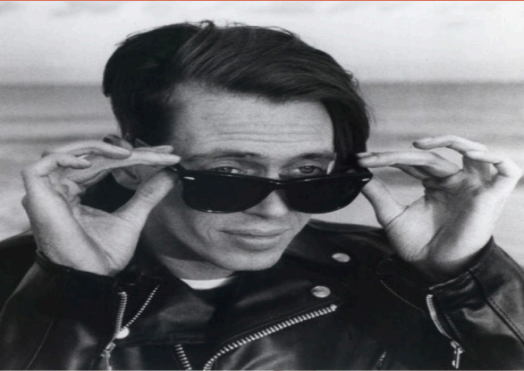


# QUEER THEORY AND CINEMA

GNDR\_ST 490 & ENGLISH 481

WINTER  
2024



“Queer theory” and “New Queer Cinema” were two neologisms born of the same early-1990s moment in Anglophone academia and public film culture. Both saw themselves as extending but also complicating the intellectual, aesthetic, and ideological parameters of prior formations like “gay and lesbian studies” or “LGBT film.” These new and spreading discourses stoked each other’s productive advances, as scholars developed new axioms by reference to the movies, and filmmakers rooted styles and images in changing notions of gender performativity and counter-historiography. Still, queer theory and queer cinema faced similar skepticisms: did their ornate language and conceptual novelty endow dissident sexualities with newfound political and cultural stature, or did they retreat too far from popular accessibility and ongoing public emergencies? Was the lack of fixed definitions, communal appeals, uniting goals, or shared aesthetic practices a boon or a harm in sustaining a long-term movement of art, action, or thought? And how many thinkers, writers, artists, scholars, and activists were erased or marginalized by a “queer turn” that purported to elevate them?

This class honors but also decenters this peak period in the reclaiming of “queer.” We will recover scholarly and cinematic trends that laid fertile grounds for that work and will also track subsequent trajectories and debates around “queer” in the way we perform readings, perceive bodies, record histories, spin narratives, form alliances, enter archives, and orient ourselves in space and time. Diversities of race, gender identity, nation, class, and political project will inflect our understandings of “queer” and even challenge the presumed primacy of sexuality as its key referent. Meanwhile, participants will develop skills of close-reading films and engage nimbly with the overarching claims but also the nuances, anomalies, and paradoxes in the scholarship we read.

\* Please note that this course satisfies the Queer Theory requirement for the Graduate Certificate in GSS.

## Nick Davis

M 2-4:50pm  
Library 4722