies.

Tags: Affect, Bodies, Histories, HIV/AIDS, Identity, Memory

Christiansen, Adrienne E., and Jeremy J. Hanson. "Comedy as Cure for Tragedy: ACT UP and the Rhetoric of AIDS." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82.2 (1996): 157-170. Print.

Christiansen and Hanson use Kenneth Burke's notion of the comic frame to analyze ACT UP's response to AIDS discourse. They claim that "the tragic frame of AIDS discourse in America" frames gay men as victims or sacrifices (158); ACT UP's impudic public actions use the comic frame, "encourag[ing] audiences to see gay men as community members rather than sacrificial scapegoats" (159). The comic frame, according to Burke, is "both humane and rational," seeking to change behavior through changed identification or reconciliation, rather than a victim or scapegoat, as in the tragic frame (160). Through deploying what Burke calls "perspective by incongruity" (162), ACT UP engages in camp performances, irony, and identity play to call out politicians for their poor responses to HIV or to appeal to shared American values that the government and public were not living up to. Importantly, relying on the comic frame means that ACT UP members believed that others' minds were changeable (167).

Tags: ACT UP, Activism, HIV/AIDS

Goh, Debbie. "It's the Gays' Fault: News and HIV as Weapons Against Homosexuality in Singapore." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 32.4 (2008): 383-399. Print.

Goh examines coverage of homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in Singapore's national newspaper *Strait Times*, which had largely been silent on homosexuality until the prime minister changed discriminatory hiring policies in 2003 to allow for the hiring of talented gay foreigners (385). The prime minister's announcement led to international attention on Singapore, and international press began to label Singapore "as the new gay haven" despite the fact that homosexuality was still illegal in Singapore (386). To discipline homosexuality (in a Foucaultian sense), the government declared that there was an "alarming Aids [sic] epidemic" and instituted new regulatory policies and laws, including making it illegal to infect someone else with HIV (386). Goh argues that the newspaper served government interests by disciplining gay bodies through how it framed homosexuality. Gays were framed as the cause of the AIDS epidemic (despite the fact that "80% of HIV patients in Singapore were heterosexuals" [389]) and as



Present Tense

deviant and anti-family (389-391). Additionally, the newspaper supported government policies and promoted surveillance of bodies through required HIV testing (391-392).

Tags: Heteronormativity, HIV/AIDS, Legal, Media, Representation

Grabill, Jeffrey T. "Shaping Local HIV/AIDS Services Policy through Activist Research: The Problem of Client Involvement." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 9.1 (2000): 29-50. Print.

Grabill looks at how professional communication can serve as a site for activist research. Specifically, he recounts his involvement in the Atlanta area working with a local HIV/AIDS services organization. He draws on Ellen Cushman's research to promote ideas of reciprocity to the community being researched as well as the idea of an "activist stance" for the writer (34). Additionally, institutional critique as a practice of the writer figures strongly (drawing on the work of Jim Porter). One of the key issues in organizational communication, Grabill asserts, is the breakdown of communication when it comes to client involvement. These client barriers in communication stand in the way of fuller and richer dialogue. Barriers given as examples include the ways meetings are organized and run as well as public transportation availability. Ultimately, Grabill offers suggestions for policy writing that is more bottom up and poly-vocal.

Tags: Activism, Bodies, Ethics, HIV/AIDS, Technical Communication

Highberg, Nels P. "'Because We Were Just Too Scared': Rhetorical Constructions of Patient Zero." *Medical Humanities Review* 18.1-2 (2004): 9-26. Print.

Highberg analyzes rhetorical constructions of "Patient Zero"—Gaetan Dugas, the supposed first patient with HIV who helped to spread it quickly—in order to disrupt the narrative about him and HIV/AIDS and to open up the range of interpretations available when approaching "life, death, and disease" (10). Highberg analyzes Randy Shilts's 1987 *And the Band Played On* for its portrayal of Patient Zero that launched the origin story into the public imagination. Shilts's construction of Patient Zero is dehumanizing, portrayed as an "alien other" (14) whose maliciousness and promiscuity is the cause of HIV spreading (12-14). Highberg argues that Shilts confirmed heterosexual readers' beliefs that gay men deserved AIDS, scapegoating Dugas and making him into a symbol of gay men's "dangerous lifestyle" (15). In contrast, Highberg reads John Greyson's 1993 film *Zero Patience* as a disruption in the typical narrative of Patient Zero: The film critiques institutional and cultural biases that



Present Tense

seek out the knowledges they already believe to be true (16-18), and questions the circulation of misinformation (22-23), asking viewers to reframe their understanding of Patient Zero and what they know about HIV/AIDS.

Tags: Bodies, Heterosexism, Histories, HIV/AIDS, Media, Politics, Popular Culture

Long, Thomas L. "Plague of Pariahs: AIDS 'Zines and the Rhetoric of Transgression." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24.4 (2000): 401-411. Print.

Long explores how *Infected Faggot Perspectives* and *Diseased Pariah News*, two HIV-positive-themed zines (independent, do-it-yourself magazines) from the early 1990s, negotiated their iconoclastic, stigma-embracing ethos with their desire for broader circulation and readership. He explains that the writers and editors of these zines rejected identities of HIV-positive gay men as either victims or responsible, assimilating citizens, instead embracing an identity of "pariah." *Infected Faggot Perspective* created a punk, anti-establishment ethos through collage practices that rejected the values of intellectual property, juxtaposing images in "disquieting new contexts" that was "similar to defilement" of the images (405). However, as the zine gained circulation, it moved to a professional copy and layout and began running advertisements, creating a tension between radical values and reacher a broader audience (406-407). *Diseased Pariah News* managed this tension, Long shows, through espousing a punk ethos verbally (through making claims like the paper and photocopier time for the zine were stolen) and through iconoclastic cover images while having a professional layout to the zine (407-408).

Tags: Collective Identity, HIV/AIDS, Identity, Publics

Patton, Cindy. "Rights Language and HIV Treatment: Universal Care or Population Control?" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 41.3 (2011): 250-266. Print.

Patton investigates the development of human rights discourses related to HIV/AIDS over the last three decades, identifying two incommensurable approaches to human rights, what she terms "witnessing illness" and "witnessing disease." The witnessing illness approach, developed historically through HIV/AIDS activism and deployed by the World Health Organization, blends the rhetoric of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with American civil rights discourses. It "requires the ongoing presence of people who are ill" and thus their claims to dignity (255) and has historically allowed for the possibility of addressing wrongs by governments and other structures of power. In contrast, the witnessing disease approach, a more recent development



Present Tense

exemplified in the “treatment as prevention” approach, ignores the lived realities of those living with HIV, taking instead an epidemiological logic that replaces discussions of rights with a logic of population control. This technocratic approach, Patton argues, dehumanizes those with HIV and leads to a loss of dignity because it “overrides classic enforceable rights of individuals (confidentiality, right to treatment decision making, anti-discrimination)” (264). However, it is difficult to argue against because of its appeals to science and statistics.

Tags: Bodies, Histories, HIV/AIDS, Medical, Politics, Public Address

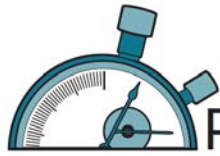
Ramsby, Fiona Harris. “The Drama as Rhetorical Critique: Language, Bodies, and Power in *Angels in America*.” *Rhetoric Review* 33.4 (2014): 403-420. Print.

Following recent turns to understand drama as rhetorical (as the Sophists did), Ramsby argues that Tony Kushner’s play *Angels in America* functions as a rhetorical critique. The play, she argues, is pedagogical: It teaches, through the use of bodies, how the language of bodies might be performed differently (406). Characters in the play resignify and develop new metaphors for understanding AIDS and the body, and the play challenges ideological truths by exposing whose truth is dominant (411). Thus, the play is *sophistic*, revealing how language is mutable, how metaphors of bodies marginalize bodies, and how new metaphors can be enacted and mapped onto bodies, thus performing and critiquing “the effects of language on bodies” (418).

Tags: Bodies, HIV/AIDS, Popular Culture

Scott, J. Blake. *Risky Rhetoric: AIDS and the Cultural Practices of HIV Testing*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2003. Print

This volume examines rhetorical practices about and around HIV testing. Scott provides a history of HIV testing in the US between the mid-80’s and the book’s publication. He asserts that ideas of HIV testing as always reliable and as a cure-all have led to testing practices and understandings that are not only unresponsive but also dangerous. Scott calls for a “rhetorical-cultural analysis” of science discourse and medical terminology and dialogue (21). Working from both classical understandings of rhetoric as well as Foucault’s ideas of medical examinations as a kind of disciplinary power, Scott looks at how HIV testing also functions as a disciplining technology exerting power over both bodies and communities. An important part of this disciplining are the ways that testing has been used to protect uninfected populations while also detecting, policing, and punishing those who have been diagnosed with



Present Tense

HIV as risky (this is especially true, Scott points out, for gay and bisexual men as well as poor women of color). Scott argues however, that HIV testing is not a magic cure for all and that its benefits are often overrated. This focus on testing has, in turn, led to a rash and shortsighted public health reaction and response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Additionally, Scott looks at the rhetoric and cultural practices of home HIV testing. Ultimately, Scott is concerned with how to ensure HIV testing practices that are more ethically responsible to those they claim to serve and to public health as a whole (229).

Tags: Bodies, Ethics, Histories, HIV/AIDS, Medical, Public Health

Sordi, Michele. "Angels, Critics, and the Rhetoric of AIDS in America." *Reconceptualizing American Literary/Cultural Studies: Rhetoric, History, and Politics in the Humanities*. Ed. William E. Cain. New York: Garland, 1996. 185-196. Print.

Drawing on Steven Mailloux's theory of rhetorical hermeneutics, Sordi engages in a reception study of Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America*. Sordi argues that the metaphors and tropes of AIDS—*infection, isolation, invasion, tainted blood, victimage*—“have become literalized in a larger cultural conversation focused on the moral health of the nation” (189). That is, rhetorics of AIDS become mirrored and deployed to regulate bodies and the nation. Sordi analyzes Alrene Croce's *New Yorker* manifesto “*Discussing the Undiscussable*,” in which Croce argues that “*victim art*” from minority groups (including but especially AIDS-related art) is not “*true art*” because it is pathos-ridden and can't be formally evaluated (189). Sordi explores how Croce's conservative discourse draws on AIDS rhetoric, using tropes of injection (politics are injected into art) and a diseased public. Further, Croce frames herself and other critics of victims of this type of art and a public unable to discern between commodity art and high art. Letters and articles that responded to Croce reproduce similar rhetorics of victim, infection, and public health. Those in support of Croce, Sordi shows, “*predictably pick up on her metaphors of plague and the need for disinterested critics to rise up and inoculate the endangered masses*” (190). Even those articles critical of Croce rely on “*imagery of a languishing, wasting being*” (192). Sordi concludes with a discussion of the implications, potentials, and limitations of Mailloux's approach to rhetorical hermeneutics in theory and in the classroom.

Tags: HIV/AIDS, Literature, Popular Culture

[Return to bibliography menu](#)

Section 10. Popular Culture and Rhetoric

Bailey, Courtney W. "Coming Out as Homophobic: Isaiah Washington and the *Grey's Anatomy* Scandal." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 8.1 (2011): 1-21. Print.

Bailey analyzes the 2006-2007 media controversy around *Grey's Anatomy* star Isaiah Washington's use of an anti-gay slur. She argues that explicit homophobia has become positioned "in confessional-therapeutic terms" in ways that continue to make heteronormativity invisible and frame homophobes as problem individuals to be reformed (2). The linking of confession to therapy leads to "a conflation of morality and health" (3) that works under neoliberal logics of citizenship as self-improvement (4). However, Washington was read as an "angry black man," confirming white fears of black masculinity, and his denial of homophobia combined with his blackness made him an unfit, un-reformable subject (5-12). In contrast, his co-star T. R. Knight came out as gay in response to Washington's slurs, and his confessional-therapeutic framing and whiteness allowed for his status as a "legitimate subject" (4) and "non-threatening gay man" (14). The rhetorical framing of homosexuality and homophobia in confessional-therapeutic tropes, Bailey argues, obscures heteronormativity, racism, and white privilege, leaving it to individuals to reform themselves rather than to address structural inequalities (16).

Tags: Citizenship, Confessional, Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Media, Popular Culture, Race

Brookey, Robert Alan. "A Community like *Philadelphia*." *Western Journal of Communication* 60.1 (1996): 40-56. Print.

Brookey argues that lesbian and gay criticism must move past questions of representational accuracy (or "authenticity") of gays and lesbians in the media, and instead ask questions related to how power is working in these representations, including what sort of social relations are enforced and how rules are constructed. Brookey exemplifies his argument by drawing on queer theory to analyze *Philadelphia* and other media representations for how power relations are constructed and reinforced in the film. Taking a Foucaultian approach that understands discourses about sexuality as disciplining discourses (42), Brookey shows how *Philadelphia*, IKEA commercials, and newspaper stories have begun to associate homosexuality with family values; however, they do so in ways that "maintain and justify relations of power" regarding ethnicity and economics (46). Brookey also argues that rhetorical studies and queer theory need to be in conversation with each other; queer theory has

insights for rhetorical studies, and rhetorical studies can help queer theory in approaching “the particular” (45).

Tags: Media, Popular Culture, Representations

Brookey, Robert Alan, and Robert Westerfelhaus. “Hiding Homoeroticism in Plain View: The *Fight Club* DVD as Digital Closet.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19.1 (2002): 21-43. Print.

Brookey and Westerfelhaus argue that extra features on DVDs are rhetorically persuasive in shaping viewers’ readings of a film. The authors turn to the extra features on the DVD for *Fight Club*, arguing that these features can limit readings of the film because they frame homoeroticism in the film as homosociality. Brookey and Westerfelhaus theorize that extra features on DVDs provide commentary that is read as “authoritative,” but also provide viewers with a sense (a “fantasy”) of agency because they find meanings through exploring the extra features (24, 25). They show how film critics’ approaches to *Fight Club* changed with the release of the DVD, as the extra features served rhetorically to reshape their interpretation of the film (26-27). Noting that homoeroticism “permeates” the film, Brookey and Westerfelhaus explain how the extra features of the DVD, through authoritative moves like director’s commentary, dismiss homoerotic implications and distract attention away from it (29).

Tags: Media, Popular Culture, Representation

Cooper, Brenda. “*Boys Don’t Cry* and Female Masculinity: Reclaiming a Life and Dismantling the Politics of Normative Heterosexuality.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19.1 (2002): 44-63. Print.

Cooper analyzes the 1999 film *Boys Don’t Cry*, a dramatization of Brandon Teena’s life and her transphobic murder in Nebraska. Cooper argues that the film challenges gender and heterosexual norms. Following Judith [Jack] Halberstam’s observation that discussion of “female masculinity” is suppressed among gender scholars (45), Cooper argues that the film celebrates female masculinity and challenges heteronormativity. Cooper stresses that her reading is not meant as the only way to interpret the film; she is exploring the film’s “potential to function as a form of liberatory activism” (49). The film can act as liberatory activism, she shows, by challenging media representations of the heartland as idyllic; questioning the naturalness of masculinity and its ties to manhood; suggesting that normative masculinity is violent and making it “appear



Present Tense

strange" (53); and focusing and centering on Brandon's life as a man while still allowing for gender instability.

Tags: Bodies, Heterosexism, Media, Gender, Popular Culture, Representation, Transgender, Violence

Cooper, Brenda, and Edward C. Pease. "The Mormons Versus the 'Armies of Satan': Competing Frames of Morality in the *Brokeback Mountain* Controversy in Utah Newspapers." *Western Journal of Communication* 73.2 (2009): 134-156. Print.

In 2006, prominent Utah businessperson Larry M. Miller canceled screenings of *Brokeback Mountain* in his suburban Salt Lake City theaters, drawing media attention. Cooper and Pease explore the media controversy that ensued through examining editorials, letters to the editor, and opinion columns in Utah newspapers. Cooper and Pease argue that mass media framed the debate in one of two ways, frames they term "*Defending Zion* and *Disrupting Zion*" (137, emphasis original). The *Defending Zion* frame supported Miller's decision and framed the debate as an issue of protecting Utah's morality from the immorality of homosexuality and Hollywood (139-140). The *Disrupting Zion* frame also made moral claims, decrying intolerance as immoral and portraying Miller as a hypocrite (141). Cooper and Pease explain that both sides saw themselves as defenders of morality (142-143). The authors offer their analysis as "an instructive case study" that explores how discourses in mass media quickly become polarized as "Us-versus-Them, Good-versus-Evil" in ways that shut down nuance and the possibility for moderate debate (146, 148).

Tags: Media, Popular Culture, Publics, Religion, Regionalism

Dow, Bonnie J. "Ellen, Television, and the Politics of Gay and Lesbian Visibility." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18.2 (2001): 123-140. Print.

Dow provides a Foucaultian analysis of the discourses surrounding Ellen DeGeneres's coming out in 1997 during her sitcom *Ellen*, arguing that these discourses were productive and regulated knowledge about sexuality. DeGeneres's narrative of coming out—during the show and in other media outlets—was couched in terms of authenticity and liberation, affirming Michel Foucault's historical argument in *The History of Sexuality* that the discourse of the confessional shapes truth as knowledge about oneself (124-127). Confessionals are made to audiences, and DeGeneres's audiences were mostly mainstream, heterosexual audiences that could tout her coming out as a sign of progress and inclusion (128). Representations of lesbians and



Present Tense

gays in television, Dow contends, are not issues of repression and transparent visibility; instead, these discourses are about “norms for different kinds of silence and speech” (129). Particularly, for DeGeneres’s coming out, these norms are about keeping sexuality within the purview of personal relationships instead of political ones, and affirming that a gay man’s or lesbian’s most important personal relationships are with heterosexuals (131).

Tags: Coming Out, Confessional, Media, Popular Culture, Representation, Visibility

Erni, John Nguyet. “Queer Figurations in the Media: Critical Reflections on the Michael Jackson Sex Scandal.” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15.2 (1998): 158-180. Print.

Erni explores the coverage of Michael Jackson’s 1993 child sex scandal, situating the discourse of stigmatization within broader contexts of queerness in the media. Rather than explore Jackson’s guilt or innocence, Erni explores how discourses about the scandal articulate queer eroticism, sexual ambiguity, identity, and secrecy (159). Erni understands Jackson as a “queer figuration” (163), and places the scandal in a larger of context of media discourses about Jackson that had already focused on open secrets, confessionals, disclosures, and rumors—discourses that associated him with childhood. Erni’s analysis focuses on three aspects of the scandal. First, the fascination with testimony invested alleged victims with knowledge, constructing youthful innocence (167-168). Second, police and the media worked to effeminize Jackson, especially through discussions of his penis and the humiliation of police photographs of his penis as evidence (169-170). Third, Jackson’s bedroom became a site of dramatization and condensation of perversion onto Jackson (170-172). Erni argues that child abuse involves “a whole set of social discourses and moral anxieties” (173) that is situated within the production of knowledges, including “commodity logic, class structure, and narrow fantasies about sexual innocence and sexual memories” (175).

Tags: Affect, Confessional, Media, Popular Culture

Goltz, Dustin Bradley. *Queer Temporalities in Gay Male Representation: Tragedy, Normativity, and Futurity*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Gotlz examines gay male representations in popular media—especially television and film—in relation to issues of age, futurity, and temporality. He argues that gay male aging is consistently framed tragically in popular media. In turn, it supports heteronormativity by aligning the future with heterosexual normativity, making the



Present Tense

future unavailable to older gay men. In Chapter 1, Goltz critiques the “youthism” within gay cultures and gay male representation that privileges youth and beauty and represents the older gay man “as isolated, miserable, and bitter sexual pervert” (6). Through analyses of a wide array of media—*Queer as Folk*, *Will and Grace*, *Six Feet Under*, *Saturday Night Live* skits, films, and more—Goltz challenges the tragic framing (drawing on Kenneth Burke) of older gay men and the dominant temporality of heteronormativity that aligns the future with careers, marriage, and procreation.

Chapter 2 challenges progress narratives that claim better representation of gay men in the media, using Burke’s tragic frame to show how popular representations of gay men privilege heteronormativity through narratives of punishment. In Chapter 3, Goltz explores representations of older gay men, showing how they are placed within tragic frames that sacrifice or punish them. Again, gay youth is valued, and the future is denied to gay men in popular media.

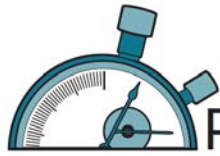
Goltz turns to representations of older gay men who have a future in Chapter 4, showing how gay characters have to identify with heteronormativity in order to have a future, as “the heteronormative script is the primary cultural blueprint for planning lives” (82). However, these assimilation strategies come at a cost: The assertion of the “good gay” image requires constructions of the gay man “as a safe, apolitical, everyday guy who happens to be gay” (84) and rests upon the further marginalization of oppressed groups along axes of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

In his closing chapter, Goltz turns to those representations at the margins within mainstream popular culture in order to speculate about queer futures. Using the metaphor of the “dinner party” and Teresa De Lauretis’s concept of the “space-off,” Goltz explores those futures and relationships that are just off screen, showing the potentials of imagining different queer futures that aren’t fully represented, but are still present.

Tags: Age, Identity, Futurity, Heteronormativity, Popular Culture, Representation

King, Claire Sisco, and Isaac West. “This Could Be the Place: Queer Acceptance in *Lars and the Real Girl*.” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.3 (2014): 59-84. Print.

King and West analyze *Lars and the Real Girl*, a film about Lars Lindstrom and his relationship with Bianca, a sex doll that he understands to be human (59). They argue that the film challenges normative understandings of temporality and relationally, situating their analysis in response to queer calls for antirelationality. Critics like Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman have called for an antirelational queer ethics that eschews



Present Tense

acceptance, a view that King and West critique for adhering too strongly to tolerance and not providing ground for building new models for kinship (61-63). *Lars and the Real Girl*, they argue, provides a model for acceptance and new kinship relationality in three ways. First, it queers temporality, blurring distinctions between the present, past, and future (66). Second, it uses prosthetics (particularly Bianca) to mediate relationships, challenging understandings of identity as autonomous, and explores how identity is always relational (72). Third, it critiques gender norms and provides non-normative kinship structures that aren't defined biologically or attached conceptually to the private family (76-77).

Tags: Identity, Media, Performativity, Popular Culture, Tolerance

Pearson, Kyra, and Nina Maria Lozano-Reich. "Cultivating Queer Publics with an Uncivil Tongue: *Queer Eye's* Critical Performances of Desire." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 29.4 (2009): 383-402. Print.

While *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* has been critiqued for its assimilationist and neoliberal politics, Pearson and Lozano-Reich argue that the show, through its "uncivil tongue," provides spaces for circulating non-normative desire and queer worldmaking (386). While admitting that the show employs civilizing rhetorics that support domestication and refashion white masculinity for the advancement of civilization (388-389), Pearson and Lozano-Reich explore "the libidinal investments of [the show's] uncivil tongue" (386). Understanding desire as productive, they argue that the show reimagines and reorganizes desire through reimagining spaces, bodies, and intimacies (390-394). Thus, the show "reimagines desire as a production of surface effects and unrealized possibilities" (397) that may open up possibilities for queer worldmaking.

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Gender, Media, Popular Culture

Peele, Thomas. "*Fight Club's* Queer Representations." *JAC* 21.4 (2001): 862-869. Print.

In this piece, Peele responds to Henry Giroux's arguments that films constitute "public pedagogy" that teach proper subjectivity and that *Fight Club* in particular teaches misogyny and violence toward women. Peele argues that the film uses homoeroticism to reinforce heteronormativity, but also offers opportunities to subvert heteronormativity and "interrupt the production of a normalized gender" (863). Peele shows how *Fight Club*, Chuck Palahniuk's book on which it's based, and other films depict homoeroticism and associate it with self-destruction. Ultimately, homoeroticism is wiped off the stage, often violently, in order to reaffirm



Present Tense

heteronormativity. However, *Fight Club* does offer the opportunity to question sexual norms. Peele asks, “What are we to make of a man who desires another man sexually but is not gay?” (865). Further, the character of Bob offers an opportunity to discuss with students meanings and constitutions of gender norms and deviant bodies, and the cover of *Rolling Stone* promoting the film features a rather queer Brad Pitt (866). Peele closes by suggesting that queer readings can provide mainstream society with challenges to gender norms (868).

Tags: Gender, Heteronormativity, Media, Pedagogy, Popular Culture, Representation

Pritchard, Eric Darnell, and Maria L. Bibbs. “Sista’ Outsider: Queer Women of Color and Hip Hop.” *Home Girls Make Some Noise: Hip Hop Feminism Anthology*. Eds. Gwendolyn D. Pough, Elaine Richardson, Aisha Durham, and Rachel Raimist. Mira Loma, CA: Parker, 2007. 19-40. Print.

Pritchard and Bibbs argue that lesbian and bisexual women of color have been mostly ignored in scholarship and popular media. What little attention has been given to queer rappers and hip-hop artists has gone to men (22-26). To advocate for more attention to and support of queer women of color in hip-hop, Pritchard and Bibbs turn to a few queer women of color hip-hop artists and how they have created space for themselves—particularly online by using computer literacies and developing their own agency. The sexism and heterosexism within hip-hop has meant that many queer women of color have needed to create their own spaces (29). These queer women of color focus on the need for visibility (30) and using their music to respond to sexism and homophobia (32). Through online spaces, they have created a global homo-hop community (32) and have created queer-affirming spaces online to interact with fans (33).

Tags: Collective Agency, Identity, Digital, Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Identity, Lesbian, Popular Culture, Race, Representation

Sender, Katherine. “Queens for a Day: *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and the Neoliberal Project.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23.2 (2006): 131-151. Print.

Rather than focus on the representation of gay men in *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Sender analyzes the show for how it “puts gay style expertise to work” (132). She argues that the show deploys gay style in order to reform heterosexual masculinity and make it more compatible with neoliberal economics and politics. Paradoxically, through pedagogy by five gay men, straight men are taught to be better heterosexual



Present Tense

men through technologies of romance, domesticity, and self presentation, which support intimate consumption and facilitate upward class mobility (137-141). Additionally, the show provides training in becoming a responsible adult and a productive, flexible worker through surveillance and shame (142-146). Thus, *Queer Eye* responds to the recent crisis in masculinity by framing it as a failure of men to grow up (144). Sender closes the essay by speculating that the show's Camp sensibility may undermine some of the show's heteronormativity (147-148).

Tags: Class, Gender, Heteronormativity, Media, Politics, Popular Culture, Representation

Shugart, Helene. "Managing Masculinities: The Metrosexual Moment." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5.3 (2008): 280-300. Print.

Shugart argues that the metrosexual "moment" is a rhetorical response to the crisis in masculinity that rationalizes commercial masculinity. "Commercial masculinity" is the phenomenon, beginning in the 1980s, that involves the commodification of male bodies; it challenges normative masculinity because it threatens feminization and ambiguous sexuality (281, 285). Metrosexual discourses manage these tensions by reorganizing homosociality in order to synthesize commercial masculinity and normative masculinity. Through analyzing the television series *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, its spin-off book, and the manual *The Metrosexual Guide to Style*, Shugart identifies three strategies of metrosexual logics for how it rhetorically responds to the crisis in masculinity. First, metrosexual logics remove or eradicate the feminine, creating a homosocial space that is distanced from women (288-289). Second, it uses the homosocial "strategic collusion of men" (290) to present metrosexuality as ironic, strategic, and unnatural—a performance of civility that allows for the "authenticity" of men's uncivilized masculinity to remain intact (290-292). Third, the metrosexual logic conceptually separates gay men from effeminacy: Metrosexual men are effeminate but not feminine like gay men. Effeminacy is performed with strategic masculine goals (293), and gay men serve as "manservants" or "border agents" who police the boundaries of heterosexual masculinity (294).

Tags: Gender, Identity, Popular Culture

[Return to bibliography menu](#)



Section 11. Digital Spaces

Alexander, Jonathan. "Out of the Closet and into the Network: Sexual Orientation and the Computerized Classroom." *Computers and Composition* 14.2 (1997): 207-216. Print.

This late 1990s piece by Jonathan Alexander asserts that the networked classroom space opens up opportunities to discuss and deal with issues of sexual orientation for both teachers and students in powerful and new ways. Alexander points to the internet's ability to offer more sexual orientation-themed resources than ever before as well as its ability to offer safety (often in the form of anonymity or pseudonyms) for LGBT people. As a self-identified out gay teacher, he talks of the risks and rewards of pedagogy that includes discussion about sexual orientation. He draws from Judith Summerfield and Geoffrey Summerfield's idea of "in-personation" of a type of reciprocal role playing in digital spaces that allows one to enter into the voice of another while having another's voice enter into you. This allows persons (straight, gay, or otherwise) to experience things in digital spaces that they might never experience outside of them (212). Alexander writes that although he cannot deny that role playing is artificial, he would argue that all performative sites are artificial due to "historical, material, and social interactions" (215) that only seem "normal" by virtue of our continued occupation of them.

Tags: Closet, Composition, Digital, Pedagogy, Performativity

Alexander, Jonathan, and William P. Banks. "Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing: A Critical Overview." *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 273-293. Print.

In their introduction for this special issue, Alexander and Banks assert that sexuality and technology studies "are concerned with the intertwined issues of space and identity" (274). Their goal is to make space for authors to interrogate issues of sexuality in computer-mediated, writing-intensive classrooms. They note that most work around sexuality in our field (up to the time of this publication) has been about bringing LGBT oriented texts and issues into the classroom and then moving into a discussion of online safe spaces as they relate to issues of sexuality. They ask how safe these spaces really are, as well as if spaces can be "too safe" while also acknowledging that safety in online and classroom spaces around sexuality is still critical. They point out that instead of emphasizing identity, the rhetorical emphasis on ethos would afford us a way to think about when, where, and how people talk about sexuality (285). They finally encourage us to think about issues of sexuality as happening in



Present Tense

networked spaces and in terms of sexual literacies. Networked and online spaces are not simply “wide open” unregulated spaces but also have their own dominant narratives that they point out. They also contain virtual spaces that are “utterly bound up in identity issues” (287). The authors leave us with a set of questions leading into the special issue’s other articles that interrogate how sexuality and online spaces intersect.

Tags: Digital, Composition, Identity, Pedagogy

Alexander, Jonathan, and Elizabeth Losh. “A YouTube of One’s Own?: ‘Coming Out’ Videos as Rhetorical Action.” *LGBT Identity and New Online Media*. Eds. Christopher Pullen and Margaret Cooper. New York: Routledge, 2010. 37-50. Print.

Alexander and Losh explore the new genre of coming out videos on YouTube, exploring how these videos are constrained or disciplined by normative discourses and how vloggers also provide resistance to these normalizing discourses. The authors identify some of the standard conventions of coming out videos on YouTube: Posters situate their videos in response to others’ videos; they share a narrative that “discovers” and tells the “truth” of oneself; they broadcast from a “domestic space” that conveys, at least temporarily, mastery over that space; and they directly address their audiences (38-40). Alexander and Losh turn to polished, commercial videos posted by Logo and the Human Rights Campaign, showing how these commercial videos contrast with vernacular videos. Specifically, these commercial videos are “familiar,” provide polished narratives, and never feature minors’ coming out narratives (43). In contrast, amateur videos are explicit rhetorical responses to exigencies and make explicit the management of various audiences. Further, amateur vloggers often provide multiple coming out videos, challenging the notion that there is a definitive version of the truth (44). While the coming out narrative is pretty scripted culturally, and commercially produced videos reinforce dominant discourses of sexuality, vernacular discourses online provide potential resistances to normative discourses. Alexander and Losh suggest that scholars should explore “queerness on the Internet as a complex endeavor with many different ramifications for identity, community, and political action” (46). They close with a discussion of some of the potential consequences of aggregation and “database watching” for YouTube videos (46-48).

Tags: Age, Coming Out, Confessional, Digital, Identity



Present Tense

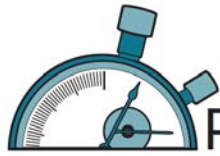
Alexander, Jonathan, Mark McCoy, and Carlos Velez. "A Real Effect on the Gameplay': Computer Gaming, Sexuality, and Literacy." *Gaming Lives in the Twenty-First Century*. Eds. Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe. Palgrave Press, 2007. 167-190. Print.

Alexander, McCoy, and Velez argue that literacy in online gaming environments is intimately tied to sexuality. Video games, they show, reinforce sexual norms and heteronormativity, but gay games often resist these norms through literacy practices. Heteronormativity in these environments is so naturalized that many gay male gamers don't recognize the environments as sexual and thus don't see their sexuality as significantly affecting their game play (173, 196). Online forums for gay gamers seem to reinforce the separation between sexuality and gaming, offering different discussion spaces for each topic. However, Alexander, McCoy, and Velez contend that the existence of these "safe spaces" and the discussions of homophobic comments in the online games "strongly suggests that sexuality is an important component of game play" (176). Through exploring Velez's experience as a case study, Alexander, McCoy, and Velez show how gay gamers use literacy practices to resist the heteronormativity of these environments through gender play and flirtation with other characters, encouraging tolerance in response to homophobic remarks and challenging heteronormative assumptions of the games and other players.

Tags: Digital, Homophobia, Heteronormativity, Identity, Literacy

Barrios, Barclay. "Of Flags: Online Queer Identities, Writing Classrooms, and Actions Horizons." *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 341-361. Print.

Barrios argues that LGBT pedagogies often too focused on set (essentialized) identity and cannot account then for the "multiplication" of these identities (especially in online spaces). He uses queer community pride flags as a way to illustrate how identities have multiplied. His term "action horizon" (342) is the concept of students seeing themselves in the public sphere shaping and confronting real complex problems. He uses three LGBT flags (rainbow pride flag, bisexual pride flag, and transgender flag) as correspondent to three classroom activities: engaging in online asynchronous discussion, writing in a computer classroom, and completing paper assignments. He argues that each of these three scenarios push students to "enact the action horizon"(351). He asks us to complicate the notion of an "LGBT identity" and suggests a multiplicity (ever expanding) of identities (356). Especially useful is his discussion of "increased fracturing" for LGBT identities. This fracturing, Barrios maintains, makes identity-based pedagogy limited in its usefulness. His action horizons as spaces where sexuality issues collide with and interact with classroom



issues takes the form of suggestions of how teachers might engage classes around conversations about sexuality.

Tags: Collective Identity, Composition, Digital, Pedagogy, Representation

Bennett, Jeffrey. "'Born This Way': Queer Vernacular and the Politics of Origins." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 11.3 (2014): 211-230. Print.

Bennett analyzes the *Born This Way* blog, which includes participant posts of images that serve as visual evidence from their childhood that they were LGBTQ. Academics, activists, and laypersons have long argued the etiology of homosexuality: whether it is innate or socially constructed. While the *Born This Way* blog seems to support an essentialist view of sexuality at face value, Bennett argues that the vernacular appropriation of the phrase "born this way" does not necessarily align with scientific essentialism. The blog "tactically appropriate(s)" the phrase in ways that encourage visitors to "engage in queer world-making" (213). The site "enables a rethinking of the epistemology of the closet," asking visitors to read images queerly and shifting the question of sexuality from ontology to ethics (214). Visuals on the blog claim evidence of non-heterosexuality through violations of gender norms, a conflation that Bennett sees as challenging heteronormativity because it "embraces non-conforming moments in a productive fashion" (219). These posts celebrate and find pleasure in non-conformity and stress the need for "hospitable spaces" (220). The images force viewers to ask how anyone could not have always known these people were queer and to ask what was being done to make their lives livable—or what should be done to make queer lives more livable now (226).

Tags: Digital, Identity, Etiology, Visual Rhetoric

Brookey, Robert Alan, and Kristopher L. Cannon. "Sex Lives in Second Life." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26.2 (2009): 145-164. Print.

Brookey and Cannon explore gender and sexual practices in the online environment Second Life. While much prior research has focused on liberatory potentials and practices related to sexuality and gender in online environments, Brookey and Cannon turn to participant performances that reproduce traditional norms. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theorizing of docile bodies, Brookey and Cannon explore these performances that reproduce norms through objectifying women's bodies as sexual objects and that marginalize marginal sexualities. In an analysis of stores in Second Life, advertisements for those stores, and posts on a blog about Second Life, Brookey



Present Tense

and Cannon show that these representations and practices reinforce traditional gender norms of male dominant and female passivity (155-156). In analyses of explicitly queer spaces, they show that these spaces are often gender-segregated and isolated from other spaces (156-157), and they examine the rampant discrimination against Furies, including graphic violence and rape in the virtual environment (159). They conclude the digital spaces are not removed from gender and sexual power dynamics (160).

Tags: Digital, Gender, Misogyny, Violence

DeWitt, Scott Lloyd. "Out There on the Web: Pedagogy and Identity in Face of Opposition." *Computers and Composition* 14.2 (1997): 229-243. Print.

In this piece, DeWitt seeks to find intersections between the process of continually coming out as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (g/l/b) and teaching writing using the World Wide Web. DeWitt discusses, in the late '90's, the tensions between the act of coming out via the WWW (as a then, always public space) and students' desires to see their stories and coming out acts kept private. DeWitt sees this public nature as a potential inhibitor of students sharing or even coming out at all. He goes on to discuss a survey he did of g/l/b students who had been involved in a Web presence. Ultimately he mediates the conflict between students feeling safe to self-identify online and the inherent dangers in being confronted online. He leaves us with a set of questions that ask how we as writing instructors can not only use the Web to provide opportunities and resources to be exposed to new ideas and identities (both negative and positive) but also to protect them against the potential to be endangered by this new openness (242). He also asks to what degree the public nature of online spaces will continue to encourage closetedness.

Tags: Closet, Coming Out, Digital, Identity, Publics

Johnson, Amber. "Antoine Dodson and the (Mis)Appropriation of the Homo Coon: An Intersectional Approach to the Performative Possibilities of Social Media." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 30.2 (2013): 152-170. Print.

Johnson explores online viral responses to and remixes of Antoine Dodson's 2010 interview in which he said, "Hide yo kids, hide you wife, hide yo husband cuz they rapin' er'body up in here" (152), as well as Dodson's agency in navigating his new fame. Johnson argues that subjects of viral fame online are not able to fully control their identity, but there is room for agency. Social media users appropriated Dodson's



Present Tense

blackness and queer masculinity, exploiting him as a “Homo Coon,” reading him as uneducated and “ghetto fabulous” and reducing his identity to a stereotype (162-164). However, Dodson was able to exploit this fame, both reproducing and challenging the caricatures of himself, in order to create a more complex narrative about himself and for upward mobility (164-167). In contrast to mass media, Johnson argues, social media’s participatory culture provides opportunities for those who are exploited to reassert agency.

Tags: Agency, Bodies, Digital, Identity, Race

McKee, Heidi A. “‘Always a Shadow of Hope’: Heteronormative Binaries in an Online Discussion of Sexuality and Sexual Orientation.” *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 315-340. Print.

In this piece, McKee looks into an asynchronous online discussion among students at three different universities around sexuality. One student in particular among these students reinforces a binary of homosexual relationships as “unnatural,” which McKee finds initially disheartening and unproductive. But as she goes on in the article, she discusses her own evolution to see that the asynchronous thread did in fact have academic and personal value for the students involved. By drawing from examples from her interviews of seven (out of 11 total) of these online discussion board student participants, she interrogates how students deal with and discuss complex issues around sexuality and looks at how online spaces can be valuable for these types of discussions in particular. She draws from Karen Kopelson to point out that coming out is “always coming out as” because you will always be categorized in that moment (329). These categorizations and binaries must be pushed at and discussed, McKee feels, and online spaces are ideally suited for this.

Tags: Agency, Composition, Digital, Heteronormativity, Homophobia, Pedagogy

O’Riordan, Kate, and David J. Phillips, eds. *Queer Online: Media, Technology, and Sexuality*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007. Print.

This edited collection provides theoretical and analytic approaches to media studies and queer theory, calling attention to issues of subjectivity, mobility, location, and space as they relate to media. The opening section, “Theoretical Landscapes,” includes O’Riordan’s exploration of the coupling of “cyber” and “queer” in theory and research since the 1990s, contending that this coupling may impede nuance and create



Present Tense

closures through idealizations as much as it has been productive. Daniel J. Phillips and Carolyn Cunningham argue for a queer surveillance studies in their chapter, proposing that queer interventions in surveillance studies can lead to productive research about identity formation, subversiveness, and knowledge production. Irmi Karl's chapter suggests that queer theory can contribute to studies of gender in technology studies; further, queer practices with online media should not be studied in isolation from other media practices. Karl calls for drawing on queer theory but resisting its abstractions by continuing to study actual practices.

The second section of the book explores and rethinks community and spatiality by exploring tensions and interactions between online and offline spaces, including explorations of subcultural publics related to BDSM and leather cultures (Nathan Rambukkana), expression of Finnish queer self-expression online and the limits of such self-expression (Marjo Laukkanen), and the relationships between bar cultures and online spaces for Russian-speaking Israeli queers (Adi Kuntsman).

Part III, "Reformulating Identities and Practices," includes chapters by Shaka McGlotten, Andil Gosine, and Debra Ferreday and Simon Lock that explore virtual intimacy and desire, the commodification of race in online spaces, and identity work of crossdressers online, respectively.

The last section of the book turns to structures and issues of agency. It includes Christy Carlson's analysis of intertextuality in the production practices of queer fans of *Law and Order*, John Edward Campbell's examination of tensions between civic engagement and consumption in online forums, and Sharif Mowlabocus's exploration of marginal gay identity production online, particularly the bareback community, in relation to health discourses and normative gay identities.

Tags: Agency, Desire, Digital, Identity, Media, Publics, Race

Ouellette, Marc. "Come Out Playing: Computer Games and the Discursive Practices of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality." *Computer Games and Technical Communication: Critical Methods and Applications at the Intersection*. Eds. Jennifer deWinter and Ryan M. Moeller. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. 35-51. Print.

Ouellette explores the intersections between gender studies and technical communication through analyses of gender and computer games. Drawing on Carl Herndl and Adela Licona's discussion of "constrained agency" and Alexander Doty's queer reception theory, Ouellette theorizes how gamers can produce queer readings of games that are not targeted toward LGBTQ gamers. In fact, normative constructions



Present Tense

in games provide opportunities for “play” within constrained agency that allow for these queer readings (36), as gamers’ “interpretive work” allows them to appropriate the game, writing in zines (DIY magazines), creating mash-ups, and writing fan fiction (39). Additionally, Ouellette explores essentialized identities in video games, arguing that gay characters in some video games are often simply “tweaks” that take the standard character of the genre and add on homosexuality (42-43). Technical communicators, Ouellette argues, are in a position to make interventions into video games and representations of gender, sex, and sexuality (44, 48).

Tags: Agency, Digital, Literacy, Representation, Technical Communication

Payne, Robert. “Frictionless Sharing and Digital Promiscuity.” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 11.2 (2014): 85-102. Print.

Payne argues that recent developments in social networking online, like Facebook’s “frictionless sharing,” facilitate “the basis for an alternative structure of intimate, promiscuous desire” (86). Facebook announced its new feature “frictionless sharing” in 2011, touting it as a feature that allows users to more easily share content with their friends, without friction. Payne demonstrates how this discourse that celebrates sharing online “implicitly recalls and disavows the rich collective intimacies of post-HIV queer cultures” (91). Payne turns to Tim Dean’s examination of barebacking subculture in *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* in order to tease out the relationships between friction and intimacy, drawing parallels between barebacking intimacy and frictionless sharing online. Just as Dean’s account of barebacking subculture relies on a fantasy of the absence of a barrier—the absence of a condom but denies that intimacy is still mediated through space (93-94)—so, too, does Facebook’s concept of frictionless sharing promote a fantasy of no mediation. Payne writes that “frictionlessness too requires friction—in the form of Facebook’s own mediating mechanism which serves to instrumentalize users’ curatorial choices” (95). Further, Payne explores this promiscuous intimacy in terms of risk: Facebook, he claims, removes the risks of sharing, but then “displaces on to its users not simply the risk of being objectified as economic instruments, but the greater risk of recognizing that objectification and instrumentalization may be part of what users desire” (99).

Tags: Digital

Peters, Brad, and Diana Swanson. “Queering the Conflicts: What LGBT Students Can Teach Us in the Classroom and Online.” *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 295-313. Print.



Present Tense

Peters and Swanson examine how we can not only equip our students with rhetorical strategies for combating heteronormativity and heterosexism in academia and society, but also how our LGBT students can also help us to understand how these strategies can take place in online spaces. They walk us through examples of student activities and discussions in online spaces around LGBT topics. Students must challenge one another through interrogating course plans and materials and also through collaborating around responses to homophobic discourse. How does online ethos affect power relations in these spaces for LGBT students (301)? Peters and Swanson ultimately argue that teachers must “help LGBT students understand the relevance of online tasks they do” since these students have rarely if ever had such things made transparent to them (311).

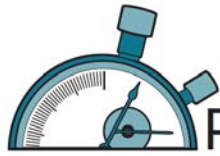
Tags: Digital, Composition, Heterosexism, Homophobia, Pedagogy

Rawson, K. J. “Transgender Worldmaking in Cyberspace: Historical Activism on the Internet.” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.2 (2014): 38-60. Print.

Dawson analyzes transgender activism on the Internet through the lens of world-making, identifying three types of projects related to trans historical activism online. The Internet, he argues, “offers a generative site for queer worldmaking” (40). The first type of worldmaking he identifies is “a world where trans lives count,” in which activists chronicle, archive, and remember the lives of trans individuals who were murdered in anti-trans hate crimes (40-41). The second type of worldmaking practice is online projects that encourage participatory history making: Visitors to these types of sites can submit everyday historical materials and narratives (46). The third type that Rawson identifies are Web 2.0 spaces where trans individuals share experiences and materials to create resources for each other. Unlike participatory history making, these Web 2.0 spaces are decentralized and there is no centralized solicitation of materials (52). These sites, Rawson contends, allow for “alternative ways of engaging with history and historical representation” (38).

Tags: Activism, Archives, Digital, History, Transgender

Reilly, Colleen A. “Sexualities and Technologies: How Vibrators Help to Explain Computers.” *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 363-385. Print.



Present Tense

Reilly examines late 19th through early 20th century pre-digital technologies around the vibrator as a frame to help students interrogate the connected nature of sexuality and computer technologies. The vibrator, she shows us, is originally a medical device that becomes a household appliance used namely for sexual pleasure. She locates sexuality at the intersections of gender and technology. Sexuality is related to, and yet distinct from gender, she points out (365). Because heterosexuality is transparent and often assumed, she writes, this allows for the connecting of gender to technology (for example the male dominated fields of computer science and technology). She takes us through student discussions around these things in her own classroom and draws on Luce Irigaray, asserting that we need new languages and ways of talking about these issues (372). Throughout, hypersexualization of women is also at center. By bringing up these historical realities and asking for new discussions and language around them, we can radically complicate binaries and explode understandings of gender and sexuality.

Tags: Bodies, Desire, Digital, Gender, Medical, Misogyny, Pedagogy

Rhodes, Jacqueline. "Homo Origo: The Queer Manifesto." *Sexualities, Technologies, and the Teaching of Writing*. Spec. issue of *Computers and Composition* 21.3 (2004): 387-390. Print.

In 56 points, Rhodes challenges the place of The Word as it interacts with what she names queertext. The Word asserts dominance and hegemony through grammar and also racism, heterosexism, capitalism, and English-centrism. But queertext embraces bodies and queerness. Hypertext is "eminently queer" says Rhodes (388). To Rhodes, queertext is an "erotic textual moment" that struggles against the body negating Word (389). Queer people "don't want a bridge." She says, "We just want to be here" (390).

Tags: Activism, Bodies, Counterpublics, Digital, Politics, Representation

Rhodes, Jacqueline. "'Substantive and Feminist Girlie Action': Women Online." *College Composition and Communication* 54.1 (2002): 116-142. Print.

This piece draws parallels between 1960s and 1970s youth and feminist counterculture and contemporary online culture. She explores the way that some feminist genres such as the manifesto and collaborative work have parallels in cyberspaces. Ultimately, she turns to the Internet's potential to disrupt and undermine (rather than to afford equal representation) as the qualities that may be the most



Present Tense

useful for feminists. As a technology and space for writing, she explores how cyberspaces provide and interact with agency. She turns to women in composition studies (such as Cynthia Selfe, Gail Hawisher, and Patricia Sullivan) to examine the idea of safe spaces for women and women-only spaces for writing (120). Radical feminists' historic use of a national textual network (including manifestos, rants, etc.) can provide a model for online writers as they use hypertextuality and online non-linear writing spaces to affect change. Similar to calls by Rhodes and Alexander in other pieces speaking about queer communities, Rhodes here says that traditional or dominant feminist histories about composition may need to be subverted in order to follow this radically subversive model.

Tags: Collective Identity, Digital, Feminism, Histories

Rhodes, Jacqueline, and Jonathan Alexander. "[Experience, Embodiment, Excess: Multimedia\[ted\] \[E\]visceration and Installation Rhetoric.](#)" *The New Work of Composing*. Eds. Deborah Journet, Cheryl Ball, and Ryan Trauman. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital P / Utah State UP. 2012. Web.

In this digital, multimedia chapter, Rhodes and Alexander share archival images and video footage from their multimedia installation at the 2008 Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition. This installation included the projection of quotations from Michael Warner and N. Katherine Hayles in a dark room, followed by a series of images of bodies. These quotations and images were played on loop, with an audio track composed of greetings in a variety of languages (remixed from the 1977 Voyager Space Probe) and whale songs. Rhodes and Alexander describe the installation as "one of bodily/sensory excess" that disoriented visitors ("Installation Rhetoric"). Their goal with the project was to encourage visitors to put concepts of materiality, intimacy, visibility, and bodies in conversation with each other. The installation "served as a provocative reminder that bodies intricately, intimately form a crucial part of any persuasive enterprise" ("Installation Rhetoric"). Rhodes and Alexander's chapter then provides archival material from their planning and production process, video footage from the installation, and a photo gallery.

Tags: Bodies, Digital, Materiality, Publics



Present Tense

Warshauer, Susan Claire. "Rethinking Teacher Authority to Counteract Homophobic Prejudice in the Networked Classroom: A Model of Teacher Response and Overview of Classroom Methods." *Computers and Composition* 12.1 (1995): 97-111. Print.

In this piece, Warshauer argues that we need pedagogy that uses the networked/computer classroom to fight back against prejudicial attitudes that marginalize those in online discussion spaces. She examines ideas of totalitarian versus democratic pedagogies and then applies how these interact in synchronous classroom discussion online. Ultimately, she encourages us as instructors to employ "interventionist strategies" that involve thinking about the "kairos of the networked classroom" (109) and when a teacher may be more effective at guiding class responses and individual sentiment and when to let online discussion happen with little teacher response.

Tags: Digital, Homophobia, Pedagogy

Webb, Patricia. "Technology of Difference: Reading the Virtual Age through Sexual (in)Difference." *Computers and Composition* 20.2 (2003): 151-167. Print.

Webb uses the work of Luce Irigaray as a frame for this piece. Namely, Irigaray's work around woman as "the Other" and man's desire to control and subjugate woman. Men, Webb asserts, in our current system of sexual (in)difference utilize technology both to distance themselves from their bodies and also to consume technology in ways that attempt to become one with technology (151). Starting with Irigaray's view of phallogocentrism as a "limiting belief system" that regulates language but additionally material relationships. This phallogocentrism is what "separates science/nature, male/female, and mind/body" (152). In the same ways that man tries to control woman (the Other), he also desires to control technology (and dominate it). Technologies are now powerful sites where women are objectified and sexual (in)difference is replicated and reified. In a poststructuralist way, Webb seeks to pull apart this idea of women as technologies and man as consumer. In her "Irigarian call to action" (162) conclusion, she asserts that a sexual revolution has not even yet begun, let alone come to completion.

Tags: Digital, Gender, Misogyny, Silence



Present Tense

Woodland, Randall. "I Plan to Be a 10': Online Literacy and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students." *Computers and Composition* 16.1 (1999): 73-87. Print.

Woodland uses survey work from 75 LGBT Web users about their online experiences to ask how LGBT people use computer-mediated communication (CMC as he calls them). He asks how these uses help LGBT people build sexual identity and also feel a part of larger LGBT communities. He finds in his research that the key uses of these CMC spaces for LGBT students are: resources in coming out, gathering LGBT related information, trying and experimenting with new ways of expressing themselves, and finding like-minded LGBT and LGBT-friendly audiences with whom they can interact (78). These, Woodland asserts, are online literacies and may parallel traditional academic literacies but may also be used in very different ways. He ends with a call for access to more technology for all LGBT people, drawing on Selfe's assertion that those with the least access to technology are often those with the least power to affect change (84).

Tags: Collective Identity, Coming Out, Digital, Literacy

Woodland, Randall. "Queer Spaces, Modem Boys and Pagan Statues: Gay/Lesbian Identity and the Construction of Cyberspace." *The Cybercultures Reader*. Eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy. London: Routledge, 2000: 416-431. Print.

Woodland provides an analysis of four online discussion forums, exploring how metaphors of space and place shape expectations and behaviors of "appropriate discourse" (417) related to homosexuality and gay and lesbian identities, as well as how these spaces then shape individual and collective identities. Appropriateness, he explains, is often determined by the structure of a site: its corporate structure, political architecture, and abilities of users to create new spaces within the site (423). Moderators, terms of service, norms created and explicitly shared by members within a space, and expectations based on metaphors of space (e.g., "room") help to shape and regulate behavior related to sexually explicit language, meeting others with similar interests, the seriousness or playfulness of discussions (424-425, 428-429). Sites attract LGBTQ users through marking the spaces as safe, through tactics of naming a space in ways that would detract anti-gay users, or through terms of service that ban harassment (426). These spaces, Woodland concludes, help to shape LGBTQ identities, and serve as places where participants can test and transform their identities (430).

Tags: Digital, Collective Identity, Identity



Present Tense

Wight, Jules. "Saving Private Manning? On Erasure and the Queer in *I Am Bradley Manning* Campaign." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 1.1 (2014): 118-129. Print.

Wight argues that the *I Am Bradley Manning* campaign on Tumblr erases Chelsea Manning's identity and to erase queerness. The campaign involved users uploading pictures of themselves, holding signs reading "I am Bradley Manning," to a Tumblr site in order to express solidarity with Manning. However, Wight argues that the metaphor "I am" erases the particularities of Chelsea Manning's life—including her trans identity and desire to be called Chelsea (121). Further, because of the fragmentary and ever-changing nature of the campaign, solidarity among participants and coalition building are thwarted (125-126). Thus, this sort of digital campaign, Wight contends, has "minimal disruptive capabilities" (120).

Tags: Activism, Digital, Identity, Transgender

[Return to bibliography menu](#)



Present Tense



Matthew B. Cox is an assistant professor of Technical and Professional Communication at East Carolina University in the Department of English. His research interests include issues of narrative, story, and identity in workplace identity especially as they relate to sexual orientation. Additionally, he researches queer rhetorics and cultural rhetorics as they relate to professional writing and workplace communication. He is published in *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* and *Computers & Composition*. He is currently working on several pieces in edited collections and a book project around LGBT narrative and identity in the workplace. When he's not

immersed in academic life, he loves to travel, seeing new sights and finding the world's best chocolate and tea.

Michael J. Faris is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Texas Tech University, where he teaches in the Technical Communication and Rhetoric program. His primary research interests are digital literacies, mobile technologies, and the intersections of queer theory and rhetorical theory. He's published in *College Composition and Communication*, *Composition Forum*, and *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. She also occasionally performs as a drag queen.

