

# LGBTQ+ History in the United States

## HIST 185

Spring 2026 Section 80 Fully Online 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/18/2026

### Contact Information

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Instructor: Wendy Rouse

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Office Hours: By Appointment Via Zoom

### Course Description and Requisites

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Students use an intersectional framework to examine LGBTQ+ history in the United States. The course emphasizes how the development of institutions and ideals, the formation of identities, and shifting contexts of equality and inequality have impacted LGBTQ+ people through time.

*Satisfies UD Area: 4. Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S. (Formerly Area S).*

**Prerequisite(s):** Completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all UD GE courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

**Grading:** Letter Graded

### Classroom Protocols

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This course will consist primarily of video lectures and workshops available asynchronously on Canvas. Follow these guidelines for an awesome learning experience:

- Watch each video lecture carefully, taking notes on the content.
- Read the accompanying course material, taking notes as you read.
- Complete the workshops using evidence from the documents to support your answer.
- Ask questions via email and discussion prompts.

# Program Information

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Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

**Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

**Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

**Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

## Course Goals

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Goal 1: Students will identify patterns of continuity and change in the gender and sexual history of the United States.

Goal 2: Students will examine how structured inequalities and social actions leading to greater equality and social justice intersect with sexuality and gender in United States history.

Goal 3: Students will apply the skills of reading, writing and thinking like historians through an inquiry approach to learning where they examine primary sources, corroborate and weigh historical evidence, and construct strong evidence-based arguments using a range of sources from the queer past.

Goal 4: Students will compare and contrast the past with the present by examining historical and contemporary issues in gender and sexual history and the formation of modern categories of identity.

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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**GE UD Area 4: Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.**

In UD Area 4 courses, students study the interrelationships of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, inclusion, inequalities, and justice in the United States. By exploring different perspectives and helping students articulate and discuss their own values, UD Area 4 courses prepare students to live and work responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural society.

## GE UD Area 4 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an UD Area 4 course, students should be able to:

1. describe how identities are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality. Examples include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, generation, regional origin, national identity, language, and intersectionalities;
2. analyze historical, economic, political, or social processes that shape diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and reflect on one's own identities and positions within these structures;
3. evaluate social actions which have or have not led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S.; and
4. engage in constructive interactions about social issues in the U.S. within the framework of equality and inequalities.

## Content

1. Courses shall focus on issues or present perspectives from different academic disciplines and include an integrative assignment appropriate to the course content.
2. Courses shall require students to apply basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking, research, and mathematics/quantitative reasoning) gained in Core General Education courses.
3. Assignments must utilize library research and oral and written communication skills.
4. Courses shall promote reflective processes and critical analysis of the civic relevance and ethical dimensions of course topics.
5. Materials must include primary sources appropriate to the disciplinary approaches used in the course (Examples include, but are not limited to, original creative works, scholarly journal articles, interviews, oral histories, historical documents).

## Writing requirement

The minimum writing requirement is 3,000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

## Course Materials

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=Required Texts/Readings

Romesburg, Don ed. *The Routledge History of Queer America*. New York: Routledge Press, 2018. ISBN:9780367222796

Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. 2nd Ed. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781580056892 (An E-copy of this book is currently available for free by logging into your SJSUI library account)

Various readings online and on Canvas

Recommended Texts

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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**Workshops:** These are a series of in-class activities designed to engage you in the process of “doing history.” (approx. 2500 words total) Through an analysis of primary sources, you will practice thinking like a historian by examining primary sources, corroborating and weighing historical evidence, and constructing strong evidence-based arguments.

**Video Reflections:** A series of video reflections ask you to reflect on your learning synthesizing the new knowledge you have gained from the video lectures and readings. These will be based on a complete/incomplete basis.

**Project:** This assignment allows you to interview an individual and place the interview in context of the history you studied in this course (GELO 1, 2, 3, 4). This assignment will be graded based on a letter grade system. See the grading rubric on Canvas for more detail on how the project will be assessed.

**Midterm and Final:** The midterm and final exam consist of short-answer questions that assess your understanding of the course content (approx. 1500 words) (GELO 1, 2, 3, 4). This assignment will be graded based on a letter grade system. See the grading rubric on Canvas for more detail on how exams will be assessed.

	Points	Percent of Grade	ALO Assessed	CLO Assessed
Workshops	300	50%	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Reflections	100	16%	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Project	100	16%	1, 2, 3, 4	2, 3
Midterm & Final	100	16%	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4

## Grading Information

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**Grading Information:** The workshops, project, and reflections in this course are designed to introduce you to both the content of history and the skills used by historians in studying the past. Please see the detailed rubrics for papers and other major assignments on our Canvas course page. You may, and are highly

encouraged, to self assess your own work using these rubrics prior to formally submitting your assignments for grading. Workshops are graded based on a complete/incomplete basis. All assignments are due on or before the assignment due dates on Canvas. **Late assignments will be docked 10% (one full letter grade) per day they are late.**

Grade	Point	Percentage
A plus	485 to 500 points	97 to 100 percent
A	465 to 484 points	93 to 96 percent
A minus	450-464 points	90 to 92 percent
B plus	435-449 points	87 to 89 percent
B	415-434 points	83 to 86 percent
B minus	400-414 points	80 to 82 percent
C plus	385-399 points	77 to 79 percent
C	365-384 points	73 to 76 percent
C minus	350-364 points	70 to 72 percent
D plus	335-349 points	67 to 69 percent
D	315-334 points	63 to 66 percent
D minus	300-314 points	60 to 62 percent
F	0-299 points	0 to 59 percent

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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1	Introductions: Definitions and Overview	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Romesburg, "Introduction: Having a Moment Four Decades in the Making," 1-12.</li> <li>• Manion, "Language, Identity, and Acts in LGBT History," 213-223.</li> <li>• Enke, "Transgender History," 224-236.</li> <li>• Hutchins, "Bisexual History," 250-261.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 1-44.</li> </ul> <p>Introductions Due</p>
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2	<p>Queer Encounters in Colonial and Revolutionary America</p>	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Godbeer, "Colonial North America (1600s-1700s)," 15-26.</li> <li>• Cleves, "Revolutionary Sexualities and Early National Genders," 27-38.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deborah Miranda, "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California," <i>GLQ</i> nos. 1/2 (2010): 253-284.</li> <li>• Will Roscoe, "Sexual and Gender Diversity in Native America and the Pacific Islands" in <i>LGBTQ America: A Theme Study</i> (Washington, D. C.: National Park Foundation &amp; National Service, 2016), 1-29.</li> <li>• Deena J. Gonzalez and Ellie D. Hernandez, "Latina/o Gender and Sexuality," in <i>LGBTQ America: A Theme Study</i> (Washington, D. C.: National Park Foundation &amp; National Park Service, 2016), 1-15.</li> <li>• Thomas A. Foster, "Alexander Hamilton," from <i>Sex and the Founding Fathers</i> (Philadelp Temple University Press, 2014), 119-142.</li> <li>• "A Revolutionary War Hero," <i>Washington Post</i>, April 8, 2019.</li> <li>• Erin Blakemore, "The Revolutionary War Hero Who Was Openly Gay."</li> <li>• Rachel Hope Cleves, <i>Charity and Sylvia: A Same-sex Marriage in Early America</i> (Oxford University Press, 2014), preface.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
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3	Queering the Frontier & Civil War	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holloway and Catte, "Rural," 175-186.</li> <li>• Sears, "Centering Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Queer History," 39-51.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 45-51.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Boag, "Introduction," from <i>Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1-20.</li> <li>• Peter Boag, "Death of a Modern Diana: Sexologists, Cross-Dressers, and the Heteronormalization of the American Frontier," from <i>Re-Dressing America's Frontier Past</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 159-187.</li> <li>• Emily Skidmore, "Beyond Community: Rural Lives of Trans Men," <i>True Sex: Lives of Trans Men at the Turn of the Century</i> (NY: NYU Press, 2017), 43-67.</li> <li>• Jonathan Ned Katz, <i>Love Stories: Sex Between Men before Homosexuality</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), 133-146.</li> <li>• Amy Benck, "Albert D. J. Cashier: Woman Warrior, Insane Civil War Veteran, or Transman Out History" <a href="http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/tgi-bios/albert-cashier">http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/tgi-bios/albert-cashier</a></li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due &amp; Project Proposal Due</p> <p>Video Reflection 1 Due</p>
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4	Crushes, Romantic Friendships & Boston Marriages	<p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between W in Nineteenth-Century America." <i>Signs</i> 1, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 1-29.</li> <li>• Karen V. Hansen, "'No Kisses Is Like Youres': An Erotic Friendship between African-Am Women During the Mid-Nineteenth Century," <i>Gender and History</i> 7, no. 2 (1995): 153-18</li> <li>• Jonathan Ned Katz, "Coming to Terms: Conceptualizing Men's Erotic and Affectional Relations with Men in the United States, 1820-1892," in <i>A Queer World: The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader</i>, ed. Martin Duberman (NY: NYU Press, 1997), 216-235.</li> <li>• Leila Rupp, "Worlds of Men, Worlds of Women," <i>A Desired Past: A Short History of Sam Love in America</i> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 37-72.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p>
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5	Gender, Sex, Race, Science & the State	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clement and Velocci, "Modern Sexuality in Modern Times (1880s-1930s)," 52-66</li> <li>Shah, "Queer of Color Estrangement and Belonging," 262-275.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 52-60.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jonathan Ned Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality." Major Problems in the History Sexuality (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2002), 348-355.</li> <li>• Jennifer Terry, "Medicalizing Homosexuality," An American Obsession: Science, Medic and Homosexuality in Modern Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 40</li> <li>• Siobahn Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body," Qu the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in America (Durham: Duke Univ Press, 2000), 15-38.</li> <li>• Margot Canaday, "A New Species of Undesirable Immigrant': Perverse Aliens and the Limits of the Law, 1900-1924," The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentiet Century America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 19-54.</li> <li>• Nayan Shah, "Perversity, Contamination, and the Dangers of Queer Domesticity," Conta Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown (Berkeley: University of Calif Press, 2001), 77-104.</li> <li>• Lillian Faderman, "Social Housekeeping," To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have D for America – A History (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 115-135.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
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6	Queering the City: Urbanization & Industrialization	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smith-Silverman, "Labor," 331-343.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," from <i>Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality</i>, ed. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 100-113.</li> <li>• Emily Skidmore, "Gender Transgressions in the Age of Empire," from <i>True Sex: The Liv Trans Men at the Turn of the Twentieth Century</i> (New York: New York University Press, 101-137).</li> <li>• George Chauncey, "Introduction," <i>Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making Gay Male World 1890-1920</i> (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 1-32.</li> <li>• Clare Sears, "Not Belonging," <i>Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth Century San Francisco</i> (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 1-22.</li> <li>• Lisa Duggan, "Introduction," "Girl Slays Girl," "A Feast of Sensation," <i>Sapphic Slashers: S Violence and American Modernity</i> (Duke University Press, 2000), 1-31.</li> <li>• Lillian Faderman &amp; Stuart Timmons, "Cities of Angels and Devils," <i>Gay LA: A History of Outlaws, Power Politics, &amp; Lipstick Lesbians</i> (NY: Basic Books, 2006), 1-38.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop</p> <p>Video Reflection 2 Due</p>
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7	Violets, Pansies & the Queer 1920s	<p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genny Beemyn, "The New Negro Renaissance, A Bisexual Renaissance," <i>Modern Ame Queer History</i>, ed. Allida M. Black (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 36-48.</li> <li>• Eric Garber, "A Spectacle in Color: The Lesbian and Gay Subculture of Jazz Age Harlem Hidden From History," ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey (NY: Books, 1989), 318-331.</li> <li>• Hazel Carby, "It Jus Be's Dat Way Sometime': The Sexual Politics of Women's Blues," <i>R America</i> 20, no. 4, (1986) pp. 9-22.</li> <li>• Laura Horak, "Enter the Lesbian: Cosmopolitanism, Trousers, and Lesbians in the 1920 Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934" <i>Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016</i> 121-168.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
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8	Out in World War II	<p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allan Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II," i <i>Hidden From History</i>, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey (New Basic Books, 1989), 383-394.</li> <li>• Margot Canaday, "With the Ugly Word Written Across It: Homo-Hetero Binarism, Fede Welfare Policy, &amp; the 1944 GI Bill," <i>The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twen Century America</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 137-173.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
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9	Lavender Scare	<p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judith Adkins, "These People Are Frightened to Death: Congressional Investigations a Lavender Scare," Prologue: The Magazine of the National Archives, 48, no. 2 (2016).</li> <li>• David K. Johnson, "Introduction," "Peurifoy's Revelation," <i>The Lavender Scare</i> (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 2004) 1-39.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p> <p>Video Reflection 3 Due</p>
10	Post War World: Cold War Closets	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Littauer, "Sexual Minorities at the Apex of Heteronormativity (1940s-1965), 67-81.</li> <li>• Serlin, "Bodies," 135-147.</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donna Penn, "The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containmen Female Sexuality in Postwar America," <i>Not June Cleaver</i>, Joanne Meyerowitz, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 358-381.</li> <li>• Amanda H. Littauer, "Someone to Love: Teenage Girls, Queer Desire, and Contested Meanings of Immaturity in the 1950s," <i>Bad Girls: Young Women, Sex, and Rebellion befo Sixties</i> (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015), 143-173.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>

11	Rights Revolution: The Homophile Movement to Gay Liberation	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallo, "Organizations," 148-159.</li> <li>• Strub, "Gay Liberation (1963-1980)," 82-94.</li> <li>• Enzer, "Lesbian History," 237-249.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 57-138</li> </ul> <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon D. Elin Fisher, "Pauli Murray's Peter Panic: Perspectives from the Margins of Ge &amp; Race," <i>Transgender Studies Quarterly</i> 3, nos. 1-2 (2016): 95-103.</li> <li>• Kevin Mumford, "Losing the March," <i>Not Straight, Not White: Black Gay Men from the on Washington to the AIDS Crisis</i> (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2016), 11-38.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
12	Crisis and Community in Reagan's America	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katie Batza, "Sickness and Wellness," 287-299.</li> <li>• Brier, "AIDS and Action," 95-106.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 138-149.</li> </ul> <p>Workshop Due</p>
13	Contemporary Trials and Triumphs	<p><i>Routledge History of Queer America:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weiss, "Queer Politics in Neoliberal Times (1970s-2010s), 107-119.</li> </ul> <p><i>Transgender History:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stryker, 151-236.</li> </ul> <p>Video Reflection 4 Due</p>
14		Project Due