

## Rutgers DSW Program Syllabus

**Module Title:** Envisioning a world beyond boxes and binaries: An introduction to Queer Theory and social work praxis

**Instructor:**

**Residency:**

**Date:**

---

### Module Description:

Queer Theory (capital T) is a collection of different critical feminist theories (lower case t) that come together to focus on the dismantling of binaries, the pushing of boundaries, and the reclamation of the authentic self. Yes, social work has often diluted Queer Theory down to simply providing LGBTQIA2S+ affirming practice, which while important, continues to operate within White cis het normative mores. This module will explore the queer theories as they relate to social work education, practice, and praxis. In order to engage in reflective and reflexive practice, we will engage in various activities, including ones focused on our own stories and identities as they applies to both teaching and practice. The voices of queer (and trans) academics and community members will be centered throughout this critical work exploring the dismantling of binaries within our field. We will conclude with committing to tangible steps our queering our teaching, practice, and praxis.

### Module Objectives:

1. To explore our personal and social work views of queerness (and how they may be in line or at odds with queer theory)
2. To reflect on our privileges (even as queer individuals ourselves)
3. To lift up the voices of queer communities to inform our scholarship, teaching, and practice
4. To explicate the core tenets of queer theories and practice frameworks
5. To apply concepts to create at least three planned actions towards queer our social work practice

### Required Readings/Watchings:

[Argüello, T. M. \(2021\). Heteronormativity and social work: The what that dare not speak its name.](#) In *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work and Sexualities* (pp. 12-22). Routledge.

Dodd, S. J., & Shelton, J. (2021). Combatting Cisnormativity in Social Work Education, Research, and Practice. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work and Sexualities* (pp. 23-34). Routledge.

Fonseca, E. (2023). On the Domestication of Queer Within Social Work: Reflections from One Queer Social Work Instructor/Student. *Affilia*.

Hicks, S., & Jeyasingham, D. (2022). Sexuality, LGBTQ Issues and Critical Social Work: Thinking with Queer and Post-Queer Theories. In *The Routledge Handbook of International Critical Social Work* (pp. 561-575). Routledge.

Kattari, S. K. (2019). Troubling binaries, boxes, and spectrums: A galactic approach to queerness and crip-ness. *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, 6(3), 136-142.

Miller, J. (n.d.) Chapter 1: Thirty years of queer theory. In Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach.  
<https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/introlgbtqstudies/chapter/thirty-years-of-queer-theory/>

Wagaman, M. A., Shelton, J., & Carter, R. (2018). Queering the social work classroom: Strategies for increasing the inclusion of LGBTQ persons and experiences. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 38(2), 166-182.

Yunus, K. A. R. A. (2022). Is queer social work possible?. *Social Sciences Studies Journal* (SSSJJournal), 6(61), 1718-1723.

## **Recommended Readings:**

Barker, M. J. (2016). *Queer: A graphic history*. Icon Books.

MacKinnon, K. V. R. (2011). Thinking about queer theory in social work education: A pedagogical (in) query. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue Canadienne De Service Social*, 28(1), 139-144.

Mulé, N. J. (2021). Sexing and Genderizing Policy: Moving Beyond Binaries and Normatives. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Social Work and Sexualities* (pp. 483-492). Routledge.

## **Recommended seminal works:**

Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: An introduction*. Vintage.

Sycamore, M. B. (Ed.). (2006). *Nobody passes: Rejecting the rules of gender and conformity*. Seal Press.

Wilchins, R. (2004). *Queer theory, gender theory: An instant primer*. Alyson Books.

## Module Assignment:

### Due

Please write a 1-2 page reflection paper, or record a 4-6 minute video (please include captions or a transcript) in responses to the follow prompts.

**Part A:** Identify and discuss messages received in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and in the social work profession about queerness from:

- A. Family (including both family of origin and family of choice)
- B. Friends
- C. School (K-12, undergrad)
- D. Media
- E. Social work entities (higher education, workplace, professional associations)

**Part B:** How are these messages in line or at odds with the messages put forth by queer (and trans) folks? Where do you see tensions occurring in our profession?

**Part C:** Please reflect on any other aspects of the readings/recommended viewings that stood out to you as they relate to your social work practice.