Discovery Course
GER 270 / GWS 270 / CWL 272
History of Sexuality and Literature
In English!

MWF 10:00-10:50 AM; FLB G 36;
Prof. Carl Niekerk; niekerk@illinois.edu

This course satisfies the General Education Criteria for a Literature and the Arts course.

Credit: 3 hours. Restricted to First Time Freshman students.
Examination of the historical contexts in which sexuality has been debated during the past three centuries, and to what extent sexuality is perceived differently in diverse cultures. Our thinking about sexuality is, in other words, very much part of the culture in which we grow up. In part one of the seminar, we will look at the history of sexuality in the Western tradition and in particular, although not exclusively, at the German and French literary and cultural traditions. We will try to answer some of the following questions: To what extent are Western European ideas about sexuality at the roots of ideas about gender roles — about the ways men and women are supposed to behave in society? How are Western ideas about non-Western cultures influenced by negative stereotypes about the sexuality of those belonging to these other cultures? In part two of the seminar, we will shift our focus to the non-Western world, and in particular to the colonial history of Indonesia and the Caribbean. In this part of the seminar we will deal with the issue of to what extent the texts from these areas constitute a critique of Western concepts of sexuality. Is the history of sexuality an integral part of colonial history? Do postcolonial texts allow an alternative construction of the history of sexuality that is different from that of the West?
"SPECIAL COURSE for FRESHMEN"
Discovery Course for Fall 2010

Action Heroes: Popular Movies and Global Change (GER 199/meets with CINE 193)

What makes a movie last in our imagination? Popular movies can be entertaining and fun to watch but, at their best, they also engage in important social and moral questions. They explore the struggle between good and evil, how people make choices, how to make the world a better place, or how to make a difference in our individual lives. In this course we examine this trend in popular movies of various genres, including action movies (The Matrix, I am Legend, The Dark Knight), animation (Wall-E), TV shows (Joan of Arcadia) as well as biopics (Gandhi), political films (Lives of Others) and drama (Truman Show, Into the Wild). The course will teach you how to watch popular movies more reflectively, providing the basic tools and terms of film analysis. Once, we have this foundation, we will examine more closely how the different genres appeal to both our desire for entertainment and our wish to better understand ourselves and the world around us. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the wide-ranging meanings of heroism and the ways in which film and the media shape our understanding of this concept (3 credits, weekly reflection papers, midterm, final film project). The course is taught in English, no prior knowledge required.

Professor Anke Pinkert (pinkert@uiuc.edu). Class time (incl. screening): TR: 12-1:50, in FLB G 36)