

[AFST B202]

Tuesday+ Thursday 11:40am-1:00pm

Fall 2026

Black Queer Diaspora

Maurice Rippel

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Office Hours: by appointment

Email Policy: I try to respond within 48 hours. Feel free to bump me if you haven't heard by then.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course explores over two decades of work produced by and about Black Queer Diasporic communities throughout the circum-Atlantic world. While providing an introduction to various artists and intellectuals of the Black Queer Diaspora, this course examines the viability of Black Queer Diaspora world-making praxis as a form of theorizing. We will interrogate the transnational and transcultural mobility of specific Black Queer Diasporic forms of peacemaking, erotic knowledge productions, as well as the concept of “aesthetics” more broadly. Our aim is to use the prism of Blackness/Queerness/Diaspora to highlight the dynamic relationship between Black Diaspora Studies and Queer Studies. By the end of this course students will have a strong understanding of how systems of power work to restrict the freedoms of Black Queer and Trans communities, and how Black LGBTQ people have lived, organized, and created in spite of and in response to these oppressions. This interdisciplinary undergraduate upper-level course will utilize academic texts accompanied by poetry, fiction, film, television, and visual art to understand Black Queer and Trans subjectivities.

Course Organization and Participant Expectations

In general, I'll begin class with a prompt, some kind of free writing or meditative activity that will relate to the theme of the session. After our ensuing conversation, I'll contribute a presentation, or more likely, a *riff*, to frame a critical piece of legislation, historical figure, etc. Most of our class will be devoted to group work, small and large group conversations, and collective study. Readings (broadly conceived) will be digitally accessible, and study outside of class will be essential for success in the course.

I ask that you start a personal journal (a google document, a note inside your Notes App, or pen and paper) where you reflect on what things we talk about in class, and how they make you feel. These reflections will reflect your personal interests and track the historical topics and themes that are pertinent to you—law, culture, politics, business, sports, etc. Feel free to draw on these for canvas discussions, presentation ideas, or papers.

I'll run the class as a seminar meaning it will be largely based on participation in class discussions, whether that be through note taking, asking questions, listening to peers and amplifying their voices, and otherwise being as present as possible in the space.

About Maurice

I'm an early-career educator who is an alum of the Bi-College Education program (the pre-major days). I majored in English literature at Haverford with a focus on Caribbean poetry. During my time in the Bi-Co, I was on the student newspaper, was president of Haverford's Students' Council, and was on several committees oriented toward issues of access, diversity, equity and inclusion.

My graduate training is in Anthropology and Black studies through a joint PhD program at Yale University. I'm working on a dissertation that looks at the intersections of sports, nationalism and racial formation— feel free to ask me questions about it!

In my spare time I enjoy listening to new music, writing, and spending time with my family.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is representing someone else's work and presenting it as your own. Of course, what ideas are truly our own? We're all always influenced by so many things that never may make it into the content we produce. We'll be exchanging ideas in this class across a variety of means and I encourage you to consult and collaborate with your classmates, especially where there are areas of overlap in your respective work. Be open too to unexpected connections.

I'm convinced citations are used as a way of keeping different disciplines and writers from speaking to one another. Due to the interdisciplinarity of this course, I will welcome the use of any of the following citation styles, as long as you are consistent and adhere to the conventions of the form. (MLA, Chicago, or APA).

Just as important as “how” we cite to me is who and what we cite. This is a course that's thinking critically about maps, and I encourage you in both reading, writing, or observing any content that you further consider who or what is a source, and whom/how we cite.

Academic Support and Accessibility

At Access Services, we work with students and visitors to campus who self-identify with a disability to ensure equal access to Bryn Mawr's programs, activities and services. The Access Services office, located in Guild Hall, provides support, and may arrange accommodations related to access for eligible students and visitors to campus. Individuals who think they may need accommodations because of the effects of a learning, physical, or psychological diagnosis

and/or a chronic medical condition are encouraged to contact Access Services as early as possible to discuss their situation.

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/access-services>

The Bryn Mawr College Writing Center offers free, individual consultations on writing and public speaking. Undergraduate peer tutors can help you understand the assignment, generate ideas, support your argument, organize your essay or presentation, polish your writing style, and become a better editor.

The mission of the Writing Center is to bring writing out into the open, support writers as they grow, and promote agency and confidence in the members of our community. Our commitment to serving all community members means acknowledging and working against all forms of exclusion in academia.

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/writing-center>

Assignments and Evaluation

Attendance & Participation (25% of total grade)

Students are expected to attend class. Attendance and participation are averaged into your final grade. **More than 3 absences will result in a full lower grade.** Please inform me of any anticipated absences at the beginning of the semester. If you miss class, you must find a time to meet with me and reschedule any missed materials. It is also on you to obtain class notes from other students. Students will be expected to cultivate a note-taking practice with support from their instructor and peers.

Class Facilitation: (25% of your final grade): Facilitating discussions give all of us an opportunity to think aloud with each other in ways that can productively generate discussion, debate, and new forms of knowledge in the community of this course. Starting Week Three of the course, students will select individually or collaboratively (in groups of 2) to facilitate a conversation on the readings assigned for the day without a lengthy summary of the text, but rather a more nuanced presentation on the readings, addressing the central arguments made by the author, wonderings/questions, eureka moments of clarity and/or confusion, and pose questions to your colleagues to build a dialogue on the readings. Please prepare an engaging class facilitation with an interactive PowerPoint or any other visual aid medium, be creative (out of the box) in your approach and always keep in mind the multiple forms of learners in the space: visual, audio, artistic, and etc. Please prepare to facilitate class discussion on the assigned readings of the session for 30-45 minutes. The final date to submit all of your class facilitation materials on Moodle by Sunday, December 13, 2026 at 11:59p.m. (EST).

Theoretical Anchor Papers (50% of your final grade): One of the most foundational Black Studies pedagogical practices is to have students critically engage, debate, discuss, and dialogue

about theoretical and methodological frameworks on Black lives across nation-state borders within a global and local context. For this interdisciplinary course focused on the political and social movements that Black communities throughout the African diaspora(s) in different time periods and spaces. You will be writing (3) theoretical framework papers at the end of every 4-5 weeks, due dates are clearly noted below, please plan accordingly. I do not accept late work at all. These text-based papers will be anchored on your critical engagement of the week's readings and film analysis. I will provide you all with an anchor/guiding question based on the course readings seven days prior to each due date. These are not summary or journal entries; they are expected to be 2-4 full-pages, doubled-spaced, 12" New Times Roman font. Your sources/evidence are the course readings below. You have the option of getting your lowest grades dropped or re-submission for an entirely new grade, only if you submit the assigned tasks on-time. You cannot get your lowest grade dropped if you do not submit a task for your lowest grade. You will receive a thoroughly detailed guideline/writing prompt a week prior to due date.

Your due dates are as follows:

—Sunday October 4th at 11:59pm

—Sunday November 15th at 11:59pm

—Friday December 18th at 6:00pm

Course Readings and Assignment Schedule

Week 1: Beginnings: Origins

September 1

Introductions: Our Why? Prof. Rippel's Subject-Position and *Yours*.

In-Class Reading: The Syllabus

September 3

Required reading: Okla Jones, "To Be Seen" is a Powerful Portrait of Black Queer Visibility," *Essence*, (June 6, 2025)

Visual Archive: Barry Jenkins, "Swimming Scene in Moonlight" (2016)

Now This, "The Queer History of the Harlem Renaissance" (2021)

Week 2: Groundings/Keywords: Situating the Field of Black Queer Diaspora

September 8

—Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, "Black Queer Feminism," in *Oxford African American Studies Center*. (May 31, 2019): pp. 1-5.

–E. Patrick Johnson and Mae G. Henderson, “Introduction: Queering black Studies/”Quaring” Queer Studies,” in *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): pp. 2-15

Visual Archive:

–Jennie Livingston, “Paris is Burning,” (1991).

September 10

Required Readings:

Jafari S. Allen, “Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjuncture,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2-3 (2012): pp. 211-248

Week 3: Intellectual and Political Genealogies of Black/Queer/Diaspora

September 15

Cheryl Clarke, “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance,” in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldua. (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1981): pp. 128-137.

Visual Archive: Shari Frilot, “Black Nations/Queer Nations?: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities in the African Diaspora,” (1995)

September 17

Omise-eke Natasha Tinsley, “Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, Vol. 14, No 2-3 (2008): pp. 191-215.

Week 4

September 22

Required Reading:

Matt Richardson, “Our Stories Have Never Been Told: Preliminary Thoughts on Black Lesbian Cultural Production as Historiography in The Watermelon Woman,” *Black Camera*, Vo. 2, No. 2 (Spring 2011): pp. 100-113

Visual Archive:

Cheryl Duney, “The Watermelon Woman,” (1997)

September 24

–Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, “Black Queer Feminism,” in *Oxford African American Studies Center*. (May 31, 2019): pp. 1-5.

–The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement,” (April 1977): pp. 1-8

–Excerpts from Dr. Marisa Solomon’s “The Elsewhere is Black”

September 25

Africana Lecture Series: Dr. Marisa Solomon, “The Elsewhere is Black”

English Lecture Hall, 12:30pm-2pm

Week 5

September 29

Required Reading:

–Watufani M. Poe, “Making Black Queer Worlds” Black LGBTQ+ Parties in Brazil and the United States,” *The Sociological Quarterly*, (April 2025): pp. 1-25

Visual Archive: POSE Season One: Episode Five: "Mother's Day" (2018)

October 1

Required Reading:

–Rinaldo Walcott, “Reconstructing Manhood; or, The Drag of Black Masculinity,” *Small Axe*, No. 28, Vol. 13, (March 2009): pp. 75-89.

–Isaiah Matthew Wooden, “In *Moonlight*, Perpetually Outside,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2022): pp. 7-22

Visual Archive:

Barry Jenkins, “Moonlight,” (2016)

—Theoretical Anchor Papers due Sunday October 4th at 11:59pm

Week 6

October 6

Required Reading:

–Kevin C. Quin, “To Stamp Out the Oppression of All Black People”: Ron Grayson and the Association of Black Gays, 1975-1979,” *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 104, No. 2, LGBT Themes in African American History, (Spring 2019): pp. 227-249

–Jared Sexton, “Shadow and Myth: On *Stranger Inside* and *Moonlight*,” in *Black Masculinity and the Cinema of Policing*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): pp. 161-193.

Visual Archive: Nancy Kates, Bennett Singer, “Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin,” (2002)

October 8

In-class writing workshop

Week 7 (Fall Break Oct. 10-18)

October 13

October 15

Week 8

October 20

–Marquis Bey, “Black, Trans, Feminism,” in *Black Trans Feminism*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022): pp. 37-65.

October 22

–Jennifer DeClue, “To Visualize the Queen Diva!” Toward Black Feminist Trans Inclusivity in Beyonce’s “Formation,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (May 2017): pp. 219-225

–Trevia Ellison, Kai M. Green, Matt Richardson, and C. Riley Snorton, “We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies,” *TSQQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (May 2017): pp. 162-169

Visual Archive:

Rashaad Ernesto Green, “Gun Hill Road,” (2011).

Week 9

October 27

Required Readings:

–Omise-eke Natasha Tinsley, “Songs for Ezili: Vodou Epistemologies of (Trans)gender,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Summer 2011): pp. 417-436.

Roberto Strongman, “Of Dreams and Nightmares: Vodou Women Queering the Body,” in *Queering Black Atlantic Religions: Transcorporeality in Candomble, Santeria, and Vodou*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019): pp. 27-48

October 29

Ahmad Greene-Hayes, “Street Evangelists and Transgender Saints: Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, and the Religions of the Afro-Americas,” *QTR: A Journal of Trans and Queer Studies in Religion*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May 2024): pp. 32-52

Visual Archive:

Anne Lescot, “Of Men and Gods (*des hommes et dieux*),” (2002).

PBS Voices, “Uncovering the Power of Hoodoo: An Ancestral Journey,” (May 16, 2023)

October 30

Africana Lecture Series: Dr. Charise Burden-Stelly, “Black Scare/Red Scare”

English Lecture Hall, 12:30pm-2pm

Week 10

November 3

M. Jacqui Alexander, "Not Just (Any)Body Can Be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality, and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas," *Feminist Review*, No. 48, The New Politics of Sex and the State (Autumn 1994): pp. 5-23

Nioli A. Attai, "Liberating the Queer Caribbean," in *Defiant Bodies: Making Queer Community in the Anglophone Caribbean*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2023): pp. 29-51

November 5

Ana-Maurine Lara, "Sexual Terror," in *Streetwalking: LGBTQ Lives and Protest in the Dominican Republic*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2021): pp. 65-90

Visual Archive:

Sarah Feinbloom, "Many Loves, One Heart," (2013).

Defining Moments with OZY, "Dominique Jackson," (November 12, 2020).

Week 11: The Queerness of Erotic Knowledges and Subjectivities

November 10

–Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power(1977)," in *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches*. Pp: 41-48. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984.

–Audre Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury (1977)," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984): pp. 36-39.

November 12

–Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984): pp. 110-113

Lyndon K. Gill, "In the Realm of OUR Lorde: Eros and the Poet PHILosopher," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2014): pp. 169-189

Visual Archive: Ada Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson, "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Works of Audre Lorde (1996)

November 13

Africana Lecture Series: Dr. Adam Bledsoe, "Pride, Power, and a Willingness to Struggle"
English Lecture Hall, 12:30pm-2pm

—Theoretical Anchor Papers due Sunday November 15th at 11:59pm

Week 12

November 17

–William Mosley, "On the Lateness of Panemic Time," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 44, No.1 (2023): pp. 157-165

–Alix Chapman, “Limbologies: The Black Queer Art of Uncertainty,” *liquid blackness*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (April 2023): pp. 62-75

November 19

–Jennifer DeClue, “Carrying the Knowledge/Performing the Archive: An Afternoon with Marsha P. Johnson,” in *Visitation: The Conjure Work of Black Feminist Avant-Garde Cinema*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022): pp. 99-142

Visual Archive: David France, “The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson,” (2017).

Week 13

November 24

November 26 (No class)

Week 14

December 1

–Marlon B. Riggs, “Baldwin’s Sissy Heroics,” *African American Review*, Vol. 46, No. 4, (Winter 2013): pp. 633-651.

–SA Smythe, “Black life, Trans Study: On Black Nonbinary Method, European trans Studies, and the Will to Institutionalization,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (May 2021): pp. 158-171

December 3

–Jafari S. Allen, “Unfinished Work,” in *There’s a Disco Ball Between Us: A Theory of Black Gay Life*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022): pp. 261-294

Visual Archive: Lisa Cortes, “Little Richard: I am Everything,” (2023)

Dawn Porter, “Luther: Never Too Much,” (2024)

Week 15

December 8

–Kai M. Green, “Troubling the Waters: Mobilizing a Trans*Analytic,” in *No Tea, No shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): pp. 65-82

–Alexis Pauline Gumbs and Julia Roxanne Wallace, “Something Else to Be: Generations of Black Queer Brilliance and the Mobile Homecoming Experiential Archive,” in *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016): pp. 380-394.

December 10

–Shoniqua Roach, “On the Uses of Black Feminism: Notes on Black Feminism as Sexuality Study,” *Feminist Formations*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Spring 2020): pp. 180-188

Visual Archive: Your Attention Please: Imitative 29, “My Sistah’s House,” (Aug. 29, 2021)

–**Third anchor paper due December 18 at 6pm**